

Magazine

Me-Centered Religion

Bobby L. Graham

It has become increasingly fashionable to hear people protest organized or institutional religion in recent decades, as they have sought to invent their own religious systems, based on what they desire and think. This writer also finds much in current systems to protest, but for vastly different, biblical reasons. Their protests are grounded in their own selfish notions, and mine are based on the teaching of God's word. One main impetus giving rise to the community churches of recent decades has been the emphasis on selfish desires rather than the will of God. When human beings begin to view themselves as equal to God, they begin acting so by asserting their own will over his will and arrogating to themselves divine prerogatives. The importance of the individual truly has become the central organizing thread around which so much of the thinking and teaching of our time has clustered. For this reason there has been much discussion of "The Me Generation."

Out of this emphasis on self, an entire "theology" has evolved, giving rise to me-centered religion. From beginning to end, however, such a religion is similar to those religions so often decried by "The Me Generation" in its fundamental traits, to which we shall call attention in this article. Those traits form the basic tenets of the theology undergirding this religion.

When human beings begin to view themselves as equal to God, they begin acting so by asserting their own will over his will . . .

1. I am my own person; nobody tells me what to do. Expressed in this assertion is the autonomy or independence of the individual from God and all others. Of course, such thinking runs into a brick wall when civil government is involved! To think that people can become so proud that they banish God from their concerns and lives in the thought that they are capable of directing their own course and that they are answerable to no one except self is the outrageous conclusion from this statement. Involved also

is the idea of the authority of the individual, who views himself as supreme. He no longer is accountable to God, if there is a God. *The Humanist Manifesto I and II* from the last seventy years well express what has become dominant thinking with many. Many of this stripe believe that humans are the only "deity" involved in this world. Such thinking enthrones man and dethrones

God. It is difficult to appeal to such thinking for self-denial, humility, lowliness, and trust in God (Matt. 16:24), or even for compassion, mercy, and kindness in human relations, when such arrogance prevails.

The entire record of divine revelation demonstrates man's amenability to God. By reason of creation God has ever had dominion over his creation. Early he directed Adam and Eve in their lives, though they soon manifested

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Adams-Warnock Exchange on Divorce

Mike Willis

This issue of Truth Magazine contains an exchange between two of the Board Members of the Guardian of Truth Foundation, who also serve as Associate Editor and Staff Writer for the magazine, on the subject of “mental divorce” or “the role of civil government in divorce.” Connie W. Adams and Weldon Warnock are well-known and respected gospel preachers, not only to our readers, but to brethren throughout the nation. Like Paul and Epaphroditus, these men are longtime brethren, companions in labor, and fellowsoldiers of the cross (Phil. 2:25). Both men have graciously agreed to state their respective views on this difficult subject, not as bitter enemies preparing for war but as fellowsoldiers discussing some details pertaining to the truth they mutually profess. We have mutually agreed that this is not the beginning of an on-going and never-ending harangue on the subject. The discussion is fully contained in this issue of Truth Magazine.

That brethren associated with Truth Magazine are not agreed on this subject is not news to those who are conversant about what is happening among brethren. The idea that all of the members of the Guardian of Truth Foundation march in lock step at the call of the editor of this magazine is mistaken, an insult to both the editor and our staff writers, and more revealing of the one who has the idea than it is of the editor or the staff writers.

Weldon Warnock and Connie W. Adams are close friends. They have been friends since their college days — way back when this editor was still in diapers. As college students at Florida College, they were both members of a country-western music group that had not a little success in the Tampa area. Both of them decided that they had rather preach than pursue a music career and have given their lives to preaching. They have maintained their friendship through the years. The relationship between these brethren was cemented even further when Connie’s son Wilson married Weldon’s daughter Julie, so that they now share the same grandchild.

Both Weldon and Connie served on the staff of Searching the Scriptures when it was edited by H.E. Phillips and brother Warnock continued to serve on that staff after brother Adams became its editor. While brother Adams was editing Searching the Scriptures, the Guardian of Truth Foundation appointed Weldon to serve on its Board and then when the Foundation purchased Searching the Scriptures Connie was added to our Board.

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“Judge Strikes Down California Gay Marriage Ban”

Jesse Flowers

I recently came across a news article with this heading on the Internet. It appeared on March 14, 2005 by *The Associated Press*, and below is an excerpt from the article.

A judge ruled Monday that California’s ban on gay marriage is unconstitutional — a legal milestone that, if upheld on appeal, would open the way for the most populous state to follow Massachusetts in allowing same-sex couples to wed.

Judge Richard Kramer of San Francisco County’s trial-level Superior Court likened the ban to laws requiring racial segregation in schools, and said there appears to be “no rational purpose” for denying marriage to gay couples.

The ruling came in response to lawsuits filed by the city of San Francisco and a dozen gay couples a year ago after the California Supreme Court halted a four-week same-sex marriage spree started by Mayor Gavin Newsom. The opinion had been eagerly awaited because of San Francisco’s historical role as a gay rights battleground.

I would like for us to contrast some of the rulings of Judge Richard Kramer and some of the rulings passed by Jehovah, the Judge of heaven and earth. Abraham identified God as “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen. 18:25). And the Psalmist Asaph declared: “Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge” (Ps. 50:6). Of course, no such thing is ascribed to judge Kramer in Scripture, or any other human judge for that matter. Let’s notice some key differences between these Judges.

1. Judge Kramer said: “To ban gay marriage is unconstitutional.”

For something to be “unconstitutional” it must be contrary to the laws and principles established by this nation’s forefathers. I suspect this will be debated for some time to come. While I do not believe banning same-sex marriages is unconstitutional whatsoever, the thing that truly matters is the constitution of Almighty God!

For various men and women to argue in favor of allowing men to marry men and women to marry women, is without question “unconstitutional” when it comes to the laws of God. This holds true whether we are speaking of God’s first covenant (the Law of Moses), or God’s second covenant (the Law of Christ).

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Third Cycle: Scriptural Limits of the Bible Periods

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Read the ruling of the perfect and righteous Judge of all the earth on this controversial issue. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination" (Lev. 18:22). "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13). The apostle Paul declared that those who practice such unrighteous acts as homosexuality and sodomy "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). I think we have a pretty good idea whose ruling will stand when this world is on fire (2 Pet. 3:10-12)!

2. Judge Kramer likened the gay marriage ban to laws requiring racial segregation in schools. That has to be one of the most ridiculous things that I have ever heard. To compare these two things is like comparing apples and oranges. In other words, they are not the same thing.

God makes it clear that being prejudiced and showing favoritism to certain individuals is sinful (Exod. 23:3; Deut. 1:17; Rom. 2:11; 1 Tim. 5:21; Jas. 2:1-13; 3:17). As Peter affirmed to Cornelius: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34-35). To separate people in a prejudiced way, because of the color of their skin is in direct violation of the word of God.

However, to oppose same-sex marriages is not to be guilty of the sin of prejudice. Why? Simple. God in his word has declared this act as sinful in his sight (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9). And, as Christians, we must manifest the same attitude as our holy God toward sinful things. "Abhor what is evil" (Rom. 12:9). We are prejudiced toward the sin, not the sinner. We discriminate against the abomination of homosexuality, not the homosexual.

Make no mistake about it. God is indeed prejudicial and discriminatory when it comes to the *sin* of gay marriages! "For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Rom. 1:26-27). To desire to marry someone of the same-sex is not natural, it is shameful! Once again, the rulings of Judge Kramer and God stand in stark contrast to one another.

3. To allow gay marriages as lawful is to "affirm family values for all California families." So said Dennis Herrera, a San Francisco City Attorney in the same article. I'm sure judge Kramer would whole-heartedly agree with this sentiment.

For one to support gay marriages is to supposedly "affirm family values"? You've got to be kidding me! How in the world is something that God identifies as an abomination,

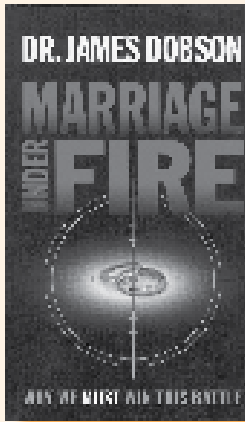
unrighteous, unnatural, and shameful referred to by others as being a part of "family values"? Somebody is going to have to help me out here.

Let us hear and consider the family values as set forth by the one who instituted the home from the very beginning. The Son of God declared, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'" (Matt. 19:4; Gen. 1:27). God made them *male and female*, not male and male or even female and female. Hear it again, God *made them* male and female. Now that we can say "affirms" family values.

Jesus added, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt. 19:5; Gen. 2:24). Do you read anything about God's approval of same-sex marriages? Of course not. But one man marrying one woman and becoming one flesh is to "affirm" family values. God has joined this holy arrangement together, and man should not separate it (Matt. 19:6)! To make gay marriages lawful is to destroy true family values as revealed by God.

"Rise up, O Judge of the earth; render punishment to the proud. Lord, how long will the wicked, how long will the wicked triumph?" (Ps. 94:2-3). One day the Judge of the earth will rise up in judgment against wicked men, and they will at that time receive the penalty of their error which is due them!

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Marriage Under Fire
by James Dobson
1-59052-4314
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Dr. Dobson carefully analyzes the issue of gay marriage and presents a compelling case against its legalization and the dire ramifications our nation could face if it is legalized. Now is the time to speak out in defense of marriage and the family as God designed it.

Easier Worship

Larry Ray Hafley

Under the heading above come the words of Tod Brainard below. He has much to say which ought to stir and stimulate reflection and reformation among brethren.

The title comes from an advertisement recently published in the "Your Church" magazine which markets technologies to churches. The gist of the advertisement was that technologies on the market today make worship easier. Much more is being said by such a title than most are willing to realize. The truth is, the average local church today is in a state of flux. The concept of a worship service is being reworked and retooled to fit 21st century standards. Churches are now hiring 'worship leaders' to bring the modern audiences into the 'spirit of worship' that is supposedly missing in old-fashioned Bible-preaching, hymn-singing church services. The old-fashioned congregation is out and the newfangled theatre audience is in!

Congregation vs. Audience

... Over the past 25 years there has been a diminishing of the congregational concept of worship. An appointment with the Lord in a collective setting that leads ... to adoration of Christ ... has given way to a selfish hodge-podge of fleshly activities. The spirit of secularism pervades much of the "worship scene" today. We have learned how to sharpen our swords on Philistine stones. Most church worship services reflect more the values and culture of Nebuchadnezzar's worship service than that of Christ's (Dan. 3:4-7). The offering of praise and worship in song has moved for the most part from the pew to the podium. ... Most ... congregations today are nothing more than audiences watching the spectacle of "praise teams" with microphones, headsets, big screen projections, and special effect lighting. ... The flesh-orientation trumps Spirit-orientation in this setting. Worship then becomes all about us and our pleasure and less about Christ and his glory. By virtue of this worship philosophy, the preaching of the word of God is no longer front and center, it is secondary and supplemental.

... One is easily deceived when one is flesh-oriented. Truth is exchanged for fables without the recognition of what is taking place.

Return to the Old Paths Wherein Is the Good Way

Jeremiah told the Israelite religious leaders that they had left the old paths and the good way (Jer. 6:16). The "worship leaders" of Jeremiah's day promoted a new way of worship which was very much like unto the worship of the Canaanites. It is high time ... to get back to the Bible. Brush off the old hymnals and get back to singing the sound, doctrinal hymns. ... Preaching the Word of God after the manner of 2 Timothy 4:2 is desperately needed. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Preaching the exalted word of God must be the centerpiece in reality and not in promotion only.

