

which he vaunts to have erected, will prove to have been built in the air, without the foundations of truth and uprightness, and we have no doubt that the solid, strong argument in favor of the genuineness of the evangelical writings will grow stronger and assume more symmetrical proportions by every result of sound criticism, while the phantasm of Strauss will speedily dissolve into mist.

*(To be continued.)*

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## ARTICLE II.

### THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF DIVORCE.

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As preliminary to any investigation of this subject, it is necessary to remark that divorce, or "putting away," mentioned anywhere in the Bible, was not a judicial act performed by a court. The husband desiring divorce from his wife did not bring her into court, and charge her with some offence for which she ought to be divorced. No court inquired whether she had committed any offence, or if so, whether her offence was such as to justify a divorce. No court ever heard and recorded the husband's decision to divorce his wife. There was no statute authorizing any such proceedings. The husband himself, at his own discretion, or indiscretion, acted as complainant, witness, judge, jury, and clerk of the court. He made out the writing of divorcement, gave it to her in her hand, and sent her away, and that was all. From this she had no appeal, except to the day of judgment. It might be a very wicked proceeding on his part, but it was legally valid. It released her from the bonds of marriage, so that she might lawfully "go and be another man's wife" (Deut. xxiv. 1, 2). This implies that another man might lawfully take her to be his wife.

This law of Moses has the appearance of a restraint upon previous usage. There is no earlier statute on the subject on record; but, apparently, it was the usage for a man to "put away" his wife at his own pleasure, and without ceremony, if he durst risk a quarrel with her relatives. This law compelled him to wait till he could write a bill of divorce-ment, or rather, in most cases, as few could write, till he could get some learned man to write one for him. This gave time for consideration, and gave the writer an opportunity to interpose his good offices for the reconciliation of the parties. It also made the fact of divorce a matter of record, and placed the record in the hand of the person most interested in its preservation.

Still, under this law, with all its restrictive force, the husband had it in his power to do much that was wrong, and to do it without redress. But, considering the hardness of Hebrew hearts, it was deemed best to leave him in possession of that power, responsible only to God for his use of it. Probably, among such a people, a more stringent law would not have been so well enforced, and would have been less effective in restraining the evil, or perhaps would have led to other and greater evils.

With us divorce, in this sense of the word, is impossible. The husband cannot dissolve the bond of marriage by his own act. It can be dissolved only by a decree of a court of competent jurisdiction, for facts specified by statute, and after proof of those facts before the court. Such is our idea of divorce; but such were not the divorces spoken of in the scriptures.

It follows, that when Christ and his apostles spoke of divorce, they had no direct reference to legislative acts, specifying what should or should not be sufficient ground of divorce; or to decrees of divorce, granted by a court after trial; or to petitions for divorce, presented to a court for trial and judgment. These things were not in all their thoughts. They had never been in the thoughts of men anywhere. It is a gross anachronism to understand them as

speaking of divorce, or of proceedings for divorce, in our sense of these terms. Divorce, in the sense in which they used the word, we have utterly abolished. We do not allow a man to put away his wife, even for the one cause which Christ specified as sufficient. If he finds that she has been guilty, he must bring her before the proper court, with the proof of her guilt, and the sufficiency of the proof must be ascertained and the decree of separation pronounced by a disinterested tribunal, and not by the injured husband.

Still, our Saviour's instructions on this subject have application to us, as imperative as they had to those who first heard them. He laid down certain moral principles, which are as old as marriage itself, and which must be in force so long as men and women inhabit the earth; principles which no man can violate without doing wrong, whatever the law of the land may put in his power; principles, too, which legislatures cannot disregard without a violation of duty. Let us inquire what they are, and what is their just application to us.

Our Saviour's instructions appear to have been given at different times, and nearly, but not exactly, in the same words; and the several evangelists report the same conversation with some diversities of phraseology, showing that they intended to give us, not his exact words and all of them, but the sense and substance of his instructions. In such cases, the most full, clear, and precise report of the conversation must govern the interpretation of those which are briefer and less precise; and the same rule applies where one report gives a part of the conversation more fully than a longer report gives that part. Keeping this in view, let us begin with Mark x. 2-12: "2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept; 6 but from the beginning of

creation, God made them male and female. <sup>7</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and they twain shall be one flesh. So, then, they are no more twain, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. <sup>10</sup> And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. <sup>11</sup> And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Here we are plainly taught that the law of divorce, given by Moses under the guidance of inspiration, was not a perfect standard of righteousness. A man might act in perfect conformity to it, and his acts would be legal, valid in law, but yet they might be sinful, not being in conformity with God's design in creating man and woman. He created them, that they might be joined together as "one flesh" for life; and being thus joined, they could not be put asunder without sin, even if the putting asunder was done according to law. On account of the hardness of their hearts the inspired legislator left it in the power of Hebrew husbands to commit that sin; but it was a power that none but a hard-hearted man would use; which no man could use without offending God.

