The Christian Courier



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"MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE"

In II Cor. 2:11, Paul speaks of Satan's devices. We know Satan has many devices that he uses against us as individuals and against the church. He also seems to know which device will work best at any given time. The device that gets results in the churches today seems to be divorce and remarriage. The true church is being destroyed by this. It not only destroys those who are living in this condition but also all those in the church who condone it or allow it to exist. There has been much written about the problem in the newsletters in the past several months.

Those who uphold the practice have accused those opposed to it of teaching that God will forgive all common sins except adultery. So, first of all, let's clear up this point. God will not forgive any sin until we repent of it. He doesn't force forgiveness on anyone. True repentance is more than just confessing our sins and saying we're sorry. Repentance is a change of attitude, direction and way of living. Paul wrote in Eph. 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more." Repentance means to stop sinning. This applies to any sin. If we stole, we stop stealing; if we've lied, we

stop lying; if we've used profane language, we stop cursing; if we've been living in adultery, we get out of the adulterous relationship.

We can't repent of our thievery and continue to steal, so why do we think we can repent of our adultery and continue in an adulterous marriage? It won't work. God will forgive adultery when we repent of it and stop doing it.

It was written recently that adultery is an act rather than a state of being. That's no more than playing games with words. We know adultery is the intimate act between a man and woman who are not scripturally married. If they are living together as man and wife, then society presumes they are having intimate relationships. And if one or both has a former spouse still living, then there is every reason to believe adultery is being committed. If not, then there's the appearance of evil anyway.

It has been said that the term "adulterous marriage" is a contradictory term. This, too, is playing with words. Jesus tells us in Mark 10:11-12 "And he saith unto them, whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." This, then, is the definition of an adulterous marriage.

The New Testament teaches that those who live in sin cannot be saved unless they repent. Paul wrote in I Cor. 6:9-10 that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He then names many sins that will keep us out of the kingdom of God and adultery is one of these.

Some will go to absurd lengths to justify the sinful lifestyles people get into. One writer even implied that a man who is living with multiple wives when he is baptized can continue to live with all of them.

We learn from II Pet. 3:16 that some of Paul's writings are hard to understand, but we must not take advantage of that fact to make them seem to say things not intended. The seventh chapter of I Corinthians is a good example of this. In verse 12 and 13, Paul forbids the believer putting away his or her unbelieving spouse. Verse 14 tells us the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believer. This statement is one that's hard to understand. We should interpret that as meaning the marriage itself is sanctified rather than the unbeliever. The last part of the verse shows

that to be the case. It tells us the children are legitimate. Verse 15 is used by some to justify a second marriage. "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God has called us to peace." It has been said this gives the believer license to remarry, but this is neither stated nor implied. The meaning is the believer is not held responsible for the breakup of the marriage.

One writer painted a very sad picture of a wife who, along with the kids, were beaten by a cruel husband. What is she supposed to do? Can't she divorce him and find a good man to marry? Notice I Cor. 7:10-11 "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." I'm well aware that in some cases it's impossible for a believing wife to dwell with an abusive husband. This passage gives her very clear instructions as to what her options are. But, we also notice Paul requires her to leave the door open for reconciliation in case the man decides to mend his ways. She is strictly forbidden to remarry.

This is reinforced in verse 39: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Now what law is he speaking of here? Some would say the law of Moses, but that's wrong. Paul wasn't writing of the law of Moses at all in this chapter. He is giving the rules for marriage, etc. for Christians. She is bound by the law of Christ concerning staying married to her first husband. When he dies, she is at liberty to marry again.

Another problem some have, although I don't think this has been brought up yet in the current discussions, is the belief that if a husband and wife mutually agree that they don't live being married, then can each go their separate ways, remain celibate and still be right with God. This, too, is error. Jesus said in Mark 10:9 "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." This agrees with Paul's writings in I Cor. 7:10-13.

One article I read used I Cor. 7:27-28 to justify a man's second marriage. Paul wrote: "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if thou marry thou hast not sinned." The writer stated that the phrase "art thou loosed from a wife" was speaking of divorce. Paul had already in verse 11 and also verse 12 command that the brother not put away his wife. So he was writing to one whose wife had died.

Again, we read one of the writers stating that on the day of Pentecost nothing was said about those who were baptized having to make restitution or divestiture. What does the word repent mean in Acts 2:38? Doesn't that mean that many of those people would have to give up many things? With 3000 souls responding to the Gospel, we could hardly expect Peter to spell out every change that would have to be made.

Brethren, I plead with you to reconsider your position on this matter. Not only for your sakes, but for that of all future generations of Christians. When you teach our young people that they can divorce their mates and marry again, you remove all incentive for them to use extreme care in selecting a spouse. Marriage is a very serious matter and our children must be taught that once a commitment is made, it is to last until death. If we can impress them with that fact, then, hopefully, they will exercise enough care so they'll never find themselves with an abusive or unfaithful spouse.

Written in love of the brotherhood and with a deep concern for the future of the true church,

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"AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY."

