

AN EXPLANATION OF  
1 CORINTHIANS 7:11a

By  
John Dale Brock

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in  
Grace Theological Seminary  
May 1957

LIBRARY  
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
WINONA LAKE, INDIANA



## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to determine the correct meaning of 1 Cor. 7:11a. The solution of the problem in this verse will be an aid in marital counseling. Therefore it is dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the minister to whom many will go for advice concerning this matter.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Professor Benjamin A. Hamilton, faculty advisor, who also gave instruction relative to the technical details of the manuscript. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Herman A. Hoyt for giving of his time in private consultation concerning this text.

All quotations of Scripture are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .	Page iii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
GREEK TEXT . . . . .	3
ENGLISH VERSIONS . . . . .	5
ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	8
STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS . . . . .	11
<p><u>Major Problem:</u> <u>What is the meaning of</u>  <u>"But and if she depart,"</u>  <u>in this verse?</u></p> <p><u>Minor Problem:</u> <u>What is the meaning of</u>  <u>"let her remain unmarried</u>  <u>or be reconciled to her</u>  <u>husband"?</u></p>	
VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS . . . . .	13
WRITER'S INTERPRETATION . . . . .	21
ENGLISH PARAPHRASE . . . . .	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	40



## INTRODUCTION

In selecting a verse for a critical examination the writer's attention was focused upon 1 Cor. 7:11. The portion of the verse which the writer is most interested in is "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. . . ."

The purpose for choosing this verse is twofold: First, to determine whether there is or is not Biblical grounds for divorce for a Christian. Second, because of the many views that are spread abroad, the writer wishes to make a critical examination of this verse to find its meaning.

The subject will be handled in the light of various opinions held as to the interpretation of the verse followed by the writer's refutation or acceptance of these opinions and views.



GREEK TEXT

According to The New Testament in the Original Greek,

edited by Westcott and Hort

ἔα γὰρ καὶ χωρισθῇ μενέτω  
ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω  
καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφίεται

Textual Variations

There are no textual variations regarding the  
problem.



The Revis King James Version, 1611 Testament), 1916

But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

American Standard Version, 1901

(But should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife.

Weymouth's New Testament, 1902

Or if she has already left him, let her either remain as she is or be reconciled to him and that a husband is not to send away his wife.

Montgomery's Centenary Translation, 1924

(or if she has already left him let her remain as she is, or be reconciled to him), and also that a husband is not to put away his wife.

The American Bible, 1935

If she does separate, she must remain single or else become reconciled to him. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

Moffatt's Bible, 1935

If she has separated, she must either remain single or be reconciled to him--and a husband must not put away his wife.



Basic English, New Testament, 1941

(Or if she goes away from him, let her keep unmarried, or be united to her husband again); and that the husband may not go away from his wife.

The Revised Standard Version (New Testament), 1946

(but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)--and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

The Douay Version, 1582

And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife.



## ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

The church at Corinth was established on Paul's second missionary journey. Paul began preaching the word in the synagogue every Sabbath, but the Jews opposed and blasphemed Paul and his co-workers. Paul said to the Jews, "Your blood be upon your own head . . . I will go unto the Gentiles." Ac. 18:6.

After entering a certain Justus' house to preach and teach, many believed and a church was established. Paul remained with them for a year and a half, after which he sailed to Syria.

After Paul's departure, many false teachings entered the church at Corinth. Worldliness also overtook the members of the church. Their actions differed little from those of the world.

As there is usually a nucleus in a church that endeavors to hold fast to the faith, there evidently was such a one in Corinth for a letter was received by Paul. Its contents was that of an age old problem; sex. 1 Cor. 7:1. They wanted to know about a number of things concerning sex, but the part with which we are concerned is that of the marriage relationship and its problems.

The problem does not start here for even in the



Old Testament, laws were written to take care of this situation. The Corinthians had access to the Old Testament Scriptures and were probably influenced by the misinterpretation of these passages.

One does not have to have a great deal of experience to know that divorce has become a real problem in the church. It will become a greater problem unless Christians are taught the scriptural view concerning this matter. It is the writer's opinion that Paul was emphasising what our Lord taught in the Gospels.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS



## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

### The Major Problem

What is the meaning of "But and if she depart,"  
in this verse?

### The Minor Problem

What is the meaning of "let her remain unmarried  
or be reconciled to her husband"?

## VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS



Major Problem: What is the meaning of "But and if she depart," in this Verse

### Separation View

To the writer's knowledge and research this view is held by a greater number of commentaries than any other view. It is believed that χωρισθῆ means "if she be separated."<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of this being a parenthesis is not discussed by those who hold this view.

Biblical separation.--The advocates of this view argue that there may be a legitimate reason for separation. This argument is very clearly stated by Ironside:

There may be circumstances where no self-respecting woman could continue in the marriage relationship with some man, there may be circumstances where a man is so absolutely brutal or so vile and filthy and perverted in whole character, that no decent, good woman could live with him, and in that case it is evident from this that she is free to leave him. . . .<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A. R. Fausset, "I Corinthians - Revelation," A Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testament eds. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, n. d.), II, 275.

