IS IT SO?

That one can put away (Divorce) their companion, for unfaithfulness (fornication) and marry another, and at the same time meet the approval of God?

The advocates of the divorce theory make no apology for saying they can. Baseing their theory on Matt. 19:9. But friends Matt. 19:9 like all other scriptures needs some verification, 2 Pet. 1:20 tells us that NO prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. Then what does that mean? It can mean ONLY one thing, that is: ALL scripture MUST and DO have other scriptures found elsewhere, helping to coordinate and harmonize. Paul proves that, in 2 Cor. 13:1 "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established. Thus we can arrive at a better understanding of all the scriptures.

When we force ourselves to take a position that is not harmonious with other scriptures, we may be bordering on contradictions, and thereby do violence to the word of God.

We have before us at this time a book on clear correct English, by Roy Ivan Johnson, who was at one time Head Assistant of Teachers college, St. Louis, Mo. Mr. Johnson mentions the fact that a sentence may become ambiguous (doubtful). We do not believe that Matt. 19:9 to be ambiguous, unless we construe it to meet the popular idea, that one can put away (divorce) their companion for fornication, and marry another.

It is quite obvious however, tthat when either member of a marriage union found guilty of fornication the marriage vow has suffered a blow, and is therefore in jeopardy. Furthermore, unless the offending party makes confession, and ask forgiveness, for the terrible sin committed Jas. 5:16 a separation may be inevitable.

But now; let us consider the matter, with all due respect to all who may desire to come to a better understanding of the Bible. Let us remember too, that those Jews coming to the Christ with such hard questions did so desireing to tempt (set a trap) for him. They no doubt thought the question having to do with the law of Moses (Christ being a staunch believer, and advocate of the law), they would catch him off His guard, and confuse Him, but did they do it? Why no. He as on all occasions was master of the situation. Therefore; when they asked the question Matt. 19:3 Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? (notice) they did not mention remarriage. In verse 4 He said have ye not read that He which made them in the beginning, made them male and female, and said for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh, wherefore, they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Mosesthen command to give a writting of divorcement, and to put her away? He sayeth unto them Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put her away. BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO.

We believe in dealing with any controverted subject as Matt. Matt. 19:9 we should have a command, a precept, an example, or at least a necessary inference; and too, there is such a thing as christian liberty, to be used ONLY when it's use does not offend a weak brother.

Now to the thought under consideration, namely divorce. In Matt. 19:9 "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one: What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder. "Since divorce requires a court proceeding, by man, which means said court is composed of men, and these men being skilled and dedicated to the winning of any law suit they have obligated themselves to win for their clients.

Since the law is not for the righteous, but for the lawless, and the disobedient I Tim. 1:9, We as christians MUST not resort to the use of the law, (of the land) Which in case of divorce we not only resort to the law but we must pay a lawyer (man) to put asunder the marriage tie, the very thing God forbids. Again in I Cor. 6:1, "Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints, do ye not know the saints shall judge the world, and if the world be judged by you, are you ~~not~~ unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

Then dear friends and brethern, divorce is not for christians. Isn't it a fact the clause "except for fornication," stipulates the condition under which one may or MUST put away their companion? Cease to live with them as man and wife, the separation to remain in effect until such time the offending party sees fit to make confession, and ask forgiveness. At which time the offending party having been forgiven of their wayward sin, is no longer a fornicator; furthermore, in case of fornication, if the church is involved every effort MUST be made to properly and scripturally process the offending member, not only to save the marriage, but to save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins, Jas. 5:20.

But what if the man does run away with another woman? Which sometimes is the case, Does that justify the innocent wife to get a divorce, and remarry? NO, but says one that is her priviledge, or liberty, Is that so? Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 3:17, "Where the Spirit is there is liberty," Then Jno. 6:63 Christ haid, "My words are Spirit, and they are life."

Hear Paul in 1 Cor. 8:9, "but take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. But says one Matt. 19:9 gives us the priviledge to put away our companion in case of fornication, and marry another. It does NOT, it makes it obligatory on the part of the innocent party, to put them away in case of fornication, but then if they marry again, they have committed adultery, Mk. 10:11, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commith adultery and if a women shall put away her husband, and be married again she committeth adultery.

