THE TRUTH ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

By Gene C. Carter

All the elements of good which yet remain in human society today stand in jeopardy--in constant danger of destruction from certain, cataclysmic, forces of evil which are raging night and day throughout the entire earth. A general process of moral disintegration is now making tragic inroads on everything dear to the peace and happiness of all mankind. Sacred institutions, Godly precepts, high ideals, old-fashioned virtues, are fast slipping from the public conscience! Here in America we witness an ever-increasing departure from the principles upon which this nation was founded. The general attitude today has become one of callous, apathetic, indifference to the sober realities looming large on the horizon. Crime, violence, bloodshed, broken homes and juvenile delinquency is sweeping onward in avalanche proportions...carrying untold millions into the depths of agony, degradation, and death. And yet there are many who would dare to ask, What has mankind to fear? Of what evils do you speak? To whom I would reply, Who can deny that this present world in which we find ourselves is not an evil world? Who can honestly refute the facts...the certainty that we stand in this year of 1953 in momentous times? A time of widespread immorality and of growing disregard for those things which are eternally sacred?

By everything in the Bible we of this present generation are undoubtedly living in THE TIME OF THE END...THE CLOSING AND CLIMACTIC DAYS OF THIS PRESENT EVIL AND UNHAPPY WORLD (Gal. 1:4, 1st John 5:19). As we are told in Daniel 12, this is the prophesied time when knowledge was to be greatly increased and when many would be traveling to and fro (verse 4). And as we find in Matthew and Luke, this is the time of world wars, of nations and groups of nations fighting against each other on an international scale (Matt. 24:3-8, Luke 21:9-10, Rev. 6:4, Isa. 57:20-21). This is also THE TIME OF DROUTHS AND FAMINES, DISASTROUS HURRICAINES AND TORNADOES, EARTHQUAKES AND VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS, TIDAL WAVES AND DAMAGING FLOODS (Matt. 24:7 & Luke 21:11, 25-26). Without contradiction the condition of this troubled and unhappy world worsens by the hour, as all nations continue plunging headlong down the path of willful disobedience--fondly called "Civilization"--which they have defiantly established as their way of life. Faster and faster the human race hurtles to its self-imposed destruction--suffering intense anguish and torment along the way--brought on by wanton violation of the Creator's expressed will and Holy Laws (Deut. 31:16-18 and 32:18-20, 23-29).

Yes, many Bible prophecies are now in process of fulfillment before our very eyes. But still greater, catastrophic, world-shaking events are destined to take place between now and the prophesied end of man's present faulty system of things here on earth (Matt. 24:21-22 & 29, Zeph. 1:14-18, Rev. 6:14-17). Every thinking Christian should rejoice to know that THE TIME OF CHRIST'S VISIBLE RETURN (Matt. 24:30, Luke 21:27) TO EARTH--as the Supreme World Ruler and Chief Religious Head (Isa. 9:6-7, Dan. 2:44, Luke 1:32-33, Micah 4:1-5, Rev. 19:11-16, etc.)--IS NOW WITHIN SIGHT--although perhaps still another 25 or 30 years away. So far as men and their behavior before God is concerned, we see tragically fulfilled today the descriptive indictment of 2nd Timothy 3:1-7, where the Apostle Paul said the following:"This know also, that IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, TRUCE-BREAKERS (breaking marriage vows and other contracts), FALSE ACCUSERS (when filing suit for divorce, etc.), incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, TRAITORS (to God, to marriage-partners, etc.), heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of Godliness (professing Christians of all the many false sects and denominations), but denying the power thereof (refusing to follow Christ's example and obey God's Commands): from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with various lusts, EVER LEARNING (all the inventions of modern science), AND NEVER ABLE TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH (still rejecting the laws of God above: John 17:17, Romans 1:28-32, Hosea 4:1-7, 2nd Thess. 2:10)."

Marriage Is A Divine Institution!

One of the fundamental aspects regarding the institution of MARRIAGE is the fact that it IS A UNION ORDAINED BY GOD HIMSELF, intended to be a great blessing to all who correctly fulfill and honor its demands! It is not an arbitrary union devised by men, with the privilege of cancelling out whenever either party might desire other pastures, or

whenever some adverse combination of circumstances and personalities arises to try and test one's patience, love, and understanding. In the 2nd chapter of Genesis, verse 18, our Eternal Creator made this conclusive statement:"...It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Then, in verses 21-24 of the same chapter, we find the account of Eve's creation. Listen closely:"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He into a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. THEREFORE SHALL A MAN leave his father and mother, and shall CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE: AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH."