<sup>2</sup>H. A. Ironside, Addresses on the First Epistle to Corinthians (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1941), p. 209.



A. R. Fuasset also advocates this.<sup>3</sup>

Non-Biblical separation.--Even though separations occur there is no Biblical grounds for them. This is argued by the following: Scott,<sup>4</sup> Robertson,<sup>5</sup> and others. Clarke states: "The Apostle puts the verse as probable, because it was frequent, but lays it under restrictions.

[This must refer to separations already accomplished; all future ones are forbidden.] "6

<sup>3</sup>Fausset, loc. cit. John Murray, 1876, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Scott, The Holy Bible (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker and Brewster, 1830), I, 146.

5 Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), IV, 126, 127.

<sup>6</sup>Adam Clarke, The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1883), VI, 121.



# Paranthetical Separation View

Those who hold this view contend that Paul is saying, ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῇ means:

"If she should in fact be separated." It supposes a case of actual separation. Two who support this view are Stanley<sup>7</sup> and Alford.<sup>8</sup> Shore states this view very clearly:

ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῇ is translated, "but if she have actually separated." These words from "but" (καὶ) to "husband" (ἀνδρὶ), are a parenthesis, and the concluding words "and let not the husband put away his wife," are the completion of the Lord's command given in verse 10. The Apostle in case such a separation should already have taken place anticipates the difficult question which might then arise by parenthetically remarking that in such a case the woman must not marry again, but ought to be reunited to her former husband.<sup>9</sup>

Non-Biblical separation.--Of those who held this view Alford's comment is excellent. He writes as follows:

ἐὰν to καταλλαγήτω is parenthetical. It supposes a case of actual separation, contrary of course to Christ's command.<sup>10</sup>

The command being merely a reference to the Lord's

command not necessarily a parenthesis.

Non-Biblical divorce.--Of those who support the

<sup>7</sup>Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: John Murray, 1876), p. 103.

<sup>8</sup>Henry Alford, The New Testament for English Readers (London: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1872), II, 523.

<sup>9</sup>T. Teignmouth Shore, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," A Bible Commentary for English Readers ed. by Charles John Ellicott (London: Cassell and Co., n. d.), VII, 308.

<sup>10</sup>Alford, loc. cit. The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: The Westminster Press, 1921), p. 69.



## Divorce View

The advocates of this view say that

χωρισθῆναι

means divorce. They do not state whether they believe this position is or is not parenthetical. Among those who hold this view are Wade<sup>11</sup> and Edwards.<sup>12</sup> Beet says:

χωρισθῆναι refers to the same kind of separation as χωρισθῆναι, which undoubtedly means divorce, for the apostle is citing the words in which Christ prohibits divorce. We need not suppose that the apostle justifies the woman's conduct. It is the case of a woman that persists in divorcing herself from her husband for an insufficient reason. She transgresses the law of Christ. She ought to be reconciled to her husband. If she refuses to be reconciled, at least let her remain unmarried. No one will say that such a case was not likely to occur in the Corinthian Church, who bears in mind the case with which a divorce was obtainable in Greece or Rome.<sup>13</sup>

Biblical divorce.--Eerdman states:

Paul reminds them of the explicit command of Christ which forbids divorce save on the ground of unfaithfulness. 'But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband . . . and that the husband leave not his wife.'<sup>14</sup>

The command being merely a reference to the Lord's command not necessarily a parenthesis.

Non-Biblical divorce.--Of those who support the

<sup>11</sup>G. W. Wade, Old Testament History (London: Methuen and Co., 1901), pp. 155, 156.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Charles Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), p. 165.

<sup>13</sup>Joseph Agar Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 116.

<sup>14</sup>Charles R. Eerdman, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1928), p. 69.



divorce view as being unBiblical, S. Nowell-Rostran clearly states this view:

The union is indissoluble and life long. The wife should not depart from her husband ("but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband"). It has indeed been forcibly argued on the strength of St. Mt. 5:32 that our Lord sanctified divorce in the case of adultery, and the remarriage of the innocent, but St. Mk. 15 gospel records no exception to a universal rule.<sup>15</sup>

inspired and what is new; nor is it a distinction between what Paul taught and what the scripture teach as Calvin understands it; but Lord here evidently refers to Christ; and the distinction intended is between what Christ had taught while on earth, and what Paul by his Spirit was inspired to teach.<sup>16</sup>

Robertson and Plummer<sup>17</sup> and Weiss<sup>18</sup> also advocate this view.