... If people come away with a "Wow, that service was so neat!" rather than "I need to confess my sin and do right for the Lord Jesus Christ!" then we have not preached the Word of God with conviction nor have we worshipped the Lord in any way, shape, or form. The degree of our worship is measured not by our technologies and our ... programs, but rather by ... Christian lives being tuned and calibrated by the convicting word of God to sing the eternal praises of the Holy One, Jesus Christ.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Did I mention that the author of the above piece, Tod Brainard, is a Baptist preacher and that his article appeared in *The Baptist Watchman*, May 2004?

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Showtime!
Worship in the Age of
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People

Irvin Himmel

They come in a variety of colors, shapes, sizes, and weights. Some of them are neat; others are sloppy. Some are considerate; others are unkind. Some are well-mannered; others are slob. Their speech and dress exemplify much diversification. Some of them are charming; others are repulsive. Some speak softly; others roar like a lion.

These people beings have a higher degree of intelligence than other earthly creatures, but there are times when their actions are stupid, senseless, and foolish. They go to the zoo to watch the monkeys. However, one wonders if those monkeys are not having more fun by watching them!

Some of these people creatures are so industrious that they are called workaholics; others are so lazy that they expect the government to supply their needs. Some are generous; others are greedy. Some are ambitious; others are apathetic.

They live and multiply in all sorts of places—cold climates and tropical regions. Some of them live in crude huts in rain forests, some live in igloos, some in tents, some in caves, some in quaint cottages, and some in houseboats. Others live in skyscrapers, costly edifices, mansions, and palaces. They sometimes sleep under bridges and overpasses, on the streets, in the alleys, in motor vehicles, and in barns and sheds. Others sleep in expensive beds located in comfortable rooms with all the latest conveniences. Some eat scraps taken from garbage cans; other dine in elegance on gourmet delights.

These creatures called people often attack each other. In some cases they strike without the slightest provocation. They sometimes choose sides and fight massive wars. Even after thousands of them have lost their lives, the fighting does not cease. They make rules and laws to govern themselves, then many of them refuse to abide by those

regulations. Some of them rob, rape, plunder, steal, destroy, and kill. The bad ones are locked up, often for only a brief period, before being freed to resume their criminal activity. While imprisoned, some of these bad guys are given better treatment than many have on the outside. These people beings have strange ways.

Some of them breed like wild dogs. Some have same sex mates, leaving the bearing of children to others. Some have multiple partners; others are monogamous. Some develop strong family ties; others reproduce and live like jungle animals. Some tenderly care for their young; others abandon or kill their offspring.



Like their customs and traditions, their religious beliefs show endless diversity. Among them one finds every imaginable shade of tenets and ceremonies. They run in a thousand different directions in their concepts of religion. A sizeable number are totally irreligious; others are decided, devout, and dedicated to their creeds, convictions, and celebrations. Most of the religious are half-hearted

about that aspect of life. What some do in the name of religion others reject, abhor, and denounce.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing that can be noted about people is this: *God loves every one of them!* This unfathomable love is what prompted the heavenly Father to send his only begotten Son into the world. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

God wants people everywhere to be saved. He is “long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). He desires

The Importance Of Bible Study

Johnie Edwards

The importance of Bible study can be seen as we read, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

1. Study. The word “study” carries with it the idea of giving diligence. Much effort is required in serious Bible study. Bible study is hard work. The evidence is seen in these words: “And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Eccl. 12:12).

2. Study is God Approved. God expects his people to know. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The Old Testament people serve as a good example of how a failure to know brings God’s disapproval. Hosea reported, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee” (Hos. 4:6).

3. Study Makes For An Unashamed Workman. Workmen in the Lord’s vineyard are always needed. Vineyard parables are work related (Matt. 20:1) teaching us to be workers in the Lord’s work. Many do little or no work due to being ashamed to do the Lord’s work, due to lack of knowledge.

4. Study Provides For Rightly Truth-Dividing. There is great demand for the truth to be rightly divided. The fact that we are admonished to rightly divide the truth implies truth can be wrongly divided! Many just open the Bible and where it falls open, try to obey. Such careless dividing might find one building an ark if Genesis 6 appears; or flying to Jerusalem to worship, should the Bible open to Deuteronomy 16.

Only diligent study can help us in rightly dividing truth.

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“all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Out of the abundant mercy and grace of the Creator, people all over the earth are offered salvation from sin through the gospel. Jesus Christ said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

Hope for eternal life is available to poor people and rich people, to old people and young people, to prominent people and obscure people, to healthy people and sick people, to morally good people and immoral people, to strong people and weak people, and to educated people and backward people.

The gospel plan of salvation calls on all people to come to Christ. We are promised, “. . . and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). God “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). God is no respecter of persons; in every nation he who fears God and works righteousness is accepted with him (Acts 10:34-35).

The heavenly Father wants us to be a “peculiar people,” that is, “*a people for his own possession*” (Tit. 3:14, NASB). When we separate ourselves from evil and are cleansed by the redeeming blood of Christ, God’s promise is, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:16).

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The Last Verses of Mark

Kyle Campbell

Modern textual criticism often undermines the authenticity of God's word. One of the paths to this goal is an attempt to say that certain Scriptures do not belong in the Bible. Although, there are some passages that are more difficult to authenticate (i.e., John 7:59-8:11, Acts 8:37, and 1 John 5:7-8), some of the harshest criticism has been leveled against Mark 16:9-20.



For many years, textual critics have stated that the last verses of Mark do not belong in his gospel. In fact, even some study Bibles go so far as to say that Mark 16:16 can be discounted because it was not originally in the Bible. Although all doctrine found in the last verses of Mark can be found in other places, the argument that the verses do not belong is, in my opinion, a serious blow to the reliability of the Scriptures. This article will examine the internal and external evidence of vv. 9-20 to determine if they belong in our Bibles.

We have three papyrus manuscripts of the gospel of Mark, from the third, fourth, and eighth centuries, but all of these are fragmentary and none contains the last chapters. There are thirty-one uncial (all capital letters) manuscripts that contain chapter 16. The oldest of these are codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, which date from the fourth century. Four others date from the fifth century, and the rest range from the sixth to the eleventh centuries. Then we have a large

number of minuscule (cursive) manuscripts that date from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. In addition to these Greek manuscripts of Mark's gospel, we also have witnesses to its text in the ancient versions and in citations from early Christian writers.

The gospel of Mark has five different endings in various manuscripts. They are, from shortest to longest:

- The ones that end at 16:8.
- The ones that end with a “shorter ending.”
- Those that contain the “longer ending” (verses 9-20).
- Those that contain both the “shorter ending” and the “longer ending.”
- The expanded version of the “longer reading” found in one manuscript.

The second and the fifth are usually disregarded because they lack adequate evidence to be probable. The fourth can also be dismissed as being a mixture of the second and third, and thus highly improbable. That leaves the first and the third as the more probable of the five different endings.

The first ending is the “harder” reading, which means it usually has a higher probability of being correct. But it leaves the gospel of Mark sounding incomplete because it contains no resurrection appearances, as in the other three gospels, and it ends

with the odd-sounding words, “For they were afraid.” If this were the true rendering, it could be easy to see how a scribe might, somewhere along the line, add a more appropriate ending to Mark. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine a scribe cutting out these verses, which include resurrection appearances and the commission to teach the gospel. Furthermore, the vocabulary and style are noticeably different in this last section from the rest of the gospel of Mark.

For these reasons, textual critics generally dismiss the “longer ending” as a composition possibly made by a scribe. They speculate that these verses were added later, probably to finish what seemed to be an uncompleted book. But is this correct? Let’s review the internal and external evidence.

The first internal evidence argument involves Mark’s vocabulary. Of the 75 significant words in verses 9-20, Alford showed that seventeen do not appear elsewhere in Mark. In other words, the claim is made that more than a third of the words are not normally used by Mark. Textual critics say that this difference makes it difficult to believe that they both came from the same author. But John Broadus demonstrated that seventeen words occur in the twelve preceding verses of Mark that are not found any place else in the gospel either! This is a startling exposure of the fragile foundation upon which this critical structure has been erected. Moreover, McGarvey discovered that there are nine words in the last twelve verses of Luke’s gospel that are not elsewhere used in his narrative, yet no textual critic has ever raised a doubt as to their authenticity. John William Burgon wrote:

Nothing I presume can be fairer than to elect that, once more, our attention be chiefly directed to what is contained within the twelve verses (verses 9-20) of Mark’s first chapter which exactly correspond with the twelve verses of his last

chapter (verses 9-20) which are the subject of the present volume. Now between these two sections of the gospel, besides (1) the obvious verbal resemblance, I detect (2) a singular parallelism of essential structure. And this does not strike me the less forcibly because nothing of the kind was to have been expected.

Now this, to say the least, shows that there exists an unmistakable relation of sympathy between the first page of Mark’s gospel and the last. The same doctrinal phraseology, the same indications of Divine purpose, the same prevailing cast of thought is observed to occur in both: (i) A gospel to be everywhere preached; (ii) Faith to be required of all; (iii) Baptism to be universally administered; (iv) “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” — is not this the theme of the beginning of Mark’s gospel as well as the end of it? Surely it is as if on comparing the two extremities of a chain, with a view to ascertaining whether the fabric is identical or not, it were discovered that those extremities are even meant to clasp.

Furthermore, the concluding section agrees with all other accounts of the resurrection and, as Lenski argues, with the beginning of Mark’s work.

The second internal evidence argument involves Mark’s style. Bruce Terry does a fine job summarizing and answering the objections concerning style. Five objections have been raised concerning the “awkward” juncture of vv. 8 and 9 because: (1) the subject of v. 8 is the women, whereas Jesus is the presumed subject of v. 9; (2) the other women of vv. 1-8 are forgotten in vv. 9-20; (3) in v. 9 Mary Magdalene is identified even though she has been mentioned in v. 1; (4) the use of *anastas de* (“Now risen”) and the position of *proton* (“first”) do not fit in a continuation of vv. 1-8; and, (5) the use of the conjunction *gar* (“for”) at the end of v. 8 is very abrupt.

With regard to juncture, the transition between vv. 8 and 9 does seem

odd. An exact parallel cannot be found elsewhere in Mark; however, the first two features are found together several times in the book (2:13; 6:45; 7:31; 8:1; 14:3). Thus the first two objections are not valid.

The third objection is that Mary Magdalene is identified in v. 9 as “out of whom he had cast seven devils” even though she has been mentioned in v. 1. However, this is not an identifying phrase; it is rather a type of flashback that gives additional information. This occurs four other times in Mark (3:16, 17; 6:16; 7:26). So giving additional information is not foreign to Mark. Therefore, the third objection is not valid either.

The fourth objection to the juncture between the two sections of Mark is that the use of *anastas de* (“Now risen”) and the position of *proton* (“first”) in v. 9 do not fit in a continuation of vv. 1-8. But v. 9 is not a continuation of the section found in vv. 1-8; it is the start of a new one. The resurrection of Christ is established by two facts: the empty tomb (vv. 1-8) and his appearances (vv. 9-14). Thus the words are appropriate, because it starts a new section. The fourth objection is not valid either.