And here is an important lesson for legislators, everywhere and always. It may be their duty, in view of the hardness of the hearts of the people for whom they legislate, to make laws allowing divorces which no man ought to desire, and which no man can obtain without sin. And the same principle applies to legislation concerning other sins. How far the legislature shall absolutely forbid them, and how far it shall only restrain and limit, what it cannot wholly prevent, is a question to be determined by the sound and honest discretion of the legislator.

It follows that, before any tribunal where duty to God is the standard of judgment, conformity to the law of the land is not always a sufficient defence. A man may obtain a divorce which will be valid, and ought to be recognized as

valid by all ; but in obtaining it he may commit a sin for which God will condemn him at the day of judgment, and for which the church, if he is a member of one, ought to excommunicate him.

We must carefully observe that our Saviour does not say the inspired legislator ought to have made a more stringent law ; nor does he repeal that law ; nor does he enact any new law. There is not a word in his instructions to any such effect. He merely tells us why the law of the land was not made more stringent, and informs us what the law of perfect rectitude on this subject always was, and always will be. He condemns those who before his time had availed themselves of the law of Moses to put away their wives sinfully as really as he does those who should commit a similar offence after his time.

Exactly how the hardness of the Hebrew heart rendered it inexpedient to prohibit divorces altogether, our Saviour does not inform us. We can, however, imagine several evils which might have followed an absolute prohibition. A man dissatisfied with his wife might have taken another, — not without sin, but yet legally, — and thus polygamy might have been increased. He might treat her with what our laws call “intolerable severity,” and thus compel her to abscond from his house. Or he might turn her out of doors without ceremony, to make room for another wife, or choosing to live without one. Such expelled wives would still be wives according to law, and other men could not take them, and be safe from the claims of their husbands who had driven them out. Thus debarred from second marriage, they would be peculiarly exposed to all the hardships and temptations attendant on enforced celibacy, and would therefore constitute a class dangerous to public morals. Some hard-hearted wretches might even murder their wives, rather than keep them for life. These and perhaps other evils were diminished, by giving legal effect to divorces executed deliberately, with due formalities, and securing to the divorced wife the right to marry again. The statute expressly provides that “she may go and be another man’s wife.”

The eleventh verse of the passage under consideration, as also the parallel passage in Luke xvi. 18, must be understood in conformity with the report of the same conversation in Matt. xix. 9, where a man is expressly allowed to put away his wife for conjugal infidelity (see also Matt. v. 32). We must either supplement the reports of Mark and Luke, by bringing in certain words reported by Matthew, but not by them; or we must assume that in Mark and Luke conjugal infidelity by the wife is considered as equivalent to putting away her husband, and leaving him at liberty to marry another. The twelfth verse in Mark seems to favor this last interpretation; but the language in Matthew seems to imply that in such a case the husband should "put away his wife," of course, in the legal form. But whatever mode of reconciliation we may adopt, our Lord certainly taught that, when a wife violates her conjugal duty and makes herself "one flesh" with another man (see 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16), her case is an exception to the general rule: her husband may rightfully be free from her, and take another wife. Even in such a case the rule holds good, that there can be no divorce without sin; but the sin is that of the wife, and not of the husband.

In the twelfth verse our Saviour applies the same law to the wife as to the husband. He forbids her to "put away her husband and be married to another." This certainly implies that a wife might possibly do such a thing. And we know, from other proofs, that Hebrew wives in our Saviour's time sometimes did it. True, commentators generally say that the law of Moses gave them no such power. Bloomfield, for example (*in loco*), says that, "strictly speaking, a Jewish wife could not divorce her husband; for, as to the example of Salome and others, *their* actions were done in defiance of all law, and in imitation of Roman licentiousness." Even this is an admission that the acts *were done*; that Salome and others *did* "divorce their husbands." Jahn, *Biblical Antiquities*, sect. 160 (Upham's translation), admits that "in the later periods of the Jewish state the Jewish

matrons, the more powerful of them at least, appear to have imbibed the spirit of the ladies of Rome, and to have exercised in their own behalf the same power that was granted by the Mosaic law to their husbands." He quotes Josephus, Antiquities, XV. 7, 10, and Mark vi. 17-29,—the case of Herodias, who had divorced her husband Philip, and married his brother Herod; for which John the Baptist reprov'd him. He quotes also this verse under consideration (Mark x. 12) as proof that such things were done.