Biblical divorce.--These who support this idea contend that our Lord set down the grounds for divorce in the gospels. Hodge says:

Adultery annuls it, because it is a breach of the specific contract involved in marriage. This is the Protestant doctrine concerning divorce, founded on the nature of marriage and on the explicit instruction of our Lord, Mt. 5:32, 19:5-9, Mk. 10:2-12, Lk. 10:16. According to this doctrine nothing but adultery or wilful desertion is a legitimate ground of divorce, first because the scriptures allow no other grounds and secondly, because incompatibility

---

<sup>16</sup> Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1930), p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Archibald T. Robertson and Alfred Plummer, "The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," The International Bible Commentary, Vol. 10, pp. 107, 108.

<sup>18</sup> S. Nowell-Rostran, St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1931), pp. 107, 108. George S. Dodd and Epiphanius Wilson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911), pp. 107, 108.



of temper. Parenthetical Divorce View other things of like kind, which human laws often make the occasion for divorce, are not in their nature a

Those supporting this view contend that from "but" (καὶ) to "husband" (ἀνδρὶ) make a parenthetical phrase. Hodge states this view:

The distinction which he here (v. 10) and in (v. 12) makes between his commands and those of the Lord is not a distinction between what is inspired and what is not; nor is it a distinction between what Paul taught and what the scripture teach as Calvin understands it; but Lord here evidently refers to Christ; and the distinction intended is between what Christ had taught while on earth, and what Paul by his Spirit was inspired to teach.<sup>16</sup>

Robertson and Plummer<sup>17</sup> and Weiss<sup>18</sup> also advocate this view.

Biblical divorce.--Those who support this idea contend that our Lord set down the grounds for divorce in the gospels. Hodge says:

Adultery annuls it, because it is a breach of the specific contract involved in marriage. This is the Protestant doctrine concerning divorce, founded on the nature of marriage and on the explicit instruction of our Lord, Mt. 5:32, 19:3-9, Mk. 10:2-12, Lk. 16:18. According to this doctrine nothing but adultery or wilful desertion is a legitimate ground of divorce, first because the scriptures allow no other grounds and secondly, because incompatibility

<sup>16</sup>Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950), p. 112.

<sup>17</sup>Archibald T. Robertson and Alfred Plummer, "The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1916), pp. 140-141.

<sup>18</sup>Bernard Weiss, A Commentary on the New Testament Translated by George H. Dodd and Epiphanius Wilson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906), III, 190.



Paradoxical Divorce View

those supporting this view contend that from  
"husband" (v. 10) to "husband" (v. 10) make a parenthesis--

Hodge states this view:

The distinction which he here (v. 10) and in  
makes between his commands and those of  
is not a distinction between what is  
and what is not; nor is it a distinction  
between what Paul taught and what the scripture  
taught as Calvin understands it; but Lord here  
is referring to Christ; and the distinction  
is between what Christ had taught while  
on earth, and what Paul by his Spirit was inspired  
to teach.

Robertson and Plummer IV and Weiss<sup>18</sup> also advocate this

Biblical divorce.--Those who support this idea

hold that our Lord set down the grounds for divorce in

Gospels. Hodge says:

Adversary annuls it, because it is a breach of  
the specific covenant involved in marriage. This  
is the Protestant doctrine concerning divorce,  
founded on the nature of marriage and on the explicit  
instruction of our Lord, Mt. 5:32, 19:9-10, Mk. 10:2-12,  
Lk. 16:16. According to this doctrine nothing but  
adultery or willful desertion is a legitimate ground  
of divorce, first because the scriptures allow no  
other grounds and secondly, because incompatibility

<sup>18</sup> Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle  
to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. E. Burdman Pub.  
Co., 1903), p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> Archibald T. Robertson and Alfred Plummer, "The  
Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," The Inter-  
denominational Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's  
Sons, 1910), pp. 150-151.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Weiss, A Commentary on the New Testament  
as Edited by George R. Dods and Benjamin Wilson (New York:  
The Macmillan Co., 1905), III, 190.



of temper, cruelty, disease, crime and other things of like kind, which human laws often make the occasion for divorce, are not in their nature a destruction of the marriage covenant.<sup>19</sup>

Others who hold this view are Eerdman<sup>20</sup> and Edwards.<sup>21</sup>

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

---

<sup>19</sup>Hodge, loc. cit.      <sup>20</sup>Eerdman, loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Edwards, op. cit., p. 166.



WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

Major Problem: What is the meaning of "But and if she depart  
in this Verse?

De-fraud ye not one the other, except it be  
with consent for a time, that ye may give your-  
selves to fasting Separation View come together  
again, that Satan tempt not for your inach-  
tance. If the word χωρισθῆναι, which is translated  
"if she depart," means "separation" then the following  
words of Paul seem unnecessary and have no meaning for  
us in the light of this word. Paul's words are: "let her  
remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." The  
exact meaning of this phrase will be handled in the Minor  
Problem, but for explanation of χωρισθῆναι, it must  
be discussed. Separation means that the couple are still  
husband and wife but not living together as husband and  
wife. When a couple are separated they can again start  
living together without going through the civil require-  
ments of marriage; this they have already done. It is  
not the The writer, therefore, cannot accept this view  
because it implies an inconsistency in the text. It  
implies that a person could be separated, but tells them  
not to marry another. This would not even be allowed by  
the civil law for they are still married to another person.  
So there would be no need of the further injunction, if  
this was merely separation.