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

We send our love with hope and prayers from the Father and His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

The Sacramento congregation of the Church of Christ invites all who love the Lord and new His love and guidance to join any and every Sunday morning at 9:30 for Bible study and 10:30 for worship services. We meet in the Taylor Street School's multi-purpose room and we love visitors.

Our invitation is all encompassing - like our Saviour said "draw all men into me". We will turn no one away from the door, however, we will use the scriptures to discern if a visitor will be allow to "bring the sermon" to the assembly or lead a portion of the services.

We pray that the body of Christ will cease being divided through the subversion of the scriptures. Our hope is that the perfect word of God be spread without the interference of imperfect man.

With love and in Christ Jesus,
Lloyd S. Usrey

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BELLFLOWER, CALIFORNIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our meeting is history now. Brother Eric Smith gave us an excellent series of lessons. He presented us many topics and stirred up our minds to seriously consider and think about. We enjoyed the fellowship with he and his family and appreciate the effort they put forth. Thanks again Brother Eric.

We also want to thank all the visitors that came from far and near to support our meeting. We had visitors from Keizer, OR; Rogue River, OR; Chico, CA; Pheonix, AZ; and La Habra, CA. Your support really adds to the meeting and encourages all of us to strive a little harder for the Lord. We really enjoyed the fine christian fellowship, good singing, good food and many Bible discussions. Several nights it was into the early hours of the morning before we finally set our Bibles aside. To me, this is what meetings are all about; good thought provoking, spiritually stimulating, and increasing ones' faith, zeal and love for the Lord and brethren.

To top off the meeting, one was added to the Church. Sister Kim Guarnotta, A.J. Way's fiance, was baptized into the Lord's church. She is a zealous young christian and we encourage all to pray for the continued love of the Lord. We all need each other's prayers to help us through this present life.

The other big news is that Mark and Tammy Perigen are the proud parents of a little baby girl. Kayla Nicole Perigen was born on August 4, 1993 and weighed 8 lbs. 0 oz. We are certainly happy that mother and baby are fine. She is certainly a wonderful addition to their family and to our Christian family.

Recently, we have had other visitors come through. Brian Ross' mother, Beverly Ross; sister, Angie; and two cousins were out visiting with Brian for a few days. We enjoyed visiting with and seeing them again. Also, Wayne and Amy Orendorff and family spent a few days in Southern California. Brother Wayne, I'm told, gave a very good lesson. We were in Northern California that week, so I'm sorry we missed seeing them.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to one and all. We pray that all will grow closer to the Lord and that the word of God will become stronger and stronger within us.

In Christian love for the
Bellflower congregation,
Gerald Brockman

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KEIZER, OREGON

Dear Brethren:

It has been some time since we have reported in. All are doing well healthwise, except for Bro. J.L.'s occassional breathing trouble, but he seems to have it under control. It has been much better lately and we are all thankful for his measure of health and for all of ours.

Some of us here attended Bellflower's week long gospel meeting they had in July. It was a wonderful meeting with Bro. Eric Smith as a guest speaker. He did a fine job with a unique style all his own which really gets the mind stimulating and really brings the gospel to a personal level. We would like to thank all the brothers and sisters in Bellflower for all their hospitality. They opened their doors and hearts to all who would come. Thanks one and all for a fine meeting and a wonderful time; and thank you sisters for all the good food that you prepared and made sure there was plenty.

We had a visitor this month - Sister Doris Jared from the La Habra congregation. We enjoyed her short visit and welcome her back.

That's about all the news for us. We pray that all the churches stay strong and faithful in the Lord Jesus as we are few in numbers in these wanning years of the 20th century. May the peace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

From the Keizer, OR congregation,
Chuck Garner

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THIS MOMENT

I may never see tomorrow; there's no written guarantee, And things that happened yesterday belong to history. I cannot predict the future, and I cannot change the past. I have just the present moment; I must treat it as my last.

I must use this moment wisely for it soon will pass away, And be lost to me forever as a part of yesterday. I must exercise compassion, help the fallen to their feet, Be a friend unto the friendless, make an empty life complete.

I must make this moment precious for it will not come again, And I can never be content with things that might have been. Kind words I fail to say this day may ever be unsaid, For I know not how short may be the path that lies ahead.

The unkind things I do today may never be undone, And friendships that I fail to win may nevermore be won. I may not have another chance on bended knee to pray, And thank my God with humble heart for giving me this day.

I may never see tomorrow, but this moment is my own. It's mine to use or cast aside; the choice is mine alone. I have just this precious moment in the sunlight of today, Where the dawning of tomorrow meets the dusk of yesterday.

Author Paul F. Barnett

Submitted by Sister Anna Bell Barnes

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GOD'S LOVE

True Love is like a beautiful flower that never fades or never grows old.

Love takes us through our sorrows.

Love is so sweet when we fall at our Jesus feet.

Love is soft as a breeze and gentle as a dove.

True love never changes, it's always in our ranges.

True love is like star light on a cool river.

True love is deep without end.

True love is like a spray of ocean breeze.

True love is never ending.

True love is happiness in store with Jesus forevermore.

True love is our Lord's mercies and graces for the human races.

Written by June Auslam in love
for my Lord and brothers and
sisters in Christ