

THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the Light of Recent Exegesis

By

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Title of Thesis..... THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.....
..... In the Light of Recent Exegesis.....

SUMMARY

This thesis attempts to show that the concept of marriage in New Testament times can best be understood in the light of the central proclamation of the Gospel --- the preaching of Jesus concerning total obedience to the will of the Creator, --- which gives the New Testament teaching relevancy and meaning for marriage today. In the New Testament context, this proclamation provides the only thread of continuity in the otherwise culturally and legally diverse statements about marriage.

Since there is no complete teaching about marriage in the New Testament, and a Christian doctrine of marriage cannot be arrived at by combining all the statements about marriage in the New Testament, this thesis seeks to prove that an analysis of the different statements about marriage in their own cultural, legal, and religious contexts, indicates that in the New Testament period a development of a 'Christian' concept of marriage took place, which was based on a common 'Jesus-tradition'. However, this common 'Jesus-tradition' made up of 'sayings', 'teachings', and 'statements' about marriage is shown to be not necessarily original with Jesus, although they may have passed through the prism of Jesus' ministry making them an authentic part of His teaching. The origin of the marriage and divorce 'logia' which form the foundation of this teaching about marriage is found to be a Christian development of older teaching on marriage which found expression in some heterodox Jewish groups of the New Testament epoch, such as Qumran, and was transmitted to the Christian sect possibly by a disciple of the Qumran community, and later transferred to Jesus who became a kind of magnetic field for all such teachings. After looking at the historical and social development of marriage in the ancient world, up to and including the time of Jesus, the thesis traces the possible pre-Christian origin and lines of transmission of this ancient teaching which became an important part of the 'Jesus-tradition'.

The spread of Christianity to many parts of the Jewish-Hellenistic world brought about modifications, additions, and differences in interpretation and usage of the original marriage and divorce 'logia'. These changes and additions can best be accounted for by analysing the different statements on marriage in the New Testament in their own cultural, moral, and religious context, which help us to distinguish what is historically and socially conditioned, from what is valid in principle even for today. This analysis also shows the resiliency and adaptability of the 'gospel' to the different cultural communities of the early Church.

From our analysis of the marriage 'logia' in the New Testament we note an ethical development in the New Testament period which appears to have passed through three distinct stages --- an apocalyptic stage at the earliest beginnings of Christianity; an eschatological stage which came with the preaching of Paul and the post-resurrection Church; and a period of positive ethical development which sought, on the basis of pre-Christian ethical codes, to map out a positive place for the Church in the world. The New Testament material has been analysed in this order, first, the Synoptic writings, secondly,

the Pauline correspondence, and thirdly, the Post-Pauline 'Haustafeln' teaching. The conclusion reached, in the light of recent exegesis, is that once the social, legal, and historical factors are accounted for, there stands at the centre of all that is said about marriage in the New Testament a 'Jesus-tradition', authentic or inauthentic, which lays the basis for the Christian concept of marriage in all periods of the New Testament, and indeed in every age and circumstance.

In Chapter VII, after an analysis of the various developments in marriage theology, some suggestions are made towards a meaningful and relevant theology of marriage in terms of 'gospel' --- the demand of Jesus for total obedience to the will of the Creator.

Dedicated to my Wife

THERESA

Son

TODD

Daughter

STACEY JANE

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Lasswade,
Scotland,
July 15, 1973

Joseph C. Burke

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The spread of Christianity to many parts of the Jewish-Hellenistic world brought about modifications, additions, and differences in interpretation and usage of the original marriage and divorce 'logia'. These changes and additions can best be accounted for by analysing the different statements on marriage in the New Testament in their own cultural, moral, and religious context, which help us to distinguish what is historically and socially conditioned, from what is valid in principle even for today. This analysis also shows the resiliency and adaptability of the 'gospel' to the different cultural communities of the early Church.

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stage which came with the preaching of Paul and the post-resurrection Church; and a period of positive ethical development which sought, on the basis of pre-Christian ethical codes, to map out a positive place for the Church in the world. The New Testament material has been analysed in this order, first, the Synoptic writings, secondly, the Pauline correspondence, and thirdly, the Post-Pauline 'Haustafeln' teaching. The conclusion reached, in the light of recent exegesis, is that once the social, legal, and historical factors are accounted for, there stands at the center of all that is said about marriage in the New Testament a 'Jesus-tradition', authentic or inauthentic, which lays the basis for the Christian concept of marriage in all periods of the New Testament, and indeed in every age and circumstance.

In Chapter VII, after an analysis of the various developments in marriage theology, some suggestions are made towards a meaningful and relevant theology of marriage in terms of 'gospel' --- the demand of Jesus for total obedience to the will of the Creator.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THESIS

PERIODICALS

AmiCler	American Clergy
AusCathRec	Australasian Catholic Record
BibArch	Biblical Archaeologist
BibK	Bibel und Kirche
BibRes	Biblical Research
BibThBull	Biblical Theological Bulletin
CallBrugGand	Collationes Brugenses et Gandovenes
CathBibQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ClerRev	Clergy Review
Conc	Concilium
Concor	Concordia Theological Monthly
DivThom	Divus Thomas
ExposT	Expository Times
HarvThR	Harvard Theological Review
HeythJ	Heythrop Journal
Interp	Interpretation
IrThQ	Irish Theological Quarterly
JBibLit	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBibRel	Journal of Bible and Religion
JCuSt	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEcclH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JLitW	Jahrbuch für liturgiewissenschaft
JRel	Journal of Religion
JRelThot	Journal of Religious Thought
JThSt	Journal of Theological Studies
JewQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
KerDo	Kerygma und Dogma
ModCh	Modern Churchman
MunchThZeit	Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift
NTA	New Testament Abstracts
NTSt	New Testament Studies
NovTest	Novum Testamentum
OrSy	Orient Syrien
PittsPersp	Pittsburgh Perspective
RecherAug	Recherches Augustiniennes
RecherSciRel	Recher ch de science religieuse /che
RelL	Religion in Life
RBib	Revue Biblique
RevistEclBras	Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira
RevQu	Revue de Qumran
RevThPhil	Review of Theology & Philosophy
SwJTh	Southwestern Journal of Theology
ScotJTh	Scottish Journal of Theology
SvTK	Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskift /r
Th	Theology
ThLit	Theologische Literaturzeitung

ThSt	Theological Studies
ThStKr	Theologische Studien und Kritiken
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VerbDom	Verbum Domini
VetTest	Vetus Testamentum
VigChr	Vigiliae Christianae
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZNeutW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZThKirche	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. ...	Genesis	Chron. ...	Chronicles
Ex. ...	Exodus	Ps. ...	Psalms
Lev. ...	Leviticus	Prov. ...	Proverbs
Nu. ...	Numbers	Isa. ...	Isaiah
Deut. ...	Deuteronomy	Jer. ...	Jeremiah
Judg. ...	Judges	Ezek. ...	Ezekiel
Sam. ...	Samuel	Mal. ...	Malachi
Kgs. ...	Kings		

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mt. ...	Matthew	Thess. ...	Thessalonians
Mk. ...	Mark	Tim. ...	Timothy
Lk. ...	Luke	Tit. ...	Titus
Jn. ...	John	Phil. ...	Philemon
Rom. ...	Romans	Heb. ...	Hebrews
Cor. ...	Corinthians	Ja. ...	James
Gal. ...	Galatians	Pt. ...	Peter
Eph. ...	Ephesians	Rev. ...	Revelation
Philip. ...	Philippians		

TRACTATES OF THE MISHNAH

Ab. ...	Aboth	Meg. ...	Megillah
Ber. ...	Berakhoth	M.Sh. ...	Maaser Sheni
Gitt. ...	Gittin	Sanh. ...	Sanhedrin
Ket. ...	Ketuboth	Yeb. ...	Yebamoth
Kidd. ...	Kiddushin	Yom. ...	Yoma

Letters placed before the above abbreviations signifies the following:

T. ...	Tosephta
b. ...	Babylonian Talmud
j. ...	Jerusalem Talmud
Bar. ...	Baraita
R. ...	Rabbi
M. ...	Mishnah

QUMRAN SCROLLS

- CD ... The Zadokite Document (Damascus Document)
(6QD) sometimes referred to in this thesis as
Zadokite Fragments.
- DSD ... The Manual of Discipline.
(1QS)
- 1QM ... The War Scroll (The War of the Sons of
Light and the Sons of Darkness).

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

- cf. cf. (Confer) -- compare
- ed. -- edited, editor
- e.g. (exempli gratia) -- for example
- et al (et alii) -- and others
- et seq (et sequens) -- and the following
- f. (ff.) -- and the following page, line, or verse
(pages, lines, verses)
- ibid (ibidem) -- the same reference as that
immediately preceding.
- idem -- the same (used to indicate the same
author).
- i. e. (id est) -- that is
- l. (ll.) -- line (lines)
- loc.cit. loco citato) -- the place cited (used when
reference is made to a work by a given
author which is the only one by him
previously cited.)
- MS (MSS) -- manuscript (manuscripts)
- no. -- number
- op.cit. (op^{er}a citato) -- meaning 'in the work cited'
(referring to a source previously cited, but
not in the reference immediately preceding.) e/
- p. (pp.) -- page (pages)
- para. -- paragraph
- passim -- at intervals throughout the pages of the
work cited.
- q.v. (quod vide) -- which see
- trans. -- translation, translator, or translated by.
- v. (vv.) -- verse (verses)
- viz. -- (videlicet) -- namely
- vol. (vols) -- volume (volumes)

GENERAL

- A.C. -- Assyrian Code

A.D.	-- Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord).
B.C.	-- Before Christ
H.C.	-- Hammurabi Code
IB	-- Interpreter's Bible
ICC	-- International Critical Commentary
Ky.	-- Kentucky
NEB	-- New English Bible
N.T.	-- New Testament
O.T.	-- Old Testament
Pap. Ox.	-- Papyri Oxyrhynchus
Phil.	-- Philadelphia
Q.	-- (German- Quelle, source) designating a non-extant source of Jesus' sayings.
RSV	-- Revised Standard Version

ABBREVIATIONS OF REFERENCE WORKS AND BOOKS (Cited by Short Title and Abbreviations)

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/ Lund;
Munksgaard, Copenhagen,

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The problem of marriage today is a kind of junction where all kinds of questions and doubts of Christian ethics meet. It is difficult to know what to do about the conflict between norm and practice which we think we are experiencing, or where to look for solutions to the dilemmas which present themselves in our different interpretations of Christian marriage. Traditional Christian ethics have come under fire from many quarters, and Christian marriage, as an institutionalized form, is no exception. Twentieth century moralists under the aegis of the "new morality" are seeking to reform sexual morals. However, their major obstacle appears to be the traditional Christian interpretation of the New Testament teaching on sex and marriage. In the dialogue which is still continuing between the exponents of the "new morality" and the defenders of traditional Christian ethics,¹ the Church has come under heavy criticism, and

1. A full discussion on the dialogue between the "new morality" and traditional Christian ethics is found in the journal Religion in Life, Vol. 35, No.2, pp.170-229, the symposium is entitled "The New Morality - What, Why - and Why Not?". A definition of the new morality and a treatment of it in relation to Biblical ethics may be found in O.S. Barr's book The Christian New Morality, New York, 1969. cf also P. Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context, New York, 1963; P. Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, New York, 1950; D. Rhymes, No New Morality; Christian Personal Values and Sexual Morality, London, 1964; and J.A.T. Robinson, Christian Morals Today, Philadelphia, 1964.

among other things, has been accused of limiting the freedom of Church members, repressing the development of civil law, devaluing sexuality, and above all, treating marriage as merely "a means to an end" - - - for the sole purpose of procreation.² These charges are not merely the voices of extreme representatives who are seeking to liberate sexuality from an institutionalized form, but rather a serious attempt to solve present day problems by demanding a reassessment of the Gospel teaching, and a consideration of those factors which through a dialectical process have emancipated themselves in the secular sphere. Thus we have a curious situation in which many of our contemporaries employ arguments against the traditional defence of marriage and its sexual norms that are Christian in origin. This new awareness, brought about by the present dialogue in Christian ethics, challenges us to review our own attitudes concerning marriage and to reassess the validity of our traditional interpretation of the New Testament teaching.

2. F. Böckle, T. Beemer, Cong Vol.5, No. 6, May 1970, p.7.

Modern Biblical exegetes,³ employing a new hermeneutics,⁴ have done a great deal in helping to resolve some of the conflicts which have arisen between traditional Christian ethics and contemporary ethical reformers, and their fresh exegetical approach is providing a new basis for a theology of marriage that seeks to be true to the Gospel teaching, and at the same time relevant to the needs of contemporary society. This new approach to marriage theology is not a question of new sources being opened up; the old biblical statements on marriage, in particular those of the New Testament, still stand. It is basically, a broadening of the basis of exegetical research to include new developments in both biblical research and the social sciences, as well as an attempt to rid the discipline of some untenable theories which have held New Testament

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3. H. Baltensweiler, Die Ehe im Neuem Testament, Zurich, 1967; H. Harsch, ed., Das neue Bild der Ehe, Munich, 1969; O. Piper, The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage, New York, 1960; H. Ringling, Theology und Sexualität. Das private Verhalten als Thema der Sozialethik, Gütersloh, 1968; E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery, New York, 1965; H.W. Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce according to the Teaching of the New Testament, Leiden, 1969; H. Thieliicke, The Ethics of Sex, New York, 1964.
4. Hermeneutics is understood here as the exegesis of Biblical statements with a view to understanding them in their own historical and cultural environment and in this context attempting to adequately perceive their meaning for the present. Cf. E. Dinkler, "Principles of Biblical Interpretation", JRelThot, 13(1955-6) pp.2-30.

exegesis in a bind.⁵ This came about with the realization that there is no such thing as abstract ethics. Every ethical system which provides understanding and guidance in the human situation, has its own historical and sociological context and must be understood within that context. This does not mean, however, that ethical teaching is a mere reflection of historical and sociological relationships; there are indeed characteristics in ethical systems that transcend the cultural and historical context, but its principles and values cannot be understood without the social substructure. 'Ethos', 'mores', 'morals' are, as etymology shows, for a large part social factors, each with a long chain of sociological implications and it is not easy to decide how far the communal existence has determined the main ideas of what should be done, or vice versa. If we want to understand the character and statements of an ethical system we have to consider its historical and sociological origin, its anthropological status, which means asking what man's "image" was at that particular time, as well as familiarizing oneself with its basic principles.⁶

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5. The theories considered untenable in present exegetical analysis are 'legalism', the idea that the Bible gives us "inscripturated" moral laws which define right conduct in all circumstances for all time; 'social evolution' and the theory 'Orders of Creation.' These theories are considered later in this chapter.
6. J. Blank, "New Testament Morality and Modern Moral Theology," Conc, 5(3, '67) p. 7.

This approach sees marriage not only as a religious phenomenon, but as belonging to the areas of religion, law, society and culture, which in their turn are all subject to change, be it environmental or dictated by time. However, because the ethics of the Old and New Testaments are intrinsically tied up with the community of faith, religion plays an important role, but not the only role. To understand the full meaning of New Testament marriage we must see how these different spheres of human experience are interconnected, and how each contributes to the image of marriage in the New Testament. To unravel these different influences is not an easy task, and it is made more difficult by the fact that we not only have to familiarize ourselves with institutional forms that are alien to our way of living, but we must also think in thought forms that are equally alien. For example, ethical norms in both the Old and New Testaments, unlike ethical norms as we understand them today as generally valid moral principles seen apart from the community of faith, are grounded in the community of faith and derive their validity and authority from the fact that they are God given.⁷ Rudolf Schnackenburg rightly observes that "The unity of the

7. cf B. Haring, "The Normative Value of the Sermon on the Mount", CathBibQ 29(1967) pp. 373-385, also G.H. Outka and P. Ramsay, Norm and Context in Christian Ethics, New York, 1966. e/

religious and the moral cannot be torn apart anywhere in the New Testament."⁸ This does not mean, however, that religion must be given priority when one sets out to analyse the ethical teaching of the New Testament, but we must bear in mind that Biblical ethics can only be understood in a theological context and not as our own ethical system separated from the community of faith.

The fact that New Testament ethics is inextricably tied up with the community of faith poses many problems to the student of New Testament ethics no matter what his approach might be. And one of the most difficult problems he faces is the fact that there is no one overall principle for an ethical system of the New Testament. Ethics based on the Kingdom of God, on the imitation of Christ, on love, on eschatology, on the community, on the spirit - - - - are all equally justified as they are varied, and yet none can be made absolute⁹ because they are all interconnected and accentuate one or other aspect

8. R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, London, 1964.

9. This is the point of difference taken with the 'new morality' school of thought. For the new moralists "the only absolute recognized" as Canon Rhymes puts it "will be the absolute of love." Love alone is the ultimate criterion for making ethical decisions (Cf O.S. Barr, op.cit. p.4). The approach taken in this thesis is that while there are predominant principles in particular situations, e.g. the eschatological principle in Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 7, nevertheless there is more than one principle at work in any given situation and these secondary principles are important as they reflect and accentuate one or other aspect of the ethos of the community involved. Cf. T.F. Driver, "Love needs Law," RelL, 35 (1966) pp.200-203.

of the ethos of the New Testament.¹⁰ And it is primarily because of this lack of over-all principle that New Testament ethics cannot be systematized. This has special implications for the New Testament teaching on marriage and illustrates the fact that it is not simply a matter of combining all relevant biblical texts to form a doctrine of marriage. A more reasonable approach is to examine each statement in the context of its own cultural milieu, taking into consideration not only the historical factors, but also the attitudes of the community toward marriage with a view to determining what these statements may have meant to contemporary listeners. In this way we will not be merely repeating these statements as principles or laws that define right conduct in all circumstances for all time, but will understand them in the light of the world to which they were spoken, and on this basis will be better able to determine if they are relevant to the needs of the institution as we understand it today.