~~already~~ Biblical separation.--The writer has stated his position as to the meaning of χωρισθῆναι. It does not mean separation. Biblical grounds for separation cannot be found in this text. For this information Paul has stated the Scriptural position in 1 Cor. 7:5.

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

There are some qualifications which must be adhered to in this separation that Paul has mentioned.

1. It must be with consent.
2. It is to be for a time. (Καὶ πόρ --a limited period of time).<sup>1</sup>
3. It is only that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.

Notice also that Paul states that they must come together again. This implies that they were separated.

This certainly means physical separation and perhaps means a separation beyond that. However, it is not the writer's purpose to solve this problem.

Non-Biblical separation.--As has been discussed separation is not even mentioned in this passage; therefore, this possibility cannot be determined from this passage. The subject of separation is discussed in 1 Cor. 7:5. The only reason for separation, found in this passage, has

---

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 318.



already been handled. *Paul Separation View*

The writer must reject the separation view on grounds previously stated. The fact of it being a parenthetical expression, however, is acceptable.

Paul is giving a command concerning the married people (1 Cor. 7:10). In the middle of the verse he explains that this is not his command, but the Lord's of which he starts to give. Commencing with the eleventh verse Paul inserts his own words, directed by the Holy Spirit, with which he qualifies this command. The Lord's command is completed in the last part of the eleventh verse, "and let not the husband put away his wife."

The case that is under investigation in this verse has already taken place and is not something in the future. Henry states it quite succinctly:

In this paragraph, the Apostle gives direction in a case which must have been very frequent in that age, especially among the Jewish converts, I mean, whether they were to live with heathen relatives in a married state. Moses' law permitted divorce; and there was a famous licence in the Jewish state, when the people were obliged to put away their idolatrous wives.<sup>2</sup>

More evidence for this will be considered under the *Parenthetical Divorce View*.

---

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Henry, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, ed. by Hickerson Williams (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n. s., p. 276).



## Paranthesis Separation View

The writer must reject the separation view on grounds previously stated. The fact of it being a parenthetical expression, however, is acceptable.

Paul is giving a command concerning the married people (1 Cor. 7:10). In the middle of the verse he exclaims that this is not his command, but the Lord's; of which he starts to give. Commencing with the eleventh verse Paul inserts his own words, directed by the Holy Spirit, with which he qualifies this command. The Lord's command is completed in the last part of the eleventh verse, "and let not the husband put away his wife."

The case that is under investigation in this verse has already taken place and is not something in the future. Henry states it quite explicitly:

In this paragraph, the Apostle gives direction in a case which must have been very frequent in that age, especially among the Jewish converts, I mean, whether they were to live with heathen relatives in a married state. Moses' law permitted divorce; and there was a famous instance in the Jewish state, when the people were obliged to put away their idolatrous wives.<sup>2</sup>

More evidence for this will be considered under the Paranthesis Divorce View.

---

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Henry, A Commentary on the Holy Bible, ed. by Bickerton Williams (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n. d.), p. 278.



## The Divorce View

The advocates of this view, in the writer's opinion are correct. They, however, do not go far enough. They do not mention it being a parenthesis, which does not necessarily mean they are not acquainted with it.

The word χωρισθῆναι as used in this passage must mean divorce. If it means anything else, the words "let her remain unmarried" have no meaning. For proof of this being divorce, Edwards gives very clear evidence:

χωρισθῆναι refers to the same kind of separation as χωρισθῆναι which undoubtedly means divorce, for the Apostle is citing the words in which Christ prohibits divorce. We need not suppose that the Apostle justifies the woman's conduct. It is the case of a woman that persists in divorcing herself from her husband for an insufficient reason.<sup>3</sup>

The construction ἐὰν ὅτι καὶ, "but and if" set off a parenthesis to provide for an exceptional case. This same arrangement of words is found in 1 Cor. 7:25, which is also a parenthesis.

Thayer claims the word ἐὰν is a conditional particle which makes reference to time and experience.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Thayer, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Edwards, loc. cit.



## The Parenthetical Divorce View

In the writer's opinion, this view is the correct interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:11. As to the word meaning "divorce," χωρισθῆ, the strongest proof is that of Edwards,<sup>4</sup> which was considered in the Divorce View. Another proof is that of the context in which we find this word. Paul is giving a command to the married people, in which he states the Lord's Commandment. In the middle of this commandment, Paul says, ". . . if she depart, let her remain unmarried." To remain unmarried one must "get" unmarried. The word for married is γάμος and here we have the word ἀγάμος, unmarried. The α (alpha) prefixed to the word γάμος gives it a negative sense.<sup>5</sup> To be unmarried, therefore, there must be a divorce. Just being separated certainly would not carry this force, for the couple would still be married.