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Not one word said about the cause for separation, If we are wrong in this matter, we are found to be the weak brother, but we believe we are right, because we have the truth, and Christ said, "ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. Jno. 8:32.

Again divorce means division, when God's people are required to all speak the same thing, to be of the same mind, that there be NO divisions among you. 1st. Cor. 1:10, Then in Juo. the 17th chapter we quote a very prominent authority on unity. He is none other than the Son of God, He was praying for His immediate followers, but he said verse 20, "neither pray I for these alone, but them also that shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.

Divorce strikes the death blow to the marriage tie. The very thing that God ordained, therefore; for us to become a party to a theory that seems to justify divorce and remarriage, we may be lending our support to a movement that will surely hinder the word of God. O' but says one Christ says in Mt. 19:8 that Moses suffered you to put away your wives, and give her a bill of divorcement. Yes that is true, but did you ever stop to think what the word suffer means? To feel with a sense of pain, to bear; to undergo; to endure; to sustain; to allow; to permit, and so on. All of which Israel as a stiff necked, and rebellious people were ready at all times to put the pressure on Moses, that they might have their own way. To be sure Moses succumbed to their pressure, and gave them a law of divorcement, allowing it to become a part of their law. He suffered it; he sustained it; that being true Christ recognized it as being a part of their law. But dod God, Moses or Christ approve of it? No, they condoned it; they suffered it; Hence the words of Christ, "from the beginning it was not so."

At this time let us call in another witness, Mk. 10:11-12 quotes Christ as saying whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery, And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another man she committeth adultrey. (Notice) this witness does not say one word about fornication, therefore; it is conclusive for one to put away their companion and be married to another regardless of cause including fornication, they have committed adultery. Yes friends the marriage tie MUST HOLD UNTIL DEATH WE DO PART. To this the apostle Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 7:39 "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.

Again divorce destroys all possibility of a reconciliation Paul in I Cor. 7:10 UNTO THE MARRIED I COMMAND, YET NOT I BUT THE LORD, LET NOT THE WIFE DEPART FROM HER HUSBAND, BUT AND IF SHE DOES DEPART LET HER REMAIN UNMARRIED, OR BE RECONCILED TO HER HUSBAND.

One more witness, and we will bring this article to a close but, before we do close, why not use a little common sense and down to earth reasoning.

The witness referred to here is Luke 16:18. He quotes Christ as saying "whosoever putteth away his wife, and marries another committeth adultery, and whosoever that amrrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

Now we have three witnesses, testifying, to what the Lord said, Mark, Luke, and Paul. None of whom were heard to say that the Lord in Matt. 19:9 justified remarriage after one was put away, for the cause of fornication. Does that mean the Lord was confused, by the hard questions put to him by Pharisees? No, Christ was not confused. He was simply telling those Pharisees there was only one cause for putting away a companion, and that was fornication. And then if we go (either innocently or knowingly) and marry again we have committed adultery.

We know and am persuaded that if either of the contracting parties steps out, and committs fornication against their companion they MUST be put away lest the offened party becomes a party to the great sin of fornication. And if the offending party is a member of the church, he or she MUST be dealt with according to the scriptures. As a matter of fact any member of the church found to be a fornicator has certainly brought shame and reproach upon the church of Christ. Then for us to ignor a fornicator or adulter in the church would be to shun our responsibility. Thus a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. I Cor. 5:6.

In closing we notice that neither of the three witnesses Mark, Luke, and Paul said nothing that would indicate that the Lord was trying to justify one putting away their companion, and marrying again. As found in Matt. 19:9, To be sure there MUST be a putting away, but and if they remarry they have surely committed adultery.

Aside from all the argument for remarriage, after the putting away on scriptural grounds, don't you think there should be at least one example in the New Testament where a church member divorced their companion, and married again? Over a period of sixty years of apostolic teaching and guidance, we do not have one instance where a church member put away their companion, and married again.

If we as a remnant of God's chosen people would sustain the thought set fourth in this article, we would glorify God, and identify ourselves as being a peculiar people, separate and apart from other peoples.

Written in love of the truth.