Because of the diversity in over-all principles governing New Testament ethics Protestant theologians have acknowledged the fact that nowhere in the New Testament is there a full teaching on marriage,¹¹ nor do

10. J. Blank, *op.cit.* p.8.

11. H. Greeven, "Ehe nach dem Neuen Testament," NTSt, 15(1969) p.365.

we come by a full teaching on marriage by systematically co-ordinating the relevant texts that we find in the Canon. In view of the facts it would appear illogical to combine Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 7, where he answers particular questions put to him by the Corinthian community under the eschatological principle that the Kingdom of God had been proclaimed and was expected at any moment, with the effort of the Christian community to formulate, by means of the 'Haustafeln'¹² an ethic that would help it to adjust to the demands of everyday life in an ongoing world. These so called 'Haustafeln' (domestic or local "tables of law") borrowed from Hellenistic-Stoic and Jewish sources indicate when the early Church, by establishing an ethical summary on existing models, wanted to define its position in the world in a positive way for the future. No doubt Paul might well have spoken differently had he been confronted with the longer duration of the Church in the world. This not only illustrates the impossibility of co-ordinating all relevant passages in an effort to arrive at a New Testament doctrine of marriage, but also the importance of considering such aspects as eschatology, Christology, ecclesiology, freedom, love, and spirit in our exegetical analysis, for all of these

12. Cf. Col. 3:18-41; Eph. 5:22-6. 9; 1 Tim. 2:1-15; 6:1f; Tit. 2:1-10; 1 Peter 13:3-9.

help to form inextricably the background of New Testament ethics and without consideration of them we cannot really discuss New Testament ethical behaviour.

The Form Critical school¹³ has shown that direct recourse to the actual teaching of Jesus by reference to particular passages in the Gospel is a complicated, if not impossible process. According to this view the teaching of Jesus has been overlaid with the traditions and teachings of the Early Church which are difficult to peel off so that we can say with certainty that here indeed is the authentic word of the Lord. However, further developments in exegetical

13. The Form-critical method applied by H. Gunkel and his disciples to the Old Testament was used by K.L. Schmidt, M. Dibelius, Rudolf Bultmann and others to establish the earliest and most trustworthy traditions about Jesus of Nazareth. The method of form-criticism is based on the conviction that ancient writers frequently collected, arranged, and edited materials (stories, legends, wise sayings, miracle stories, myths, etc.) already circulating in the culture in which the writer lived. Cf. R. Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, trans. J. Marsh, London, 1963, pp. 1-7, Form Criticism, F.C. Grant, ed. New York, 1962.

analysis¹⁴ may well help to circumvent the problems posed by form criticism, and will no doubt be helpful in analysing the different logia attributed to Jesus in the Gospels.

German scholars¹⁵ are already talking of "a new image" of marriage, and since the second World War the exegetical work done by such scholars as Baltensweiler, Harsch, Thieliicke, and others has been emphasizing the need for a

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14. N. Perrin in his book Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, London, 1967, offers a fresh approach to rediscovering the actual teaching of Jesus. While he acknowledges the fact that the form-critical view of the Gospels is the most acceptable approach, he endeavours to work out a methodology for reconstructing the teaching of Jesus, given this view of the sources. Beginning with the premise that the burden of proof always lies with the claim to authenticity, Perrin lays down the following criteria of authenticity -- (a) the criterion of dissimilarity, (b) the criterion of coherence and (c) the criterion of multiple attestation. The criterion of dissimilarity is most important, and holds that we can be reasonably sure of the authenticity of any saying ascribed to Jesus only if it is unparalleled in the early Church or in rabbinical tradition. Naturally rabbinical parallels should be examined with critical scrutiny to determine if they are later than the time of Jesus or the Gospels themselves. The criterion of coherence comes into play when a body of material has been authenticated by the criterion of dissimilarity. Once the 'ipsissima facta' in the Gospels are established then we go on to identify units which are 'coherent' or consistent with these. The principle of "multiple attestation" means that the case for recognizing a saying or incident as primitive, if not authentically located in the ministry of Jesus, is strengthened if it is attested in two or more independent lines of transmission. Cf. F.F. Bruce, Traditions Old and New, Devon, 1970, pp. 47-57; also C.E. Carlston, "A Positive Criterion of Authenticity?", BibRes.7 (1962), pp. 33ff. Exeter, /
15. F. Böckle, O. Piper, H. Ringling, see also note 3 above.

fresh approach which takes into account the anthropological status of the different statements referring to marriage in the New Testament. W. Lohff describes this new image of marriage "as understanding marriage in terms of Gospel, as the benevolent gift of an authentic life realized in faith, which has the greatest power to elevate mankind."¹⁶ This approach differs from the traditional teaching in that it seeks an understanding of marriage strictly in terms of the Gospel, and not in terms of law, evolution, the order of things, or any other theoretical formulation. In fact, the effort to arrive at a new image of marriage is not confined to the half dozen or so emphatic statements found in the New Testament, nor is there an attempt to string them together like cultural beads in order to arrive at some systematic doctrine. What is emphasized is the tension that is always present between the Gospel and the historical and sociological situation --- a tension which gives Christianity its flexibility to adjust to the changing circumstances of time. This is well illustrated in the 'Haustafel' found in Ephesians 5:22-33. It begins: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord" (5:22). This, it is said, simply reflects a patriarchal situation that Western culture has left behind long ago. A situation which would certainly not be tolerated in this age of 'Women's

16. W. Lohff, Das neue Bild der Ehe, H. Harsch, ed., Munich, 1969, p.36.

Liberation', and the equality of the sexes. Further, it could be said to go against the grain of our modern concept of marriage as a partnership. Yet, despite the presence of this sociological fact in the 'Haustafeln' the Gospel is able to speak to the essential relationship: "however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (5:33). Thus while the Gospel speaks to men in the context of their own imperfect human structures, it calls them to a realization of the essential meaning of the marriage relationship, and by so doing becomes the dynamic force which institutes change rather than defends the status quo. The Gospel becomes the instrument whereby the institution may be cleansed of its imperfections, inequalities, and limitations, elevating it to a higher level of human perfection. And it is with the meaning of the relationship itself rather than its form and function that this thesis will be concerned. The meaning of the marriage relationship and what the Gospel has to say about it has been overshadowed, if not totally neglected, in previous exegetical research, and this is largely because of the almost paranoiac preoccupation of scholars with the form and function of the institution, especially the question of indissolubility. Form and function are basically those aspects of marriage that are historically and sociologically conditioned, whereas meaning lies more in the realm of ethics and religion. What has been happening is that theologians in the past

have been largely concerned with a sociological problem and have neglected, in part, the theological question of what the Gospel did, is doing and can do, for marriage. Thus the study of marriage in terms of the Gospel is merely an adjustment to the distortion which is found in the literature. Our task in this thesis may be described as distinguishing what in the New Testament is historically and sociologically conditioned, and what is valid in principle even for today.

Historical Survey of Previous Biblical Research:

A historical survey of teachings and customs within different times and cultures is necessary in order to give perspective to our present study. This survey will also show the positions held within the field of New Testament exegesis.

The history of New Testament exegesis concerning marriage bears evidence of the influences of Church and State. Most exegetes from the Fathers onward were anxious not only to lay bare the truth of the New Testament, but also to defend the teaching of their particular branch of the Christian faith. Upon a cursory glance at the exegetical literature it soon becomes clear that a 'wedge' of ecclesiastical and secular law often comes between the scholar and the New Testament material. This apologetic defence of denominational bias in relation to the interpretation of certain New Testament passages has caused, to say the

least, chaos in the literature. And while the Christian community as a whole adheres to certain basic characteristics of Christian marriage, there is such divergency in the interpretations among the various communions of the Church, that even sincere Christians are confused as to what may be considered as an acceptable interpretation.

This problem of interpretation arose as soon as the Church began to move out into the world. The first evidence of this difficulty arose when Paul was faced with the problems of the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 7). From that point onward the problem grew as the Church grappled with the concrete and historical and sociological situations of the pagan world. The early Fathers, while generally accepting the position that marriage between baptized persons was indissoluble, were by no means unanimous,¹⁷ and even at this early stage the difficulty of interpreting the New Testament teaching to meet the needs of the early Church was not an easy task. The problem became more acute after Christianity became a state religion. Whereas beforehand it could censure those members who did not adhere to its practices, now it was faced with the task of trying to make its marriage practices universally acceptable to the state, which

17. J. Pospishil, "Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church," *IrThQ*, 38 (1971) pp. 338ff, H. Crouzel, "Remarriage after Divorce in the Primitive Church: A Propos of a recent book," *IrThQ*, 38 (1971) pp. 21-41.

consequently brought the Church in to opposition to secular law. It was to Christianity's advantage, however, that Roman marriage was monogamous in origin and tradition, and further that a permanent marriage bond among the Romans excluded on principle any other marriage, or any relationship similar to marriage, such as concubinage.¹⁸ But it was to her disadvantage that in classical Roman law marriage was viewed as a factual situation which persisted because --- and as long as --- both partners wanted to live in the married state. This naturally implied that both partners remained completely free to opt for a divorce, even unilaterally. Under the influence of Christianity, sometime before A.D. 600, this concept changed and marriage came about by contractual agreement between the partners and persisted also if the partners no longer wanted to live together.¹⁹ After the introduction of Christianity as a state religion divorce was tied to various explicit reasons, though these reasons varied in number and nature. A divorce without such a valid reason was punished with grave penalties. By the middle ages the conflict between Church and State was settled by allowing marriage, for Christians at all events, to become entirely an affair of the Church.²⁰

18. H. Ritzer, "Secular Law and the Western Church's Concept of Marriage," Conc. Vol. 5, No. 6, My 1970 p. 67.

19. N. Van Der Wal, "Secular Law and the Eastern Church's Concept of Marriage," Conc. Vol. 5, No.6, My 1970, p.76.

20. J. Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, New York, 1908-22, Vol. 8, p.437.

While the Church in the West was framing its laws around the structures of Western culture, the Church in the East was also being influenced by its historical and sociological context. And like the West its interpretation of Scripture was conditioned by historical and sociological factors. Its problems, like those in the West, began as soon as it attempted to apply its teaching to the Christian community living for the most part in a secular environment under civil authority. The divergence of East and West not only finds its roots in its different mentalities and cultures, but also in the adoption of different traditions.²¹ While the Western

21. When the Gospels were composed, marriage was being hotly debated by the different Rabbinical schools, the main difference among them being the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The rigorist school of Shammai held that the mention of 'uncleanness' restricted the husband's power of divorce to cases of adultery; the more lenient school of Hillel held that anything in the wife which "found not favour in his eyes" was ground for divorce. J. MacCabe argues that the maxim put into Christ's mouth regarding marriage and divorce is merely the principle of the Shammai school. However, he points out that "The Gospels represent divergent streams of Christian tradition, flowing on from the Rabbinical schools into the new Church, and two of these streams have entered the Gospel narrative." Cf. his The Influence of the Church on Marriage and Divorce, London, 1916, p. 53. There is some evidence that these different traditions were adopted by the different groups in the early Church. And there is little doubt that a rigorist teaching similar to that found in the Gospels preceded the New Testament, and can be found in sectarian literature such as the Zadokite Document in Qumran Cf. Rabin, The Zadokite Documents, Oxford, 1954, p. 7. It appears that the Church in the East followed a tradition similar to that of the Hillel school.

Church was thinking of marriage as a 'sacramentum', following the later Vulgate, the Greeks were seeing it as a great 'musterion', which evoked quite different associations than when Western European theologians interpreted Ephesians 5:22-33 in the light of the teaching of the sacraments current in Western tradition. Origen in his treatment of the relevant New Testament passages²² concerning marriage sets the tone for the Eastern Church's concept of marriage when he develops a kind of graduation in which he places virginity at the top, followed by total monogamy, and then allows for "sklerokardia" in certain cases such as widows who marry, the marriage of an abandoned spouse, and finally reaching the level of the ancient Mosaic divorce, that is, divorce for whatever reason.²³ This idea was taken further in the exegesis of Basil, who became a foremost authority in this matter, and who interpreted the text of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 by linking it with two texts which are found in the Septuagint but lacking in most current versions of the Hebrew Old Testament, Jeremiah 3:1 and Proverbs 18:22a: "The man who keeps an adulterous wife is foolish and impious." This attitude was further developed by Epiphanius to allow for remarriage of divorced persons. He states:

22. Passages treated by Origen are: Mt. 19:3-12, I Cor. 7:1-2, 5-9, 38-40, and I Tim. 3:1-2, 12.

23. Anti-Nicene Christian Library, A. Menzies, ed., Additional Volume, Edinburgh, 1897, pp. 506-512; Cf. also O. Rousseau, "Divorce and Remarriage: East and West", Conc Vol. 4, No. 3, Ap. 1967, p. 58.

"He who has only one wife will be advantageously praised and honoured among members of the Church; but not he who has not been able to be content with one who has died, or whom - although separation has taken place for reason of fornication or adultery or some other cause- the divine word (o theos logos) does not accuse and does not exclude from the Church or from life but tolerates because of his weakness. The reason is not so that he might have two wives at the same time, the first being still alive, but so that, separated from her, he might be licitly united to another if the case should present itself; for the holy word and the holy Church have pity on him, especially if such a man is otherwise devout and living in accord with God's law." 24

The difference between the East and West became more divergent as the Church in the West dominated the secular authority, while the Church in the East became more subject to civil authority and reflected civil law in its interpretations of Scripture. However, the differences in interpretation ran deeper than mere civil influences, it involved the two different conceptions that existed between East and West. The Western Church put the emphasis on the contractual element as the basis on which sacramental grace has come to be conferred, whereas the Eastern Church tended to relate everything to the aspect of mystery and the Scriptures, and looked upon the Church as intervening through her blessing, without reference to the contractual element.

Turning again to the Church in the West we find that the Protestant reformation brought with it an almost total rejection of the traditional concept of marriage as it was understood in Canon Law. The Reformers questioned the

24. Adv. Haer. 59, 4; trans. O. Rousseau, idem, p.62.

rigid medieval views of divorce, and rejected the sacramental, ceremonial notion of marriage. In fact it appears that the Reformers, out of their repudiation of the Church of Rome, adopted some of the ideas of the Eastern Church regarding marriage. Divorce and remarriage became possible for such things as adultery, extreme cruelty, and prolonged desertion. It is with the Reformers that a reassessment and reinterpretation of the Old and New Testament teaching on marriage begins to take shape, and at the same time a new problem was also taking shape, which was to cast its shadow over biblical exegesis from that period to the present day. W.M. Foley puts it this way:

"It is in the modern period, since the Reformation, that the question of the two jurisdictions and the proper relation of the one to the other has come into prominence and has given occasion to many practical difficulties arising from the conflict of the two different ideals." 25

The Western world had come unstuck from the authority of the Roman See and was beginning to assert itself in matters that were previously considered to be the private domain of the Church. The Reformers helped this separation of ecclesiastical and civil law by supporting the claims of the State and of the civil magistrates as against the extravagant claims of the medieval Church, holding that the laws of the Christian state must be regarded as Christian laws and must be obeyed, and that

25. J. Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 8, p. 437.

no law abiding citizen should be subjected to Church censure or to social inconvenience for neglecting some ecclesiastical ordinance, so long as he did nothing illegal or dishonourable. On the other hand the Roman Catholic Church held that it was the province of the Church to define what should or should not be considered lawful in the matter of marriage.²⁶

The bifurcation of Church and State, and the divisions which arose in the Church itself brought about a real confusion in both Christian practice and doctrine concerning marriage, and it is from this point onward that the major problems are raised in the field of Biblical exegesis. The Protestant Reformers, anxious to transcend the Canon law of the Roman Church, put great emphasis on the authority of scripture, and in so doing gave impetus to what may well be described as the most important phase of Protestant theology -- that of Biblical exegesis.