The construction ἐὰν δὲ καὶ, "but and if" set off a parenthesis to provide for an exceptional case.<sup>6</sup> This same arrangement of words is found in 1 Cor. 7:28, which is also a parenthesis.

Thayer claims the word ἐὰν is a conditional participle which makes reference to time and experience<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. <sup>5</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>7</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 162.



ἔα with ἡμῶν which is an aorist subjunctive passive, indicates an experience that has already taken place. The aorist shows that the event took place at a given time in the past.

The case Paul is bringing before us is, if on these conditions, (Mt. 19:9) that a person is divorced, she should remain unmarried. The conditions are those given by our Lord in 1 Cor. 7:10b: "let not the wife depart from her husband" and 1 Cor. 7:11b: "and let not the husband put away his wife." In 1 Cor. 7:11a is Paul's commentary on this commandment of our Lord.

It has been said that this commandment of the Lord's was that of Lk. 16:18 and Mk. 10:11-12. It has also been said that the Mark and Luke passages are referring to the married and the Matthew accounts, 5:32 and 19:9, refer to those of the engagement status.<sup>8</sup> In examining these passages the writer can find no evidence that they are speaking of different groups. The most logical conclusion is that the passages refer to the married couples, as Paul's treatment is referring to the married, in which he mentions the Lord's charge.

The accounts of Mt. 5:32, 19:9 and Mk. 10:11 are very clear that the background for discussion was the Law of Moses. In these passages our Lord was questioned about the marriage relationship. In Matthew 19, the conversation is

---

<sup>8</sup>Herman A. Hoyt, "I Corinthians," Unpublished class notes, Department of New Testament (Grace Theological Seminary, 1956), p. 67.



between the Pharisees and Christ. The Pharisees ask the direct question concerning divorce. In Christ's answer He refers them to the Old Testament; and states that no man has the power to break the tie. This alone would imply that there is to be no divorce for any reason. But it is agreed that we must not take a verse out of its context. In verse 9 Christ gives the qualification, which is that of fornication.

The passage in Lk. 16:18, however, is not too clear in regards to its background. Perhaps it is the same incident, therefore, the same background.

The law of Moses, concerning divorce, is found in Deut. 24:1-4, especially are we concerned with the first verse.

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

The word for uncleanness, נִלְוָה means "to make oneself bare, to be naked, to be destitute, forlorn, forsaken,"<sup>9</sup> and is translated in the Septuagint, ἀσχημον,<sup>10</sup> which Bagster renders "uncomely or indecent."<sup>11</sup> The

---

<sup>9</sup>William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of The Old Testament, trans. by Edward Robinson, (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849), p. 820.

<sup>10</sup>Henry Barclay Swete (ed), The Old Testament according to the Septuagint (London: Deighton Bell and Co., 1887), I, 390.

<sup>11</sup>The Analytical Greek Lexicon (London: S. Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1912), p. 58.



International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia states they "know of no modern version which makes זנות the equivalent of fornication or adultery.<sup>12</sup>

This is Scott's view concerning the word "unclean-ness": "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered

The uncleanness, on account of which the Israelites were suffered for the hardness of their hearts to put away their wives, was not adultery, or any suspicion of it; for both these cases were otherwise provided against: (Deut. 22:22, Lev. 21:10, Num. 5:12-31).<sup>13</sup>

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 21:10)

Others who affirm that this view is correct are: Gore,<sup>14</sup> Farrar and Thomas,<sup>15</sup> and Dr. Gill.<sup>16</sup>

With this material as a background we can see why our Lord, in Mt. 5:32 and 19:19 gave the qualification for divorce; fornication. The people were using everything, no matter how small, for an excuse of divorce. God did not

<sup>12</sup>W. W. Davies, "Divorce, in O. T.", International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (1939), II, 864.

<sup>13</sup>Scott, op. cit., I, 578.

<sup>14</sup>J. Battersby Harford, "Deuteronomy," A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, ed. by Charles Gore, Henry Leighton Goudge and Alfred Guillaume (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 162.

<sup>15</sup>W. L. Alexander (exposition), "Deuteronomy," The Pulpit Commentary ed. by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1950), III, 382.

<sup>16</sup>John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1853), I, 779.



mean it to be that way.

The Pharisees were misinterpreting the passage in Deut. 24:1. They asked: "Why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement. . . ." Mt. 19:7. Our Lord answers them, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." The word suffered is ἐπέτρεψεν and means "permit, allow" or "give leave."<sup>17</sup>

Jesus, first sets their thinking clear on the interpretation of Deut. 24:1 by telling them that divorce was permitted because of their hard hearts and that it was not a command. He follows this by saying that it was not so from the beginning; that is, the permitting of easy divorce. Our Lord qualifies their divorce idea with the words "except for fornication." Mt. 19:9.