Perhaps the most serious objection with regard to juncture is that v. 8 ends with the conjunction *gar* (“for”), which is very abrupt. The final clause of v. 8 (“for they were afraid”) has only two words in Greek. Since the word *gar* cannot stand at the beginning of a Greek sentence, it is found at the end. There are no other two word clauses containing *gar* in Mark, but there are word clauses including three and four words (Mark 1:16, 38; 3:21; 5:42; 9:49; 11:18; 14:70; 15:14; 16:4) that contain *gar*. Thus Mark did know how to use *gar* in short sentences.

Although all the stylistic features of this section are not found together elsewhere in Mark, they are found elsewhere individually in Mark and thus this juncture is indeed his in style.

The external evidence comes from three sources: (1) manuscripts, (2) versions, and, (3) the early Christian writers, known as “the Fathers.” Again, John William Burgon writes:

It is a known rule in the Law of Evidence that the burden of proof lies on the party who asserts the affirmative of the issue. But the case is altogether different, as all must see, when it is proposed to get rid of twelve verses which for 1,700 years and upwards have formed the conclusion of Mark’s gospel. This assumption that a work which has held to be a complete work for seventeen centuries and upwards was originally incomplete, of course requires proof. I can only imagine one other thing which could induce us to entertain such an opinion [to brand Mark 16:9-20 as spurious] and that would be the general consent of MSS., Fathers, and Versions.

The oldest manuscripts do not contain the last verses of Mark’s gospel. Our two oldest complete copies of Mark, codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, which also happen to be our oldest copies of the complete New Testament, end the gospel of Mark at verse 8. But there are also other manuscripts which do not contain verses. 9-20, including the twelfth century Greek minuscule 304 and the fourth century Old Latin manuscript “k.” Instead, “k” contains the “shorter ending.” Several other manuscripts also include the “shorter ending,” and then proceed to include the “longer ending.” Along with all that, eleven minuscule manuscripts of Mark that do contain the passage, include with it an asterisk, obelisk, or some other indication that the passage is doubtful. McGarvey stated, “Its absence from some copies can be accounted for by considering the many accidents by which the last leaf of a manuscript may be lost.”

On the other hand, the passage is found in nearly all of the other ancient manuscripts, including the Alexandrian, which stands next to the Vatican in accuracy. These include all the uncials (numbered at 18) except three (including the fifth century uncial codices Alexandrinus, Ephraemi and Bezae) and virtually all the minuscule copies of Mark (numbered at 600). Furthermore, the abundance of manuscripts which contain the “longer ending” implies the earlier existence of their ancestors. Of all undamaged Greek copies of the gospel of Mark (over 1500), only a relative few can be shown to have not contained Mark 16:9-20 when they were made.

The versions are early translations into different languages based on Greek manuscripts. They are helpful because they were in existence earlier than the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, and before the time of Jerome. White attempted to use versions as opponents of these verses, but the versions are very good witnesses, beginning in the second century. These verses are included in all the versions except two. The following are some examples:

- The Syriac. The oldest is the Syriac in its various forms: the “Peshitto” (2nd cent.), and the “Curetonian Syriac” (3rd cent.). Both are older than any Greek manuscript in existence, and both contain these twelve verses. As also does the “Philoxenian” (5th cent.) and the “Jerusalem” (5th cent.) contain these twelve verses.
- The Latin Versions: Jerome (A.D. 382), who had access to Greek MSS. older than any now extant, includes these twelve verses; but this Version (known as the Vulgate) was only a revision of the *Vetus Itala*, which is believed to belong to the 2nd cent., and also contains these verses.
- The Gothic Version (A.D. 350) contains all of the verses.
- The Egyptian Versions: the Memphitic (or Lower Egyptian, otherwise known as “Coptic”), belonging to the 4th or 5th cent., contains them; as does the “BMC” (or Upper Egyptian, otherwise known as the “Sahidic”), belonging to the 3rd cent. contains them.
- The Armenian (5th cent.), the Ethiopic (4th-7th cent.), and the Georgian (6th cent.) also contains them and attests to the genuineness of these verses.

In determining actual words, the evidence by the early Christian writers, known as “the Fathers,” is more valuable than even the manuscripts or the versions. There are nearly 100 writers older than the oldest of our Greek codices; between A.D. 300 and A.D. 600 there are about 200 more, and they all refer to these twelve verses. The following are some examples:

- Papias (about A.D. 100) refers to v. 15 (as stated by Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* iii. 39).
- Justin Martyr (A.D. 151) quotes v. 20 (*Apol.* I. c. 45).
- Irenaeus (A.D. 180) remarks on v. 19 (*Adv. hoer. lib.* iii. c. x.).
- Hippolytus (A.D. 190-227) quotes vv. 17-19 (*Lagarde’s ed.*, 1858, 74).
- Vincentius (A.D. 256) quoted two verses at the seventh Council of Carthage, held under Cyprian.
- The *Acta Pilati* (cent. 2) quotes vv. 15-18 (*Tischendorf’s ed.*, 1853, 245, 351).
- The *Apostolical Constitutions* (cent. 3 or 4) quotes vv. 16-18.
- Eusebius (A.D. 325) discusses these verses, as quoted by Marinus from a lost part of his *History*.
- Aphraartes (A.D. 337), a Syrian bishop, quoted vv. 16-18 in his first Homily (*Dr. Wright’s ed.*, 1869, i., 21).
- Ambrose (A.D. 374-397), Archbishop of Milan, freely quotes vv. 15 (four times), 16, 17, 18 (three times), and v. 20 (once).
- Chrysostom (A.D. 400) refers to v. 9; and states that

vv. 19-20 are “the end of the gospel.”

- Jerome (A.D. 331-420) includes these twelve verses in his Latin translation, besides quoting vv. 9 and 14 in his other writings.
- Augustine (A.D. 395-430) more than quotes them. He discusses them as being the work of Mark, and says that they were read in the churches.
- Nestorius (cent. 5) quotes v. 20, and Cyril of Alexandria (A.D. 450) accepts the quotation.
- Victor of Antioch (A.D. 425) confutes the opinion of Ensehius, by referring to very many MSS., which he had seen, and so had satisfied himself that the last twelve verses were recorded in them.

So there are over a dozen witnesses to the last verses of Mark among the early writers, dating back to the second century. Why did none of these illustrious early writers claim that these verses were spurious? The earliest evidence for the inclusion of Mark 16:9-20 pre-dates the earliest evidence for its non-inclusion.

Also, the evidence for the early writers’ use of the “longer ending” is spread over a broad geographical area: Justin (Rome), Irenaeus (Gaul), Eusebius (Caesarea), Vincentius (North Africa), and Tatian and Aphraates (Syria). Against this, the ancient Greek evidence for non-inclusion is confined to Egypt (and Caesarea, but this is because the library at Caesarea included Egyptian manuscripts). Snapp concludes that the implication of this is that copies of Mark containing the “longer ending” were in use in these locations.

It is a fact that these last twelve verses of Mark have more verifying evidences than other parts of Mark. W.R. Farmer wrote, “In fact, external evidence from the second

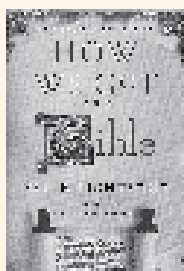
century to Mark 16:9-20 is stronger than for most other parts of that gospel.” Van Bruggen added, “If it still remains uncertain whether Mark 16:9-20 is well attested textually, then very little of any of the rest of the New Testament is well attested.”

Though the evidence for the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 is strong, it is consistently tossed aside as questionable (at best) by modern textual critics. For example, in a published Moody Press commentary on Mark, Louis Barbieri, a former professor at Moody and Dallas Theological Seminary, observed, “Since these verses are disputed, it certainly seems that one would not be wise to base any matter of doctrine or experience on a verse that was found only in this section” (372). Perhaps prejudice enters the discussion more often than many would like to admit. For instance, because of the plain teaching of Mark 16:16 regarding baptism, many denominationalists would love for these verses to be removed. By taking the position that these verses were not a part of Mark’s original gospel, they can!

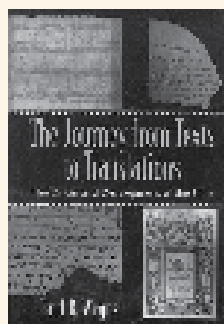
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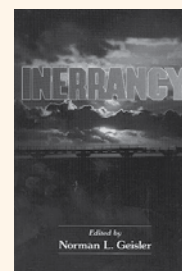
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Some Thoughts on Divorce and Remarriage

Weldon Warnock

The following article was prompted by an article written by my good friend, brother Connie Adams, entitled, "Emotional Arguments," which included a segment on divorce and remarriage. It appeared in the February 3, 2005 issue of *Truth Magazine*. He has written a response that appears in this issue. I invite you to study each article carefully and prayerfully.

Let no one surmise that because of this exchange that Connie and I have become enemies and have ostracized one another. We remain close friends after more than fifty-four years when we first met at Florida College. We have preached together, prayed together, socialized together, laughed and cried together, and performed on stage professionally together in country music while at Florida College. You might say there has been a lot of togetherness. And, besides all of these things, his oldest son, Wilson, married our daughter, Julie. So, we'll just go on together. We enter into this cordial exchange to try to come to a better understanding of the word of God. You will notice that both Connie and I show disdain for, and repulsion toward, factionalism. Above all, we walk together because we are united on the basic truths Jesus revealed on marriage, though we differ on one or two details like any two brethren might do (cf. Amos 3:3; Eph. 4:1-6).

Many try to justify their beliefs and practices by emotional arguments. This is true in the marriage, divorce, and remarriage controversy. They prove nothing as to the right and wrong of a matter. I have never attempted to uphold my position on MDR by human emotions. Due to certain circumstances, some divorced people must live in celibacy. This would be true of those who divorce when fornication is not involved, whether it is the one who puts away or the one put away (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). When both husband and wife disrupt the marriage consensually, neither may marry another, even if one of them commits fornication. That is the so-called "waiting game." However, to affirm that an innocent spouse may remarry when his/her mate commits fornication is not a waiting game; neither is it an emotional argument, but rather a biblical one.

FORNICATION AND DEATH

Someone says: "There is no Scripture that authorizes a put away person to remarry because Jesus said 'whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery'" (Matt. 5:32). I believe this as strongly as anyone. But would there not be some qualifications or exceptions to this statement? I ask: (1) What if an innocent, divorced woman's husband died a few months or so after she was put away by him? Could this put away woman marry? (2) What if she was divorced like the situation in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11? Could she remarry her husband? Remember, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery," but his statement does not preclude *all* put away spouses under *all* circumstances from remarrying. The two previous situations prove this. So, Jesus' statement, "Whosoever marries her that is put away commits adultery," is not an *absolute*, since there are exceptions. Jesus was speaking of a woman who is divorced where fornication is not involved. Read Luke 16:18 and observe that not only the divorced woman commits adultery when she marries another, but also the man who divorced her. Fornication is not mentioned in Luke 16:18, so neither party may remarry without committing adultery. Yes, whosoever marries her/him commits adultery when no fornication is involved.

Most brethren would say that an innocent woman (or man) who has been divorced may remarry when her husband dies, based on Romans 7:2-3, though he commits fornication after the civil divorce. Why is it that one may make an exception to what Jesus said concerning the put away woman in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, based on Romans 7:2-3, but no one, according to some, may use Jesus' exception in Matthew 19:9 for this same woman whose former husband is living in adultery? Some say you may use Romans 7:2-3 to justify remarriage, if the fornicating husband dies, but you may not use Matthew 19:9 if he lives. Strange!