At the beginning of the modern period, from the seventeenth century onward, there are three definite positions held in Christendom regarding the concept of marriage. The Roman Catholic Church holding to its traditional interpretation, and abiding by the decisions made at the Council of Trent (1545), declared that a valid marriage is one conducted before a parish priest and two witnesses.²⁷ The Church forbids divorce of two parties

26. Ibid, p.437.

27. In the Eastern Church, by contrast, a priest is not required to make the marriage legal.

who were baptised Christians at the time of marriage, but a valid marriage where one party is unbaptised may be dissolved since it is not sacramental. In such cases the dissolution is made by nullity as divorce is not permitted. The Anglican Church also held to the principle of indissolubility, inheriting its theology from Roman Catholicism.²⁸ However, by the eighteenth century, with its emphasis on reason and natural law and its tendency to Erastian views of Church and State, it adopted a view in line with other reformed Churches in allowing divorce for adultery, basing its reasons on the interpretation of the 'exceptive clause' found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. However, the Anglican Church in rejecting the 'Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum',²⁹ a code of Canons advocated by the more advanced Continental Reformers, in which adultery, desertion, deadly hostility and prolonged ill-treatment of a wife by a husband were admitted as grounds for divorce, and their non-acceptance of the Roman Catholic practice of nullity in its totality put the Anglicans in a rather awkward position which is reflected in their

28. G. Dunstan, Conc. Vol. 5, No. 6, p. 140.

29. A. R. Winnett, The Church and Divorce, London, 1968, p. 1.

theology of marriage, and gave rise to differences of opinion within the Anglican Church.³⁰ The Reformation view, as stated in the 'Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum,' allowed divorce for other reasons than adultery; however, even within the ranks of Protestantism there was no concensus on the matter, and the history of its literature represents all three positions held in the Christian Church. A conservative group held uncompromisingly to the principle of indissolubility, while a more moderate group, mainly Anglican theologians, upheld the indissoluble principle but allowed divorce in cases of adultery. The more liberal Protestant theologians supported the 'Reformatio Legum', in that they allowed

30. On the indissolubilist side, K.E. Kirk, Marriage and Divorce, (1st. edition, 1933; second edition, (1948); R.C. Mortimer's revision of T.A. Lacey's Marriage in Church and State, (1947); R. Haw, The State of Matrimony, (1952). On the non-indissolubilist side, W.R. Inge, Christian Ethics and Modern Problems, (1930); J.H. Cruse and B.S.W. Green, Marriage, Divorce and Repentance in the Church of England, (1949); D.S. Bailey, The Mystery of Love and Marriage, (1952); Cf. A.R. Winett, op. cit. page 14, note 43.

divorce for causes other than adultery.³¹

How did the different branches of the Christian Church interpreting the same body of literature come to hold such diverse views? There are a number of reasons,

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31. The Protestant conservative viewpoint that marriage is indissoluble and does not allow for divorce is represented by G.H. Box and C. Gore, (Anglican) Divorce in the New Testament, London, 1921, -- both take a position identical with that of Roman Catholicism in that a sacramental marriage, that is, a marriage conducted between two baptised persons is indissoluble, however, divorce and remarriage is allowed for desertion in mixed marriages; F.L. Cirlot (Episcopal) Christ and Divorce, Lexington, Ky., 1945, -- marriage is indissoluble except by death; F.C. Grant (Episcopal) The Mind of Christ on Marriage, Five Essays on Marriage, Louisville, 1946 -- marriage is indissoluble for those committed to the will of God, however, consideration may be given to the New Testament exception for harlotry, and premarital sex; S.L. Tyson, (Episcopal) The Teaching of Our Lord as to the Indissolubility of Marriage, Sewanee, Tenn., 1909 -- the most conservative of this group. Tyson contends that according to New Testament teaching marriage is indissoluble and there is no exception.
- Apart from the Anglican moderates listed in note 30, the following represent the view that marriage is indissoluble except for adultery. F.H. Chase (Anglican) What Did Christ Teach About Divorce?, London, 1921 -- divorce for adultery only, there were no grounds for desertion; A. Hovey (Baptist) The Scriptural Law for Divorce, Philadelphia, 1866 -- divorce for adultery and possibly for other sexual sins, however, separation only for desertion.
- The liberal view goes back to Martin Luther where in his The Estate of Marriage, (1522) he lists three reasons for divorce (1) adultery, (2) incompatibility -- due to some bodily or natural deficiency, and (3) the refusal of the partner to fulfill the conjugal duty. Cf. Luther's Works, Vol. XLV: The Christian in Society, 11, edited by Walther I. Brandt, Phil., 1962, pp. 30-35; R.H. Charles, The Teaching of the New Testament on Divorce, London, 1921 - interprets N.T. teaching as meaning divorce for adultery, desertion, and possibly other causes; J. Murray, (Presbyterian) Divorce, Phil., 1953, divorce for adultery and desertion. Cf. also note 30 plus D.W. Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce, Leiden, 1969, p.30.

and to lay a basis for our own exegetical inquiry into the New Testament material we shall delineate some of the influences which gave rise to the different exegetical interpretations of the New Testament literature.

A Response to Moral Needs

Most of the exegetical work done by the different branches of the Christian Church was done for practical purposes in response to a particular need of the Christian community in that particular time. In a real way the exegetical literature reflects the needs of its own period and interprets the New Testament teaching in the light of these needs. Thus in assessing this material we must have an eye for what is historically and sociologically conditioned, and what can be considered as biblical principles that find their roots in the teaching of the New Testament. An example of how the scholarship of early exegesis reflects the cultural and historical context of the period in which it was carried out can be seen in the sudden shift of opinion in the Anglican Church around the turn of the present century. At this particular time there was a strengthening of the indissoluble position brought about when New Testament criticism questioned the 'exceptive clause' found in Mt. 5:32 and 19:9 (but not found in Mark) as an authentic word of Jesus. Further, the Anglo-Catholic movement, with a moral theology largely derived from Roman sources, had gained ground among the clergy. What is more,

divorce was no longer an exceptional occurrence, but had come to be regarded as a major challenge to the Christian conception of marriage demanding an uncompromising stand on the part of the Church.³²

This same thing can be seen in the Roman Catholic apologetic writings on the subject, which largely amount to defending the Church's position established at the Council of Trent.³³ In Protestant circles generally the interest in the subject seemed to be geared to the current moral situation, as when the divorce rate rose after World War II, a series of exegetical works came to the fore advocating stricter divorce laws.³⁴ All of this

32. A.R. Winnett, *Op. Cit.* p.7, Cf. also Archbishop G. Fisher, Problems of Marriage and Divorce, p.18, and D.W. Shaner, *Op. Cit.* p.9.
33. This is a little unfair to current Roman Catholic exegesis where some real effort has been made to interpret the New Testament teaching on its own merits. The most noteworthy advance is that of the French scholar, Joseph Bonsirven, who, in his book, Le Divorce dans le Nouveau Testament, Paris, 1948, argues that the divorce texts in Mt. 5:32 and 19:9 only makes sense when we interpret 'porneia' as meaning false marriage, that is, an invalid marriage contracted in good faith. This theory has much to commend it, and when considered in relation to the cultural and historical background becomes all the more convincing, as it finds support in Rabbinic literature. Cf. also J. Delarme, "Sens du texte de S. Matthieu (V. 31-32) sur le divorce", AmiCler 66 (51, '56) pp. 772-774; T.V. Fleming, "Christ and Divorce", ThSt, 24 (1, '63) pp.106-120; J. Dominian, Christian Marriage, London, 1968.
34. Cf. F.L. Cirlot, Christ and Divorce, Lexington, Ky., 1945; B.S. Easton, F.C. Grant, and S.E. Johnson, Five Essays on Marriage, Louisville, 1946.

illustrates the tremendous influence historical and social factors have upon the interpretation of Scripture and how these factors contributed to the development of different theories in the literature. What is more, it makes us aware, that in our utilization of such secondary sources, we must give careful consideration to those social factors that influence the exegesis of the New Testament teaching on marriage.

The Problem of Legalism in Protestant Exegesis

The Protestant Reformers in their effort to abrogate the Canon law of the Roman Church were led to reflect continually on the Ten Commandments, emphasizing in their theological formulations the authority of Scripture, thus replacing Canon law with a strict observance of Biblical law. This Biblical legalism, usually of Calvinist origin, frequently turned out to be more capricious and irrelevant than Catholic legalism based on the Canons of the Church. However, in the past couple of decades this problem has been combatted in Protestant theology with its discussion on 'Gospel and Law'.³⁵

The whole problem began when early exegetes interpreted Biblical ethics and law³⁶ as fixed and

35. Cf. C.H. Dodd, Gospel and Law: The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity, New York, 1951; W. Lillie, Studies in New Testament Ethics, Phil., 1961; G.H. Outka and P. Ramsey, *op.cit.*, pp.265-322.

36. Ethics comes from the Greek work 'ethos', which means 'a habit or custom'. 'Nomos' varies little from this meaning, and can best be understood as 'an accepted custom'. Thus ethics and law are in some ways synonymous -- both reflecting a particular ethos that is historically and socially conditioned. Cf. W. Barclay, Ethics in a Permissive Society, Glasgow, 1971, pp. 13-26.

stereotyped ways of looking at ethical behaviour. In other words what was once the usual thing to do had now become the obligatory thing to do. No consideration was given to the process in the formation of the Mosaic law, which shows the significance of the natural, economic, geographical, social and historical factors which contributed to the evolution of Israelite law, nor was there any attempt made to understand these texts in their concrete social situation.³⁷ Biblical laws, pertaining to ethical behaviour, were seen as prescriptions that were as binding today as they were for the period in which they were given. Biblical exegesis began to free itself from this legalism when it began to examine more closely the debate which was carried on in the New Testament concerning the validity of the law. Paul, as well as the rest of the New Testament, evinces the firm conviction that the Old Testament law considered as a whole derives from God as its author. Yet, despite this full acceptance of the divine authority of the law, this same law is considered to be no longer in force. The basis of this assertion is contained in Paul's argument that the Old Testament law, according to the intention of God, has a validity limited to a certain period of time. It is but a stage in the unfolding of the saving plan of

37. Early exegesis was more concerned with the practical application of the texts rather than an understanding of them in their own social and cultural setting.

God. It "came in" (Rom 5:20) and was intended up to the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:19). The law of Moses, according to Paul, has only a 'temporary validity', contingent upon a particular historical and sociological context, whereas the "law of Christ" is a law that has a permanency for all time. This implies that with the coming of Christ the law had lost its validity, and what is more is seen as a set of prescriptions that were applicable to definite historical and sociological situations, and were not meant to be transferred, as is, to dissimilar cultural situations which demanded a different set of prescriptions.

This differentiation between gospel and law which has been worked out in recent Protestant theology makes a major contribution to exegetical research in that it delivers it from the legalism which treated Biblical legal prescriptions as literally applying to situations in which they could not possibly be worked out in practice. Furthermore, it provides a counterbalance to early Protestant emphasis on Scripture as the sole authority.

Regarding marriage, the problem of 'legalism' can best be seen in the attempts by earlier exegetes of all persuasions to treat the legal prescriptions of the old and New Testament as laws which define right conduct in all circumstances for all time. No effort was made to interpret these laws in the context of their own historical and sociological environment, their main concern was to fit together all the legal prescriptions

that are found in Scripture into a systematic doctrine of marriage. Interestingly enough these prescriptions had to find some continuity in order to allow themselves a systematic formulation, and for most scholars, this continuity was found, not in the diversity of the historical and sociological situations from which the various texts were taken, but the ethos of the exegete himself. This is well illustrated when we consider their treatment of the Ten Commandments, especially the seventh commandment "You shall not commit adultery". This law of divorce was seen as equally applicable to both men and women, and depending upon denominational bias, was referred to one or more illicit sexual acts. In actual fact this particular law in the Decalogue is applicable only to women,³⁸ as a man in Hebrew society could not commit adultery against his wife, but could only commit adultery if he violated the rights of another man.³⁹

The emphasis in most previous exegetical work, with few exceptions, puts great stress on the legal aspect of marriage --- to the extent of treating the teaching of Jesus as laws or moral principles that demand obedience. This legal narrowing of the issues is difficult to

38. L. Epstein, Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud, Cambridge, Mass., 1942, pp. 3-33.

39. Cf. F. Hairk, TDNT, IV, pp. 732ff. There is some evidence that similar practices were prevalent in the Hellenistic and Roman world.

overcome, as the discussions regarding marriage and divorce in the Old and New Testament are held in the context of the legal language of the period which suggests the legal context as a reasonable basis for analysis. However, modern exegetical analysis⁴⁰ has shown that even though Jesus uses the language of the law, He does so in a way that alienates it from its customary legal use and breaks through the plane of law into that of reality --- "He reveals the reality of a human relationship in which God lays direct claim to man's response. And He frees this relationship from the strait-jacket of the Law."⁴¹

This problem of exegesis while recognized must also be faced, and the imposition of a legalism, by emphasizing the authority of Scripture, or following through the legalistic formulations of the ancient world, must be avoided. So too, must be avoided the imposition of our own cultural ethos on the teaching of the Gospel. Our aim is to find out how the Gospel transcends the law, both ancient and modern, and speaks to the reality of marriage.

Two theories which have greatly influenced Christian ethics, and especially Biblical exegesis, are the social evolutionary theory of anthropology and the theory of 'orders of creation' developed by a group of German scholars of which E. Brunner, P. Althaus and W. Elert are

40. H. Baltensweiler, et al, see note 3.

41. P. Hoffmann, Conc. Vol. 5, No. 6, p.53.

representative. These theories, while providing a framework for interpreting the Biblical material, also adversely affected its exegesis. Like legalism, these theories are considered untenable in present exegetical research, nevertheless their influence, which is not dead yet,⁴² must be considered.

The Social Evolutional Theory

For more than a hundred years the thinking of Christian theologians has been concerned with the theory of evolution. At first, with a few exceptions, they considered the Christian doctrine of creation to be threatened by the opposition that seemed to exist between the new hypothesis and the biblical account of creation. However, as the new theory became an essential part of the mental furniture of the Western world, and became the basis not only for the idea of the biological evolution of man, but also for a description of historical and social evolution, theologians in an effort to be relevant attempted to assimilate the different aspects of evolutionary theory into their theological formulations. No longer was it "the creation story or evolution" but "the creation story and evolution". Among the first theories of evolution to be embraced by theologians, was the social evolutional theory developed by the new empirical science -- Anthropology.

42. Evolutionary theories have been put forward by T.H. Huxley in his Romanes Lectures, Julian Huxley in Essays of a Humanist, Chatto & Windus, 1964, Penguin, 1966, and by C.H. Waddington, The Ethical Animal, Chicago, 1960.

The study of family life as an aspect of social structure began with the lawyers and students of comparative jurisprudence. The first documented work in this field was Sir Henry Maine's Ancient Law,⁴³ in which he used the Scriptural History of the Israelites to establish his 'Patriarchal Theory'. However, the roots of biblical anthropology go back beyond Maine to studies made by Sir Robert Filmer and John Locke, who in their analysis of Scripture came to different conclusions as to the origin and pattern of family life.⁴⁴ These early discussions by lawyers were brought about by the problems which they faced in their work, such as who succeeds whom, who inherits what, who marries whom? In an effort to solve these problems they turned to the analysis of earlier civilizations, and more importantly referred to

43. H.S. Maine, Ancient Law, John Murray, 1861.

44. Sir Robert Filmer, preceded Sir Henry Maine in alleging on the authority of Scripture that "Patria Potestas" existed among the Hebrews. The main facts relied on by Filmer were (1) Abraham's league with Abimelech; (2) sentence passed by Judah on Thamar; (3) Abraham's army of three hundred and eighteen soldiers of his own family; (4) The fifth commandment, which Filmer takes to be the law enjoining obedience to kings, it is delivered in the terms, "Honour thy father", as if all power were originally in the father.

However, Locke in replying to Filmer's arguments points out that the evidence was just as weighty in favour of a matriarchal theory at the beginning of Israelite society, and in addition to refuting Filmer's arguments on their own Scriptural references, he draws on a large body of additional Scriptural material to prove that Hebrew society was originally matriarchal. Cf. J.F. McLennan, The Patriarchal Theory, London, 1885, pp. 35-50.

Roman Law on which English jurisprudence was based. Thus these and many other questions form the core of problems settled by 'family Law' -- law pertaining to marriage, parenthood, legitimacy, inheritance and succession.

At the turn of the nineteenth century lawyers became concerned over the fact that both Israelite society and Roman law on which their 'family law' was based were more reminiscent of a tribal way of life than of a sophisticated civilization, and they were interested in finding an explanation as to how this development from tribal to modern civilization came about. For an explanation they turned to the theory of social evolution which readily suggested itself as a logical explanation.

The social evolutionary theory by explaining the existence of an institution by showing how it originated and the series of stages through which it had passed, lent itself nicely to the study of kinship and marriage. J.F. McLennan,⁴⁵ a Scottish lawyer, was the first to utilize the social evolutionary theory to explain the origin and development of the family. McLennan began where his predecessors left off, with an analysis of the tribal system of ancient Rome, from which he concluded that the symbolic bridegroom capture found in ancient Rome was the 'survival' of an earlier stage in which men

45. J.F. McLennan, Primitive Marriage, Black, 1865.

had indeed forcibly abducted women from other tribes. From this assumption he went on to delineate the different stages through which the customs of kinship and marriage had passed. In the beginning there was promiscuity where male and female mated indiscriminately, living in wandering bands. This gave way to a system in which kinship was traced through females only, which in turn was followed by the tracing of kinship through males only. Finally monogamy and the tracing of kinship through both males and females became dominant. These conclusions sparked off a controversy between McLennan and Sir Henry Maine who had previously established on the basis of his 'Patriarchal Theory' that the family originated as a 'Patriarchy' --- tracing its kin through the father. This debate between the 'Matriarchal' and 'Patriarchal' schools of thought was to preoccupy the new social science, anthropology, for the next half century.

The man who brought the social evolutionary theory directly into the arena of theology was himself a theologian and Old Testament scholar. At the time of Robertson Smith anthropology was very much to the fore in theological discussion. The theory of evolution, in all its aspects, had entrenched itself in the minds of all thinking men both inside and outside the Church, and formed the basis of all current intellectual discussion. Robertson Smith, coming later, inherited the idea that modern civilization represents a long process of evolution. However, he noted that evolution involved not only

progression from one state of development to another, but also the continuing of beliefs and practices that are no longer of functional value to daily living. Something of what we still do and believe, he argued, is fossil; meaningless, petrified appendage to the daily business of living. And what he was interested in doing was scraping away the clinging rubble of fossilized, meaningless, customs and beliefs, and laying bare those customs which have proved their evolutionary status by their function in modern society.⁴⁶ His effort in this field laid the foundation for the new discipline - social anthropology.⁴⁷

While Robertson Smith supported McLennan in his basic theory,⁴⁸ he differed in his approach, choosing to work from the known backward to the unknown drawing in the final analysis, upon primitive cultures for analogies to support his theory.