And these "Jewish matrons" might have argued very plausibly, that, even under the Mosaic law, they had as good a right to divorce their husbands as their husbands had to divorce them. It is as equitable, they might say, that we should have that power as that our husbands should have it; and it is not unusual for Moses to state a law in its application to one particular case, which is to be taken as an example in all cases where the equity is the same. Especially, he makes laws for *men*, which are evidently meant to be applied to *women* also. In this same chapter which contains the law of divorce (Deut. xxiv.) he enacts (vs. 7), that if "a man" be found stealing and selling any of his "brethren," he shall be put to death. This law certainly applies equally to a woman, stealing and selling her sisters. In the law concerning pledges (vs. 10-13), only men are mentioned, but certainly women also are intended. Deut. xix. provides cities of refuge for a "man" who killeth his neighbor accidentally. Certainly, a woman, subject to the same misfortune, had the same privilege; and so in many other cases. Why, then, should not the law which enables a man to put away a disagreeable wife, be understood as enabling a woman to deliver herself from the clutches of an intolerable husband? True, we have no recorded argument of "Jewish matrons" to this effect; but some of them certainly acted as if they had reasoned thus.

We may consider it as certain, then, that the power of wives to divorce their husbands was sometimes claimed and exercised, and that our Saviour referred to it in this con-

versation. This point will be found important in our remaining investigations.

It is evident that when our Saviour says that "whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, he committeth adultery against her," he has reference to the original and unchangeable law of marriage, and not to the law of the land as given by Moses. The divorce, if executed in due form, is legally valid; and he is not punishable by any human tribunal; but in the sight of God he has sinned, and must answer for it at the day of judgment. Nor does he say that the law of the land ought to be such as to punish him for that sin. He does not blame Moses for promulgating so lax a law, nor does he say that future legislators ought to be more stringent.

The report of this conversation in Matt. xix. 8-9 varies from that in Mark, now under consideration, somewhat in words; but the entire harmony of meaning is perfectly obvious, till we come to the ninth verse, where we find two points demanding attention.

The first is the exception to the general rule, that divorces are sinful. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." As has been already observed, the exception is not mentioned in Mark; still, we must recognize it as a part of what our Lord said, and must supplement or interpret the report in Mark accordingly. We must understand that for this cause a man might put away his wife and marry another without committing adultery.

The other is the last clause of the verse: "Whoso marieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery." The parallel clause in Mark reads: "And if a woman shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Do these clauses refer to the same case and mean the same thing?

The Greek word translated "her that is put away" is *ἀπολελυμένη*. It is the perfect participle, middle or passive, of *ἀπολύω*, which signifies, when spoken of a wife or a hus-



band, "to let go free; i.e. to put away, to divorce" (see Robinson, *Lex. in verbo*, c.). In the middle voice it signifies *one who has set herself free from her husband*, or, as the idea is expressed in Mark, using the active voice, one who has put away her husband. Taken in this sense, the two passages agree exactly in their meaning; the only difference being that one expresses the idea in the active voice and the other in the middle. In the passive voice, the word means *one who has been put away by her husband*. In this sense the meaning is diverse from that in Mark, and difficult to reconcile with other passages of scripture. The language in Matthew is equivocal. It may have either of the two meanings above mentioned. That in Mark is precise, explicit, capable of only one of those meanings. Should it not control our interpretation of the language in Matthew?

That *ἀπολελυμένην* may be taken in the middle voice is certain. It is true that the Greek grammars fifty years ago and more, gave another form for the perfect middle; but that form is now regarded, in all grammars not obsolete, as a second perfect active. Only a few verbs — less than two hundred — have it all; and when found, it is always used in the active sense. On the other hand, the form which the old grammarians treat as the perfect passive exclusively, is often used by the best writers in the middle sense. Matthiæ quotes Sophocles, Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, Thucydides, Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Euripides as so using it. He quotes Demosthenes as using that form of *λύω*, and Thucydides as using the participle *καταλελυμένος* in the middle sense. Here are certainly authorities enough, and good enough, to settle the question; and two of them come very close to the word under consideration (see also Stuart's *New Testament Grammar*, pp. 74, 83, 92, *et al.*; and as to "the second perfect, formerly called perfect middle," p. 90). Our English translators seem to have felt bound, by the unanimous consent of all the Greek grammars of their day, to consider *ἀπολελυμένην* as passive, and translated accordingly; but certainly we have abundant grammatical authority for regard-

ing it as the perfect participle in the middle voice. There are grammatical reasons for preferring it.