Paul has been referring to these words of our Lord in 1 Cor. 7:10-11. In this passage Paul is speaking of Christian married couples. It is quite conclusive, that, as Paul is here speaking to the married, he has given a command of the Lord concerning the matter of his discussion. The reference of the Lord's command is in Mt., Mk., and Lk. In Mt. the command is given twice, 5:32, and 19:9; and once in each of the others.

Matthew was a very close associate of Christ, as He walked the roads of this earth, Mt. 9:9. It is most probable that he was at His side when Jesus spoke the words of Mt. 5:32

<sup>17</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 245.



and 19:9. Luke and Mark, however, were not as clearly related to Christ. This does not, in any way, discount inspiration; for other cases of this nature are found in the Synoptic Gospel. Compare Mt. 12:9-13 with Mk. 3:1-6.

As Paul is speaking to the married couples and refers to our Lord's command in Matthew then we must conclude that the term "fornication", Πορνεία, is a general term for unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship. And for this only does Christ allow divorce.

If we failed to examine 1 Cor. 7:15 closely, we might say that this would allow for a laxness in divorce. Notice, however, in verse 15 it is the unbeliever who is doing the departing.

On the basis of this critical investigation it is the writer's opinion that this passage is referring to Christ's command in Mt. 19:9, where He gives the only Biblical grounds for divorce.

In conclusion the writer would emphasize what our Lord said in Matthew 19 when the Pharisees confronted him with questions. God only permits divorce on the grounds of fornication, it was not a command; the command was that a Christian was not to marry another. Divorce is only to be used when the mate refuses to live a clean life and insists on living in adultery.



Minor Problem: What is the meaning of "let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. . .?"

A command is given in μεγέτω. It is third person, singular present imperative. The imperative is the mood of command or entreaty;<sup>18</sup> "let her remain."

ἀγαμος is γάμος, married, with the α-privitive (alpha) prefixed; which gives it a negative meaning. It is equivalent to our "un-". It is translated "unmarried."

The word for husband, ἀνδρὶ, is the word for man, but in the context it is translated "husband."

καταλλάγητω is third person singular, Aorist imperative and is translated "let her be reconciled." This verb also carries the force of command.

There are two words for reconcile in the Greek;

καταλλάσσω and διαλλάσσω. Robertson states the difference in meaning of the two:

καταλλάγητω is an old compound verb to exchange coins of equal value, to reconcile. It is one of Paul's great words for reconciliation with God. (11 Cor. 5:18-20 and Rom. 5:10). διαλλάσσω (Mt. 5:24) is more common in the older Greek, but καταλλάσσω in the latter. The difference in idea is very slight, δια - accents notion of exchange, κατα - the perfect idea (complete reconciliation).<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual of the Greek New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946),

<sup>19</sup>Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, loc. cit.



What is the meaning of "let her remain un-  
der his reconciliation to her husband?"

statement is given in Matthew. It is third  
singular present imperative. The imperative is

"command or entreaty; 1st 'let her remain.'"

ἵνα is hina, married, with the

relative (alpha) prefixed; which gives it a

meaning. It is equivalent to our "un-". It is

"married."

word for husband, ἀνδρὶ, is the word for

in this context it is translated "husband."

ἵνα is third person singular,

relative and is translated "let her be reconciled."

also carries the force of command.

two are two words for reconcile in the Greek;

καταλλάσσειν. Robertson states the

in meaning of the two:

καταλλάσσειν is an old compound verb to  
change of value, to reconcile. It is  
and a great word for reconciliation with God.  
(Mt. 5:24 and Rom. 5:10). ἀλλάσσειν (Mt.  
more common in the other Greek, but καταλλάσσειν  
latter. The difference in idea is very slight,  
reciprocal notion of exchange, κατα - the perfect  
complete reconciliation).

E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual of the  
Textual Criticism of the New Testament (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900).

Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament.



The encouragement is for the couple to go back together again. But if and when they do it is not to go back together to "give it another try," but to reunite with complete reconciliation.

In the text we see two alternatives for the one who has been divorced:

1. Remain unmarried, or
2. be reconciled to her husband.

When a Christian has grounds for and contemplates getting a divorce, he should consider seriously the above mentioned alternatives. If a divorce is obtained, the person should remain unmarried, or go back to live with the one whom he has left. There is no allowance for a Christian marrying another person so long as the mate is alive. (Rom. 7:2).

The main point of this situation is: What is primary in the Christian life, God or sex? If the individual insists on getting remarried then sex seems to be the primary thing in their life, by their desire to get remarried. But on the other hand if God and serving Him comes first, they will not remarry for God's Word does not condone it.

To be reconciled with the husband is better than to remain unmarried. However, if the mate insists on living a life of debauchery, then it is better to remain unmarried for the sake of testimony to God and to others. By the act of remaining apart from him would let people know you are



not connected with nor condone his actions.