Biblical exegetes, taking a cue from such scholars as Robertson Smith, began to trace the evolutionary development of Christian marriage. Citing the relevant passages in the Old and New Testament, scholars could easily discern an evolutionary development. Thus the basic idea which evolved, and kept marriage theology from advancing, was that polygamy was a consequence of a fall

46. W. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites, (Burnett Lectures), Edinburgh, 1888-9.

47. M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, Middlesex, 1966, p.25.

48. W. Robertson Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, Cambridge, 1885.

from a paradisaical state brought about by an expression of sin, and that from this point onward the institution of marriage marred by sin struggled to regain its original ideal state. This struggle can be delineated in the history of the institution by tracing the different evolutionary stages through which marriage passed:- For example, from matriarchy or patriarchy to polygamy, monogamy and then on to the equality of the sexes. The difference between the approach of anthropology and theology is that the theologian starts with a mythological conception of marriage as recorded in Genesis, interprets from the biblical literature a reason for its failure -- man's sin, and then proceeds to interpret the historical and sociological factors by combining the theological conception with the social evolutionary theory. The anthropologists on the other hand seek to show from the historical and sociological facts, that marriage has gone through an evolutionary process. However, the theological approach became the pattern of exegesis despite the conflicting historical and cultural evidence recorded in the Old Testament regarding the origin and development of the institution.⁴⁹

Some Biblical scholars⁵⁰ have detected a parallel between the evolutionary development of marriage and

49. Cf. D.R. Mace, Hebrew Marriage, New York, 1953 (Part), pp. 35-43, also E. Westermarck, Marriage, New York, 1929.

50. Cf. P. Grelot, Man and Woman in Scripture, New York, 1964.

revelation. As God revealed himself in history first through the prophets, and then through his Son, Jesus Christ, He made his will concerning marriage clear to man. Thus social evolution was seen as fulfilling God's will in history, in a sense, social evolution took place because revelation made it possible.

However, anthropologists who developed the social evolutionary theory to explain the human family have found, through their ethnographic studies, that this theory is not altogether suitable for the purpose to which it was so enthusiastically put. Granted that there is an evolutionary process in the history of human institutions, yet we cannot be sure that one step in the process is superior to another, or necessarily follows another. The mistake that early evolutionists made, and consequently all those who adopted their theory, including theologians, was that human institutions are not subject to cumulative evolution in the way that, say, technology is. Kinship systems, unlike technological inventions, cannot be ranked as better or worse, higher or lower; they simply represent alternative ways of doing things, and are geared to the needs of a particular period and environment.

A second error detected in the evolutionists' scheme is that they failed to see that the whole of mankind need not have gone through the same series of stages --- that there were alternate possible routes. Because the evolutionists insisted on universal evolution, so did the

theologians and they regarded any contemporary tribe that might be practicing 'archaic' traits such as polygamy, to be somehow spiritually and socially retarded --- not realizing that this tribe itself was the end product of an evolutionary process. The Bonhoefferian concept "man come of age", has come to mean, for Western Christianity at least, man at the end of the evolutionary process, the beneficiary of God's total revelation. Our Westernized brand of Christianity has come to see people with different marriage customs, such as obtain in Africa, as spiritually retarded and socially inferior; ^a And our efforts have not been so much to preach the Gospel as to change their social system. This attitude, built largely on a misconception, has given Christianity a bad image in many parts of the world.⁵¹

As anthropology became more scientific there was a shift from evolutionary speculation to a more empirical investigation of societies.⁵² Bronislaw Malinowski may well be credited with breaking the strangle-hold which evolutionary theory had on early anthropology. He insisted on explaining the customs of a particular society in the context of their own culture. Other

51. E. Hillman, "The Development of Christian Marriage Structures", Conc Vol. 5, No. 6, May 1970, pp. 25-58.

52. R. Fox, Kinship and Marriage, Middlesex, 1967, p. 20.

anthropologists,⁵³ taking Malinowski's lead, have gone on to develop the science of kinship studies along these lines. However, while anthropology was becoming more scientific and ejecting the evolutionary concept as untenable, theology still clung to it as the most logical framework in which to develop its theology of marriage.

What the 'biblical evolutionists' did not take into consideration was the fact that the form and function of marriage are dependent upon a particular historical and sociological environment, and that when that environment changes then the function and form of marriage may also change. And further, that this change may not necessarily be an evolutionary process from one stage to

53. Kinship studies took a more empirical approach with the work of R.E. Lowie and G.P. Murdock in America, Radcliffe-Brown in England, and especially C. Levi-Strauss in France. It was Levi-Strauss's work Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté, Paris, 1949 (Elementary Kinship Structures) which changed the whole emphasis of kinship study. Before Levi-Strauss marriage had been discussed largely in the context of recruitment to kinship groups; legitimate marriage was necessary to provide for legitimate offspring to replenish the group. However, Levi-Strauss argued that kinship groups were simply units in a system of 'alliances' made or expressed by marriage. The real differences between kinship systems, then, lay in the different ways in which they moved women around the system in marriage. This approach enabled anthropologists to put all kinship systems on one continuum and discuss them as variations on the alliance theme. Thus marriage is seen as the response to various recognizable pressures within a framework of biological, psychological, ecological and social limitations. And the reason why one form of marriage is chosen over another is that they answer certain needs and do certain jobs, and when these needs change so does the system. Cf. R. Fox, op.cit. pp. 13-25.

to another, but simply the adopting of a system that is the most workable for the group concerned. Take, for example, the creation myths in Genesis 1 and 2. It is self evident that at the beginning of the human race marriage is monogamous, as there is only one couple -- Adam and Eve. The command to "increase, multiply and fill the earth" is also a necessity imposed by the historical and sociological situation. The authors of the creation stories were expressing in the phrase "multiply and fill the earth" an important characteristic of their own social environment, as great importance was attached to progeny. A large family was a necessity in the pastoral environment of early Israel, thus the begetting of children became the function of marriage. And in time the function took precedence over the form, and the form changed to meet the needs of the society. Thus we have the introduction of polygamy and concubinage,⁵⁴ because the important thing was to beget offspring and extend the family. However, when we compare this situation with our own we can appreciate the historical and cultural influences at work. Today, living in a dangerously overpopulated world, we no longer see the function of marriage as "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth". That command, if no other, has been ably fulfilled. And where the function has changed,

54. Cf. J. Van Seters, "The Problem of Childlessness in Near Eastern Law and the Patriarchs of Israel," JBibLit, 87 (1968) pp. 401-8.

as in our own society, so has the form, no longer do we practice concubinage or plural marriage for the purpose of bringing forth offspring. If we practice these things today it is for entirely different reasons.

There is need for a second look at the Creation myths, this time with an acknowledgment of the fact that they too, are set in a historical and cultural context that is in need of 'deculturalization'. The Christian Church in drawing its theological inspiration from these myths has been guilty of defending cultural practices⁵⁵ (marriage for the purpose of offspring) rather than seeking the essential meaning of the marriage relationship. What is needed in Biblical exegesis today is less emphasis on form and function, which are essentially sociological considerations, and more emphasis on the meaning of the relationship itself.

The Orders of Creation and Marriage Theology

A fourth problem which has hampered rather than helped exegesis in the field of marriage theology is that of depending too much on the notion 'orders of creation'. This concept has become a highly controversial term in

55. An example of the Church's defence of primitive cultural practices may be found in most Prayer Books, for example, from the Book of Common Prayer (Church of England), the Book of 1662 with additions and deviations approved in 1927, we have: "First, It (marriage) was ordained for the procreation of children,..... Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication ..." pp. 263-4.

theology today.⁵⁶ It is used in Protestant theology to designate a number of social relationships such as marriage and family, people, state and economy where everyone finds himself, involved in these, including the Christian, prior to and independently of his being a Christian, so to speak, and where he is subject to the commandments which God gave as Creator and which he imposes upon all men.⁵⁷ In a way the concept 'order of creation' holds firmly to the belief that God's will, which is the ultimate standard for law, can only be known through revelation. However, this does not mean that the will of God can only be known through Holy Scripture; quite apart from the saving revelation of Jesus Christ, God has given an original testimony to himself in nature and history, a universal revelation from the beginning of all things. This "is not essentially bound up with faith ... or with the Bible story, but is natural, human, and pre-Christian."⁵⁸

This approach makes it clear that law is based upon the order of existence expressed in creation. And although God is not the imminent world-logos, but the world law giver, the world's laws are nevertheless a manifestation of his creative will. Behind the 'suum cuique' stands the original divine order, which lays down

56. K. Rahner, Sacramentum Mundi, An Encyclopaedia of Theology. Vol. 4, London, 1969, p. 296.

57. Ibid, p. 296.

58. P. Althaus, Die christliche Wahrheit, 1 (Gütersloh, 1946) p. 74.

what is proper for each person, the will of the creator, the order of creation.⁵⁹

For Althaus, law, together with marriage, nationality, the State, and economics, all belong to the ordinances of creation, by which he understands "the indispensable conditions of human life as lived on the plane of history", implanted in man by the Creator through instinct and reason.⁶⁰ However, Althaus points out that "God's action does not establish one single abstract ordinance as such, but a number of concrete forms of ordinance; not a static and ready made world, with natural, eternal and immutable forms of ordinance, but a dynamic world, pressing constantly forward to the creation of new forms."⁶¹ Therefore, the idea 'order of creation' according to Althaus, is not to be understood in static and Platonic terms, as an eternal order of being, but as an historical and dynamic process.⁶²

However, the apparent weakness of the whole idea comes into view when we analyse these ordinances in relation to man's historical existence. We find that these orders, in the arena of humanity, are shot through by sin, and that therefore their particular historical form at any given moment must be critically examined, to

59. E. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, London, 1937, pp. 211-219.

60. H-H Schrey, Conc. Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 32.

61. Ibid, p. 32.

62. P. Althaus, op. cit. p. 74.

see whether they are in keeping with the divine intention behind the ordinances. In this sense 'the orders of creation' cannot be described as preserving the status quo, or as belonging to a period of time when these orders were in operation in human history.⁶³ They are rather a kind of Platonic 'form' that stands over against reality -- a standard by which reality must try to perfect itself.

63. Reinhold Niebuhr is critical of this concept because it has no normative value for man. "There must be something in the order of creation which makes it normative. But it is difficult to find this normative principle because man is a historical creature and there are no purely "natural" forms in his life which have not been subjected to both the freedom and the corruption of history." Cf. The Theology of Emil Brunner, Vol. 3, C.W. Kigley, ed., New York, 1962, p. 265. In commenting on Brunner's idea of orders of creation in relation to marriage Niebuhr says, "Brunner, following Luther, makes monogamy the chief example of the order of creation not only because monogamy is the most primordial and perennially valid of human communities, but because it is the one institution which is validated by a Scriptural appeal to the order of creation. It will be remembered that Jesus in rejecting divorce which Moses had allowed "for the hardness of your hearts", declared that "in the beginning it was not so". He then proceeds to derive from a genuine order of creation, heterosexuality, ("male and female created he them") and from the fact that the marriage bond merges two personalities into one ("and they shall become one flesh") the conclusion that the ideal law for such a union is its indissolubility. "Now what God had joined together let no man put asunder". It is just this ideal of the natural order ... that prompts some questions about the validity of the concept. Undoubtedly, every Christian would agree that the indissolubility of the marriage bond is the ideal solution for the actual intimate mergence of two lives, physically and spiritually. But this mergence is not a fact of nature but an achievement of history and is tolerable only when grace sustains the partners. If we move from the problem of indissolubility of marriage we find that everything is touched by history and is relativized by historical circumstances." Ibid, p. 266.

Thus marriage in this sense is not simply a remedy for sin, but an original order which governs the relationship between the sexes.

Brunner in his discussion of marriage and family life⁶⁴ as an order of creation begins with the fact that sex-differentiation makes humans universally dependent upon one another for their existence and for their self fulfillment,⁶⁵ for a man can become truly a man only in relation to a woman, and a woman can become truly a woman only in relation to a man.⁶⁶ Biologically man and woman are functionally related to one another, and because there is a biological differentiation various kinds of sexual relationships have become universal phenomena which give specific character to individual and corporate life. Furthermore the sex relation, as well as the parent-child relation, teaches us that humans are unequal and dissimilar in their functions.⁶⁷ This basic dissimilarity in function reveals a basic dependency upon others whose functions are complementary to our own.⁶⁸

Brunner goes on to point out that the existing order of sex relations or of any other created order in a given society may stand in need of change, even drastic

64. E. Brunner, op. cit. p. 211-219

65. Ibid, p. 211

66. Ibid, p. 211

67. Ibid, p. 212

68. Ibid, p. 214

reformation, from the Christian standpoint, but "Adaptation to the existing order ... because it has been created by God, is the first point in the Christian ethic."⁶⁹ The existing order must be respected because of the created order of God, of which the existing order is a form, albeit distorted. The second point in the Christian ethic is this, "the existing order is not the order created by God, but it is the order created by God in its broken condition due to sin".⁷⁰ The acceptance of the given order must therefore be temporary and conditional.⁷¹ Because God is the Redeemer as well as the Creator and Preserver, we should strive to purify and perfect the existing order in obedience to Him.⁷²

This static ideal standing behind the historical reality, being constantly obscured by sin, or neglected, yet not being destroyed, is reminiscent of a Platonic influence that is alien to the Old Testament. Marriage can only be realised in the historical situation, and apart from that realization there is no such thing as marriage. The notion of seeing marriage as an 'order of creation' is no doubt derived in part from the static ideal of marriage which has moulded its structure in human life over the centuries. To put it plainly, this

69. Ibid, p. 214f.

70. Ibid, p. 214

71. Ibid, p. 214

72. Cf. D.E. Burrington, "The Command and the Orders in Brunner's Ethics," ScotJth.20 (1967) pp. 149-164.

notion is a very unhistorical way of looking at a very historical institution. It sees marriage as a simultaneously unhistorical yet universal basic structure of human existence, thus concealing a Christian concept of marriage, and therefore obstructing rather than clarifying man's understanding of it. The present Protestant attitude sees the image of marriage as accordant with a belief in creation, but not in the sense that it is a simultaneously unhistorical yet universal basic structure of existence.⁷³

The 'order of creation' calls us back beyond the teaching of Christ to the original command which God made in accordance with his act of creation. This makes Christian marriage nothing more than a realization of this manifestation of God's will in human experience. In fact this concept of marriage may be said to be non-Christian, in that it is available to anyone, as the order itself is natural, human and pre-Christian. Furthermore, it reduces the teaching of the New Testament to an emphatic restatement of God's order of creation, a mere calling attention to a pristine ideal that ought to be followed. However, the New Testament teaching on marriage involves more than just bringing the original 'order' into sharper focus with existing practice. The Gospel makes marriage into something new, and while it is lived like any ordinary marriage, the couple, by virtue

73. W. Lohff, op. cit. p. 36.

of their Christianity, view it as something new. Christ is not only present in the Church, but he is present also in marriage, and thus transforms it into a means of salvation. Christian marriage is no mere refurbishing of an original order, no daunting ideal is set before us; the promise of redemption and unity, founded in Christ, transcends the ordinary imperfect earthly marriage, which is thus freed from all natural considerations and conceived anew by God.⁷⁴

The idea that the New Testament teaching on marriage is primarily a restatement of a pristine ideal that was instituted by God at the beginning of creation must be abandoned. Christian marriage, apart from ordinary marriage, is seen to be something more, something different, something 'new'. However, like ordinary marriage, Christian marriage is temporal, transitory, and bound only to this world (Mt. 12:25 par.), ^{s/}since it, too, is governed by civil as well as ecclesiastical authority, and in many ways resembles ordinary imperfect marriage. However, for Christians it represents the means of serving and glorifying God in this world. Marriage under the influence of the Gospel is not merely the presentation of a static ideal that must be met, but becomes a dynamic force in the redemption of the world. There is definitely a 'new creation' regarding the institution of Christian marriage, a creation that has

74. H. Baltensweiler, Conc. Vol. 5, No. 6, p. 148.

Christological and salvific implications for man. As Christ is in the Church, so He is in Christian marriage, making new, redeeming, and forgiving sinful humanity. The one difference between Christian marriage and ordinary marriage is the 'gospel'. And it is precisely with the terms of the gospel rather than with terms of law, evolution, the orders of creation, or any other theory that this thesis will be chiefly concerned.

The Task of This Thesis

The task of this thesis is to overcome the limitations which previous theological and sociological theories have imposed on exegetical efforts, and to study the various Old and New Testament statements on marriage in their own historical and cultural context with a view to determining what aspects of the New Testament teaching on marriage are historically and sociologically conditioned, and what is valid in principle even for today. Our aim will be to see if the teaching of the New Testament has a unique contribution to make to this basic human relationship, and further, if it speaks dynamically and meaningfully to the marriage relationship irrespective of historical and social conditions. Thus this exercise will be interested in its relevancy as well as its authenticity.

The approach will be both sociological and exegetical, in the sense that all aspects of the institution will be given consideration. The first task is to familiarize

ourselves with the institutional forms that existed at the time of Jesus. The institution of marriage, the status of women, the position of the husband, were without doubt, quite different in Jesus' time from what they are today. Thus our initial task will be to get a grasp of the kind of institution for which the teaching of the New Testament was meant, and to determine what these teachings meant to Jesus' contemporaries. Once we have established the "Sitz im Leben" of the New Testament teaching, our next step is to critically examine this teaching in the context of its own cultural milieu.

Recent findings in biblical exegesis⁷⁵ enables us to approach the subject of Marriage in the New Testament in a new light. Thus our analysis of the concept of marriage in the New Testament will be governed, to a large extent, by these new developments in biblical exegesis.