There are brethren who teach that fornication committed after a civil divorce, even an unscriptural divorce, is after the fact of the civil divorce and, therefore, not a legitimate reason for the innocent party to remarry. Why? Because they say no put away person may remarry, but they ap-

prove the put away person to remarry when the one who puts her away dies. Is not the one put away still put away? Hence, they are saying that a man who divorces his faithful, innocent wife and then marries another woman that he remains the heavenly bound husband of his first wife. The first wife he put away is still bound to this fornicating degenerate, we are told.

JEWISH WOMEN

The Jewish women in the first century, especially in Palestine, were always put away by their husbands. How did they then put away their fornicating husband, other than by the *action* of dismissal and repudiation, which the Greek word *apoluo* means in regard to divorce (Thayer 66)? Jesus allowed the faithful wife to do whatever she could do or needed to do in putting away her fornicating husband (Mark 10:12; Matt. 19:9). I offer several references that show that the Jewish women could not divorce their husbands, especially in Palestine, but were always divorced by the husband. We notice:

In their commentaries on Matthew the following men stated that among the Jews the husband divorced (put away the wife: Lenski (734); Hendriksen (305); Barclay (2:197). There is the *Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings (627). Dr. Ralph Earle in *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, wrote: "Among the Jews a woman could not divorce her husband" (229). Josephus, Jewish historian, corroborates this Jewish practice (Book 15, Chapter 8, 880-881). Of course, what they said is what the Bible teaches (Deut. 24:1; Matt. 5:31; 19:7, 9).

In light of the position of the Jewish women being always the put away in Jewish culture, *how could they do what Jesus said women could do* in Mark 10:12? This is the question to which I have never had a satisfactory answer. I understand she could ask for a writing of divorcement to be granted unto her, but she still became the put away. How could she use Mark 10:12, other than by the *action* of repudiation and disavowal?

THE COURTHOUSE

In my opinion the whole crux of this controversy is over getting to the courthouse, at least in the United States. The innocent party must file or counter-sue for a divorce or he/she would be the put away and then not permitted to marry, as some reason. However, in Kentucky, as well as some other states, you cannot counter-sue, so says a Bowling Green, Kentucky lawyer who practices family law. He wrote: "There is no counter-suing." This being the fact of the matter, I suppose it really is a rush to the courthouse, if no innocent put-away person may remarry when fornication is involved.

What would you tell an innocent person who surprisingly gets his/her divorce papers in the mail and then learns the

marriage partner is going to marry another? Or what would you tell the soldier who comes home from the war and his wife has divorced him and is married to another man? Then there are those whose fornicating spouse divorces them and they had no money to counter-sue in the states where permissible? May these persons do what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9? May he/she put away *scripturally* according to Matthew 19:9 who was *unscripturally* divorced? Does an unscriptural divorce prohibit an innocent spouse from *scripturally* putting away for the cause of fornication? Brethren, I did not introduce the preceding situations as emotional arguments, but rather what would you tell them, biblically?

So, as some improperly reason, God is bound and regulated by what an ungodly spouse does in a loose, permissive court. Surely this could not be true! By the way, most courts in the United States will not permit divorce for adultery, but for irreconcilable differences or incompatibility. As one preacher said in response to this point: "God knows." Sounds a little like so-called "mental divorce" to me! Let me add in reference to marriage and divorce, we have to satisfy the legal requirements of civil government. We are to obey the laws of the land (Rom. 13) as long as they do not violate God's law (Acts 5:29).

MARRIAGE IS PERMANENT

Yes, Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife (or husband, ww), except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." I believe this with all my heart and have taught it all the years I have preached the gospel. Whenever fornication is committed *against* a faithful, innocent spouse (Mark 10:11), the innocent party may remarry (Matt. 19:9). The adultery in Mark 10:11 is *against* (*epi*) his former wife. Translations having "against" are: KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, NIV, Williams, Goodspeed, and others. Then there is Thayer's *Greek English Lexicon* that has "against" (235). Therefore, whenever a man commits fornication after divorcing his wife, he commits adultery *against* his former wife. She may then put him away (dismiss, repudiate) for fornication and marry another (Matt. 19:9). The same would be true with the husband in Mark 10:12.

I believe that marriage is permanent and when a marriage is broken up, one or both marriage partners sin. I believe that fornication is the only exception for divorce and remarriage for the innocent party.

CLARIFICATION

Some clarification needs to be made about a few expressions that we hear frequently. First, is about this second putting away argument some use. There is only *one* scriptural putting away; that authorized by the Lord. Of course, there are unscriptural divorces. An unscriptural divorce does not nullify the right of an innocent party to

scripturally put away a fornicating mate. To illustrate and help us see this matter more clearly, a person might be unscripturally baptized, like at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-5), but the second one, yes, the *one* baptism (Eph. 4:5) would be the scriptural one approved by God. Second, is sequence. A scriptural divorce, as just stated, fits the biblical sequence of (1) fornication, (2) scriptural putting away by innocent spouse, and (3) right of remarriage by innocent party. Third, is “mental divorce.” I don’t believe, nor teach, that one may just think away his/her spouse. The Bible says, “Put away” not “think away.” This expression means different things to different people and can leave the wrong impression. One man asked, “This mental divorce thing; does it mean that if my wife goes crazy that I can put her away?” The expression is misleading and prejudicial.

There are good, honorable brethren for whom I have the utmost respect, who disagree with some of the things I have written in this article who are not contentious or divisive. I believe the feeling is mutual. Let brotherly love continue!

ADDENDUM ON FACTIONALISM

Some brethren need to quit painting everybody a heretic and a false teacher, not worthy of fellowship, who may have some disagreements along the lines which this article addresses. What we don’t need is another splinter group in the church, but it looks like it is coming or has already arrived. Oh, how I remember the way it used to be thirty to forty years ago when brethren could disagree on some things and not bludgeon one another to death.

Sadly, factionalism or partyism has become far more prevalent among us. Some brethren are obsessed with

MDR. They accuse those who disagree with them on any point on this issue as false teachers and the churches who use them as compromisers of truth. Meetings are cancelled, fellowship is broken and the “heretics” are stigmatized by way of websites, e-mails, bulletins, journals, and word of mouth. There is no tolerance or compassion. What is puzzling to me is why do some now make all the particulars of MDR, like in this article, such a major issue that brethren formerly showed tolerance? Why all of a sudden is there such hostility and enmity? We had very little controversy over this specific issue before the computers came along and “loose cannons” got possession of them and started “firing away” at anything and everybody. They are like a kid with a new toy. The church would be better off if their computers were taken and thrown into the trash dump, providing they could not get their hands on another one.

A factionist, whoever he might be, who imposes his opinions and personal ideas, is guilty of causing dissensions and division in the church of the Lord. We must be real sure that what we urge and insist that brethren believe and practice is the absolute truth of the gospel. Heresy (factionalism) is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and any of us who sow discord among brethren displeases our heavenly Father (Prov. 6:19). Factionalism, extremism, yes, hobbyism, like a malignant tumor, emaciate the body of Christ.

A good church can be ruined by factionists in a few years or less, having dwindled down in size that they could meet in a one-car garage with the car in it. Whether MDR or other issues, factionalism stunts church growth, stifles joy, disturbs the peace, and creates self-righteous bigotry.

87 Ormond Dr., Scottsville, Kentucky 42164

Reply to “Some Thoughts on Divorce and Remarriage”

Connie W. Adams

My dear friend, Weldon Warnock has responded to my article in *Truth Magazine* entitled “Emotional Arguments” which appeared in the February 3, 2005 issue. As I would have expected, Weldon has clearly stated his views and has written in a kind and brotherly way. Over the years, we have been as close as any brothers in the flesh could ever be. He is a good student of the word and an able preacher of it as well. Our lives have been brought together as entertainers, preachers, in debates, in publishing work (both with *Searching the Scriptures* and *Truth Magazine*),

and now we are grandpas-in-law! We don’t intend to stop being friends.

I concur in the warnings Weldon has sounded about factionalism. The tendency to splinter and then splinter the splinter, over every point of difference is much in evidence these days. The drawing of lines and choosing of sides early in any controversy, does a disservice to the cause of Christ. It does not become any of us to develop tunnel vision and focus on one issue to the neglect of other needed things. Neither is it

helpful to array brethren against one another and seek to drive wedges. None of us reacts very well to attempts to treat us as puppets on a string who jump when the string is pulled by some nervous brother who seems to know exactly what you need to say, to whom, when to say it, and how to go about it.

This is not the first time Weldon and I have openly differed over this issue of divorce and remarriage. In 1985, when Weldon was writing the question and answer column in *Searching the Scriptures*, his reply to a question on this subject prompted a response from me (so I guess turn about is fair play) and led to an exchange between Weldon and Jim Deason. Each of us said what we had to say and then moved on to other things. Most of the material published in *Truth Magazine* over the last few years on this subject has presented the view which I hold. Very little has appeared to the contrary. In July 2004 at Bowling Green, Kentucky, we offered an open forum discussion on this subject following a panel presentation by four respected men. Mike Willis has published every article I have ever sent him, including those which touched on this issue.

I see no need for a lengthy review of all Weldon has written. We stand on the same ground on much of what is involved. But there are differences which neither of us can ignore.

EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS

We both agree that truth is not settled by emotional arguments. Weldon says his argument is scriptural, not emotional. But then we are asked what to tell a person who receives divorce papers in the mail, or a soldier home from the war whose wife has divorced him and married another man, or a woman who has no money to counter-sue. These cases do stir emotions, whatever disavowals are made to the contrary. Whatever I would tell them, or Weldon, either, would have to be no more nor less than what the few passages which address this subject have to say.

EXCEPTIONS

We are told that the statement “whosoever marries her that is put away commits adultery” is not an absolute since there are exceptions. He says these exceptions are (1) death (Rom. 7:2-3); and (2) a case such as in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 where one is either to remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. First of all, when death occurs, a marriage bond is severed. There is no marriage. Second, in the case in 1 Corinthians 7, there is no third party involved. Two people who were joined by God in the first place are “reconciled.” Now, if I grant that these are exceptions, since brother Weldon gave us the passages for them, what *other* exceptions are there, and where are the passages for them?

JEWISH WOMEN

Weldon argues that it was impossible under Jewish cus-

tom for a woman to divorce her husband since the initiative was always with the man and that consequently the only way she could put him away was by some statement of repudiation (though it had no legal force). Mark 10:11-12 says, “And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” Weldon cites several sources on this point. Roman law did provide for women to divorce their husbands and Mark wrote his gospel for a Roman audience. Besides that, Jesus taught in anticipation of the gospel of the kingdom being addressed to a world-wide audience. It was not just a Jewish gospel. Stauffer comments on this briefly in the *Truth Commentary on Mark 227*. I would hate to take the position that Jesus presented a truth which was totally useless and impossible for a large segment of society.