Approximately 4,000 years after Adam spoke these inspired words, Jesus Christ appeared on the scene and with forcible emphasis repeated Adam's remarks. In Mark 10:6-8, He boldly declared the following:"... From the beginning of the creation GOD MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. FOR THIS CAUSE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE; AND THEY TWAIN SHALL BE ONE FLESH: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh." Who is it that joins a man and woman together as husband and wife? It is not, as some seem to think, the presiding minister, priest, or justice of the peace. IT IS GOD AND GOD ALONE WHO "TIES THE KNOT." IT IS GOD WHO MAKES THEM ONE! Why does a man feel attracted to a woman and wish to leave his parents? Because the Eternal Creator has purposely made the two sexes, each to want and to need the other, in order to have the full and happily productive life which He has ordained. Those who criticize and condemn the exercise of sexual relations between a properly married man and woman are guilty of criticizing and condemning God Himself. It is the Devil who prevails upon the narrow-minded and ignorant to pervert or otherwise misuse and abuse the God-given privilege and pleasure of properly directed and controlled sexual relations. At this point let us firmly bear in mind the undeniable fact that the Creator purposely made the two sexes, each for the respective good of the other, and that He is the one who ratifies, seals and binds any lawfully legitimate marriage contract entered into by those who voluntarily wish to take each other as husband and wife.

Let Not Man Put Asunder!

How very little this stern warning from Christ is considered and obeyed today! And, by many who claim to be His devoted and obedient followers! Once having created Adam and Eve, joining them together in Holy Wedlock, God never intended that they or their descendants should commit the senseless folly of such wanton, unauthorized, divorce and remarriage as so many have indulged in through the centuries--especially during the past fifty years. Regrettably however, as is shown by several scriptures, the sordid practice of callously divorcing one's mate --for many reasons other than the one and only cause allowed by God-- soon made its ugly appearance in human society. Consider with me now the full import and significance of Matthew 19:3-6:"The Pharisees also came unto Him (Christ), tempting Him, and saying unto Him, IS IT LAWFUL (according to the Bible) FOR A MAN TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE FOR EVERY CAUSE? (Then, as now, such was the common practice among many--including those who professed to be Christians!). And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? WHAT THEREFORE GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER!

How this last ringing statement from Christ must have shaken their faith in the inherited Jewish traditions governing divorce and remarriage! Not another word from Christ should have been necessary, but to try and justify themselves and salve their guilty consciences they asked Him the following question:"...Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" (Verse 7). What Christ said in reply to this question constitutes one of the most misconstrued and misinterpreted verses of the entire Bible! Hardly anyone yet today seems to understand, and yet the meaning is quite plain when all the facts are honestly considered. Here was His reply:"He saith unto them, MOSES BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF YOUR HEARTS SUFFERED YOU TO PUT AWAY YOUR WIVES: BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO." Both Our Saviour and His questioners in this conversation were referring to Deut. 24:1-4, an old testament passage on which the Jews and many other have done much wishful thinking, and from which they have drawn many wrong conclusions regarding divorce.

Follow closely now and we will let scripture explain scripture!

What Is Fornication?

Immediately after telling the hypocritical Pharisees that from the very beginning it had not been God's will to sanction such divorce as the Israelites began to practice during Moses' time, Christ then went on to say this:"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 (for some reason other than for the cause of fornication) doth commit adultery." In this verse Our Lord gives all mankind THE ONE AND ONLY BIBLE GROUNDS FOR OBTAINING A DIVORCE! What reason does He give? Two things are mentioned in this verse which we have not encountered previously in this study. One is called "fornication," the other is called "adultery." But, notice, of the two it is ly for the act of fornication which Christ tells us any man has the right in God's sight to put away his wife!

For an authentic definition of the word "fornication," let's turn now to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 5th edition, page 395, where we find the following:"ILLICIT (unlawful) SEXUAL INTERCOURSE ON THE PART OF AN UNMARRIED PERSON." This definition is based upon and is fully substantiated by several significant texts in both the old and new testaments. In Deut. 22:13-19, the matter of PREMARITAL RELATIONS is specifically dealt with. In this passage Moses wrote the following explicit instructions, which he had received from God, governing the possibility of divorce:"If any man take a wife, and go in unto her (has intercourse with her on their wedding night), and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I TOOK THIS WOMAN, AND WHEN I CAME TO HER, I FOUND HER NOT A MAID: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth THE TOKENS OF THE DAMSEL'S VIRGINITY unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter to this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I FOUND NOT THY DAUGHTER A MAID; and YET THESE ARE THE TOKENS OF MY DAUGHTER'S VIRGINITY. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.' And the elders of that city shall amerce (levy a fine) him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon A VIRGIN of Israel: and SHE SHALL BE HIS WIFE; HE MAY NOT PUT HER AWAY ALL HIS DAYS."

Friends, how can anyone fail to realize the sobering impact of these plain words from the lips and pen of Moses? In them he states the ONE AND ONLY BIBLE REASON FOR OBTAINING A DIVORCE...THE REASON OF FORNICATION...PREMARITAL INTERCOURSE! Let's understand. It is God's loving will that both a man and a woman come to the sacred estate of marriage as virgins--neither one having had any sexual relations before marriage. It is His will that each have a mate untouched and undefiled by fornicating relations with someone else before marriage. It is a crime against God, against one's own self, and against one's marriage-partner to indulge in promiscuous intercourse before marriage! If any man's charge that his bride had not come to him a virgin was proven untrue, then she was to remain his lawfully wedded wife for the rest of his life. Whether such a wife eventually proved to be an asset or a detriment, a blessing or a curse in other respects was something for them both to work on. Sufficient to say, any couple who live in reverent fear of God and are obedient to His Holy Commands shall have His ever-present help to make their marriage a shining success!