Calvin makes quite clear the issue of remarriage:

If she has been expelled from the house or has been put away, she must not think that even in that case she is set free from his power; . . . even those who are not received by their husbands, continue to be bound, so that they cannot take other husbands.<sup>20</sup>

This verse makes a direct statement against such practice and to do otherwise is to go directly contrary to a command in God's Word. The passage in Mk. 10:11-12 with Rom. 7:3 also contribute to this fact.

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

"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Rom. 7:3)

One of the commandments that Moses gave to the Israelites is quoted by Paul in Rom. 13:9. "Thou shalt not commit adultery . . ." The writer feels this is conclusive evidence that a person is not to remarry while the person he or she first married is still living. If he did

---

<sup>20</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus, O.: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 99.



remarry he would be guilty of the same sin which caused the divorce.

Some who support this view are: Exell,<sup>21</sup> Hodge,<sup>22</sup> Dr. Gill,<sup>23</sup> and others.

The view held by Morgan, the writer cannot accept. Morgan states:

There is only one real ground for divorce, and that is the ground of infidelity within the marriage relationship. We have modified our laws within recent years, much to the detriment of our high standards of morality, which will be proven in the process of years. Do not forget that it is the guilty party that is not allowed, by the law of Christ, to be married again. Here I differ from very many. Some of my friends in the ministry will not marry a divorced person. I will, within the limit. If the man is not guilty, and has to divorce his woman; if the woman is not guilty, but has to divorce her man, then I will marry him, or her; but not the guilty party.<sup>24</sup>

There is only one passage, to the writer's knowledge, that would even slant toward giving permission to remarry; that is 1 Cor. 7:15. A critical monograph has already been written on this verse. The conclusion of this paper is that there is to be no remarriage for the Christian.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>Joseph S. Exell (ed.), First Corinthians, Vol. I, The Biblical Illustrator (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n. d.), p. 453.

<sup>22</sup>Hodge, loc. cit. <sup>23</sup>Gill, op. cit., I, 191.

<sup>24</sup>G. Campbell Morgan, The Corinthian Letters of Paul, An Exposition of First and Second Corinthians (London: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1946), p. 99.

<sup>25</sup>Henry Clyde Elder, "A Critical Investigation of the phrase 'not under bondage' from 1 Cor. 7:15," Unpublished Critical Monograph, Grace Theological Seminary, 1951, p. 65.



The writer must agree with Mr. Morgan that there is only one ground for divorce, infidelity in the marriage state. It is also true that the standards have been lowered and the Christian has been living up to the law standard (in part) instead of setting the standards high. However, it doesn't seem that Mr. Morgan was helping the standard by marrying a divorced person. The Scripture has given a clear statement concerning divorce. Lk. 16:18.

This paper has discussed the problem of Christians divorcing and remarrying. The writer has come to the conclusion that divorce is permitted on the ground of "fornication." Mt. 5:32. They are not commanded to seek divorce on these grounds; they may remain together, but are "permitted" to seek divorce. Also the writer has concluded that it is wrong and unscriptural for a Christian, under any circumstance, to remarry while his former mate is living.

In coming to this conclusion let us remember that the unregenerated man has little restraint upon his heart. He will drop to the lowest depths of sin. When a Christian sins and falls we should be surprised, but not so with a person outside of Christ. We should not be surprised at what he will do. So where it is completely out of order for a Christian to remarry, it is not for the unsaved, because it is his nature to sin.

There were things in everyone of our lives before



we were saved that the blood of Christ has covered. Yet we must admit that we Christians sin every day. Perhaps we might do some of the things we did before we were saved, and God forgives us for those sins. This does not mean we are saved all over again, nor does it mean that all of our sins were not forgiven when we accepted Christ; but it does mean that we have stepped out of bounds. God forgives us as we come to Him with a repentant heart. So it must be on the same basis that when a person with an entangled marital life before he is saved, trusts Christ as his Savior, is forgiven of his sin just as any other sinner.

ENGLISH PARAPHRASE



#### ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

But since she has already departed she should remain not married or she should be reconciled to her former husband.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, W. L. (exposition) "Deuteronomy," The Pulpit Commentary. Ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1950.
- Alford, Henry. The New Testament for English Readers. Vol. II. London: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1872.
- The American Bible, 1935.
- American Standard Version, 1901.
- The Analytical Greek Lexicon. London: S. Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1912.
- Barnes, Albert. Notes, Explanatory and Practical on the New Testament. Vol. V. Glasgow, Scotland: Blackie and Son, n. d.
- Basic English, New Testament, 1941.
- Beet, Joseph Agar. A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892.
- Bengel, John Albert. Gnomon of the New Testament. Trans. Charlton T. Lewis and Marvin R. Vincent. Ed. Charlton T. Lewis. Vol. II. Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1860.
- Benson, Joseph. The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. New York: T. Carlton and J. Porter, n. d.
- Butler, Glentworth J. The Bible Work. New York: The Butler-Bible-Work Co., 1892.
- Calvin, John. Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle. I Corinthians, Vol. I. Trans. John Pringle. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans's Pub. Co., reprinted 1948.
- Clarke, Adam. The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Vol. VI. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1883.