THE COURTHOUSE

Weldon thinks that the crux of the matter is who gets to the courthouse first. I do not believe God is bound by what ungodly men may rule, but I do believe that we are bound by what God said about one who is put away having the right to remarry. Customs and laws which regulate marriage and divorce may vary from place to place, but in every culture there is a recognized point at which two people are married and at which one puts away the other. We both agree that we are obligated to obey the laws of the land as long as they do not violate, or require us to violate God’s will. As to generic causes for divorce in most states, these are designed to include any number of specific reasons. The irreconcilable difference might well be adultery. The irretrievable breakdown might be because of adultery. There is nothing to hinder the one putting away a mate for adultery from stating that to him/her and/or putting that statement in writing. That is not just mental, but overt action.

AFTER THE FACT

When a divorce has occurred and then later on one party commits adultery, then it cannot be said that this initial putting away was for fornication. What happens after that fact cannot be the cause of it. According to what the Lord taught, it is the one who puts away the other (initiating the action), for fornication (the reason for the action) who has a right to remarry. When divorce takes place, it is usually a matter of time (waiting) until one or both will remarry. That is the force of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:31-32 “causeth her to commit adultery.” As time passes, the presumption is that she will marry, or give into a sinful relationship outside of marriage. If not, then what is the sense in what Jesus said?

As to “mental divorce,” what else can you call it when two people are already divorced and one remarries and then the other “in purpose of heart” puts away that spouse who has remarried? If a mental decision is what it takes to end a marriage, then does a mental decision constitute the beginning of one? If two people purpose in their hearts to

marry, are they married at that point and therefore entitled to the sexual privileges of the marriage bed? Would you sanction “common law” marriages? Dr. Laura calls that “shacking up” and she is right. That’s what most everybody used to call it. If “putting away” only involves “purpose of heart” then why is that not “thinking away” your mate who has already put you away? The Bible speaks of the “thoughts and intents” of the heart. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” How else can you “purpose” in your heart without “thinking” in your heart? And what other process of thinking is there besides mental activity?

While we may ponder on the civil aspects of this issue, and while our hearts may bleed for those who have been abused and mistreated by being unjustly put away, what Weldon has said about the permanence of marriage must be taken to heart. God made his laws on marriage, divorce and remarriage strict, and he did that on purpose. Marriage is the basic unit of all orderly society. When families are shaken, so are the nations in which they dwell. And as this exchange shows, so are churches and so are relations between brethren. God meant for one man and one woman to be joined in marriage for life, with one exception and that is fornication.

I know Weldon joins me in urging our readers to study this matter with an open mind and an open Bible. Every local church will have to deal with such problems when they arise on a case-by-case basis. And every local church will have to decide whom to invite for meetings and local work using their own best judgment as to the needs of each congregation.

FINAL WORD

This ends my part of this exchange. I do not intend to

carry on an unending battle. We have both stated our case the best we could, and I am content to leave it for you to study. When I preach on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, I shall continue, as I have in the past, to deal with not only what the Bible says about it, but will also review various positions which I hold to be erroneous. Some of these are more dangerous than others. The brethren who know where I stand and are willing to hear me will send for me and others will not. And that is all right with me.

“Strife, seditions and heresies” are all works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Strife is friction and it begins within the heart. It then seeks company and then those of like mind begin to pull apart from the rest. That is division in motion. That is “sedition.” “Heresies” involves the crystallizing of tenets to give legitimacy to the division. That becomes “the horse they rode out on.” We must not become one issue people. Hobby horses are dangerous critters to ride. It is hard to escape the conclusion that some have become hobby riders when we have websites devoted entirely to this one issue. Papers can become unbalanced the same way. In the minds of some this issue has become a litmus test as to whether or not some of us can work together in a private publishing business which is not the church, is not supported by contributions from churches, and which does not attempt to do the work of the church.

Should Weldon want a brief rejoinder to what I have said, that is fine with me. But this closes my part of the discussion, and I am thankful for the brotherly spirit which exists between us and intend to keep promoting that with all my heart.

P.O. Box 91346, Louisville, Kentucky 40291

My Rejoinder on Divorce and Remarriage

Weldon Warnock

For the sake of illuminating my position a little more clearly. I ask your forbearance for a few more thoughts in this rejoinder to brother Adams. These articles will be read and evaluated for now, and perhaps in years to come. I don’t want to leave anything, if at all possible, vague, ambiguous, and unanswered.

TRUTH MAGAZINE

As to more being written in *Truth Magazine* in favor of Connie’s views set forth in this exchange, I don’t know for sure. I can’t remember it being that slanted toward what we are presently discussing. To my memory I have agreed with most of the articles on divorce and remarriage. I suppose

Connie meant all the articles, generally speaking, written by the staff writers to which about all of us have concurred and have preached through the years.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES ARTICLE

In reference to the article of mine that appeared in *Searching the Scriptures* in November 1985, to which Connie alluded, was entitled, “May the Guilty Party Remarry?” The point to which Connie and Jim Deason responded was a brief parenthetical statement. Jim and I had an exchange of one article each in March 1986. Connie stated his differences in the same issue. After that we all moved on to other things. In the past few years some over-zealous

brethren have used this parenthetical statement as fodder to feed their hobby horse.

THREE MARITAL SITUATIONS

Concerning the three different cases of the person receiving divorce papers in the mail, the soldier who comes home and finds his wife had remarried and the woman who has no money to counter-sue, I agree with Connie that we have only what is written in the Bible as to the right answer. By implication, Connie's answer to these situations is that they may not remarry, but would have to live in celibacy. My answer is that the innocent parties may remarry based on Matthew 19:9. We are not talking about spouses whose mates become bank robbers, alcoholics, drug addicts or invalids, but who commit fornication. Jesus does not permit divorce and remarriage for any cause but for fornication. Fornication is involved in each one of these cases, so the innocent party may dismiss, repudiate, reject and disavow his/her guilty mate.

EXCEPTIONS

Evidently, we both agree that “whosoever marrieth her which is put away committeth adultery” (Matt. 19:9) has exceptions. Connie granted that death breaks the marriage bond and the *put away* woman may remarry. However, he wants to know where there is another exception for one who is put away to remarry? Well, that one is Matthew 19:9. In fact, the word “except” is found right in the middle of the verse — “except it be for fornication.” *The innocent woman in the latter part of the verse may do what the innocent man may do in the first part of the verse when fornication is involved.* When one is unscripturally put away by a fornicating mate, the innocent party may scripturally put away the guilty party. Else, you have Jesus teaching that an innocent spouse is forever bound, that is, a life time, by the nefarious and sexually immoral acts and deeds of a marriage partner. Thus we are told by some that the faithful, innocent wife or husband cannot, therefore, act in dissolving a marriage bond because the ungodly spouse got the civil divorce before the innocent mate did or could.

JEWISH WOMEN

The proof I offered is overwhelming that Jewish women were always put away by their Jewish husbands, especially in Palestine. I quoted Lenski, Hendriksen, Barclay, Earle, Hastings, and Josephus. The Jewish women were the *put away*. Yet, Jesus said that women can put away and remarry (Mark 10:12). How did the Jewish women do what Jesus said women could do? The Romans did not interfere in Palestine with the Jewish customs. They did not go to a Roman official and secure a divorce. Their husbands gave them a bill of divorcement, not the Romans. Hence, these innocent, put away Jewish women could scripturally remarry according to Mark 10:12, for the cause of fornication (Matt. 19:9). But if Mark 10:12 was just applicable to the non-Jewish women, then Jesus permits them to remarry

for the cause of fornication, but not the Jewish women. Surely, no one believes that! These Jewish women could dismiss, repudiate, disavow or reject their husbands. Why? Because Jesus said so in Mark 10:12 and Matthew 19:9. If they, the *put away*, could do it then, the *put away*, innocent spouse may do it today.

AFTER THE FACT

We are told that after the fact of a civil divorce, an innocent person may not put away his/her mate for fornication because there has already been a putting away, but the putting away initially was unscriptural. There was no right to put away the innocent party. The innocent spouse is given the right to put away a fornicating partner (Matt. 19:9). When no fornication exists, neither the one who puts away may remarry without committing adultery and neither may the one who is put away remarry without committing adultery (Matt. 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). To say that one can't reject when he has been rejected by a fornicating spouse is illogical. It is like saying if you forsake somebody, he cannot forsake you. But we read that, if we forsake God, he will forsake us (2 Chron. 15:2). It is fallacious to say that one cannot repudiate and dismiss his husband or wife if he or she has been beaten to the courthouse in a civil divorce.

DIVORCE

A few more words need to be said about “mental divorce.” Connie seems to think that the *legal* divorce at the courthouse precludes any further *action* in doing what God allows. He thinks that any subsequent activity could only be mental, hence, he concludes that it is “mental divorce.” I interpret what Connie wrote that, if you don't go to the courthouse in this country, then any other action would have to be mental, in the mind. But the Greek word *apoluo*, translated “put away” in Matthew 19:9 and other places is a verb of action. Thayer says it means to “dismiss from the house; repudiate” (66). This does not sound just like “mental” to me. Are you saying that an innocent spouse cannot dismiss and repudiate a fornicating mate after a civil divorce has taken place? The Jewish woman could because they were always the put away. This is true with the Moslem women in the Islamic world today. Of course, the heart is involved in a divorce as it is in a marriage. The heart must be involved in a sincere way in all our actions before God. “Blessed are the pure in heart.”

No, a couple is not married at the moment a man proposes to a woman and she accepts. Neither are they married at the moment they pick up their marriage license at the courthouse. Marriage is a covenant (Mal. 2:14). A covenant entails an agreement between two or more. When a man and a woman marry, they take vows that reflect the thoughts of their heart. Would not a marriage be of the heart, expressing by vows a commitment to one another till death they do part?

Third Cycle: Scriptural Limits of the Bible Periods

Bob Waldron

The objective in this third cycle is to reinforce yet again the list of Bible periods, to reinforce the links between the periods, to reinforce what is in each of these periods, and to show where each Bible period is set forth in Scripture. In this section we show that outlining is not inspired; it is for our convenience. One may outline a period differently than someone else. One may choose a different event to mark the end or beginning of two periods. As long as one has logical reasons for so doing, it is all right to organize material differently. Illustrate at appropriate points. During the learning process be consistent and have everyone learn the same outline. Later, individuals may modify the outline. Also remember that, in order to keep the following outline as simple as possible, we ignore partial chapters.

To encourage my students, I like to make the point that when they have learned the events listed for the first three periods, they will have learned what each of the first eleven chapters in Genesis is about. Remember that the “generations” chapters are 5 and 10. The last part of 11 is

also generations. In the previous cycles, we do not look at our Bibles, but it is important to have people look at these divisions in their Bibles. Do not get detoured into detailed studies during this cycle. If someone asks a question that can be quickly and easily answered, do so. If it is way off the subject, or would require a very lengthy answer, remind the students that this study is preparatory for a more intense study later. Let’s save our involved questions for that study.

As you help the students look for the Scriptures that begin and end the period, have them turn the pages quickly and just note what is in the chapters. Help everyone remember what is the first event and the last event in a given period and then find those events. This is the way that the scriptural limits are established.

BEFORE THE FLOOD — GENESIS 1-5.

Chapter 1: Creation of the world.

Chapter 2: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

It takes two for the marriage, but only one to destroy it. When a husband or wife commits fornication, he or she has disrupted the marriage and the innocent party may put away (dismiss, repudiate) the guilty mate (Matt. 19:9). When there is *no fornication* and a man puts away his wife and marries another, he commits adultery. The same is true with the woman who marries another. We could say: “Whosoever puts away his wife when there is no fornication and marries another commits adultery. And whoever marries her when there is no fornication commits adultery.” Fornication, the exception to the rule, makes the difference for the innocent party.