Returning now to the 22nd chapter of Deuteronomy, let's consider what took place if the charge of not being a virgin brought against a bride was found to be true. To emphasize everyone's need to strictly refrain from sexual intercourse before marriage...to visibly impress on their minds how great a sin premarital relations were in God's sight, we find that God instituted a very sobering penalty to be enforced on those who dared to violate His law. Notice verses 20 and 21: "BUT IF this thing be true, and THE TOKENS OF VIRGINITY BE NOT FOUND FOR THE DAMSEL: THEN...THE MEN OF HER CITY SHALL STONE HER WITH STONES THAT SHE DIE: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: SO SHALT THOU PUT EVIL AWAY FROM AMONG YOU." No longer does God require this terrifying penalty to be enforced on those guilty of such a crime against society. But, He most certainly does still intend that the unmarried nevertheless observe this eternal precept! If this penalty should be reinvoked upon society today, only God knows how many would have to forfeit their lives. In His article entitled "The Real Shame Of Illegitimacy," in the September, 1949, issue of Coronet Magazine, author Ellis Michael states that the yearly average of unwed mothers here in the United States numbered (at that time) 100,000--of whom half were under the age of 20!

Let us not overlook here the undeniable fact that the figure of 100,000 unwed mothers represents only a fraction of all those guilty of indulging in sexual relations prior to marriage. The 100,000 who become pregnant and bring unwanted, mistreated and neglected babes into this troubled world are only those who fail to use effective contraceptive measures...those who somehow "get caught." Much more could be said, more authentic statistics cited, to show the sickening tragedy of this blot on our American youth, and those of other so-called "Christian" nations. Would to God we were just half as righteous as so many smugly assume! It is a national and international tragedy that there are many millions the world over who relegate God's Law against such actions into the category of "antiquated concepts," not now to be be seriously considered by today's 20th century parents and their precocious, sex-educated, children. May God have mercy on such a rebellious generation! All parents, and those who consider themselves minister's of Christ, who fail to constantly guard against and to sternly suppress such wanton intercourse must bear the stigma and suffering of the children's sin--both in this life and at the Judgment-seat of Christ.

The Example Of Joseph And Mary!

To further prove the fact that both Moses and Christ have given fornication as the one and only Bible grounds for securing a divorce, turn with me now to the first chapter of Matthew. There we find the account concerning Joseph and his suspicions against Mary, when he learned she was with child before their marriage. Give your attention now to verses 18 and 19:"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER (had intercourse), SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD of the Holy Ghost. THEN JOSEPH her husband (her intended husband), being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example (not wanting to bring a public charge against her and have her stoned to death), WAS MINDED TO PUT HER AWAY (divorce) privately." Here, Friends, is New Testament scripture--a concrete example--concerning Christ's own mother, in which we find that Joseph was planning to divorce her! WHY? Because he naturally supposed that since she was with child she had already had intercourse with some other man and was therefore not coming to him as a pure virgin. Thus, knowing that the one and only cause for divorce allowed by God applied to such a case, Joseph was going to refuse her as his wife by giving her a writ of divorce and quietly sending her on her way. Being a just and honourable man, he wanted to do so as quietly and privately as possible--in order to save her from embarrassment, shame, and death by stoning.

As the next few verses show, Joseph was soon enlightened by an angel as to the true facts regarding Mary's pregnancy, and was told not to doubt her virginity. He then no doubt rejoiced and was quite glad--after the birth of Christ--to take her as his lawfully wedded wife. In no passage of the entire Bible can you find where God ever gave any reason for divorce except that which both Moses and Christ have unequivocally declared! If you require further proof that the Bible defines fornication as being premarital intercourse, consider John 8:41, where some sarcastic and Christ-rejecting Jews had the gall to tell Christ the following:"...WE BE NOT BORN OF FORNICATION..." In making this statement these Jews were insulting Christ by insinuating that His father was only some man with whom Mary had had unlawful, fornicating, relations before her marriage to Joseph. They were calling Him a bastard, an illegitimate child, sired out of wedlock by some human father. How much anguish and grief such charges gave Our Lord we can only imagine! But, this revolting statement is nevertheless more irrefutable proof that the Bible itself defines fornication as being unlawful premarital intercourse.

That Which Moses Allowed

Now let me explain the true meaning of Christ's reply to the sarcastic Pharisees in Matthew 19:8, where He told them that because of the hardness of their hearts Moses allowed them to put away their wives. As I noted previously, both Christ and His questioners in this case were referring to Deut. 24:1-4, especially verse 1. Ever since Moses was inspired to write this first verse, and the three following, the Jews and those of every nation under the sun have greatly misconstrued, warped and twisted out of all proportion, Christ's intended meaning! Verse one has been seized upon for approximately 3300 years now as Bible authority for divorce on many grounds--other than the one and only given by Moses just two chapters previous. Here is what Moses wrote, probably within a matter of hours from his writing of chapter 22:13-21, which we have already considered. Listen:"WHEN A MAN HATH TAKEN A WIFE (this phrase being in the past tense signifies the marriage was made and fully consumated), and married her, AND IT COME TO PASS (this phrase being in the

future tense signifies an indefinite time after the bride had been accepted and the marriage fully consumated--perhaps weeks, months, even years) THAT SHE FIND NO FAVOUR IN HIS EYES, BECAUSE HE HATH FOUND SOME UNCLEANNESS IN HER: then LET HIM GIVE HER A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT, and give it in her hand, AND SEND HER OUT OF HIS HOUSE." (Verse one).