If the woman in question were the same just mentioned, the wife whom her husband had put away, we should naturally expect the article to be used; that she would be called τὴν ἀπολελυμένην. The omission of the article suggests that the person spoken of is a different woman, not before mentioned; as she is, if she is one who has put away her husband. And the article is omitted wherever the expression occurs. In Matt. v. 32 and Luke xvi. 18 it is ἀπολελυμένην, without the article.

In Luke xvi. 18 she is called ἀπολελυμένην ἀπὸ ἀνδρός. Ἄπὸ signifies *from*, rather than *by*; especially "after verbs of losing, i.e. λῆειν and ἀπολλῆειν." It is, however, sometimes "put after neuter and passive verbs, to mark the author and source of the action; but not where the author is to be conceived of as *personally and immediately* active; this latter idea being expressed by ὑπὸ and παρά" (Robinson's *Lex. in verbo*). According to this definition, ἀπολελυμένην ἀπὸ ἀνδρός designates a woman divorced *from* her husband, by a divorce in which he was not "personally and immediately active"; i.e. a divorce of the husband by the wife, such as is mentioned and forbidden in Mark. This proves that ἀπολελυμένην in Luke must be taken in the middle voice, designating a woman who has set herself free from her husband. And if in Luke, then doubtless in Matthew; and the three evangelists agree perfectly in respect to our Lord's meaning.

Some may think that this is giving too much force to the preposition ἀπό; that ἀπό is here used merely to denote a state of separation *from* a husband, without any reference to the agent by whom the separation had been effected. But even if we admit this objection, ἀπολελυμένην cannot be taken in the passive sense. The passive *has* reference to an agent, and in this case would point out the husband as the agent by whose direct, personal act, the divorce had been effected. If that were the meaning, the use of ἀπό would be inadmissible, and ὑπὸ or παρά must have been used. The

passive sense, then, is plainly not intended. It follows that the word at least *may* be taken in the middle sense, as denoting a divorce by the wife.

And we claim the very highest possible authority for this interpretation, that of the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. vii. 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." The expression "not I, but the Lord," doubtless refers to what the Lord said in these instructions, reported by the three evangelists. If none of these Gospels had then been written, then Paul gives a fourth report of what our Lord said. He first forbids the wife to "depart from her husband." The departing which he forbids, is one which renders her "unmarried" (*ἀγαμος*, husbandless.) It is, therefore, a divorce. If she has already placed herself in this situation, he requires her to "remain" so, "or be reconciled to her husband." He forbids her to marry another man, as she might feel at liberty to do, but for this prohibition. It is remarkable that the Greek words here rendered "depart," are *χωρισθῆναι* and *χωρισθῆ*, in the passive form, but in the middle sense, though there is a middle form for the aorists. That they have the middle sense is certain, because they describe the act of the wife, taking herself away from her husband.

At the end of this tenth verse we read: "And let not the husband put away (*ἀφίεναι*) his wife." The word for divorce is changed, because the husband, being the possessor of the house, would naturally effect a local separation from his wife, by sending her out of it (*ἀφίεναι*); whereas the wife, not having control of the house, could locally separate only by departing (*χωρισθῆναι*). The difference, however, is only circumstantial.

In the next verses (12, 13) the apostle applies the same term to divorces by the husband and by the wife. Our version reads: "If a brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her

away (*μὴ ἀφίετω αὐτήν*). And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him (*μὴ ἀφίετω αὐτόν*).” Our translators vary the phrase, saying, “leave him” in the thirteenth verse, instead of “put him away,” as in the twelfth. But the Greek word is the same in both verses, and means to *send away*. It is the same as that used in the eleventh verse of the husband divorcing his wife. Its application to the wife fixes the meaning of “depart” (*χωρισθῆναι*) in the preceding verses.

In the fourteenth verse he gives the reason why difference of religion should not be a ground of divorce; and then adds: “But if the unbelieving depart (*χωρίζεται*), let him depart (*χωρίζεσθω*). A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.”