Marriage is an agreement between two people, a man and a woman. Divorce can take place when *only one* spouse acts or both may decide to divorce. When fornication is involved, the innocent may put away the guilty partner and marry another. By the way, I have never heard of a man marrying a woman, or vice versa, and she did not know it.

However, I have heard of a man divorcing his wife, or vice versa, and she/he didn’t know it. According to some brethren, this woman is trapped in celibacy, through no fault of her own, and cannot put away her fornicating husband. Let me also say: No, I don’t condone “shackin’ up,” or common law marriages. I have never sanctioned adultery.

CONCLUSION

I trust that this congenial exchange will be profitable to all who read it and that it will be received in the spirit in which both of us tried to present it. There are many ramifications to this issue in application and, in my opinion, nobody has the answer to every one of them. What happened to tolerance with some of us? I appreciate Connie’s patience and good attitude in this matter and I trust that I have manifested the same.

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Chapter 3: First sin.
Chapter 4: Cain and Abel.
Chapter 5: generations of Adam.
Fast-forwards us to the time of the flood.

One of the purposes covered by the generations is to help us to see that the Bible is leading us to the life of one man — Jesus Christ. The Bible is his story. But, as a narrative device, the generations also help us to cover many years quickly, so think of it as fast-forwarding. Also remember how we learned as children to count by five's, five, ten, fifteen — but all we have to count to remember the generation chapters is five, ten.

FLOOD — GENESIS 6-10.

Chapters 6-8: the flood itself.
Chapter 9:
• Meat for food.
• Capital punishment.
• Rainbow covenant.
• Noah's drunkenness.
Chapter 10: Generations of Noah's sons.
Fast-forwards us to time of tower of Babel.

Early in our study of this third cycle, I keep it pared down to the minimum, but as we spend several classes drilling and fixing these Scriptures in mind, I go a little more into detail and have the students learn that chapter 6 is the warning of the flood, chapter 7 is the beginning of the flood, and chapter 8 is the end of the flood.

SCATTERING OF THE PEOPLE — GENESIS 11

Tower of Babel.
Generations of Shem.
Fast-forwards us to time of the Patriarchs.

THE PATRIARCHS — GENESIS 12-50

Chapters 12-25 — Abraham.
Chapters 25-28 — Isaac.
Chapters 28-35 — Jacob.
Chapter 36 — Esau.
Chapters 37-50 — Joseph.

Be sure to turn the pages to see that the characters fit into the chapters given. In the period of the patriarchs emphasize most of all the overall period set forth in chapters. 12-50. A little later, break it down into the lives of the four characters set forth in these chapters. These Scriptures set forth the section where each patriarch is the main character, not the point from which his life begins to the time his life ends. At this point I like to have a surprise for the class and show them that, unbeknownst to them, they have learned a fine outline of the book of Genesis. Then I show how useful this is. Mention any story, or any promise to anybody in Genesis. If that story or that promise is about Abraham, where will it be found? Somewhere in Genesis

12-25, etc. I have found this a very encouraging experience for the student.

THE EXODUS — EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS 1-13.

At first, just ask what this period begins with (Israel in bondage in Egypt) and what it ends with (the refusal of the people to go up and take the land). Fix the references in mind through oral drill. I do not make a very serious effort to learn a complete breakdown as is listed below, but eventually it needs to be done. Let time and your class's success be your guide. Do not forget how important it is for you and/or your students to page through their Bibles to see for themselves where these limits are.

Exodus 1-15 — escape from Egypt.
Exodus 16-18 — journey to Mount Sinai.
Exodus 19-24 — God makes a covenant with Israel.
Exodus 25-30 — instructions for making the tabernacle and its furniture.
Exodus 31 — two special craftsmen who will direct the work.
Exodus 32-34 — Israel breaks their covenant; God renews it.
Exodus 35-40 — building of the tabernacle and setting it up.
Book of Leviticus:
• Laws given for the priests and Levites.
• Teaches concept of holiness.
Numbers 1-9:
• Census taken of people.
• Gifts of princes.
• Passover observed.
• One year since left Egypt.
Numbers 10-12 — trip from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea.
Numbers 13 — spies bring back a fearful report.

WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS — NUMBERS 14-36, DEUTERONOMY, JOSHUA 1-5

Just as we said above, emphasize Numbers 14-Joshua 5. Add the rest as there is time. Count it a success if you and the students know the references for the beginning and the end of the periods. You will see that some chapters are skipped in the following list. As you turn the pages of your Bible, you will find that the chapters skipped are dealing with the law and not with the narrative. Also, a few events are skipped just to try as much as possible to keep it simple. Remember that by now, you and/or your students should be getting a lot more familiar with these events, so the memory load in this cycle will not be too great.

Numbers 14 — People sentenced to wander in the wilderness.
Numbers 16 — Korah, Dathan, Abiram.
Numbers 17 — Aaron's rod that budded.
Numbers 20:

- Miriam's death.
- Sin of Moses and Aaron.
- Passing by Edom.
- Death of Aaron.

Numbers 21:

- Fiery serpents.
- Sihon.
- Og.

Numbers 22-24 — Balaam.

Numbers 25 — Israel commits fornication with Midianite women.

Numbers 26 — second census.

Numbers 31 — vengeance of Jehovah upon the Midianites.

Book of Deuteronomy:

- Speeches of Moses.
- Moses' death.

Joshua 1-4 - Crossing the Jordan.

Joshua 5 - Observance of the Passover.

Exactly 40 years after leaving Egypt.

INVASION AND CONQUEST — JOSHUA 4-24

Joshua 4-24 is the main reference. Learn the others as time and interest permit.

Chapters 4-8 — central campaign.

Chapters 9-10 — southern campaign.

Chapter 11 — northern campaign.

Chapter 12 — list of kings conquered.

Chapters. 13-19 — land divided.

Chapters. 20-21 — cities of refuge and other cities given to the priests and Levites.

Chapter 22 — Transjordanic tribes return home.

Chapter 23 — Joshua challenges Israel to forsake idols and to remain faithful to Jehovah.

Chapter 24 — Covenant renewed at Shechem.

JUDGES — JUDGES, RUTH, 1 SAMUEL 1-9 (UP UNTIL SAUL IS ANOINTED KING)

The first 13 judges are told about in the book of Judges.

Stories of Eli and Samuel are told only in 1 Samuel.

I like to use 1 Samuel to illustrate my point about organization. If I organize 1 Samuel according to content, then I like to say it is about three men: Samuel, Saul, and David. The first eight chapters are primarily about Samuel, chapters 9-15 are primarily about Saul, and chapters 16-31 are primarily about David. If I want to divide 1 Samuel chronologically, then I say the first 9 chapters finish the period of the judges. Chapters 10-31 are the United Kingdom, and the reign of Saul. One thing that encourages learning is to take data learned and require the mind to sort it in different ways. 1 Samuel furnishes an excellent opportunity for this. *Oral drill will fix these details in mind. Do not be discouraged. Give yourself time and keep working.*

In a way, the greatest challenge in learning the scriptural limits of each Bible period occurs in the next three periods. The main difficulty is that there are two parallel accounts. A second difficulty is that there is an awful lot of information to keep up with.

UNITED KINGDOM

1 Samuel 10 - 1 Kings 11.

We have learned that 1 Samuel 9 is the end of the Judges, so the United Kingdom begins with 1 Samuel 10. Look in your Bible and see what chapter 10 tells about (*the anointing of Saul*).

Now turn the pages through 2 Samuel and 1 Kings until you find the the death of Solomon. What chapter is his death recorded in? This chapter, then, marks the end of the United Kingdom.

Now we need to look at the parallel account.

I sometimes call these parallel narratives A narrative and B narrative, and sometimes first narrative and second narrative. Just be sure your students know what you mean by whatever term you use.

Also take the time to show your students that narrative A begins in Genesis and proceeds from one book to the next book until 1 Chronicles. This is the main narrative. Then in 1 and 2 Chronicles we have a very important parallel narrative that we call narrative B, or second narrative. The reason why I use these terms is it is quicker to say A narrative than to say 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. The main thing is that your students



The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come To God

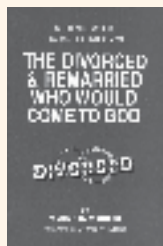
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A Review of Homer Hailey's The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come To God

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are to know that we have to deal with parallel accounts through these periods.

1 CHRONICLES 10 - 2 CHRONICLES 9:

In the parallel account we find Saul's death in 1 Chronicles 10.

We find the death of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 9. So that chapter marks the close of the United Kingdom.

(This is the main part to emphasize.)

Now let's give the references for each individual king who ruled over the United Kingdom.

Saul:

- 1 Samuel 10: Saul is anointed king.
- 1 Samuel 31: Saul's death.
- Therefore the life of Saul is set forth in 1 Samuel 10-31.

When we go to the parallel account in 1 Chronicles:

- The first nine chapters are given to genealogical records.
- The only reference to Saul in 1 Chronicles is his death in chapter 10.
- Therefore almost everything we know about Saul is in 1 Samuel.

David:

- David is king throughout almost the entire book of 2 Samuel.
- He is anointed king over Judah at the beginning of chapter 2. Therefore for convenience sake, think of David's reign as being told in 2 Samuel.
- He lives on into 1 Kings, but he makes Solomon his successor in chapter 1 of that book. Again, we emphasize that David's reign is almost completely confined to 2 Samuel. Leave the little details until later.
- In 1 Chronicles, we find David's rule from chapter 11 through chapter 29.

Solomon:

- In the Kings narrative, Solomon is made king in 1 Kings 1 and dies in chapter 11, so 1 Kings 1-11 is the reign of Solomon.
- In the Chronicles account, Solomon begins his rule in 2 Chronicles 1, and his death is recorded in chapter 9. Therefore Solomon's reign is set forth in 2 Chronicles 1-9.

DIVIDED KINGDOM

1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 17:

- Since the divided kingdom begins after the death of Solomon, in the first narrative it starts in 1 Kings 12.
- And it ends with the northern kingdom of Israel being carried away into captivity, it ends in 2 Kings 17.

2 Chronicles 10 - 29:

- In the second narrative, since the death of Solomon is in 2 Chronicles 9, the divided kingdom begins in chapter 10.
- The close of the Divided Kingdom is not as clearly set forth in 2 Chronicles as it is in 2 Kings. Our best estimate is chapter 29.

I cannot over-emphasize how important it is to have the students leaf through their Bibles to find these events that mark the beginning and end of these periods. That way they see that these divisions are based on fact.

Drill, drill, drill. Have everyone go through the process several times of looking up the references as described above. Then require more and more response from memory.

This is the period when the writing prophets began their work, but I do not take time to emphasize their work on this time through the material, lest it seem overwhelming to the student. The prophets can be added later.

JUDAH ALONE

2 Kings 18-25:

- Since Judah alone follows the fall of Israel, and Israel is taken away in 2 Kings 17, Judah alone begins in 2 Kings 18.
- It closes with the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity in chapter 25.
- 2 Chronicles 29-36:
 - Likewise, in the second narrative, since the fall of Israel probably happens about the time of 2 Chronicles 29, Judah alone begins in chapter 30,
 - And continues to the end of the book, chapter 36.