Stop and think a moment! Was Moses here flatly contradicting his restrictive statements of chapter 22:13-19, in which (by revelation from God Himself) he authorized only the act of fornication as legitimate grounds for divorcing one's mate? Could he have flouted the commands there already given and of his own volition, without God's consent, have permitted men to begin putting away their wives for unauthorized reasons? Of course not! Nor did he. Moses was not guilty of devising recepts of his own imagination, in order to please the public, as many deceiving church leaders have done! Here is the Plain Bible Truth. The word translated as "uncleanness" in this controversial verse is from the original Hebrew word "Ervah," which means NUDITY, NAKEDNESS, or SHAME. And, the only nudity, nakedness, or shame on a woman's part for which God allows a man to divorce one he has taken to be his wife concerns the MATTER AND QUESTION OF HER VIRGINITY--as we have already seen!

In reality, this verse describes A CASE WHERE AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME HAD ELAPSED BEFORE THE MAN DISCOVERED HIS WIFE HAD NOT COME TO HIM A VIRGIN. What did Christ mean by saying that it was because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses allowed them to put away their wives? The answer to this lies in the much overlooked but very significant TIME ELEMENT involved in such a case. To help us more fully understand the direct relation of this time element to Christ's statement regarding the hardness of men's hearts where divorcing of their wives was concerned, turn with me now to Deut. 21:10-14. In this passage Moses gave instructions governing the possibility of a soldier in the army of Israel seeing a beautiful captive among a group of conquered women and desiring her to become his wife. Then, in verses 13 and 14, he said this:"And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that THOU SHALT GO IN UNTO HER (have intercourse with her), AND BE HER HUSBAND, and SHE SHALL BE THY WIFE. And IT SHALL BE.(in process of time), IF THOU HAVE NO DELIGHT IN HER, then THOU SHALT LET HER GO (divorce her) whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her (had intercourse with her over a period of time)."

For what reason was a soldier allowed in God's sight to divorce such a woman, whom he had married and taken to be his wife? IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN FOR THE ONE CAUSE OF FORNICATION...HIS DISCOVERY SOMETIME AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE THAT SHE HAD NOT COME TO HIM A VIRGIN! Both this and chapter 24:1-4 have the same factors involved. Both describe the same type of case. One in which the woman's lack of virginity was not at first discovered--in which some time had elapsed before the man involved learned the truth. A case where the man, by reason of his own intercourse with her, unwittingly caused her to become doubly objectionable to another man for the same reason he had decided to divorce her. A case in which the time for him to have brought a public charge against her and for her to have been stoned to death was already past. And, one in which she was not held responsible for the fact of her sex relations with the man who decided to reject her. In such a case, in view of such extenuating circumstances, if the man, OUT OF HARDNESS OF HEART, being UNWILLING TO FORGIVE HER SIN AND TO KEEP HER, insisted on turning her away, he was allowed by Moses to do so.

Such men admittedly had a strong point of argument in their favor. If a woman has been guilty of intercourse before marriage, she might be one to continue it after marriage with someone other than her lawfully wedded husband. However, since the man had professed enough love to want her as his wife, even though he eventually learned she had not come to him a chaste virgin, still, if his love were sincerely true, the only thing he should have done in such a case would have been to overlook her sin, both of them ask God to forgive it, and he then to have kept her as his wife! God nowhere states that if a man wishes to overlook a woman's premarital relations that he cannot do so. How many women would have to be rejected today if the prospective bridegrooms insisted on their brides being virgins! In such an age of lost virtue as we have today the man who falls in love with a woman guilty of premarital relations should be willing to overlook it, providing she be one who repents of her past profligacy and could be counted upon to remain true to her husband. All things considered, it was basically a hardness of heart, a lack of true love, an unrelenting, unforgiving spirit which prompted such men to take belated advantage of the law and to divorce their mates.

In cases of this nature, since He knew what might develop, God apparently deferred His sealing of such a marriage--while waiting to see whether the offended man would accept or reject such a woman when he finally learned the truth. This hardness of heart both God and Moses allowed, although both would no doubt have preferred to see such women accepted and retained as the men's wives--in which case God would then have made them one. Regardless of how one may regard the merits of such belated divorce action, the truth remains that Deut. 24:1 does not mean what thousands have wished to make it mean through the centuries. IT IS NOT BIBLE AUTHORITY FOR SECURING A DIVORCE ON GROUNDS NOT AUTHORIZED BY GOD--AS MANY WHO REBEL AGAINST THE STANDARDS AND LIMITATIONS SET BY HIM HAVE FALSELY CLAIMED!