Evidently, the same Greek verb, *χωρίζω* (to “depart”), first applied to the act of the wife in the tenth verse, is here applied to the act of the husband and the wife indifferently, and means, or implies, divorce. We have before seen that *ἀφιέναι* (to put away) is applied to both. Either party has the power, though not, in the cases here under consideration, the moral right, to divorce the other; and when this is done, though sinfully done, the unoffending party is at liberty. “A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases,” but may take cognizance of the act as legally valid; as releasing him or her from all conjugal obligations to the offender; and may therefore marry another person with a clear conscience.

And this harmonizes perfectly with the original law concerning divorced persons, as laid down by Moses (Deut. xxiv. 2): “And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.” It would be absurd to understand these words as meaning, “She may go and commit adultery.” It means that she may become another man’s wife without crime. It is equally absurd to suppose, that though she would be without crime in her second marriage, yet her second husband would commit adultery by

taking her. We are aware that the law of Moses, in several instances, assumes that, among such a hard-hearted people, certain morally wrong things will certainly be done, prescribes the limits within which the doing of them shall be restrained, and the mode and forms of doing them, if they are done at all, and defines the rights and duties of third parties, resulting from such acts. This very law, regulating divorce at the pleasure of the husband, is an instance. It is so in respect to polygamy, concubinage, and slavery. But in no such case does the language used give such express permission to go and do the act, as is here given to the divorced woman to "go and be another man's wife." The meaning is, that she may do it rightfully, and "another man" may rightfully take her for his wife. In the words of Paul, "A sister is not under bondage in such cases." She has been made *ἄγαμος* (husbandless), not by her own act, but by the act of another, which she could not prevent, and is free, legally and morally, to marry again. And if so, *ἀπολελυμένην*, in Matthew and Luke, must not be taken in the passive voice, as meaning one who has been divorced by her husband, but in the middle voice, meaning one who has "departed from," "put away," divorced her husband. In such cases she is the offending party, and can gain no rightful privileges by her own wrong act.

But could the offending party, who divorced the other wrongfully, marry again? On this point Moses is silent. So far as appears, he could contract a second marriage, which would be legally valid, and give to his second wife all the rights of a wife. But our Saviour teaches that in so doing he would be morally guilty; would "commit adultery against" his former wife, and must answer for it at the bar of God. Thus, all the teachings of scripture on this subject are found to be perfectly harmonious. The principal points are:

1. The original law of marriage, making it the union of a man and a woman for life. This is the rule of perfect righteousness on this subject, unchangeable in its nature, and incapable of being violated without sin.

2. Conjugal infidelity by the wife so violates this law that the husband may rightfully effect a divorce from her, and marry another ; but the mode of effecting the divorce should be prescribed by the law of the land, and should be strictly observed. That conjugal infidelity by the husband gives the wife the same right is nowhere expressly asserted. Yet the general sense of Christendom is, that the equity of the case implies it.

3. The law of the land should provide rules regulating divorce ; and in forming such rules the legislature should consider the character of the people, and if the hardness of their hearts is such as to render it expedient, may give legal validity to divorces which ought not, in strict righteousness, to be desired.

4. In such cases the party unrighteously divorced is at liberty, morally as well as legally, to marry again ; but the party who unrighteously caused the divorce cannot marry again without sin.

5. It follows that, at the bar of God, the bar of conscience, or the bar of the church, conformity to the law of the land is no sufficient defence for effecting a divorce, even if the law of the land is exactly what it ought to be. At either of those tribunals a man must be judged, not by a statute devised to diminish as far as practicable the amount of evil done by a hard-hearted people, but by the perfect law of righteousness.

Exactly what the law of the land ought to prescribe in this matter the scriptures nowhere inform us ; doubtless, because the statutes ought not to be the same everywhere, but should be such in each country as will, in practice, bring the people nearest to the original law of marriage. What that law was for the Israelites we know. Our legislators have judged, and we doubt not correctly, that with us it should be much more stringent. They have enacted, that the husband shall not put away his wife, or the wife her husband, for any cause whatever ; that no divorce shall take place, except for a very few causes, which are specified by

law ; and that where any of these causes exist, the divorce shall be effected only by a decree of the proper court, after the facts have been ascertained by judicial investigation. So it is, even in cases of conjugal unfaithfulness. Cases of " departing " and " putting away," such as Paul mentions, our laws call " wilful desertion," and treat them as offences. Paul permits the deserted party to consider himself or herself as divorced, and to marry again. Our laws consider such desertion as a valid cause of divorce, but do not allow the divorce to take place and the deserted party to marry again, till the fact of desertion, and not mere casual or temporary absence, has been established in court, and a decree issued accordingly. Our laws also allow a wife to obtain a divorce for " intolerable severity." If the " severity " is such that she cannot with safety remain in the house, it is equivalent to driving her out of the house, that is, putting her away ; and in that case, as the husband cannot, if he would, give her a valid writing of divorcement, it is proper that the court should do it ; but not till the facts have been investigated, and the severity is found to be such that the wife ought not to endure it.