CAPTIVITY (THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND EZEKIEL)

I like to point out that there is actually an over-lapping of the periods of Judah alone and the Captivity, because the captivity began before Judah fell. Captives such as Daniel and his friends were carried away in 2 Kings 24, and 2 Chronicles 36, as was Ezekiel, but to keep it simple, I just emphasize that Daniel and Ezekiel are where we get our information about the captivity and go into no more detail than this.

RETURN — THE BOOKS OF EZRA, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, ESTHER, NEHEMIAH, AND MALACHI

Ezra 1-6 — the first return in 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel and Jeshua (the high priest):

- They rebuild the temple.

Books of Haggai and Zechariah: at that same time Haggai and Zechariah prophesy.

Book of Esther:

The story of Esther occurs between Ezra 6 and 7.

Ezra 7-10: Second return, under Ezra, 458 B.C.

Book of Nehemiah:

- Nehemiah comes in 445 B.C. to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Book of Malachi: the period ends with his work.

Having emphasized the people in the Return earlier, now let's pull the books together. There are Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Nehemiah, and Malachi. *Drill until the students can list the times of the returns, the people of the returns, and the books of the return.*

YEARS OF SILENCE — NO SCRIPTURE

I go into no detail in this cycle on the last three periods. The years of silence have no Scriptures to learn, and most people are familiar with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Acts. Then, whether they can say the epistles or not, they at least can find that they all follow Acts.

Life of Christ — Gospel accounts.

Early church — Acts.

Letters to Christians — Epistles and Revelation.

Fourth Cycle — A Lifetime of Study

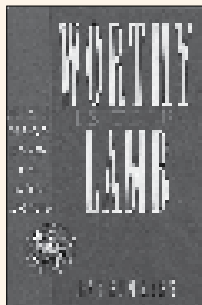
Often I am asked, "What is the next cycle?" It is the most important cycle of all. If you have been following this outline carefully, you now have the "boxes ready in the warehouse," the "files ready on your hard drive," the "skeleton" ready for all future Bible study.

The next cycle is learning what is in every chapter, learning every story in detail, learning the message of every prophet and of every epistle. Go back and get well acquainted with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Walk with Moses and the Israelites through the Red Sea. Stand with them at the foot of Mount Sinai and hear Jehovah speak aloud. Walk through that "great and terrible wilderness" to

Kadesh-barnea. Then cross the Jordan with them into the promised land. Watch Samson lift those gates of Gaza and carry them over hill and dale to the hill just outside the walls of Hebron. Let David become one of your best friends. Weep as the kingdom falls apart, and as those kingdoms become more and more wicked. Stand in the streets of Israel and hear Amos and Hosea cry out their messages of doom. Ask the question of "why" with Habakkuk and hear God's answer. Weep with Jeremiah as he stands looking at the deserted, wasted city of Jerusalem. Rejoice — and yet weep — as the temple is rebuilt in Zerubbabel's day. Then live through the years of silence when God seems to ignore his people by sending no prophet. Stand beside the altar of incense with Zacharias and hear an angel speak for the first time in over 400 years. Rejoice with the shepherds as the angels announce the birth of the long awaited Messiah. Let Jesus become your most intimate friend. Stand in awe at the empty tomb. Hear the sound of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and listen to Peter proclaim the gospel for the first time. Watch as the early church grows — and then is persecuted and scattered. But see that hardship only makes it grow faster. Walk with Paul over all Asia Minor. Sing with him in the dungeon at Philippi. Sit beside him as he writes to fellow-saints and pours out his heart to them, to help them overcome some problem or to grow in their understanding of some concept about this new kingdom of the Lord. Finally stand with John on the island of Patmos and see the marvels of the great revelation, the beautiful glimpse of the final victory of the Lord and his saints.

It is a lifelong goal. It is one that can be accomplished, and it is infinitely and eternally rewarding. The small effort is as nothing in comparison to the eternal weight of glory awaiting us (2 Cor. 4:16-18). "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15)!

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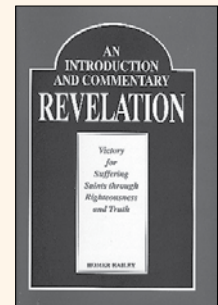
Worthy Is The Lamb
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“Me-Centered Religion” continued from front page the spirit of self-sufficiency and autonomy that we here condemn. Whenever human beings have obeyed the Lord, whether as individuals or as nations, they have benefitted greatly. On the other hand disobedience to God has always brought troubles. The Christian belongs to God in a special sense, having been bought by him for a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20). He is obligated to live to God’s glory in both body and spirit. Any doubters need to consult the inhabitants of Sodom, Jonah, or the nation of Israel to learn the value of seeking the guidance of God in their lives.

Be yourself. Guided by the basic understanding of individual autonomy, legions have fallen victim to the appeal of one strain of modern psychiatry to live out their own individual dreams, to actualize their own potential in an effort to maximize their self-realization. The most important person is “you,” and the most significant culture is self-development along lines of one’s own choosing. Nothing that hinders the developing of self is allowable; all else becomes secondary.

Against this incorrigible spirit of self-determinism lies the demand of God for the alteration of self (Gal. 2:20). Only when the old self is crucified and the new self is formed in one’s life, according to the image of Jesus Christ, does one become spiritually useful to this world. To remain in the old mode of sinful living is to remain a spiritual drag and part of the world’s principal problem. The changes wrought by the Lord through the power of his Spirit-given word produce a life that is both salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). Only in subordinating oneself to the will of Christ does one escape the slavery to sin that captures the old self (Rom. 6:10-18).

2. Your own self-realization is more important than any externally imposed creed. With the dominance of self imbedded in the modern psyche, the groundwork is likewise laid for rejection of creeds (any religious idea or ideal that infringes upon what the individual desires or conflicts with it). The stubborn will of the individual becomes the impenetrable wall guarding the person against any biblical concept of God or man. As the Gentiles rejected the idea of God, so have many today similarly repudiated him. Lip service is too often the only service offered, and that until the conscience no longer cries out for something more. No one knows you better than you do, and nobody thinks more highly of you than you do. Thus one reasons himself into a stance of rejecting all that affords not the pleasure, contentment, or satisfaction that self demands. He then forms attitudes, speaks, and acts on the basis of what will promote his own self-realization (or self-actualization).

The value of the benevolent will of God should never be set aside. God has never spoken from whim but for man’s earthly and eternal good (Deut. 6:24). God’s own selfish

pleasure has never been the motive behind the divine mind or plan, and man’s own selfish pleasure is always the motive that short-circuits the divine plan (Jas. 4:3; Matt. 6:24).

3. Express the deity (God) within you. Though the materialist does not believe in any deity, he acts as if man is deity. He worships and serves the creature — both idols and self — rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Others seem to think that the human being is somewhat divine, though they fail to believe in God in any genuine biblical sense. The outcome of this endeavor is the defying of God and the deifying of man. The saddest reality of the present is that many live their lives as if there is no God. In doing so, they impede their own spiritual development and, to some degree, obstruct the salutary influence of the Bible.

SOURCES OF ME-CENTERED THINKING

Every major stream has its tributaries; this “stream” of thought is no exception. Into it have flowed the influential contributions of many decades, thus gradually conditioning the minds of people for an acceptance of what once was unthinkable. What are these sources?

1. Denominational creeds. They have fostered the idea of diversity of thought about God and his service as acceptable. They have also encouraged people to believe what they wish, making humans the final arbiters of what they choose.

2. New Age Thought/Eastern Religions. Being a hodgepodge of religious thought, it offers people something they want, encourages people’s autonomous view of themselves, and presents a view of humans as divine.

3. Secularism. Possibly its major contribution has been its “Don’t Worry — Be Happy” thinking.

4. Pluralism. This concept has become a major contributing stream in its stress on there being many paths to God.

5. Ecumenicalism. Recent decades have witnessed the merging of different religious bodies by the surrender of convictions and beliefs. In such a climate, it becomes acceptable to surrender God-required teaching to the pre-eminence of the individual.

6. Segmental Role of God. Too often God has been assigned his place in life, which has usually been some small part of life or some particular time in life, instead of the totality of one’s life. Such thinking motivates one thinking of himself as superior to God.

It is easy to see the convergence of these varied sources into the stream of me-centered religion. How many of us have not been victimized to some extent by the thinking

“Divorce” continued from page 2

That these brethren disagree on the subject before us has been known publicly for over twenty years. While Connie was editing *Searching the Scriptures*, Weldon and Jim Deason had an exchange in its pages on this subject. Connie took editorial exception with what Weldon wrote to distance himself from Weldon’s position. The subject was discussed and dropped. These brethren continued to work together in spite of their differences after each one had written what he had to say. It was a healthy exchange of ideas without the breach of fellowship. We anticipate the same in this discussion.

Both Weldon and Connie have a commitment to teach and obey the teaching of Jesus on divorce and remarriage. Jesus said, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt. 19:9). Both of these men believe that (1) marriage is intended to be a lifetime relationship between one man and one woman; (2) marriage is dissolved by death and frees the survivor to marry again; (3) there is one cause for divorce (fornication) which gives the innocent party the right of remarriage; (4) anyone who divorces for any other cause and remarries is living in adultery and must cease the practice of adultery in order to be faithful to God; (5) God’s law of marriage applies to both alien sinners and Christians. They disagree on some details in the application of this law, just as all brethren will disagree among themselves at times on similar points.

To give a parallel, all of us agree that the Lord established the Lord’s supper to be observed by Christians. We are agreed that the Lord’s supper (1) consists of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine; (2) should be observed on the first day of the week; (3) should be partaken of by all Christians (that is, the Christian should partake of both the cup and bread, not a priest taking of the cup for the observant); (4) is a memorial of Christ’s atoning death and an anticipation of his second coming. However, in the common faith we have about the Lord’s supper, brethren are disagreed at times on some details in its application. Some believe that there should be only one serving of the

here reviewed. May all of us guard our hearts diligently, that we might subject ourselves to God. We must view ourselves as bondservants of Jesus Christ and even speak of ourselves in this way. What a difference between the way we have viewed such matters and the way Paul frequently spoke of himself!

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Lord’s supper on the Lord’s day, that if one member partakes in an assembly then all should partake (even if some have already partaken in a previous assembly), that one may take the Lord’s supper to those who are unable to be present at the services for various reasons, that the grape juice cannot contain added vitamin C, that the unleavened bread should be formally crumbled before it is passed to the members, that members should bake the unleavened bread instead of using store bought matzos, that all members should drink the fruit of the vine from one cup, that the one cup represents the new covenant, etc. We have only had problems with reference to the last two mentioned items because a group of brethren made them conditions of salvation and fellowship for all men. Brethren have erred who equated serving the Lord’s supper on Sunday evening to those who were unable to attend on Sunday morning or who required a formal breaking of the loaf before serving it with partaking of the Lord’s supper on Thursday night. Such is a mixture of apples and oranges as the proverb expresses it. The same mixture of “apples and oranges” occurs when someone equates differences on the application of the one marriage law on which we are all agreed with teaching a totally different law on marriage, such as brother Hailey did.

In the same way, brethren who are agreed on the broad principles of Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage have had differences with respect to some details in its application through the years without that dividing brethren. Fellowship has been affected only when men have espoused and pressed sweeping theories which nullify the principle given by Jesus, thus making the application of his law mute in general (all may remarry regardless of the circumstances of their divorce; the marriage law has no application to the world at large; etc.). More recently, however, some among us have become factional to the point of trying to create a division among brethren over any number of nuances on “mental divorce.”