Once understanding the true meaning of Deut. 24:1, the three verses which follow it are automatically explained. Notice now verses 2 thru 4:"And when she is departed out of his house (divorced on the grounds of fornication by the first man to formally marry her), she may go and be another man's wife (there was no law to prevent such a woman from hopefully trying to yet find some man who would have her, regardless of her past). And if the latter husband (the second man to formally marry her, whom she had somehow succeeded in winning) hate her (he too discovers her sinful past), and write her a bill of divorcement (for the one and only cause of fornication), and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; HER FORMER HUSBAND (the first man to whom she was formally married), WHICH SENT HER AWAY (divorced her), MAY NOT TAKE HER AGAIN TO BE HIS WIFE, after that she is defiled (once having refused her he was not allowed at some later date to childishly change his mind and finally accept her as his wife--especially since she had had relations with still another man, for which he was indirectly responsible); FOR THAT IS ABOMINATION BEFORE THE LORD..."

No! Indeed not! Once having taken advantage of the one and only grounds for divorce which God allows, no man was privileged to later reverse his position, and like some petulant, vacillating, unstable child decide that he would like after all to take back a woman whom he had actually enlisted God's help to get rid of! God Himself is not so unprincipled, so unstable and so perverse. Neither does He foolishly counteract and nullify His deliberated previous actions. Nor is it His plan and purpose to aid and abet the formation of defective character in mankind. Once He makes a decision and performs an action in our behalf, based upon His Holy Laws, He personally sticks to it and we are obligated to do likewise. Later on in this article I will show you why Deut. 24:1-4 does not prohibit--as some have wrongly supposed due to their misunderstanding of the entire passage--the reunion of those who actually are one flesh in God's sight.

Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery!

Thus far we have reviewed the facts concerning the sin of premarital relations, which is called fornication, and which constitutes the only Bible grounds for divorcing one's mate--providing it can be proved. Now let's turn to another matter of vital importance to the subject of Divorce And Remarriage. In Ex. 20:14 God Himself spoke this authoritative command:"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY." What is this act which He forbids? Turning again to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, we find this definition of "Adultery" on page 19:"Voluntary SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BY A MARRIED MAN WITH ANOTHER THAN HIS WIFE OR BY A MARRIED WOMAN WITH ANOTHER THAN HER HUSBAND." Like that of "Fornication," this definition from secular authority is also based upon and is fully substantiated by the Bible. In Leviticus 18:20, Moses wrote the following: "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her." Then, in chapter 20 and verse 10 of Leviticus, we find this staggering statement:"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife (twice repeated for the sake of emphasis), THE ADULTERER (wayward husband) AND THE ADULTERESS (wayward wife) SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH."

Before we go any further, please bear in mind the fact that sexual intercourse indulged in by unmarried persons is called "Fornication," and that "Adultery" is unlawful intercourse indulged in by married persons with others than their lawful mates. Under the Mosaic Dispensation which stood until the founding of the Church Of God on the Day of Pentecost in 31 A.D., the crimes of Fornication, Rape, and Adultery were punishable by death. (See Deut. 22:21, 25-27, and 22). At this point let us also remember that Christ said in Matthew 19:9:"And I say unto you,

WHOSOEVER SHALL PUT AWAY HIS WIFE, EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION (the sin of premarital intercourse), AND SHALL MARRY ANOTHER, COMMITTETH ADULTERY: AND WHOSO MARRIETH HER WHICH IS PUT AWAY (divorced for some cause other than the one and only allowed by God) DOTH COMMIT ADULTERY." To also emphasize the fact that this unequivocal statement holds true regardless of which party secures the unlawful divorce, whether the husband or wife, Christ said this:"...AND IF A WOMAN SHALL PUT AWAY HER HUSBAND (like many men, there have been countless women guilty of divorcing their mates for reasons other than that which God allows), AND BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER, SHE COMMITTETH ADULTERY." (Mark 10:12).

A True Marriage Is "For Life"

Why does any man or woman who divorces their lawful marriage-partner for some reason other than for the one cause of fornication become guilty of the sin of adultery if they remarry? Paul clarifies this point for us in several New Testament passages governing the sacred institution of marriage. First let's consider what he said in Romans 7:2-3:"FOR THE WOMAN (this also applies to the men) WHICH HATH AN HUSBAND IS BOUND BY THE LAW (God's inexorable laws respecting marriage) TO HER HUSBAND SO LONG AS HE LIVETH; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband (she is no longer bound to her deceased mate). SO THEN IF, WHILE HER HUSBAND LIVETH, SHE BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER MAN (if she divorces for some unauthorized reason and remarries), SHE SHALL BE CALLED AN ADULTERESS: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law (free in God's sight to then remarry); so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." This critical factor is further emphasized by Paul in Ist Corinthians 7:39:"THE WIFE (or husband) IS BOUND BY THE LAW (God's Law) AS LONG AS HER HUSBAND LIVETH; BUT IF HER HUSBAND BE DEAD, SHE IS AT LIBERTY TO BE MARRIED (free to remarry) TO WHOM SHE WILL; (this next phrase is vitally important and absolutely essential to a successful and happy marriage!) ONLY IN THE LORD (she should exercise the utmost caution and choose a man fully obedient to the expressed will of God above--and, of course, one not divorced, unless it had been for the one cause of fornication)."