Our laws, perhaps, are not the very best that could be framed for a people of our average hardness of heart ; and if not, it would be well to amend them, if we can find legislators wise enough. But those who, on theological grounds, agitate for such a change as shall render divorce impossible except for adultery, are certainly wrong in principle. They overlook the distinction between what a man must do in order to be blameless before God, and what the state, for the good of society, ought to require on pain of punishment. In this, they differ radically from Moses, and from God, under whose inspiration he legislated.

The scriptures teach, as we have seen, that the party who has been actually " put away " by the other " is not in bondage," but may rightfully marry again. The strictest rule that can be required of human legislatures, therefore, is to allow no decree of divorce on the application of either party,

except for some act, or series of acts, equivalent, except in legal validity, to such putting away by the other. We say, except in legal validity, because no man under our laws can give his wife a writing of divorcement which shall make it lawful for her to "go and be another man's wife"; but he may do everything except this, which the Bible calls putting her away; and when he does it, it seems proper, as he cannot give her the document which she needs for her protection, that the court should give it. A divorce at the request of both parties, or for a cause which both parties have conspired in procuring, or for any act done by one party with the assent or connivance of the other, of course no law will permit.

The law of divorce where a man has a plurality of wives is of no practical importance in this country, where such cases can never occur. Under our laws, a man who, having one wife already, goes through the form of marrying another, does not thereby gain a second wife, but only commits a crime for which he is to be punished. The victim of his crime needs no divorce, for she has never been married to him. But in some countries where we have missions, cases are liable to arise, and occasionally do arise, in which the question is of great practical importance, and its consideration cannot be avoided.

There are those who attempt to avoid this question, by denying that any man ever had, or can have, more than one wife at a time. If any man has two women whom he calls wives, the second, they say, is not his wife, because she was taken in violation of the original law of marriage, which requires the union of one man to one woman, and to one only. They might as well argue that no other sin can be committed. Certainly, polygamy was always a sin against God, more or less heinous, according to the knowledge that a man had of his duty. But under the laws of many nations, and of Israel among the rest, the commission of that sin was possible, and it was sometimes committed, even by good men. Moses treated this subject as he did that of divorce, and



doubtless for the same reason — the hardness of their hearts. He gave no direct permission to take a plurality of wives, nor did he expressly forbid it. He gave them the origin of the practice, in the wicked family of Cain, before the flood; he showed them what troubles their father Jacob suffered from it; and he enacted that if, after all, any man would have two wives, he should treat them both, and their children, according to certain equitable rules which he laid down. But if, after this, a man took two wives, the second marriage was as valid, legally, as the first. The second wife had as valid a right as the first to all the privileges of a wife, and conjugal infidelity by her was adultery as really as by the first.

As some contend, in opposition to the plain meaning of the words of Moses, that he speaks only of successive, and not of contemporaneous, wives, we will quote an inspired comment. In 1 Sam. i. 2 it is said of Elkanah, the father of Samuel: "And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah." In verses 4-7, we learn that both were alive at the same time, and that Peninnah "provoked" Hannah for her barrenness, "to make her fret," and that this happened "from year to year." Notice carefully, the declaration of the inspired penman, that "he had two wives," both living with him as his wives at the same time. In 1 Sam. xxv. 39-42 we learn that after the death of Nabal, David sent servants to Abigail, his widow, with a request that she would become his wife, and that "she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife." In the next verse we read: "David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and *they were also both of them his wives.*" It is not at all to the purpose to say here, that David did wrong, sinned against the original law of marriage, in taking Ahinoam. Doubtless he did. Still, the inspired record informs us that he did it, and that when he had done it, they were "both of them his wives."

It is certain, therefore, that though taking a plurality of wives was always a sin against God, yet under the law of

Moses it could be done, and sometimes was done. Doubtless, polygamists were always greatly in the minority; for after furnishing each man with one wife, there would be but few women left to become second wives. Still such cases occurred. They continued till our Saviour's time, and later, as we learn from Josephus; and there was a true doctrine concerning them, so long as the law under which they were possible continued to be administered.

Literally taken, our Saviour's words forbid the putting away of the second wife, except for unfaithfulness, as much as that of the first; of Peninnah as much as of Hannah; of Abinoam as much as of Abigail. "They were both of them his wives," and had equal right to conjugal privileges, while faithful to their conjugal obligations. Not a word can be found in any of our Saviour's discourses making any distinction between them.