Your humble servant,

J. C. SPURLIN

Supplement To The Former Article

It is with careful consideration that we write this supplement. But, as we sit in our study and read the works of educated men, we are able to find ourselves, and better substantiate our own thoughts. It is not easy for a man of limited education as myself, to find words to express my thoughts, and to put them on paper, in a way and manner that the average reader may be able to fully comprehend the substance set forth in an instrument of writings. Due to that fact, we thought it good to get out a supplement to the former article. To be frank and precise. We believe the popular idea on divorce and remarriage is a factor lending support to our already deteriorating society.

If the young folks of today were taught to respect God's laws and teachings relative to the marriage vows, our chances would be much better for building a stable society. I am not ashamed to tell you dear reader, that the principles of Christianity including good morals, are to be found in the home, at mother's knees. Please read Second Timothy 1:5.

I once heard a school teacher say, "her greatest problems in the school room were of children from broken homes." Then can you imagine a gospel preacher advocating divorce and remarriage? However, the preacher being a natural man, and being susceptible to the pangs of the flesh, and too, since the love of money is the root of all evil, I Tim. 6:10, it could be a more profitable way of influencing people, while others have loved ones who have gone astray, are every ready to try to offer comfort, and condolence to those who are near and dear to them. Furthermore, it is natural for one entertaining the thought of divorce and remarriage to confide in a preacher, especially one of noticeable reputation. And while the preacher may be doing what he thinks is right, offering as proof Matt. 19:9. But, friends we must be very careful, lest we misapply God's word. We as preachers are under a strict command to rightly divide the word of truth. As in the case of Mat. 19-9, I for one have pondered over that scripture for a long time, never, could I bring myself to think that Christ would advocate something and fail or forget to reveal it to his ambassador, the apostle Paul. Nowhere in Paul's writings do we find him advocating divorce and remarriage. But we do find him saying in I Cor. 7:10 "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." (NO EXCEPTION PLEASE). Recently I learned through the writings of a well educated Bible student, there are such, things to be found in the Bible as elliptical passages, (meaning that a word has been omitted). To prove there is an ellipsis in Matt. 19:9 is only to show that in order to have harmony with Christ and Paul

We must supply the word then. Which would make it read, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and then, shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. Now. by supplying the ellipsis THEN we have harmony. Which is proof that God's word does harmonize. And by so doing we can all agree, and all speak the same thing, as Christ prayed in the 17th chapter of John, and as Paul recommended in the 1 Cor. 1:10.

0' but wouldn't it be wonderful if all of God's people would all speak the same thing, and eliminate those things that cause division and hatred among his people. But so long as some clamor for error, we cannot sacrifice truth, nor can we embrace error, just to have a half heated agreement. By all means we must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered the saints. Jude 3.

The church of Christ today is imperiled by divisions, pet theories, and indifference towards our christian duties. Satan since the beginning of time has rejoiced to see the people of God divided, and subdivided. And so long as folks will entertain error under the name christianity, Satan will be the more encouraged, to offer new points of division. God forbid, that I should offer anything of a divisive nature, and thereby sow seeds of discord, O' yes the ones advocating the divorce and remarriage theory charge us with sowing seeds of discord: But, that happened in the division over instrumental music, it happened in the division over the Sunday school. It happened in the division over Cups, it happened in the division over setting the Lord's table twice on Lord's Day. And now it is happening over the divorce and remarriage question.

We have before us a copy of a debate, between two church of Christ brethern, on the divorce and remarriage question. In which the brother defending the remarriage question, accuses us of dividing the church. I would like to ask the question, Who divided the church over the above innovations, was it the ones that put the offending thing in the worship, or the ones that opposed it? Anyone with common sense knows that had it not been for the above innovations, the people of God today, would stand together, as solid as a rock.

Dear reader, you might be interested to learn, but reluctant to acknowledge, that when a congregation embraces a matter of digression it breaks down the resistance to other evils of error. You might be interested to learn that so long as we cater to strange doctrines, as did some of the churches of Asia, Revelations 2:1 through 7. Just that sure our existence as a church is in jeopardy.

Then let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments, for that is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12:13.

—J. C. SPURLIN