Thus we see why Christ states that any divorce obtained on grounds besides that of fornication would culminate in the sin of adultery if either party should remarry. Let's understand! If and when a man and woman choose to take each other as husband and wife, and neither one subsequently brings a charge of fornication against the other, then God seals their marriage, makes them one flesh, with the intent and purpose that they remain so for the rest of their natural lives! It was for this reason that Christ said:"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. WHAT THEREFORE GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER." (Mat. 19:6). If any man or woman so joined together by God takes advantage of unauthorized human laws (of which there are many) to divorce and remarry--while the one to whom God has joined them for life is still alive--they do so in open defiance of His superior Laws and will! And, by reason of the ensuing sexual intercourse between themselves and the person they thus become unlawfully attached to, they become guilty of the great sin of adultery...unlawful sexual relations with someone other than the one to whom God has joined them for life!

Referring again to the greatly abused, misconstrued, and misinterpreted passage of Deut. 24:1-4, SHALL WE SAY THAT MOSES WAS IN IGNORANCE OF THESE PERTINENT FACTS? Shall we contend he did not realize that anyone divorcing for unauthorized reasons and marrying again would thus become guilty of adultery in God's sight? Or, shall we maintain the ridiculous premise that because Christ stated their hearts were hard Moses allowed the men of his day to divorce those to whom God had joined them for life? SHALL WE SAY THAT MOSES AIDED AND ABETTED THE SIN OF ADULTERY, ONLY TO HAVE STONED TO DEATH THOSE CAUGHT IN THE PERFORMANCE OF IT? INDEED WE CANNOT! Furthermore, can we believe that Duet. 24:1-4 prohibits the reunion of those who actually are man and wife in God's sight? If any man or woman eventually learns that they have made the great mistake of divorcing the one to whom God has joined them for life, and, having remarried, that they are now guilty of adulterous relations with a person to whom God has not joined them--are they not privileged and should they not energetically try, if it be at all possible, to become reunited with their true mate? By all means! There is no law against such a course. Let us remember that Deut. 24:1-4 does not apply nor refer to those whom God has actually joined together.

Unfortunately such a case, and such a course of action to try and rectify such a situation, is invariably beset by many complications. The man or woman wishing to take such action would necessarily have to discuss the matter with the one to whom they wished to become reunited. Each would have to be in full accord and agreement that they would return to

each other and would then remain together for the rest of their lives--if it could be at all worked out that they might do so. Each would have to explain their desire and motives to the second parties involved. In order to satisfy the laws of the land, an annulment of the second marriage would have to be obtained. And so it goes. Perhaps several children would be involved; or an equitable settlement of various properties acquired as a result of the second marriage would have to be worked out. Admittedly, there would invariably be many complicating factors and impeding obstacles to overcome. But, REGARDLESS OF ALL CONTRARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND PERSONALITIES--regardless of what relatives, friends, or neighbor's might think or say--NO MAN OR WOMAN WHO LEARNS THEY ARE LIVING IN ADULTERY, with someone to whom God has not joined them, SHOULD DEFER LEAVING THEIR UNLAWFUL PARTNER AND DISSOLVING SUCH AN UNLAWFUL UNION! If the other factors involved would permit such a reunion of those whom God has made one, and yet the true mate concerned did not wish to have it so, the only alternative for the one seeking to do God's will would be to separate from the second party--and remain so for the rest of their lives. Unless, for the sake of children involved, they and the second party would solemnly covenant with God to forsake all further sexual intercourse and live together as husband and wife--IN NAME ONLY.

Regrettably, many who learn they are living in adultery are not willing to forsake such unlawful intercourse and union. Under Satan's influence they harden their hearts against the revealed will of God, and, employing carnal human reason, foolishly conclude that God would not be a God of love, nor fair, nor just, to expect them to make such a drastic move. To which countless scriptures reply, GOD IS LOVE, HE IS FAIR, AND HE IS JUST! AND, THERE IS NOTHING HE REQUIRES BUT WHAT IS GOOD FOR US--BOTH IN THIS LIFE AND IN THE WORLD TO COME! Anyone desiring to please Him, desiring His help and blessings for themselves and their children, both now and forever, must be willing to make their lives and their every act conform with His loving will. All things considered, this present life is of comparatively short duration. It is a time of trial and testing, of preparation for eternal life in the world to come. In order to achieve the gift of eternal life, all disobedience must be removed, root and branch (Romans 6:23, etc.). As Paul tells us, in ~~1st Cor. 6:9-10~~: "KNOW YE NOT THAT THE UNRIGHTEOUS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? BE NOT DECEIVED (don't fool yourself): NEITHER FORNICATORS (those guilty of premarital sexual intercourse), nor idolaters, NOR ADULTERERS (those guilty of unlawful intercourse after marriage), nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (the sexually degenerate and depraved)... SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD (eternal life here on earth: consider Matt. 5:5, Rev. 21:1 & 8, 22:14-15, etc.). Yes, for the sake of one's eternal Salvation, if they must now relinquish a home and sexual intercourse--with someone God forbids--it must be done!