“Mental divorce” is a term with a broad spectrum of meaning. It is not specific enough to identify what one means when he says, “This brother believes in ‘mental divorce.’” On the left end of the spectrum, “mental divorce” is used to describe the “waiting game,” a marriage in which both parties agree to a divorce and each party tries to wait out the other with the view that the one who commits adultery first or remarries first frees the other party to remarry. The term “mental divorce” first appeared in that context. Faithful brethren far and wide have rejected this corrupt concept from the first. To my knowledge, no one associated with *Truth Magazine* holds that position.

At the other end of the spectrum are brethren who hold a variety of ideas. One says that unless the divorce papers say “for fornication,” the innocent party does not have the right of remarriage. Those who conclude the innocent party

is permitted to remarry under such circumstances may be charged with “mental divorce.” Another says unless the innocent party files the papers for divorce he does not have the right of remarriage. Another says the innocent party may counter sue the guilty party who initiates divorce proceedings and still have a right to remarriage. Some brethren charge that this amounts to “mental divorce.”

Another says that, should the judge rule in answer to the guilty party’s petition to dissolve the marriage, the innocent party is not free to remarry even if she has counter sued. Another says that, should the guilty party initiate and obtain the dissolution of the marriage, the innocent party is free to remarry if she makes a statement to the elders, to the family, or to someone before the papers are completed at the court house. Another says the same, except that such a statement does not have to be made before the papers are completed at the court house. Still others disagree over whether the faithful innocent mate in Mark 10:11 may repudiate her adulterous mate and remarry (“whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another committeth adultery against her”). I list all of the variations about “mental divorce” to show the ambiguity of the expression, not to prejudice our readers about the subject before us.

In recent months, some brethren have pressed the “mental divorce” issue to the point of being obsessed with the idea and becoming factional. Such brethren mark out a space for themselves on the spectrum of “mental divorce” and then call on all brethren to withdraw from everyone to their left, all the while ignoring that there are brethren to their right calling on brethren to withdraw from those to the left of each respective brother, including him. When asked how they intend to respond to those brethren to their right who are calling for others to withdraw from him, these brethren act as if there is no cause to even consider that problem.

The subject of “mental divorce” has become a hot topic ever since Ed Harrell and others wrote articles and preached sermons condemning those who replied to Homer Hailey’s admittedly false teaching on divorce and remarriage. Brother Harrell wrote, “Many congregations would not accept into their fellowship the divorced persons accepted by Hailey, and many would not invite him to preach because of the view he holds. Other congregations are more flexible on both questions. . . . Others, rightly I believe, have decided to use him in spite of the difference” (“Homer Hailey: False Teacher?” *Christianity Magazine*, November 1988, 8). In defending an on-going fellowship with Homer Hailey in spite of his false teaching on divorce and remarriage, these brethren said that there is no difference in having an on-going fellowship with those who differ on “mental divorce” and those who teach what Olan Hicks, Homer Hailey, Glen Lovelady, Jerry Bassett, and Jim Puterbaugh teach. (The implication of this argument is this: Since the one

using the argument advocates an on-going fellowship with those who differ on “mental divorce,” he also believes in an on-going fellowship with those who teach what Hicks, Hailey, Lovelady, Bassett, and Puterbaugh teach. Whether or not the one who makes this argument is willing to accept its conclusion varies from individual to individual.) Since that argument was first made by brother Harrell, a group of brethren have made it a primary thrust of their work to call attention to any person associated with the Guardian of Truth Foundation who might not agree with their particular set of definitions, prohibitions, and nuances relating to “mental divorce.” Let me frankly say that among the Guardian of Truth Board Members and staff writers for the magazine, we have some disagreements in these areas. We humbly respect each other’s conscience and work together as one, based on our common commitment to the one law of divorce (one man, one woman, one exception) which Jesus revealed in Matthew 19:9 and other passages.

For several years, members of the Guardian of Truth Foundation have been singled out to pit one brother against another. “I don’t understand how brother ____ can work with brother ____ inasmuch as they have disagreements on” some aspect of the “mental divorce” issue. Web sites have been started and maintained with the transparent motive of attacking members of our Board and staff. Staff members have been asked out for lunch, interrogated about what they believe about this situation, and then written up in magazines as “false teachers” because they answered as honestly as they knew how the questions the individual asked, though they have never preached on the subject.

Truth Magazine associates are fair game; whatever they preach or teach is open to the same review as that which is taught by anyone else. However, let’s not be so naive as to think that the only ones who have questions about the “mental divorce” issue are those associated with *Truth Magazine*. For example, when the discussion about an on-going fellowship with Homer Hailey in spite of his false doctrine on divorce and remarriage first emerged, Ed Harrell wrote regarding the debate on this issue between Marshall Patton and H.E. Phillips, “*Searching the Scriptures* recently published a debate on divorce in which H.E. Phillips and Marshall Patton, two old and esteemed friends of mine, argued contrary views. If Phillips is correct, Patton is condoning sinful relationships. Both men cannot be right. *In that discussion, I cast my vote in favor of Patton’s argument*” (*Christianity Magazine*, Nov. 1988, 8, emp. mine). Where is the opposition to brother Harrell in his support of brother Patton’s view? (I wonder if brother Harrell has a file full of letters canceling subscriptions and gospel meetings because of his 1988 endorsement of brother Patton.) My point here is not to raise opposition against brother Harrell on his agreement with brother Patton. I am simply showing the inconsistency of those who would publicly oppose one of us if we held brother Patton’s view, but who

keep silence when brother Harrell acknowledges the same view. Jesus in Matthew 7:1-5 warns against such myopic inconsistency.

Brother Harrell is not the only brother not associated with *Truth Magazine* who comes down on that side of this discussion. How then does one explain the remarkable silence about those men who come down on that same side of the “mental divorce” issue who are not associated with *Truth Magazine*?

How can those who are such vocal critics of those associated with *Truth Magazine* on the “mental divorce” issue participate in lectureships with those who condemned brethren for drawing a line of fellowship against Homer Hailey, conduct meetings at congregations where the editors of *Christianity Magazine* work, and ignore others who also have acknowledged their agreement with the position brother Patton espoused in the Phillips-Patton discussion?

Pardon me for concluding that such brethren are, at the best, showing partiality in their judgments and, at the worst, are guilty of malice toward those brethren in Christ who are associated with *Truth Magazine*. “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:16). Let those who see themselves in the comparisons I have outlined not take offense, but, rather, let them examine their own hearts before God in these matters. Perhaps some, until now, have been blind to their inconsistency in these controversies. What they do now will determine their integrity.

Some of us need to get back on focus and realize Satan is using all of this to discourage and divide God’s people. Brethren who share a conservative, Bible-oriented respect for the authority of Christ uphold Christ’s law on marriage in Matthew 19 and similar passages. Yet, we always have

and always will differ in some degree about certain details, difficulties, judgments, scruples, opinions, nuances, and some points of application. This is true of every Bible subject! Such differences can be discussed from time to time in a healthy way, with respect for each other’s conscience, and without any of us pressing to make all of our personal conclusions the final standard for all the rest of us. In this atmosphere, we all can continue to grow and mature spiritually, and even learn to correct our course if we find we have drifted, and through it all to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).

Truth Magazine has always tried to provide a forum which is open, honest, and balanced so as to cultivate such an atmosphere among brethren deeply committed to the authority of Christ in all things. A hallmark of this paper has been its policy of allowing brethren to express differences within this atmosphere of openness and impartiality, but without becoming obsessed with anyone’s favorite subject or hobby. Different views and exchanges have been published by respected, responsible men on our staff and other good men not on the staff. When false doctrines and apostate movements undermining the authority of God’s word have arisen through the years, we have not hesitated to refute them in a direct and determined manner, and without respect to persons. Our posture has not changed in that regard one iota, in spite of the insinuations and slurs of certain men at times. By the same token, we recognize another serious danger and we do not hesitate to caution all brethren about it, without respect of persons. Envy, strife, partiality, and factions can be destructive to our souls and to the cause of Christ, just as surely as a liberal mindset can be.

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Preacher Needed

Lake Charles, Louisiana: The Southside Church in Lake Charles is looking for a preacher. If interested, please send resume and references to southsidecoc@juno.com or contact Paul Sullins at 337-436-0477.

Quips & Quotes

Changing Muslim Ways

“New York — A female professor led an Islamic prayer service Friday with men in the congregation despite sharp criticism from Muslim religious leaders in the Middle East, who complained that it violated centuries of tradition.

Amina Wadud, a professor Islamic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, led the service at Synod House at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, an Episcopal church Manhattan.

“Some Islamic scholars have said they were aware of a few other mixed-gender prayer meetings led by women, mostly in the West, but they are rare.

“The issue of gender equality is a very important one in Islam, and Muslims have unfortunately used highly restrictive interpretations of history to move backward,” Wadud said before the service. “With this prayer service, we are moving forward. This single act is symbolic of the possibilities within Islam” (*The Indianapolis Star* [March 19, 2005], 15).

Second Annual Truth Magazine Lectures

July 11-14-2005

The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible

Bowling Green, Kentucky — Sloan Convention Center

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00 - 8:50	What About Islam and the Qu'ran? Kyle Pope	Is the Biblical Text Reliable? John Smith	Are There Lost Books of The Bible? Mark Mayberry
9:00 - 9:50	The Glorious Church Rody Gumpad	Evidences: Prophecy: Kevin Maxey	Evidences: Unity of Bible: Steve Wallace
10:00 - 10:50	Addictive Behaviors Pornography: Steve Wolfgang	Addictive Behaviors Substances of Abuse: Art Adams	Addictive Behaviors Gambling: Joe Price
11:00 - 11:50	Creation: Dan King	Genesis 3: Paul Blake	Genesis 6-8, The Flood: Tom O'Neal
Lunch Break			
Ladies Classes			
10:00 - 10:50	Helping Christians Ad-dicted to Pornography: Bette Wolfgang	Teaching Children to Respect Authority: Sherilyn Mayberry	Creating Peace At Home Violet McDaniel
Auditorium			
2:00 - 4:00	Open Forum		Elders & Work of the Church
Singing Led by Various Song Leaders 7:00 - 7:30			
What Does the Bible Claim For Itself? Donnie V. Rader	Is the Bible Applicable to the Modern World? Walton Weaver	Oh How Love I Thy Law: Johnie Edwards (After Wednesday evening Bible Study)	First Century Morals for the Twenty-first Century: Andy Alexander

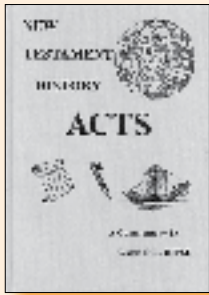
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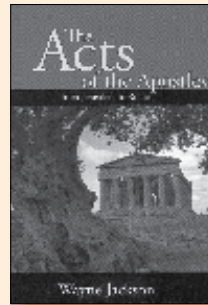
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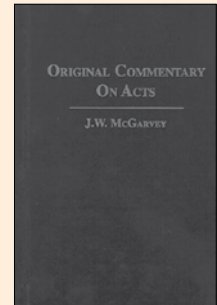
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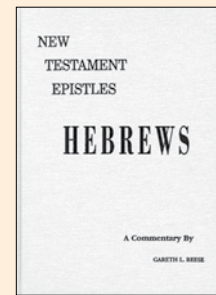
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