- Dana, H. E. and Mantey, Julius R. A Manual of the Greek Testament. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946.
- Davies, W. W. "Divorce in O. T." International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. Vol. II.
- Dods, Marcus. An Exposition of the Bible. Vol. V. Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton Co., 1908.
- The Douay Version, 1582.
- Edwards, Thomas Charles. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897.
- Eerdman, Charles R. The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1928.
- Elder, Henry Clyde. "A Critical Investigation of the phrase 'not under bondage' from 1 Cor. 7:15," Unpublished Critical Monograph, Grace Theological Seminary, 1951.
- Exell, Joseph S. (ed.) The Biblical Illustrator. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n. d.
- Farrar, F. W. and Thomas, David. "I Corinthians," The Pulpit Commentary. Eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. Vol. XIX. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950.
- Fausset, A. R. "I Corinthians - Revelation." Vol. II. A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments. Eds. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, n. d.
- Genenius, William. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament including Biblical Chaldee. Trans. Edward Robinson. 2d. ed. Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849.
- Gill, John. An Exposition of the New Testament. Vol. I. London: William Hill Collingridge, 1853.
- Gould, E. P. "Commentary on the Epistle to the Corinthians." An American Commentary on the New Testament. Ed. Alvah Hovey. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1887.
- Grant, F. W. (ed.) The Numerical Bible. Vol. IV. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n. d.



- Harford, J. Battersby. "Deuteronomy." A New Commentary on Holy Scriptures. Eds. Charles Gore, Henry Leighton Goudge and Alfred Guillaume. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929.
- Henry, Matthew. A Commentary on the Holy Bible. Ed. M. Bickerton Williams. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, n. d.
- Hodge, Charles. An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1950.
- Howard, W. F. "First and Second Corinthians," The Abingdon Bible Commentary. Eds. Frederick Carl Eiselen, Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey. New York: Abingdon Press, 1929.
- Hoyt, Herman A. First Corinthians. Unpublished notes for class in English Bible at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1956.
- Ironside, H. A. Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1941.
- Jacobs, Henry, Spieker, George Frederick, and Swensson, Carl A. "Annotations on the Epistles of Paul to I Corinthians VIII-XVI, II Corinthians and Galatians," The Lutheran Commentary. Ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs.
- Jenks, William. (Ed.) The Comprehensive Commentary. Philadelphia: L. P. Lippincott and Co., 1849.
- King James Version, 1611.
- Kling, Christian Friedrich. "The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians," Trans. by Daniel W. Poor. A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Ed. John Peter Lange. Trans. and ed. Philip Schaff. Vol. VI of N. T. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.
- Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians. Columbus, O.: Wartburg Press, 1946.
- Makrakis, Apostolos. The Interpretation of the Entire New Testament. Trans. Albert George Alexander. Vol. II. Chicago: Orthodox Christian Education Society, 1950.
- Moffatt's Bible, 1935.
- Montgomery's Centenary Translation, 1924.



- Morgan, G. Campbell. The Corinthian Letters of Paul. London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1946.
- Nowell-Rostron, S. St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. London: The Religious Tract Society, 1931.
- The Revised Standard Version (New Testament), 1946.
- Robertson, Archibald T. "The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," The International Critical Commentary. Eds. Charles Augustus Briggs, Samuel Rolls Driver and Alfred Plummer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.
- Robertson, Archibald (Thomas). Word Pictures in the New Testament. Vol. IV. New York: Harper and Bros. Co., 1931.
- Scott, Thomas. The Holy Bible. Vol. I. Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, and Crocker and Brewster, 1830.
- Shore, T. Teignmouth. "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," A Bible Commentary for English Readers. Ed. Charles John Ellicott. Vol. VII. London: Cassell and Co., n. d.
- Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn. The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians. London: John Murray, 1876.
- Swete, Henry Barclay. (Ed.) The Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint. Vol. I. London: Deighton Bell and Co., 1887.
- Thayer, Joseph Henry. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. New York: American Book Co., 1889.
- Trollope, William. Analecta Theologica. Vol. II. London: T. Cadell and Strand, 1892.
- Vincent, Marvin R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. IV. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.
- Wade, G. W. Old Testament History. London: Methuen and Co., 1901.
- Weiss, Bernard. A Commentary on the New Testament. Trans. George H. Dodd and Epiphanius Wilson. Vol. III. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1906.
- Weymouth's New Testament, 1902.
- Wordsworth, Christopher. The New Testament with Notes. Vol. II. London: Rivingstons, 1870.



Young, Robert. An Analytical Concordance to the New Testament. Ed. Wm. B. Stevenson. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., n. d.