Tragedy of tragedies, irony of ironies, there are millions of American homes today which have been founded on the sinful platform of divorce and remarriage. According to the vital statistics concerning Marriage and Divorce found on page 437 of the 1953 World Almanac and Book of Facts, the 30 year period from 1921 through 1951 saw approximately 7,397,509 divorces here in the United States. And, 1946 witnessed the record high of 610,000 divorces granted throughout the 48 States. Of which, incredible as it may seem, not one was granted for the one and only reason allowed by God! We have but two States which come even remotely close to God's Law where the matter of grounds for a divorce is concerned. One is South Carolina, where no divorce is granted to any person--for any reason whatsoever. The other is New York, where the charge that a man's wife has had relations with some other man, or that a woman's husband has had relations with some other woman--true adultery if the couple involved are truly husband and wife in God's sight--is allowed as the only grounds for divorce. So far as unfaithfulness to one's mate is concerned, not even that is Bible grounds for divorcing the one to whom God has joined man or woman for life. This point will be fully explained a little later on.

All the other States grant divorces for a multitude of reasons--none of which are permitted by the Almighty! In 1946 the late Senator Arthur Capper wrote an enlightening article, entitled "Uniform Divorce Law," which was widely read in the American Weekly Magazine. In his informative article Mr. Capper made the following pertinent statements:"The institution of the family is seriously threatened in the United States by 49 different and conflicting laws on the subject of marriage and divorce ...As a people, we are disturbed by our divorce statistics. We have a right to be disturbed. THEY ARE HIGHER NOW THAN THOSE OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD...THE WIDESPREAD TRAGEDY IS A MATTER OF RECORD. In 1945, there were 1,618,331 marriages in the country and 502,000 divorces. In other words, FOR EVERY THREE COUPLES THAT WENT TO THE ALTAR, ONE COUPLE SPLIT UP IN A COURT...The time-honored vow (based on the Bible), "Until death do us part," has lost much of its meaning [illegible]

MORE AND MORE OF THE PARTING...Divorces are steadily increasing toward the point where the family as a legal entity threatens to go out of existence." Needless to say, these comments by the late distinguished Senator from Kansas brought a resounding "Amen" from every God-fearing man and woman throughout the United States and Canada who read his article.

With so many divorced men and women in circulation, the majority of whom want to "try it again," as some callously express themselves, it often happens that one of them will succeed in captivating someone who has never been married. After all, divorced persons do not usually wish to remarry another divorced person. But, regardless of whether a divorced person remarries one who is also divorced, or whether they remarry a single person--the resulting union and the ensuing sexual intercourse is completely invalid in God's sight! The principals of such unions are not made "one flesh" by Him. Neither does He bless their unlawful union in any way. In reality, such unauthorized mergers always incur His condemnation and wrath. Any children born of such unlawful unions are completely illegitimate in His sight. No, God does not sanction or condone that which is sin, even though done in ignorance. As we are told by the Apostle Paul in Gal. 6:7:"BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP." And, as Moses said in Numbers 32:23:"...BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT."

As I have explained previously, the divorced person who has contracted a second marriage, once learning the truth, has no alternative but to try and become reunited with their original mate--the one to whom God has joined them "for life." On the other hand, if the case should be one where the single person, having married a divorced person, learns the truth that such a marriage is not lawful according to God's Laws, they then have no alternative but to immediately cease all further intercourse with the divorced party--and do their utmost to have their marriage to the divorced person annulled. After which, if accomplished, he or she would then be entirely free in God's sight (since God had not joined them to the divorced person) to remarry...providing, of course, that the next time it be with a single person--one never married before. Then, and only then, would they finally be contracting a lawful marriage in God's sight...one He could and would place His Divine approval and blessings on. Unfortunately, the divorced person learning the truth and trying to become reunited with their original mate is not always able to effect such a reunion--in which case they have no choice but to remain estranged from their true mate and suffer the loss of sexual intercourse for the rest of their lives. This loss of sexual intercourse to some, especially those of more youthful years, would be hard to bear. But, we each have our cross to bear, and if some incur such a sacrifice they should be--for the sake of eternal life--willing to bear it. (Consider Ist Cor. 7:1, 7-8 and Matthew 19:12). The single person learning the truth, and managing to become free from the divorced person whom they had unlawfully married, is not faced with the unhappy prospect of having to remain unmarried. So long as they will choose another single party, or if perhaps their prospective choice should be a widow or a widower, one whose true mate has died--they are entirely free to do so.

Why Was John Baptist Beheaded?

One of the most tragic, pathetic, and shameful episodes of the entire Bible concerns the account of John the Baptist's death. Of the principal characters mentioned in the Bible, John the Baptist stands with those of the highest rank. His birth was prophesied (Isa. 40:3, Mal. 3:1 & 4:5, Luke 1:13-17); he possessed God's Holy Spirit from the day of his birth (Luke 1:15); and he was the one given the high honor of baptizing Our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:13-16). Also, to his everlasting honor, Christ gave the following testimony regarding him in Matthew 11:11:"Verily I say unto you, AMONG THEM THAT ARE BORN OF WOMEN THERE HATH NOT RISEN A GREATER THAN JOHN THE BAPTIST..." Despite all this, John the Baptist died a martyr's death! WHY? Very few seem to register the startling fact that John suffered the loss of his head because of the sin of unlawful divorce and remarriage! Consider with me now the sorry account of his death as given by Matthew, in chapter 14, verses 3 thru 10:"For HEROD had laid hold on John, and bound him, and PUT HIM IN PRISON FOR HERODIAS' SAKE, HIS BROTHER PHILLIP'S WIFE. FOR JOHN SAID UNTO HIM (to Herod), IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR THEE TO HAVE HER. And when he would have put him to death (out of rage for being thus reproved by a minister of God), he feared the multitude, because they counted him (John) as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS danced before them (Salome), and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, SAID, GIVE ME HERE JOHN BAPTIST'S HEAD IN A

PLATTER. And the king was very sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it be given her. AND HE (Herod) SENT, AND BEHEADED JOHN IN THE PRISON."