We shall begin our analysis with the Synoptic Gospels, although they are not the earliest Christian writings.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, they are attempts to record

75. Among the developments which have affected the study of marriage in the New Testament are the dating and authorship of particular New Testament letters. For example, the Pauline corpus has in recent exegesis been reduced to six, and at the most eight genuine Pauline letters.

76. The earliest known Christian writings are the letters of Paul, supposedly written between 48 to 60 A.D. Cf. Chapter 4 above.

the beginnings of Christianity and the actual teachings of Jesus. While it may not be possible to determine with certainty whether the Synoptic teachings on marriage can be attributed to Jesus himself, we shall assume that the teachings used in the Synoptics to guide the behaviour of Church members, were influenced by the person of Christ. Therefore the nature of our analysis will be to trace the origin, development and significance of the Synoptic teaching in the Churches of the Evangelists.

Stage two of our analysis will concern the teaching of marriage in the Pauline correspondence.⁷⁷ Here we see the 'gospel' at work in a Gentile environment. The first real experience of the Church in the world apart from Judaism --- a pragmatic test of its teaching against a different historical and cultural background - is that of the Greco-Roman world. Thus the importance of understanding the cultural milieu, Paul's theological principles, and the attitudes of his Gentile contemporaries to marriage (I Cor 7), are of vital importance in determining if Paul has anything to say to the institution of marriage as we understand it today.

Stage three will deal with the Post-Pauline teaching on marriage, especially in the Gentile Churches. This

77. Only six letters are considered genuine Pauline Epistles in this thesis, Romans, I +II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians and Philemon. Two other letters are debatable - Colossians, and II Thessalonians. The authenticity of the Pauline Corpus is discussed fully in Chapter 4 above.



teaching is representative of the Church at the turn of the first century, and is found largely in the New Testament 'Haustafeln' teaching, and the Pastoral Epistles. In addition to our analysis of the New Testament Post-Pauline teaching, we shall also look at the teaching of marriage in other contemporary Christian writings. This analysis will attempt to note the developments and innovations made in the Christian teaching of marriage at this period.

Finally, on the basis of our analysis of the New Testament material we will look at the possibility of developing a theology of marriage in terms of the New Testament teaching. A theology that is at the same time, true to the 'gospel' and relevant to the needs of our own situation.

In conclusion, we shall outline the origin and development of the institution of marriage in New Testament times, and show in what ways this teaching may be relevant to our own human condition.

CHAPTER II

THE "SITZ IM LEBEN" OF JESUS' TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

Our starting point in our analysis of the New Testament teaching on marriage must begin with a consideration of its historical and sociological origins and its anthropological status, which means asking what man's "image" was at that particular time, as well as familiarizing ourselves with the basic principles of its ethical system and marriage institution.¹

"It is taken for granted by some people that all societies have approximately the same type of family life. This is quite wrong."² There are major differences in family structures throughout the world, and to understand one form of family structure over against the other we must assess these differences. However, the acknowledgement that there are major differences in family structures is of vital importance to our analysis of the teaching of Jesus on marriage in the New Testament. Any preconceived idea that family life in the time of Jesus is approximately of the same type as we practice today can only lead to misinterpretation, and distortion of what Jesus taught, and what the New Testament amplified in its proclamation. To understand

1. See page 4, Chapter 1,

2. E.A. Nida, Bible Translating, New York, 2nd ed., p. 180.

what Jesus, and the New Testament had to say about marriage and the family, we must first understand the "Sitz im Leben" to which this teaching was addressed.

The Mesopotamian Milieu

The Hebrews were Semites, and their social organization, in its origin, did not differ from that of the Semites in general. In order therefore to observe those elements which in time came to be specifically Hebrew, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the early Semitic family, and to determine the position and status of the Hebrew family in its Mesopotamian milieu.

The cradle of the Semites is said to be the Arabian Peninsula,³ from whence they penetrated northward, towards Mesopotamia, forming, in course of time, the various Semitic groups known as Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramaeans, Phoenicians, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Hebrews and Abyssinians (Falashas).⁴ However, in time, no one knows how and when, the Hebrews cut themselves adrift from the larger body and established themselves as a unique entity in the Semitic world. The Hebrews, continuing to practice a nomadic existence as opposed to the stationary way of life of other Semitic peoples, soon developed customs and ideologies that were different from

3. W.O. Oesterley and T.H. Robinson, Hebrew Religion, its Origin and Development, London, 1930, p. 3, Cf. also J. Kastein, History and Destiny of the Jews, New York, 1939, p. 6.

4. Cf. Oesterley, *Ibid*, p.3.

their Semitic relatives, and though connected to the Semites by descent and language, they chose a totally different path regarding customs and religion. While we will attempt to outline the general development of the marriage institution in the Middle East, our attention will be focussed more particularly on the development of Hebrew marriage insofar as it forms the background to the teaching of the New Testament on marriage and the family.

The Law Codes as Sources of Information

Our knowledge of family life in most of the Ancient Near East is derived from legal documents such as the Hammurabi Code, the Assyrian Laws, and the Nuzi Laws. However, the question always arises as to how far these documents reflect current practice. Some laws are conservative and attempt to sustain customs that are falling into disuse, while others are radical and seek to introduce reforms. Examples of both these aspects of the law can often be found in the one law code.⁵ However, we must bear in mind that laws only provide the framework of society and do not express or enforce the total life, in that they do not always regulate the 'mores' and

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5. The Deuteronomic law of the levirate is a good example of an attempt to sustain a custom that has fallen into disuse --- With the change from a nomadic to an agricultural society the law seeks to limit the practice to instances where brothers are living together. This is without doubt an effort to revive what had fallen into abeyance. Cf. Deut. 25:5. The introduction of reforms can also be detected in the Deuteronomic law code, especially where the authority of the father is limited by requiring the sanction of the elders - Deut. 21:18-21. This shows a definite change in authority. Cf. J.R. Bartlett, "The Use of the Word *WAV* as a Title in the Old Testament," VetTest, 19 (1969) pp. 1-10.

'folk-ways' of a society. Thus when laws assume polygamy and permit divorce this in no way indicates the extent of either of these practices in that particular society. Therefore what we find in the legal documents of the ancient world is an ordering of social practices that have proved acceptable over a period of time by the majority of its citizens, and not necessarily a reflection of current practices.

a. The Hammurabi Code

According to the Hammurabi Code the Babylonian family was basically monogamous in character. Para. 167 implies monogamy when it states: "If, when a seignior acquired a wife and she bore him children, that woman has gone to (her) fate (and) after her (death) he has then married another woman ...".⁶ This is further reinforced by the fact that the children of both wives shall share equally in the inheritance of their father, whereas in a polygamous situation the children of the chief wife would get a greater share of the inheritance.⁷ Only in exceptional cases may a man marry a second wife or take a concubine while his first wife is still alive. These are: (1) if his wife is incurably ill (para. 148); (2) if she is of a reprehensible character, neglecting her duties and belittling him in public (para. 141); (3) if she is

6. Cf. J.B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, relating to the Old Testament, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1950, p. 173.

7. Ibid, Assyrian Laws (Middle) para. 41, p. 183.

sterile (para. 146-7); and (4) if she is a priestess and is forbidden by religious law to bear children (para 144-5). In all these cases the inability of the wife to provide her husband with children is deemed sufficient ground for taking a second wife or a concubine.⁸ Thus the whole problem of childlessness in Near Eastern law and among the Patriarchs of Israel is of paramount importance when we consider the practice of taking second wives and concubines. The importance attached to the wife's fertility, and to descendants in the masculine line who would ensure the continuance of the tribe and the handing on of the inheritance, explain these legal provisions. To the nomadic Hebrew, whose strength lay in a large family, the begetting of children, especially male, was of paramount importance. And further, the consummation of the marriage may be argued to have taken place at the birth of a child rather than at the signing of a contract, or at the deflowering which took place on the night of the couple's marriage celebration. Sterility was considered to be a defect (קִיָּבָה) in a woman, and according to Ketuboth 7: 7 was grounds for annulment: "If he married her, making no conditions, and defects were found in her, she may be put away without her Ketubah" However, the defect of sterility was overcome in Near Eastern society, and especially among the Israelites, not by the putting away of the wife,

8. I. Mendelsohn, "The Family in the Ancient Near East," BibArch., 11-15 (1948-52) p. 24.

but rather by the wife providing a 'handmaid' for the husband for the purpose of ensuring legal descendants.⁹

9. To the Hebrew the giving of handmaids to the husband was not considered to be a violation of the rule of monogamy. If we follow the theory of 'extended personality' developed by P.(E). Dhorme, J. Pedersen, and H. Wheeler Robinson, we can grasp the thinking behind this whole practice of giving handmaids to the husband for the purpose of ensuring legal descendants.

In Hebrew thought a man's personality is thought of as extending throughout his ביתו, i.e. 'house' or 'household'. The father, of course, is the head; and next in order of importance are alternatively the wife (or wives) and the sons, then the sons' wives and the daughters. Thus a man's personality is felt to exist within his household, and what is more, to extend to the whole of his property. As Pedersen puts it, "In the eyes of the Israelite also property is a living thing, and is part of his soul" (Cf. Israel: Its Life and Culture I-II, 1926, p.170.) Thus the household in its entirety is regarded as a psychical whole --- the extended personality of the man at its head. The prime example of this is the story of Achan in Joshua 7:24f Cf. for example, also Gen. 44:4ff, and Judges 11:12-13, where 'messengers' are considered an extension of the personality.

In the case of the Hebrew wife the same principle applies. Her personality is extended in her property and possessions such as her dowry and servants which she brings from her father's house, and over which her husband has no rights. This property brought from her father's household is an extension of her personality which forms a psychical whole -- making up the total personality of the wife. Should the wife find herself barren after marriage she could give her husband a handmaid, which is essentially extending the husband's right over an additional part of her personality over which previously he had no jurisdiction. In this sense no other personality is involved apart from the husband and wife, as the handmaid is considered a part of the wife's 'extended personality'. Thus the marriage as far as the Hebrews are concerned remains unchanged. This idea is brought out quite well in the case of Rachel and Jacob. When she found that she was barren she gave her handmaid, Bilhah to Jacob in order to ensure legal descendants. After the birth of Bilhah's son Rachel says "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son" (Gen.31:6f). According to the concept of 'extended personality' the son is Rachel's and not Bilhah's as the marriage is between Jacob and Rachel with Bilhah considered a part of Rachel's personality.

Thus the desire for providing a son who is to be heir, is not only linked with the religious motive of the promise, but also reflects the social feeling of the time; and, according to our observations in note 9 above, the practice of providing 'handmaids' may be seen as a safeguard against polygamy, as the husband loses the right to take a second wife if his legitimate wife provides him with a slave as concubine for the purpose of ensuring legal descendants.¹⁰

However, as a consequence of this practice in the Near East there developed a sexual ethic in which men and women are placed on different levels. Wives and concubines have certain well-defined rights, but the husband retains a wide freedom of action; no one reproached Judah for sleeping with Tamar, although he

Now while there is much evidence of polygamy, even in the case of Jacob mentioned above, the concept of 'extended personality' seems to have governed the practice of taking concubines, and by so doing, helped to retain the concept of monogamy as the basic ideal.

From the period of the Monarchy onward the practice of polygamy among the Hebrews was confined very much to the aristocracy and royalty whose extravagant harems and plural marriages were motivated by politics and a conspicuous display of wealth. However, the ordinary Hebrew in keeping with his concept of 'extended personality' kept his marriage monogamous, with his wife providing a handmaid, if necessary, for the purpose of providing legal descendants. Cf. A.R. Johnson, The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God, Cardiff, 1962; J. Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture, I-II, 1926; H. Wheeler Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology" in The People and the Book, ed., A.S. Peake (1925), pp. 353ff.

10. P. Grelot, "The Institution of Marriage: Its Evolution in the Old Testament," Conc. Vol. 5, No. 5 (1970), p. 40, Cf. also the Hammurabi Code, para. 146-7.

mistook her for a prostitute (Gen. 38:15-18).

Furthermore, only the man could take the initiative in connection with marriage: the wife was the subject of a contract between the bride's future husband and her father (Gen. 24:58f). He is as the West Semites called him the 'Ba'al' ("owner") of his wives and children. Thus in Babylonian society, a man could have as many slave concubines as he wished. The Code explicitly recognizes this fact when it decrees that a slave concubine and her children shall be set free after the death of the master.¹¹

The Hammurabi Code indicates that marriage in Babylonian society was a civil affair with no religious sanctions necessary. Marriage was based on a written contract. Para. 128 of the Code states this clearly: "If a man takes a wife and do not draw up a contract (rikistum) with her, that woman is not a wife". The marriage contract usually contained four or five clauses: (1) the names of the parties concerned and the declaration of marriage; (2) the amount of the 'tinhatu'; (3) clause concerning the settlement in case of divorce; (4) oath of the parties; and (5) the names of the witnesses and the date.¹²

11. Hammurabi Code, para. 170-71.

12. I. Mendelsohn, *op. cit.* p. 25, Cf. also T. J. Meek, "Mesopotamian Legal Documents", in Ancient Near Eastern Texts, ed., J.B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1950. pp. 217ff.

Marriage in the ancient Near East was very much an economic arrangement and naturally marriages were arranged, for the whole family was concerned with the new member of the group or the loss of one of its own members. Before the actual marriage took place it was the custom for the bridegroom to present to the bride's father a sum of money or its equivalent in goods. This sum of money is called in Babylonia, Assyria and Nuzi 'tirhatu', in Ugarit 'tirhatu' and 'mohar', and in the Old Testament¹³ 'mohar'. It is not necessary to explore all the sociological implications of the paying of the "tirhatu-mohar" here, suffice it to say, that there exist two schools of thought as to the definition of the "tirhatu-mohar". One school interprets the "tirhatu-mohar" as 'bride-price' and hence concludes that the Ancient Near East marriage was at least originally "purchase-marriage". The other school explains it as a "compensation gift", and hence concludes that marriage never was "purchase-marriage".¹⁴ Evidence can be gathered in support of both positions.¹⁵ However,

13. Cf. Gen. 34:12; 1 Sam. 18:25; Ex. 22:15:16.

14. For a full debate on this issue see M. Burrows, Basis of Israelite Marriage, American Oriental Society, New Haven, Connecticut, 1938.

15. As against the argument presented by M. Burrows in favour of the 'tirhatu' as a 'compensation gift', a record from Nuzi supports the marriage by purchase theory. Here a man declares after receiving the 'tirhatu' from his daughter that "I have received, I am paid". It appears also that among the Canaanites and the Hebrews the 'mohar' or its equivalent in labour, was regarded as a 'price' for the girl (Cf. Gen. 29; Ex. 2:21).

according to paragraphs 138-39 of the Hammurabi Code, which deal with the case of divorce, if a man divorces his wife, who has not given birth to children, he shall give her back the equivalent of the 'tirhatu', but if no 'tirhatu' was given at the time of the marriage, he shall give her one 'maneh' of silver "for a divorce", which indicates that marriage was not necessarily purchase marriage. On the other hand, we find that the giving of a 'tirhatu' is taken for granted in the Hammurabi Code.¹⁶

In the matter of divorce the Babylonians differed from their Semitic neighbours, in that a more humane attitude toward women seems to be expressed in their law codes, and further, in some cases the woman's status is the same as that of a man, namely, she can divorce her husband at any time on paying a fine.¹⁷ However, the Hammurabi Code accepts the attitude of the Ancient Near East that a man could divorce his wife at any time by pronouncing the formula "you are not my wife". The only exception to this general attitude in the code is in the case of a sick wife, who may not be divorced against her will,¹⁸ otherwise a husband may do as he pleases. Nevertheless, divorce was not a simple matter of saying "you are not my wife", the laws put an obstacle in the way of divorce by prescribing a fine to be paid by the

16. Hammurabi Code, paragraphs 164, 166.

17. H.C. 142-43.

18. H.C. 148-49.

husband. In the case of a first wife (*hirtum*) who has not given birth to children, the husband must pay her a sum of money equivalent to the 'tirhatu' and must also return her dowry which she has brought from her father's house.¹⁹ The fine varied according to the status of the wife, and in the Hammurabi period this fine varied from ten shekels to sixty shekels of silver.²⁰

Adultery was a crime only when committed by the betrothed girl and married woman but not when committed by the husband. The penalty for such a crime according to the Hammurabi Code was death by drowning. However, punishment varied depending on the circumstances of the crime,²¹ and the parties involved.

While the Hammurabi Code prescribes a set of laws favouring monogamy, it still shares the basic characteristic of the Ancient Near East, in that its social and economic organization calls for a family structure that has as its priority the providing of sons for the continuance of the tribe and the handing on of the inheritance. Thus the problem of childlessness gave rise to the practice of concubinage and second wives, and consequently contributed to a sexual ethic which put men and women on different levels. On the other hand the long history of tradition and practice gathered up in

19. H.C. 138.

20. H.C. 137ff. also I. Mendelsohn, *op. cit.* p. 31.

21. H.C. 142-43.

these codes indicates a shift in attitude which allowed women a higher degree of equality than their surrounding Semitic neighbours.