Will any one attempt to evade this conclusion by saying such cases were rare, and he had no reference to them? The attempt will be vain. If he had no reference to such cases, then he did not authorize divorce in such cases, and his general prohibition of divorces of faithful wives must remain as it stands, as applicable to the second wife as to the first. By quoting the original law of marriage, he shows that the man has committed a sin in taking a second wife; but concerning his duties resulting from that sin he gives no instructions, unless they are found in his general prohibition of divorce. He leaves the offender much in the condition of a man who has begotten an illegitimate son. In begetting such a son he sinned, and involved himself in an inconvenient relation, from the disadvantages of which he cannot, and ought not, to extricate himself. He must suffer the consequences of his error, till relieved of them by his own death, or the death of the other party to the relation. As for withdrawing conjugal privileges from her, he cannot do it without subjecting her to discomforts and temptations from which she has a right to be preserved, and from which he has pledged himself to preserve her. He has "sworn to his own hurt"; she

has trusted to his oath, and committed her all to his care, and he may not "change."

This view of such a man's duty is confirmed by Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus, that a man having more than one wife should not hold office in the church (1 Tim. iii. 2): "A bishop must be the husband of one wife" (*μῆς γυναῖκος ἄνδρα*). Twelfth verse, "deacons," plural, must be "the husbands of one wife" (*μῆς γυναῖκος ἄνδρες*). Tit. i. 6: An elder must be "the husband of one wife" (*μῆς γυναῖκος ἄνθρωπος*). This rule plainly implies that among those from whom bishops and deacons were to be selected, that is, among members of the churches, there might be some having more than one wife. Such men might be found, if not among the Greeks, yet certainly among the Jews living among the Greeks according to their own laws, as they were allowed to do. Such men, hearing the gospel, might be converted, and giving evidence of faith and repentance, would be received as members of the churches. Some of them might be well qualified in other respects for the office of bishop or deacon, but they must not be elevated to those offices. There are obvious reasons for this restriction. A church teaching that the taking of two wives is a sin to be punished by excommunication, and yet having a pastor with two wives, would exhibit a very plausible appearance of inconsistency, of which its enemies would not fail to take advantage. Such a pastor would not "have a good report of them which are without." His family would not be a good model for other families, in the church or out of it. The case may be illustrated by one already mentioned,—that of a man who has an illegitimate son. He may have repented of his sin; he may, as to his present character and conduct, be a worthy member of the church; but he cannot be a pastor without extreme embarrassment to himself, and to the church over which he presides. "The young people will find it out," and will make remarks destructive of his influence and that of the church. And so it would have been with a pastor or deacon having two wives.

It seems, therefore, that a man who in the days of his unregenerate darkness had taken two wives, and afterwards, on evidence of faith and repentance, had been received as a member of the church, was expected to continue to be the husband of both. His second marriage was not reckoned as a nullity, nor could he relieve himself from his bad predicament by divorcing one of his wives; but besides the other disadvantages of his condition, he was disqualified for office in the church. In the eyes of all heathen of average candor this rule would vindicate the church from the charge of inconsistency.

Attempts have been made to give this rule some different meaning; but in vain. The Greek church interprets it to mean, that a bishop, or deacon, whose wife dies, may not take another. But this would be aside from the purpose for which the rule was given. Paul left Titus in Crete, that he should "ordain elders in every city" (Tit. i. 5), and this rule was given as a guide in the selection of men to be ordained. The similar directions given to Timothy were evidently given for the same purpose (see especially, 1 Tim. iii. 15). The rule, therefore, must refer to the candidate as he was at the time of his selection. He must be, at that time, "the husband of one wife," or be rejected. To say that he must be rejected because after the death of his present wife he would marry another, would be absurd; for the facts, the death of his present wife and his subsequent marriage, could not be foreknown.

Bloomfield suggests that the rule may be intended to exclude any man who, having lost his first wife, had married a second. He would understand *μῆς γυναῖκος ἄνδρα*, a man who has never had but one wife. He quotes, in confirmation, 1 Tim. v. 9: "Having been the wife of one man (*γεγονῆα ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή*). But this passage, instead of confirming his interpretation, disproves it. If Paul had meant what Bloomfield supposes, he would have used the perfect participle, "having been." He would have written, *γεγονῆτα μῆς γυναῖκος ἄνδρα*. Instead of this he uses the present tense —

in Timothy *δεῖ εἶναι*, in Titus, *ἐστίν*; showing that he refers to the man as he is at the time of selection for office, and not as he had been at some time previous to his conversion.