In this heart-breaking incident we find where a faithful, courageous, God-fearing minister dared to defy even an exalted Roman ruler...by telling him that he was living in adultery with another man's wife...that they had no right to each other according to the laws of God governing His institution of Holy Matrimony. The woman's real husband was still living! In marrying her Herod became guilty of unlawful relations with another man's wife--in this particular case, with his own brother's wife! John was no mercenary and cowardly hypocrite, calling himself a minister of Christ, who defied God and deliberately preached lies and deceits...soft and smooth things to the general public in order to receive filthy lucre and have a large following--as are many who claim to be minister's of God! (Remember 2nd Cor. 11:13-15, Matt. 24:11 & 24, 2nd Peter 2:1-2 & 14, Isa. 30:8-10, 2nd Tim. 4:3-4). John's first thought was always to please and obey God--even though it might mean defying all humanity. For being A TRUE MINISTER, HONEST WITH GOD, FAITHFUL TO HIS CALLING (Isa. 58:1, 2nd Tim. 4:1-2), he incurred the vengeful wrath of both Herod and his wicked paramour. But, it was especially she who nursed her smoldering hatred and took advantage of circumstances to cause John's death.

I ask you, HOW MANY WHO CALL THEMSELVES MINISTER'S OF JESUS CHRIST ARE FOLLOWING JOHN'S HEROIC EXAMPLE TODAY? Instead of rising enmasse to mightily protest against the mounting stench of fornication and adultery, of unlawful divorce and remarriage, we witness the maddening spectacle of more and more clergymen joining the ranks of those who openly promote, aid and abet the dissolution of that which God has joined together for life!! In alliance with such false prophets and blind leaders of the blind are those of secular law--the judges (as Senator Capper mentioned) and lawyers who wax financially fat by their sordid traffic in the multi-million dollar business of unlawful divorce and remarriage. MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON THOSE WHO ADD TO AND TAKE FROM HIS COMMANDS AND SUPREMELY INEXORABLE HOLY LAWS! (Remember Rev. 22:18-19). All those who have any part in putting asunder those couples whom God has made "one flesh," to remain so "as long as they both shall live," are trampling the Creator's Laws underfoot and will have to fearfully answer for it before the Judgment-Seat of Christ!

What has already been said in explanation of the true meaning of Deut. 24:1-4, and especially of the word translated as "uncleanness" in verse 1, should have been sufficient to convince any honest mind that the matter of unfaithfulness to one's lawfully-wedded mate is not there intended or to be inferred as Bible grounds besides that of fornication for securing a divorce. However, aside from the proof already presented on this point, let's consider now the case of the woman mentioned in the 8th chapter of John--the one caught in the very act of adultery. Notice verse 11:"...Neither do I (Christ) condemn thee (to a public trial and death by stoning, as those who brought her to Christ were planning to do): GO, AND SIN NO MORE." Christ did not tell this woman that she had become totally unfit to live with her husband and should leave him. Nor did he inform the injured husband that he had a right to divorce this wife guilty of intercourse with another man. He simply told her, quite emphatically, "GO (where to? where else except back to the husband to whom God had joined her for life), AND SIN NO MORE (don't do such a thing again)." Yes, God will extend His great mercy and will forgive those guilty of sin --those guilty of adultery, fornication, even sexual depravities--providing they will quit doing such evils. As still further proof that the sin of adultery, unfaithfulness to one's true mate, does not constitute Bible grounds for divorce, I ask you to read verses 12 thru 31 in the 5th chapter of Numbers. There you will find the method employed up to the time of the cross to determine whether or not a woman suspected of undetected adultery was guilty or innocent. Notice the stern measures taken and the terrible curse which fell on those who were found guilty. But, also notice, even if the woman was found guilty and did suffer the curse, absolutely nothing is said that God allowed the wronged husband to divorce her.

IF, and this is a very big IF, one's life with one's lawful marriage partner should become humanly intolerable for some reason or combination of reasons--then God does allow a separation from one's true mate. But, neither the husband or wife living in separation from the other has any right to ever divorce the other and remarry someone else. (Consider this point in Ist Cor. 7:10-11). NO ONE SHOULD MARRY A NON-CHRISTIAN (2nd Cor. 6:14-15)! But, if they have done so, they are advised by Paul to remain with their unbelieving mate (Ist Cor. 7:12-15)...providing, of course, that the unbeliever would not forcibly prevent their Christian mate from fulfilling those sacred duties to God above to which all mankind is obligated. In conclusion I ask you to seriously consider Malachi 2:14-16 and Jeremiah 5:30-31. MAY GOD HELP EVERYONE TO OBEY HIS LOVING WILL.