The Assyrian Code:

In contrast to the Babylonian family structure the Assyrian family was basically polygamous, as a man could have as many concubines as he wishes in addition to his chief or "veiled" wife, regardless of whether he had children by his chief wife or not. C.H.W. Johns, in his An Assyrian Doomsday Book, notes that the Harran census lists many men with two wives.²² The interesting difference to note here between the Babylonian and Assyrian societies is that the Babylonian practice of concubinage seems to be directly connected with the problem of childlessness, with restrictions placed on the husband if the wife can provide him with progeny, whereas the same practice in Assyrian society is permitted regardless of the fertility of his chief wife. Therefore, while childlessness is at the root of both practices, the unprohibited practice of the Assyrians allowed the husband a much wider range of sexual freedom, while at the same time reducing a woman's rights considerably, so much so, in fact, that in the Assyrian Law Code she becomes a mere chattel.

The institution of marriage, apart from the practice of polygamy, was basically the same in Assyria as in

Babylonia. Marriage was based on a written contract,²³ with basically the same terms as those contained in the Hammurabi Code.²⁴ However, marriage in Assyrian society was more easily dissolved, since women were not as well protected under the law, and had far less rights than Babylonian women. A man was absolved from any responsibility in divorcing his wife, and was not required to pay alimony of any kind. The Middle Assyrian Law (para. 37) merely states that if a man desires to give his wife something he may, but if he does not "she shall go forth empty". Unlike the Babylonian woman who had some rights regarding divorce,²⁵ an Assyrian woman could under no circumstances divorce her husband. The pronouncement of the simple formula "She is not my wife, I am not her husband", was sufficient to dissolve the marriage. Thus an Assyrian woman who became a party in a divorce suit was left with only her personal belongings, and presumably her dowry, as a means of livelihood.

Mendelsohn describes the position of the Assyrian woman as "worse than that of a ^{ja}best of burden".²⁶ As a girl she was under the strict control of her father and as a married woman under the merciless power of her husband. She was held responsible for the misdeeds of her husband; his sins were visited upon her. Thus if a

23. Assyrian Law, para. 36.

24. H.C. 128ff. Also page 56 above.

25. H.C. 142-43.

26. I. Mendelsohn, op. cit. p. 36.

man strikes another man's wife and thereby causes a miscarriage, his (the offender's) wife is treated in the same manner.²⁷ That is to say, as he has deprived the other man of his child, so shall he be deprived of his. The offender's wife and unborn child are of no concern to the law. Equally a married man who seduces a virgin must surrender his wife to the victim's father to be treated in like manner.²⁸ In this situation women were regarded as property, and any crimes involving women were treated as a crime against the proprietary rights of the husband or father.

While there are other Ancient Near Eastern documents²⁹ which give other modifications of the institution of marriage in Near Eastern society, the above material is sufficient to provide a background for our analysis of the Hebrew marriage institution.

The Hebrew Family

The Hebrew family as it appears in ancient biblical tradition is patriarchal.³⁰ However, whether it was

27. Assyrian Law, para. 50.

28. Assyrian Law, para. 55.

29. Other legal texts which treat regulations are The Laws of Eshnunna, the Hittite Laws, The Nuzi Laws, and the Lipit-Ishtar Law code, which may be found in J.B. Pritchard's Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 1950.

30. References to matriarchal and fratriarchal family organization are found both in the cuneiform sources and in the Old Testament. Cf. P. Koschaker, "Fratriarchat, Hausgemeinschaft und Mutterrecht in Keilschriftrechten," ZAW, 7 (1935), pp. 1-89; C. H. Gordon, "Fratriarchy in the Old Testament," JBibLit, 54 (1935) pp. 223-31; D. Mace, Hebrew Marriage, 1953, pp. 76-95.

essentially monogamous or polygamous is difficult to determine, as the history of the Hebrews goes back beyond recorded history. That polygamy was practiced in Hebrew society there is little doubt,³¹ but the origin of the practice is open to interpretation. The biblical records seem to support two basic interpretations of the Hebrew family. One interpretation is that the Hebrew family was essentially monogamous, and it was only due to foreign influences that polygamy was tolerated as a deviation from the standard. The other interpretation claims polygamy was the norm and standard but that certain internal cultural developments operated toward the ideal of monogamy.³² However, regardless of the essential structure of the Hebrew family, what we meet in the records of biblical tradition is a polygamous family structure. And it appears that the evidences advanced in support of the theory of polygamy are more compelling than those offered to prove monogamy.³³ As Epstein puts it,

"a polygamous society also permits monogamous families, while a monogamous rule generally excludes polygamy altogether. Polygamous records in some biblical families, therefore, do offer refutation of the theory of monogamy, but instances of monogamy in no way refute the theory of polygamy".³⁴

31. Cf. Gen. 29:15-30, 24, Gen. 26.34; 28.9

32. Cf. Leopold Loew, Gesammelte Schriften, Szegedin, 1889-1900, III, pp.33f; also L.M. Epstein, Marriage in Bible and Talmud, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1942, p. 3-11; D. Mace, Hebrew Marriage; 1953, pp.136-141.

33. Cf. L. Epstein, *Ibid*, p. 6.

34. *Ibid*, p. 6.

The question of native origins in a group as old as the Hebrews cannot be solved. The records, which are the only sources of reliable information, do not go back to origins.³⁵ Thus our safest starting point is to recognize polygamy as an established institution in Israelite society, and to treat monogamy as representing a superimposed morality on a polygamous foundation. This monogamous tendency grew, as we shall see, with the progress of Hebrew history under the influence of lawgiver and preacher.

It is necessary, however, to seek the reason for polygamy. Here we might make a vital distinction between the general practice of polygamy among the rank and file Hebrews, and Solomon's harems which expressed the extravagant wealth of the oriental monarch. The narratives of the Old Testament stress the desire for providing a son who is to be heir. This may be seen as part of the religious motive of the promise, but it also reflects the general social attitude of Near Eastern society to the problem of childlessness, as we have seen expressed in the Assyrian and Babylonian law codes.³⁶ Polygamy is thus linked to reproduction, and is considered proper and permissible while the desire for progeny predominates. The prestige which bearing a son gives to a wife and even to a 'handmaid' is eloquently brought out in the biblical narratives.³⁷

35. Ibid, p. 7.

36. See page 55f. above.

37. Gen: 24:60; 29:31; 30:1;24.

In the early stages the Hebrew family was based on a Babylonian pattern³⁸ with Abraham the patriarch and Sarah the matriarch as required by Babylonian law.³⁹ Thus Abraham and Isaac have only one wife in the formal sense of the term, and in accordance with the Hammurabi code,⁴⁰ their marriage follows a definite pattern. Sarah provides a 'handmaid' for Abraham when she is found childless. To take concubines in addition to the 'handmaid' given to him by Sarah would be a violation of Babylonian restrictions. However, a relaxation of these Babylonian restrictions can be discerned in the second stage when we find Jacob taking two wives,⁴¹ and Esau three wives.⁴² From this stage onward the course of their history, presents migrations, economic changes, cultural influences from without and cultural progress from within, all contributing^{ed} to the development of the Hebrew family structure.

The migrations brought the Hebrews into contact with other customs, especially the polygamous practices of the

38. The Babylonian laws are based upon a concept that just as there is a single male head in the household, the patriarch, so should there be a single female head, the matriarch. It is the special dignity of the matron that stands in the way of full, free polygamy in Babylonia. Abraham, being a product of Babylonian culture, followed the same marriage pattern, and accepted only 'handmaids' given to him by Sarah. Cf. L. Epstein, op. cit. p. 7.

39. H.C. 144, 167.

40. H.C. 144.

41. 29:15-30, 24.

42. Gen. 26.34; 28.9

Canaanites, which exposed the Hebrews to unrestricted polygamy. Further, the changes brought about by the settlement in Palestine are significant in forming a new pattern of family life. The most significant changes were: (1) the change from a pastoral to an agricultural and town economy; (2) the formation of the tribal confederation (the amphictyony) and its dissolution with the introduction of the monarchy; and (3) the collection of the laws into a series of codes.⁴³

Some development in Hebrew family structure can be detected when we compare pre-Mosaic and post-Mosaic times on the basis of the picture in the historical books. We find that decisive changes have taken place in the traditional ancient Semitic law of marriage. For example, the law of marrying two sisters simultaneously, which obtained in the pre-Mosaic period no longer obtains in the post-Mosaic period.⁴⁴ Also such laws as those introduced against selling one's wife to pay off a debt⁴⁵ show a refined feeling for the value of marriage. However, despite these developments, Hebrew marriage was still a long way from reaching the high standard that we find in Babylonian society where the wife had many

43. C.S. Rodd, *op.cit.* p.24.

44. Compare Lev. 18:6-23 and 20:9-21, with Gen. 29:15-30, Ex. 6:20, Gen. 20:12, 2 Sam 13:13.

45. Ex. 21:7f; Cf. Deut. 21:14.

rights of which the Israelite's legislation appears to know nothing.⁴⁶

Towards the end of the Monarchy religious law began to play an important role in influencing the kind of relationship that was to dominate as the 'ideal' in Hebrew society. Thus, while polygamy appears to have been the norm, it was by no means accepted wholeheartedly, and while Deuteronomy seems to endorse polygamy (21:15-17), and concubinage (21:10-14), it reacts strongly against royal polygamy (17:17). In actual fact, polygamy tended to accentuate the difference between social classes, with the aristocracy practising polygamy, while the ordinary Hebrews, because of economic factors, practised monogamy. However, nothing in the law forbade a man from having more than one wife, provided he could support them. Therefore the nature of Hebrew marriage generally was that Rulers permitted themselves plural wives; bigamy was not infrequent, but the people as a rule practiced monogamy.

The Old Testament gives us very little information regarding divorce. However, it appears in the early stages ^{that} a Hebrew could divorce his wife at will, and was not obliged to make provisions for her future maintenance.

46. Such measures as the right of the wife to divorce her husband; provision by the husband for the divorced wife; and the right in the marriage contract to refuse to give security for debts contracted by the husband before marriage (Cf. H.C. 142, 151, 137-140, 171, 172) indicate the superiority of Babylonia to Israel in the external details of civilization. Cf. W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Philadelphia, 1961, pp. 80-81.

As is evident from Hosea 2;2, it was enough for the husband to pronounce the simple formula "She is not my wife, I am not her husband". The only legislation in Deuteronomy about divorce concerns the prohibition against taking back a repudiated wife who remarried (24:1-4); the reasons justifying divorce are rather vague.⁴⁷ However, the husband was compelled to give his wife a bill of divorce.⁴⁸ This situation helped to maintain the tradition of the two moralities, one for men and the other for women. And, as in Assyrian society, it weakened the social position of women considerably, reducing them to the level of disposable property. However, in marriage itself, the husband had certain obligations to fulfil, which a wife could demand before a court (b.Ket.77a, 107a). He had to provide her with food, clothing, and shelter, and to fulfil his connubial duty; and furthermore to redeem his wife in case of her later captivity (m.Ket.IV.4, 8-9; t.Ket.IV.2, 264). In case of illness he was to provide medicine for her, and at her death to provide a funeral. The right to divorce was exclusively the husband's.⁴⁹ However, through the

47. This is evident from the fact that a great deal of discussion was carried on in Rabbinic literature concerning the phrase "some unseemly thing". Deut. 24:1ff.

48. See Gen. 24:1-4.

49. However, the woman could divorce her husband if he engaged in certain trades such as Dung collecting, Tanning, and Copper smelting (T.Ket. vii.11, 270). These trades were repugnant because of the foul smell connected with them. Cf. J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, London, 1967, p. 308ff.

religious influence against divorce, and the restrictions placed on the husband's freedom such as having to pay a sum of money to the wife as prescribed in the marriage contract, a stigma and obstacle was placed on any hasty divorce.⁵⁰ These restrictions improved the status of women within the marriage relationship.

What becomes apparent in viewing the Hebrew family against its Mesopotamian environment is that it shares certain basic characteristics with the ancient Semitic world, which may be summed up as follows: (1) marriage serves primarily as a means of begetting offspring; (2) marriage is patriarchal, the father is the 'ba'al', the provider and protector of his wives and children; and finally (3) a woman attains the highest station in life when she becomes a mother --- motherhood is the glory of the woman, for it is only then that she becomes a 'berakhah' a blessing (Gen. 49:25).⁵¹

However, the Hebrew people had a religious factor working to change its institutions, and through the influence of lawgiver and preacher the monogamous tendency grew and developed with the progress of Hebrew history. Epstein notes this religious influence when he writes:

50. b. Yeb. 89a, 63b; b. Pes. 113b -- Gen. R. 17.3 on 2. 18 (Sanh. 133, is significant).

51. I. Mendelsohn, p. 39.

"The lawgiver, finding polygamy at the root of Hebrew life did not or could not eradicate it by outright prohibition, but sought to eliminate it gradually by such laws as required purification after contact with women (Lev. 15:18), or the command to treat all wives alike (Ex. 21:8-11), or the prohibition against castration, by the censure he offered Solomon for his plural marriages (Deut. 17:17), by prophetic utterances in favour of monogamy, ⁵² and by the subtle apologies for the polygamy of some prominent biblical personalities. ⁵³

Marriage in Hebrew society took on theological implications when it was linked with the creation stories in Genesis. ⁵⁴ Gen. 2:18-24 written in an environment where polygamy, concubinage, and divorce, were legally admitted, was interpreted by the prophets to be the fundamental plan of God in that the 'mia sarx' union of man and woman was meant to be basically monogamous. Thus monogamy became the ideal in the preaching of the prophets. However, two factors were recognized in the history of the Hebrew people which prevented this 'ideal' from becoming the accepted practice. First there was the coming of sin into the world (Gen. 3), which is said to have blinded men to God's fundamental plan in creation, and, secondly, the appearance of a new cultural phenomenon -- unrestricted

52. The prophetic references to monogamy as the ideal are: Isa. 50:1; Jer. 2:2; Ezek. 16:8; Prov. 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-31; Ps. 128:3. overstated?

53. L. Epstein, op. cit. p. 5. Cf. also L. Loew, op. cit. pp. 33-35.

54. Gen. 1:27ff; 2:18-24.

polygamy, which the Hebrews borrowed from neighbouring cultures. Once Israelite legislation adapted itself to the practice of polygamy it created a gap between practice and the divine intention - the divine intention being interpreted, on the basis of Gen. 2:18-24, to mean monogamy.

The prophets, in addition to making monogamy the ideal, introduced a new element into the Hebrew conception of marriage. The marriage relationship was used by the prophets allegorically to show the relationship between God and His people, Israel. This relationship between God and His people was seen to be personal, redemptive, loving, forgiving and reconciling. In the preaching of the prophets the marriage relationship itself was seen to contain these same qualities. For the prophets, marriage became an 'I-Thou' relationship, and not merely an 'I-It' relationship. The wife was now seen as a 'person' rather than a piece of property belonging to the husband. Hosea's own personal experience and ministry is illustrative of the new element of redemptive love and reconciliation which begins to emerge in the marriage relationship of Israel for the first time.

The marriage symbolism is used by the different prophets with slight variations due to legal arrangements then in force. For example, monogamy is seen to be the ideal as Jerusalem becomes the only bride of Yahweh and

other cities become her daughters.⁵⁵ Thus by displaying to believers the ideal couple formed by the God-Bridegroom and Community-Bride,⁵⁶ this symbolism not only influenced religious thought but in many ways helped to make the monogamous ideal a practical reality in Hebrew society.

The ideal in the prophets and wisdom literature⁵⁷ of post-exilic Judaism definitely favoured monogamy, which eventually resulted in the development of new attitudes toward divorce: God stands as witness between the man and "the wife of his youth"; the man is not to break faith with her "for Yahweh hates divorce".⁵⁸ However, while this ideal had no force of law, it is interesting to note its emergence in Hebrew society, as it illustrates the presence of a new conjugal morality, which no doubt marked the Hebrews off from the rest of the Semitic world.

By the time of Jesus, however, the monogamous ideal had made great inroads on Jewish practice. While the

55. Ezek. 16:53-63.

56. Isa. 54:61-1-16.

57. Cf. Prov. 5:15-23; Sir. 26:13-18, Job. 31:1, 7:12, Tobit. - passim.

58. Cf. Mal. 2:14-16. Some recent scholars argue for a 'cultic interpretation' of Malachi, showing that in its prophetic context the statement, "let none be faithless to the wife of his youth, for I hate divorce", refers not to the actual breakup of marriage but rather to infidelity to the religion of Yahweh. Cf. A. Isaksson, Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple; Lund, Gleerup; Copenhagen, 1965, p. 31f.

Rabbinic legal literature still provided for the possibility of polygamy, the ordinary Hebrew to all intents and purposes was monogamous.⁵⁹ However, we must bear in mind that the kind of marriage to which Jesus directed his teaching included the permission of polygamy, the subjection of women, and the sole right of the husband to divorce. Furthermore, what Jesus had to say about divorce and the monogamous ideal had no force of law. Like the prophets before him, he could only appeal to the moral consciousness of his hearers. Thus we find that, understood in the context of Hebrew marriage customs and laws, the 'Sitz im Leben' of Jesus' teaching is vastly different from our own.

Marriage as a Process:

The idea that boy meets girl, falls in love, and after a romantic love affair gets married is totally alien to marriage as understood in first century Christianity. There was no one moment of time that can be accounted as deciding its full institutionalization. Jewish marriages⁶⁰ occur as a process over a long time, and often over several years.⁶¹ Only with the gradual payment of the

59. Cf. J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, London, 1969, pp. 368ff, among others.

60. This is also the case with marriage in Greek and Roman society. Cf. P.E. Harrel, Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church, Austin, Texas, 1967.