In many heathen lands there is no such thing as marriage. A man buys or captures as many females as he can and chooses, cohabits with such of them as he pleases, and sells them or gives them away when he pleases. The scripture law of marriage and divorce has no reference to such cases, except to condemn them. If such a heathen becomes a Christian and wishes to have a wife, he must marry one, and one only, and must be faithful to her while they both live. In other lands there are laws which authorize and regulate polygamy. In such countries a man may take two, three, or even four wives, as in Turkey, and may believe at the time that he is doing right; and his wives may believe that the transaction is a right one, and may rely on it accordingly. The relation may be entered into according to well-known laws, and in good faith, by all the parties. In such cases, the Bible teaches that neither party has a moral right to dissolve the relation while the other remains faithful to its duties.

In most countries where polygamy is allowed concubinage also prevails, and cases are liable to arise in which it is not easy to decide whether the relation between a certain man and a certain woman is that of marriage or concubinage, or even something still more lawless. In a vast majority of cases, however, these loose connections may be dissolved without any violation of plighted faith, and ought to be dissolved; and in cases of any real difficulty no more can be required than a thoroughly honest inquiry after duty, and an honest performance of what duty seems to require.

If any one objects to our views, that they are too indulgent to the man who has taken two wives, allowing him the privilege of keeping both after his conversion, we have but one thing, in addition to the teachings of scripture, to say in reply. If he really, in his heart, believes his objection valid, it must be that he, in his heart, regards a permanent

connection with two wives as a *privilege*, rather than a punishment, and would have two wives himself, if he thought he could do it safely. With such a man we have no inclination to argue.

In these inquiries, we have been careful to base nothing on the authority of commentators. We may perhaps, however, afford relief to some minds by quoting a few words from Scott, whose evangelical piety and orthodoxy have never been questioned. On 1 Cor. vii. 15, he says: "The apostle further observed, that if the unconverted wife or husband chose to depart, and to disannul the marriage, according to the laws of the community, the believer was not required to act in opposition to it, or as if in bondage by the preceding contract." And more to the same effect. On 1 Tim. iii. 2, "The husband of one wife," he says: "Christ and the apostles expressly condemned polygamy, as well as divorces except for adultery; yet there was no direct command for a man who had taken more wives than one to put the others away when he embraced the gospel; and such a requisition might have produced many bad consequences in domestic life, and increased the opposition of the civil powers to the preaching of Christianity. But the rule, that no man, however qualified in other respects, should be admitted into the pastoral office, who had more than one wife, or who had put away one to take another, tended to show the impropriety of polygamy and divorces on frivolous pretences, and their inconsistency with the Christian dispensation, and concurred with other things to bring it into total disuse in the Christian church; yet without violence and confusion."

If the rule here laid down by the apostle excluded every man who had, before his conversion, "put away one [wife] to take another," it must be on the ground that such putting away, being sinful, was a nullity, and the woman thus put away, was still his wife, so that when he "took another," he was in fact the husband of two wives, and not of one only. Whether this construction is allowable, we leave to the reader's judgment, without expressing an opinion.

In other respects, the views of Scott on these passages of the apostle are evidently the same, for substance, set forth in this Article. Of course, he did not believe these views to be in conflict with the teachings of Christ, as recorded by the evangelists.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAMISM.

BY REV. GEORGE F. HERRICK, MISSIONARY OF THE A. B. C. F. M.

CHURCH History fully details the relation which Christianity sustained to Judaism, whether of correspondence or of antagonism. The relation of Christianity to ancient forms of Heathenism also has been so elaborately sketched by Christian historians, that systems of heathen philosophy and belief, the nature of Paganism, and the state of the ancient pagan world, have never been more vividly and faithfully portrayed than in those portions of church history which describe the aggressive movements of Christianity. This is true also in reference to the latest onward movement of Christianity, which is even now making, and that too on a broader plane than ever heretofore. Christian enterprise, in the form of missionary effort, encounters the same forms of Judaism, which has been growing more dry and dead now for almost two thousand years, and meets with multifarious forms of heathen superstition and pagan cultus, and detailed accounts of these systems, and of the triumphs of Christianity over them, are added every year to the accumulating records of the militant, and to-be victorious, church of Christ.

But the relation which Christianity has held to Islamism occupies but little space in the annals of the church. Yet since the early conquests of the religion of the cross were