61. Gen. 29:15-30, 24.

bridewealth, the accompanying ceremonies, and the birth of a child⁶² is the bond generally confirmed and a stable marriage thought to develop. This is not to say, however, that romantic love was completely absent.⁶³

The marriage process begins when the father can afford the 'bride-price' for his son, with the family, not the son, selecting the prospective bride.⁶⁴ The consent of the son to the partner is not important; however, it is usually obtained without difficulty, as the son realizes that it is well nigh impossible for him to marry without the payment of the 'bride-price' by the father, who controls all the property. Further, this initial arrangement may well be his only opportunity to have a family of his own.

The consent of the daughter is not necessary, and very often the daughter is disposed off with nothing to say at all in the matter of her marriage.⁶⁵

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62. The Rabbinic saying that a woman "... is acquired by money, by writ, or by intercourse" (M. Kidd 1:1), does not establish the fact that a marriage is stabilized by any of these actions. Marriage is actually what takes place after the acquisition of a woman, and it depends very much on the birth of a child whether the marriage is to continue as is, or undergo change or possibly dissolution. Thus the birth of a child appears to be the crucial factor in the Middle East which confirms and stabilizes the marriage bond.
63. Cf. Gen. 34.3, Judg. 14.1-3, II Chron. 11.20-21.
64. In the Near East 'cross-cousin' marriages were preferable, that is, marriage with the child of the aunt or uncle. This arrangement serves to keep the 'bride-price' within the larger family group, and further strengthens that group through progeny.
65. However, there are varying customs throughout the Middle East regarding the consent of the daughter, one such custom of asking the girl's permission is contained in Genesis 24:51-58.

The period which elapses between the agreement for the couple to marry and the payment of the 'bride-price' is difficult to determine, but all indications are that once the agreement for the couple to marry is reached, the two families settle down to a long and protracted period of negotiations until a bargain is struck.⁶⁶

However, as noted earlier, the amount agreed upon is not paid in full.⁶⁷ As a rule, only two-thirds of the bride-price is paid over prior to marriage. The remainder is retained by the husband to be paid to the wife only if and when he divorces her. This is, in a way, a safeguard for the wife who would find herself without financial support if divorced by her husband, and on the other hand, it is an obstacle to the husband against a hasty divorce. It is not easy to come up with a third of a 'bride-price' in a subsistence economy.

The next stage in this long process of matrimony is the betrothal. The betrothal is the ceremony which begins the transfer of the girl from her father's power to that of her husband's. From this point until the wedding ceremony the bride is to avoid being seen by her prospective husband.⁶⁸ Should she meet him by accident

66. Cf. S. Greengus, "Old Babylonia Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", *JCuST*.20 (1966), pp. 55-72. In this article Greengus describes an account of a groom's visits to his wife's father's house which took place over a period of four months.

67. Sometimes the 'bride-price' is paid in kind, e.g. Gen. 29:68.

68. Cf. Gen. 24:65.

in the course of her daily work she is to veil her face.

The marriage itself is the climax to the successful negotiations carried out by the parents of both partners, whose consent is more important than that of the prospective partners, who often express their readiness for marriage purely symbolically. A close look at the biblical records would suggest that there may have been little fanfare or ceremony in a Near Eastern marriage. However, closer scrutiny shows that wedding ceremonies were held, and that they followed a general pattern. After the agreement had been reached by the two families, the wedding took place soon after. A small tent was erected by the women and the bridal bed made ready. A number of the groom's female relatives went to the bride's parents' tent to fetch the bride and bring her to the prepared tent where the marriage would be consummated.⁶⁹ This practice of escorting the bride to the marriage tent became the nucleus of community celebration, as others joined in the procession, making it an occasion of pomp and festivity. In New Testament times the wedding ceremony had taken on other embellishments such as a festive meal to which many guests were invited.⁷⁰ However in the earlier period only the

69. This small tent is called by different names in the Bible, for example, 'qubbah' Num. 25:18; 'ohel', II Sam. 16:22; 'huppah' Ps. 19:6; 'heder' Joel, 2:16; 'eres' S. of Sol. 1:16.

70. Mt. 22:2ff.

menfolk took part in the festivities,⁷¹ with the bride absent, or having a feast of her own in her father's tent.

The ultimate test of the marriage came at the time of the consummation. With the great emphasis placed on virginity in biblical times, some proof had to be given to show that the bride was a virgin. While there are no records of a ritual or ceremony marking this important stage of the marriage, there is evidence from a legal passage which refers to the preservation of the blood-stained garment worn by the bride during her defloration.⁷² The blood-stained garment which was the 'token of virginity' was carefully preserved by her parents. For the garment to serve as a conclusive proof of the bride's virginity it had to be delivered into her parent's hands immediately upon the consummation of the marriage and under public surveillance; otherwise the parents could produce at a later date any blood-stained garment when confronted with an accusation of lack of virginity in their daughter.⁷³ Usually two relatives of the bride and groom stationed themselves outside the bridal tent and when the garment was brought forth, and the girl was found

71. Gen. 29:22, Judg. 14:10-11.

72. Cf. Gen. 22:13-19.

73. This practice is still carried on among the nomadic Arabs of the Middle East. See R. Patai, Family Love and the Bible, London, 1960, p. 60ff.

to be a virgin, it was announced to the public and the celebrations began. Thereupon the blood-stained garment was taken to the bride's father's tent for safe keeping. However, lack of virginity was considered (and still is) a disgrace for her father's family which can be expiated only by her death.

Most scholars are prepared to accept the fact that the act of defloration on the wedding night consummates the marriage. However, there are strong indications that the marriage is not fully consummated until the birth of a child. The Old Testament demands that a bride be pure before marriage, this not only means that she be a virgin, but that she has no blemish or defect.⁷⁴ If, after marriage a defect was found in her, the husband had the right to put her away (Ket. 7:7). Thus the basis for divorce not only included adultery but other reasons which included sterility. Barrenness in a woman was considered as the greatest of calamities, and every possible avenue of escape from such a disastrous condition was sought by the Middle Eastern wife. The practice of magic, the taking of folk medicines, the making of religious prayers and vows were among some of the means resorted to in an effort to achieve conception. However, if the wife remained barren for a certain period the husband was left with two choices. He could send her

74. For example, the same purity that was required of the priest was also required for the bride, which meant also that she was to have no physical defects.

back to her father's house with her 'mohar', or else he could take a concubine in order that he might have sons. The second choice was often facilitated by the fact that the barren wife often provided the husband with a 'handmaid' as did Sarah and Rachel. This practice prevented divorce, and at the same time did not violate the monogamous concept of marriage as the Hebrews understood it.⁷⁴

While the interpretation of ($\pi\eta\eta\eta$) in Deut. 24:1-4 is normally understood as some 'indecent' or 'improper behaviour'.⁷⁵ It may well be understood to mean in addition to indecent or improper behaviour some blemish (D7A) which might give the husband cause for divorcing her, as is made clear in Ketuboth 7:7:

"... (If he betrothed her) on the condition that there were no defects in her, and defects were found in her, her betrothal is not valid. If he married her, making no conditions, and defects were found in her, she may be put away without her Ketubah."

Therefore, divorce in the Old Testament is not only based on moral issues, but also includes divorce for such physical defects as sterility, and other possible blemishes such as leprosy and physical deformity. In point of fact, the same degree of purity was demanded of the bride before marriage as was demanded for those entering the priesthood. In view of these facts, it can reasonably be argued that

74. See note 9 above.

75. For the various interpretations on Deut. 24:1 in Tannaitic literature, Cf. H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, 1922-6, on Mt. 5.31f.

the final requirement for a stable marriage is the birth of a child.

Even today in the Middle East a barren woman will prefer her husband take a second wife in order that the 'house may have sons'.⁷⁶ In our analysis of the New Testament material on divorce, it will be necessary to consider this additional basis for divorce, and to try and determine if it has implications for the teaching of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament.

The Greco-Roman World

Jesus and the early Church had, for the most part, to deal with the marriage laws and customs of three nations -- Jewish, Greek, and Roman. The Roman Empire at the time of Christ was supreme over the whole world as then known -- with communication made easy by their tremendous road and caravan routes, and the acceptance of the Greek language as the medium of communication in both learning and commerce. However, the policy of the Roman Empire was, to a large extent, one of toleration and non-interference with the marriage as well as other laws and customs of the nations who had been conquered. Therefore, both the Jews and the Greeks were allowed to continue with their own marriage customs and laws. However, despite this toleration by the Romans, 'acculturation' took place, with each nation borrowing customs and practices from another.

76. Cf. R. Patai, op. cit. p.71.

To complete the background for our study it is necessary to look briefly at Greek and Roman marriage customs, noting their differences^{from} and similarities with the customs and laws of the Jewish nation just considered.

The Greeks:

Marriage in early Greek society was originally a religious event. It was not based on interpersonal relationships. Nor was marriage based directly on the procreative act, leading to the foundation of a family, or on marital and paternal authority, but on the "religion of the hearth" (Demosthenes, *Pros Makartaton*, 51). The "hearth" was the symbol of deceased ancestors, and the place of the household gods.⁷⁷ Therefore each family had its own household liturgy with its own rites, prayers, hymns, and sacrifices. The father was at the same time the head and the 'priest' of the domestic household religion. Ancestor worship and the care of the household gods was passed on from father to son. Thus the continued existence of the household religion was assured by marriage through procreation. A barren marriage meant that there was a danger of the domestic religion becoming extinct; as a result, barrenness dissolved marriage. In a real sense, the ancient Greek

77. E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery, London, 1965, Part II, p. 4ff.

family was a religious community which perpetuated the worship of ancestors and individual household gods.⁷⁸

Greek society being patriarchal, marriage meant for the woman a transference from one religion to another -- from the religion of her father's household to that of her bridegroom, with its different rites, prayers, and sacrifices.⁷⁹ This transference from one religious community to another was marked by a series of rituals which had to do with consecration and initiation. This transference consisted of three essential acts. The first took place in the house of the bride's father, and was called the 'ekdosis', the handing over of the bride. The second step was the conducting of the bride to the house of the bridegroom. The final ceremony, was the 'telos', which took place in the bridegroom's house.

Marriage for the Greeks was therefore originally a religious act, an initiation of the woman into a different religion. This underlying religious principle in Greek marriage is said to be responsible for the monogamous and essentially indissoluble nature of marriage in early Greek society.⁸⁰ However, as the society became more secularized, absorbing the social influences from other cultures, it lost sight of the religious principle underlying its basic concept of

78. Ibid, p. 5

79. Ibid, p. 6f

80 Cf. W.J. Woodhouse, "Marriage" (Greek), in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed., James Hastings, Vol. VIII (1916) pp. 448ff.

marriage, and marriage became not so much a means for continuing the household religion which was falling into disuse,⁸¹ but an institution for the purpose of procreation.⁸² However, the need for descendants was often interpreted in the context of the 'household religion', with a son being hailed as "the saviour of the paternal hearth".⁸³ Thus marriage, in earliest Greek society, was not by mutual consent (consensus) but by the initiation and consecration, on the wife's part, into a religious community. Any union which did not comply with the religious requirements of the family was not considered marriage, and any child born to such unions was, according to Demosthenes, "not born by the hearth."⁸⁴

However, from the fifth century B.C., marriage gradually became dissociated from its original religious foundation becoming, in course of time, a totally secular institution. With this total secularization of marriage a number of changes took place with regard to the institution itself. The monogamous and indissoluble nature of Greek marriage, which was founded on the ancient 'household religion', was, by the time of Christ, lost. Divorce, polygamy, and concubinage, introduced to the Greeks through intercourse with neighbouring cultures, was now common practice.

81. This disuse was largely caused by three developing factors in the people's doctrine of God; (1) Monotheism. (2) Universality. (3) Transcendence.

82. Cf. Demosthenes, "Kata Neairas," 122.

83. Aeschylus, "Khoephoroi", 264.

84. "Pros Makartaton", 51.

Marriage among the Greeks took the form of an agreement or contract (egguesis) between the bride's 'Lord' or 'Master' and the bridegroom. This Lord or Master (usually the father) gave the dowry (bride-price) in the presence of witnesses. The contract included both the 'ekdosis' -- the handing over of the bride, and the 'gamos' -- the wedding feast. These ceremonies, according to Attic Law, were purely a legal matter and had little religious significance.⁸⁵ However, in the Hellenistic period these ceremonies came under the influence of Eastern customs.⁸⁶ The marriage itself included, in addition to its social and economic aspects, a religious dimension in that a priest took part in the marriage ceremony, blessing the marriage and giving instruction to the bride and bridegroom.⁸⁷

It was also in the Hellenistic period that marriage became depreciated as an institution in favour of asceticism. Asceticism was seen in this period as a means of delimitation from the world.⁸⁸ This negative attitude towards marriage had two basic causes; first, the general breakdown in moral standards in the society, and secondly, the rise in Neo-Pythagorean philosophy⁸⁹

85. Cf. H.J. Wilkins, The History of Divorce, and Remarriage, London, 1910, pp. 1ff.

86. E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: op. cit. p. 17.

87. Ibid, p. 17.

88. Cf. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, London, 1952, p. 103.

89. The Neo-Pythagoreans considered sexual intercourse a contamination of the spirit under any circumstances, even within marriage. Cf. W.J. Woodhouse, "Marriage (Greek)", op. cit. pp. 448ff.

of the idea of spiritual and ethical personality. Sexual intercourse was, in the light of such spirit/flesh dualism, considered a contamination of the spirit, and was only allowed, and then by only some of the philosophical schools such as the Stoics, within matrimony and for the sole purpose of procreation.⁹⁰ Hence the spirit/flesh dualism contributed to the spread of asceticism and the general decline of marriage as an acceptable vocation in life.⁹¹

With marriage suffering from such a low estimation in Greek society divorce became easy, with pre-marital and extra-marital relationships serving as an alternative in satisfying man's natural passions. All of this, of course, was linked to the decline of the 'family cultus' and the subsequent secularization of the society, which as a consequence brought sweeping changes, one of which was the emancipation of women. E. Sehling notes that,

"The principal duties of women lost their significance when degeneration of the family cult and of economic production took place. As the power of the head of the family became restricted, women became legally more independent." ⁹²

Athenian law⁹³ recognized this new independence of women by granting the right of divorce to either spouse. However, the benefit accrued mainly to the husband, since

90. Ibid, p. 450.

91. Cf. H. Preisker, Christentum und Ehe im den ersten drei Jahrhunderten, Berlin, 1927, p. 20ff.

92. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 7, New York, 1910, p. 193.

93. H. J. Wilkins, *op. cit.* p. 2.

to begin proceedings for a divorce the wife was required to present in person to the archon a written statement of her desire, whereas the husband could dissolve the marriage simply by repeating the divorce formula:

Γυναι πρᾶττε τὰ σα — Ἄνερ, πρᾶττε τὰ σα' or
τὰ σεαυτῆς πρᾶττε — τὰ σεαυτοῦ πρᾶττε —

and the marriage was broken off. However, the right of divorce to either spouse was recognized in law, and if Mark 10:11,12 is a true reflection of Hellenistic society, the practice appears to be common.

To sum up, it might be said that the history of Greek marriage shows that originally marriage was a religio-social institution tied closely to the 'household religion' which provided, in earlier times, the governing principle for social organization, including marriage. However, the social and religious influences of neighbouring cultures contributed to the decline of the 'family cult' with its ancestor worship and family gods, and as a consequence, marriage, which was originally a religious act -- monogamous and indissoluble -- began to break down, and in the Hellenistic period was openly depreciated. Thus divorce, concubinage, and illicit sexual relationships became common practice in Greek society. Therefore, marriage for the Greeks in the time of Christ was a secular undertaking which had little religious significance, and, was, for the most part, a combination of various cultural practices that had been

brought together as a result of the syn^{retistic}chronistic nature of the Hellenistic environment, where Jew, Roman, and Greek, exchanged not only the things of commerce, but social, cultural, and ethical practices.

The Romans

Roman marriage customs and laws have many similarities with the Greek and Hebrew conception of marriage. In fact, their origin, like those of the Greeks, is said to be based on a 'family cultus', where the marriage ceremony was as much a transference of the bride from one religion to another as it was a social institution in its own right.⁹⁴

In early Roman marriage the duty of the wife was to serve the husband and his tribe as 'mater familias', provide him with children, and to take part in the 'family cultus' of the family or tribe into which she had been received. The continuance of the line, especially the production of male heirs, served among other purposes to foster the cult of the family, which could, if there was any danger of its dying out, be guaranteed survival, if need be, by adoption from other families.⁹⁵

This religio-cultic sensitivity was responsible for the development of very fully evolved wedding customs at the very beginning of marriage. These customs were maintained in Roman society even when secularization had

94. Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, op. cit. p. 12ff.

95. Ibid, p. 7ff.

introduced other forms of marriage,⁹⁶ which enabled the wife to continue to belong to her previous family circle; thus she was no longer subject to her husband's protective power.⁹⁷ The Christian marriage ceremony, as we know it today, can be traced to these pagan Roman marriage rites. For example, much of the wedding ceremony --- giving of a ring, the wedding dress, wedding cake ('far'), taking of oaths before witnesses, and prayers and blessings are derived almost directly from the pagan ceremony of the Romans.

Now while there are no major differences in the marriage systems of the period under discussion, there were differences of degree, and it is to these differences that we shall turn in our discussion of Roman marriage.

Marriage in Roman society could take three forms called 'confarreatio', 'coemptio', and 'usus'. However, only 'confarreatio' marriages involved the concept of 'manus', that is, the situation where the wife passed from the authority of her father into the hand of her husband who exercised authority over her.

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96. In the beginning only 'confarreatio' marriages were known in Roman society. These marriages were closely connected with the 'family cultus' and were totally religious in essence. However, with the demise of the 'family cult' other forms of marriage appeared that were totally secular and less permanent. These different forms are discussed in this chapter.
97. See 'coemptio' and 'usus' marriages below.

The 'confarreatio' was, in fact, the oldest and most solemn form of Roman marriage.⁹⁸ It was performed before ten witnesses in which the couple exchanged vows, and ate 'far' -- a kind of wedding cake. This union was 'indissoluble'.

The 'coemptio' (mutual mock sale) was a fictitious sale of the bride by the father.⁹⁹ In this sense the bride was considered nothing more than a piece of property that was transferred from the father to the husband. It should be noted, however, that a faulty conveyance would allow a woman to escape from under the 'manus' of her husband by breaking the cohabitation for a certain period. She had, in fact, only to return to her father's house three successive nights in a year and her husband's rights by prescription were gone.

The 'usus' form of marriage amounted to what might be called common-law unions. However, the relationship was consummated if the couple lived together for a year. This loose relationship, called by some 'free marriage',¹⁰⁰ had serious consequences for both husband and wife. In this situation the wife had no right to compel her husband to maintain her. The husband, on the other hand, had no real power over the wife because the wife did not

98. Cf. Arthur T. Macmillan, What is Christian Marriage?, London, 1944, p. 27.

99. Gaius, Inst. I, 113 (writing about the middle of the second century A.D.).

100. Cf. S.A. Leathley, The History of Marriage and Divorce, London, 1916, p. 28ff.

pass 'in manum' to him. Furthermore, apart from the pre-nuptial contract, the husband was powerless over the wife's property.¹⁰¹

The prevalence of these two later forms 'coemptio' and 'usus' in Roman society around the first century is not known, but judging from the literature of the period, it appears that such unions contributed both to the moral laxity of the time¹⁰² and to the rejection of marriage as an acceptable institution.

Like marriage in Jewish and Greek society, Roman marriage was contractual, with the wife passing, upon the payment of a bride-price, under the paternal disposition of her husband, apart, that is, from the special forms of marriage mentioned above in which case the woman remained either under the 'pater familias' of her father, or maintained her own independence.¹⁰³ Roman law¹⁰⁴ required only the consent and delivery of the bride for consummation of a marriage. The three conditions for 'justae nuptiae' were (1) Puberty, males 14 years, females 12 years. (2) consent (both of the parties and the heads of their families). (3) 'Connubium' i.e. the general ability to take a lawful wife. In the beginning

101. Ibid, p. 28.

102. Cf. H. Preisker, op. cit. p. 20ff.

103. For a full discussion of how a woman claimed independence in Roman society, see E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Part II, pp. 12ff.

104. Cf. S.A. Leathley, op. cit. p. 29.

'connubium' applied only to citizens, but was later granted to plebians. The consummation of 'justae nuptiae' entailed specific obligations on both parties. It meant that the wife must be maintained by the husband,¹⁰⁵ and was to be sharer in his honours and dignities. In return she owed him respect and obedience, and his domicile was hers. The children born during the marriage, and within ten months after the husband's death, were presumed to be legitimate and were under 'patria potestas'.¹⁰⁶

The purpose of marriage in Roman society went through a similar evolution to that of Greek marriage. Marriage was first conceived as a means of continuing the 'family cultus'. However, as the 'family cult' lost its popularity, marriage came to be understood as a means of begetting offspring for the continuance of the family, tribe and nation. Cicero, among others, gave voice to this view when he wrote:

"For since the desire to beget offspring is the natural property shared by all living things, the roots of society are in marriage, its growth is the begetting of children; its consummation is the unity and community of the home."

Apart from the lawful marriages mentioned above there were other forms of inferior union, which were more

105. Cf. S.A. Leathley, op. cit. p. 29ff.

106. Ibid, p. 32.

or less recognized, among them concubinage.¹⁰⁷

Concubinage, as understood in Roman society, was a union between a free man and a free woman formed without the intention of constituting marriage, 'affectus maritalis'. Concubinage received partial sanction in the 'Lex Julia et Popia Poppaea (A.D. 9)', a law designed to prevent misalliances and to force men and women of certain age to marry and have children by imposing certain penalties.¹⁰⁸

The decline of the 'family cultus' and the 'secularization' of Roman society contributed, as it did in Greek society, to a general decline in morals and marriage standards. In early times when marriage with 'manus' was common, the wife, being subject to her husband's authority, had no freedom, and therefore no say in matters of divorce. The husbands, too, were restricted by way of pecuniary penalties if they divorced their wives without good reason.¹⁰⁹ However, by first century B.C. the 'manus' marriages had become

107. It might be noted here that a man could have only one concubine at a time and could not have a wife at the same time as a concubine. In this regard it must be accepted that the ancient Romans, throughout their history, were monogamous. Cf. A.T. Macmillan, What is Christian Marriage?, London, 1944, p. 31, 33. Also S.A. Leathley, *Ibid*, p. 34. 1.

108. Cf. Macmillan, *Ibid*, p. 31.

109. J. Muirhead, in his Historical Introduction to the Private Law of Rome, 2nd. ed., revised and edited edn. by Henry Goudy, A. & C. Black, 1899, cites a case where in 206 B.C. the censors removed L. Annus from the senate because he had divorced his wife without laying the matter before the Council. p. 234.

obsolete, and a woman now married by 'coemptio' or 'usus', and therefore could dissolve the marriage by a simple repudiation (repudium) and compel her husband to emancipate her.¹¹⁰ Two factors are said to be responsible for this easy divorce and emancipation of women, one, the introduction of new legislation that gave greater equality to women; and two, a change in the attitudes of Roman women themselves. The Roman woman, aware of her legal emancipation, was no longer attracted by the old strictness and sanctity of marriage, but opted for a laxer form of relationship such as 'usus'.

Marriage in this period, around the first century A.D., lost its appeal, becoming distasteful to the ordinary citizen. Thus asceticism became popular and sexual licentiousness widespread. So much so, that Romulus (Emperor Augustus) is said to have forbidden husbands to repudiate their wives, unless they were guilty of adultery or drinking wine.¹¹¹ Other laws¹¹² were also introduced to check the growing trend of easy divorce. However, despite these efforts to set standards for marriage, asceticism and licentiousness became common

110. Cf. Gaius, Inst. I, 137a, in Institutes, Poste's Edition, Oxford, 1904.

111. Cf. S.A. Leathley, op. cit. p. 34.

112. For example, 'Lex Julia et Poppaea Poppaea (i.e. the 'Lex Julia de adulteriis' B.C. 18 as amended by the Lex Poppaea Poppaea A.D. 9). Cf. S.A. Leathley, op. cit. p. 30ff.

features of Roman society.¹¹³

The Status of Women

The status of women in the ancient world, and especially in the three nations just considered, can for the most part be gathered from what has already been said. In Jewish society women were considered inferior, occupying a position of subordination.¹¹⁴ No laws were designed to liberate them from this position of inferiority, but in ~~time~~ the Jewish moral consciousness had become more sensitive towards women, and as a result many of the old laws and penalties designed to punish or disgrace the erring wife were either abandoned or ignored.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Jewish woman still suffered from grossly inferior status, and her position, despite the little freedom gained through a more humanitarian attitude, changed very little. In the time of Christ her status was still accurately summed up in the familiar phrase "women, slaves and children",¹¹⁶ which meant that the woman like the slave and child has over her a master, and, while she may have marginal rights in addition to those of

113. Paul, for example, makes numerous references to the licentiousness of the Hellenistic world, Cf. Romans 1:29, I Cor. 5, Gal. 5:19.

114. Cf. pp. above. Also chapter 5 pp. on the idea of subordination and submission in Jewish ethics.

115. A good example of old laws and penalties being ignored is found in John 8:3-10, where the scribes and Pharisees bring to Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery which was, according to the law of Moses, punishable by death. However, in this instance Jesus challenges the moral integrity of her accusers, resulting in the woman's escaping the letter of the law.

116. Cf. M. Ber. iii, 3.

the slave and child, her status in law is practically the same.

Women in Greek and Roman society were, in the beginning, equally subordinate to their husbands, being considered as property exchangeable between father and husband.¹¹⁷ However, in course of time the social and religious origins which gave rise to this situation changed, with both societies adopting new customs and attitudes towards women. Marriage became for the Greeks and Romans a totally 'secular' institution, and, as a consequence new laws and customs combined to give women greater freedom, and in some instances, an equality with men.¹¹⁸ By the time Christianity came upon the scene this new status of women was a recognized fact in the Hellenistic environment, with the author of Mark's gospel taking cognisance of the fact that women as well as men had the right of divorce (Mk. 10:11, 12).

The teaching of the New Testament regarding women can only be understood when we seek the meaning of what is said about women in particular texts in the context of its own historical and sociological environment. It is only against such a background that we can assess the teaching of the New Testament regarding the status of women both within and outside the marriage relationship.

117. Cf. A.T. Macmillan, op. cit. pp. 23-36. This fact can be gathered from the contractual and totally economic nature of the marriage in both Greek and Roman society.

118. This point is well illustrated in Mark 10:11,12, where women are acknowledged as having the right of divorce, a Roman law. Cf. D. Daube, Roman Law, Edinburgh, 1969, pp. 65-117.

CHAPTER III

THE TEACHING OF THE SYNOPTICS ON MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

Critical to our analysis of the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels on marriage is the question of authenticity. How are we to determine if the 'sayings' attributed to Jesus on marriage and the family in the Synoptics are in fact what He himself actually said or taught, or if they are merely sayings or teachings from other sources that were attributed to him and circulated in response to the practical needs of the Christian community, that is, in response to homiletic, apologetic, didactic, liturgical, or ethical needs? Form-critical analysis has shown the magnitude and complexity of the problem of authenticity by pointing out that "the Gospels are witnesses primarily to the faith of the first -- and second -- generation Christians, and only secondarily to the events in the ministry of Jesus."¹ The early advocates of Form-criticism,² while pointing out the difficulties involved in determining authenticity in the 'sayings'

1. Harvey K. McArthur, "From the Historical Jesus to Christology," Interp., Vol. 23 (1969), p. 191.

2. M. Dibelius, R. Bultmann, K.L. Schmidt.

of Jesus,³ were equally pessimistic about overcoming these difficulties, concluding that it was virtually impossible to be certain as to what is the 'authentic word' of the Lord. Many scholars have been overwhelmed by the magnitude and complexity of this problem, while others have taken refuge in the pessimism of earlier Form-critics seeing the problem as virtually insoluble, therefore turning away to other New Testament problems. However, the importance of authenticity to sound exegetical research has commanded, either willingly or unwillingly, the attention of scholars, not the least among them the disciples of Form-criticism. These scholars, while underlining the basic character of the problem now confronting New Testament exegesis,⁴ have

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3. Some of the difficulties in determining authenticity in the 'sayings' of Jesus are: first, the ministry of Jesus is an event of the distant past; secondly, it was essentially a private as over against a public event (public understood here as an event which affects the public life in such a way that many lines of evidence converge to corroborate the facticity of the event); thirdly, in the case of Jesus we are interested in the inner quality of life, which is the most difficult aspect to verify; fourthly, the sources nearest to the ministry of Jesus are anonymous documents, with little likelihood of consensus concerning the author or their precise relation to the events they describe; and finally, these earliest sources are Christian sources and as Christianity existed this side of Easter and in circumstances quite different from the original ministry of Jesus. Cf. H.K. McArthur, *Ibid*, p. 195, also R. Bultmann, "The New Approach to the Synoptics," *JRel*, (1926) pp. 337-62.
 4. The problem accentuated by recent Form-critical research is the 'element of uncertainty' in all our knowledge of the historical Jesus. This problem, however, is essentially the basic problem of historical research, as historical research itself can only lead to probability results. Under certain circumstances the probabilities may be so high as to constitute practical certainty as distinguished from absolute or philosophic certainty. In the case of Jesus, the nature of the sources makes it extremely difficult even for practical certainty to be achieved.

also developed a new set of criteria by which a higher degree of probability may be reached regarding the authenticity of the 'sayings' of Jesus. It is by employing this new set of criteria in our analysis of the teaching on marriage in the Synoptics that we hope to reach a higher degree of probability as to what Jesus taught regarding marriage and the family. The criteria and method chosen for our analysis here have already been indicated in Chapter One.⁵ It is the set of criteria developed by Norman Perrin in his book Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus. Perrin's method is based on the premise that the burden of proof always lies with the claim to authenticity, and he lays down the following criteria of authenticity:- (a) the criterion of dissimilarity, (b) the criterion of coherence, and (c) the criterion of multiple attestation. The criterion of dissimilarity is most important, and what it means is that we can be reasonably sure of the authenticity of any 'saying' ascribed to Jesus only if it is unparalleled in the early Church or in rabbinical tradition. For reasons which we shall see later, we shall add to this criterion of dissimilarity a further qualification, which attributes authenticity to any 'saying' ascribed to Jesus if, in addition to the early Church and rabbinic literature, it is unparalleled in earlier apocalyptic and sectarian tradition, e.g., Qumran and Gnosticism. The criterion of coherence comes into

5. Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 9,10 note 14.

play when a body of material has been authenticated by the criterion of dissimilarity. Once the 'ipsissima verba' of Jesus in the Gospels are established then we go on to identify units which are 'coherent' or consistent with these. The principle of 'multiple attestation' means that the case for recognizing a saying or incident as primitive, if not authentically located in the ministry of Jesus, is strengthened if it is attested in two or more independent lines of transmission.⁶ By putting the sayings of Jesus to the test of these criteria one can show "that the saying comes neither from the Church nor from ancient Judaism... . There is no other way to reasonable certainty that we have reached the historical Jesus."⁷ This set of criteria provides the most suitable methodology for our analysis and exegesis of the different marriage logia attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. One other factor may be mentioned before we go on to consider the different logia on marriage in the Synoptic Gospels, and that is the contribution made to our understanding of the ministry of Jesus by recent studies in the sectarian literature of Qumran and Gnosticism. The results of these studies have helped, as we shall see, to rediscover the authentic teaching of Jesus.

6. Cf. N. Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus, New York, 1967, Chapter 1. Also F.F. Bruce, Traditions Old and New, Devon, 1970, pp. 47-57; also C.E. Carlston, "A Positive Criterion of Authenticity," BibRes. 7 (1962), p. 39ff.

7. N. Perrin, Ibid. p. 39ff.

Re-evaluation of Sources:

Up until recently the 'Synoptic Problem', that is, the problem of finding an explanation for the correspondences and differences existing in the Synoptic Gospels, ^{was} were explained on the basis of either the "two document" or "four document" theory. The "two document theory" holds that two basic documents underlie the Synoptics: (1) The Gospel of Mark, and (2) a non-extant source of Jesus' sayings, designated as Q (Ger. Quelle, source). The "four document theory" on the other hand holds that in addition to material from these sources, Matthew and Luke both add matter peculiar to themselves. Streeter designates these sources as (1) M, Matthew's source of sayings from Jerusalem, and (2) L, the material peculiar to Luke (L+Q being combined into "Proto-Luke" before inclusion into Luke)⁸. However, with the recent discoveries at Qumran and the discoveries of other contemporary sectarian literature such as the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas⁹, a re-evaluation of early Christian source material is called for. This is not to deny the validity of the "two document" or "four document" theories as valid methods of analysis, but at the same time we must be open to the possibility that

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8. B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, London, 1924, Part II.
9. Especially those of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. Cf. for example, W. Bauer's Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum, 1934, 2nd ed., and E.T. 1964. For a review of this book see G. Strecker, JBibRel 31 (1965), pp. 53-56. For a fuller positive evaluation see Arnold Ehrhardt, "Christianity before the Apostles' Creed," HarvThR, 55 (1962), pp. 73-119.

other documents in either written or oral form, contributed to the collection of writings that we call the Synoptics.

The Marriage 'Logia' in the Synoptics

Our approach to the marriage 'logia' in the Synoptics will be three-fold: first, we will consider the basic conclusions of scholars concerning the marriage logia as found in the Synoptics; secondly, we will deal more specifically with the 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages relating to the exceptive clauses; and thirdly, we will attempt a solution to the problems raised in our consideration of the logia material. It is in the third stage, a re-examination of the 'logia', that we will test the authenticity of the words attributed to Jesus by employing the criteria mentioned in the introduction to this chapter.

The marriage and divorce logia attributed to Jesus can be found in four places in the Synoptic Gospels: Luke 16:18; Mark 10:1-12; Matthew 5:32f; 19:3-12. These 'logia' are considered by most scholars to be different modifications of the one 'logion', where Jesus makes a pronouncement on marriage and divorce.¹⁰ However, if the authors of the Synoptics were confused as to the exact teaching of Jesus on marriage and divorce, commentators are equally divided as to what in the Synoptics should be accepted as the authentic teaching of our Lord.

10. Cf. H. Baltensweiler, "Die Ehebrucksklause bei Matthaus, Zu Matth. 5:32,19,9," ThZ.15 (5, '59) 340-356.

The whole problem arises as soon as scholars attempt to determine which version of the 'logion' is closest to the actual words of Jesus, realizing, of course, that the logion has undergone modification to meet the needs of the early church. This lack of consensus on the part of scholars as to what may be considered the original form of the 'saying' is illustrated in the literature by the defence of three classic positions.

(1) Mark 10:1-12 as the Original Form

According to the "two document" hypothesis, Mark is considered the earliest Gospel, written about A.D. 65 (Luke about A.D. 80, and Matthew about A.D. 85). The theory suggests that at first the 'saying' was isolated (suggests Luke 16:18!), and later given a definite setting following a form frequently used in Jewish sources where controversies dating from the first few centuries A.D. are recorded. This form has four parts (1) a question by an outsider -- the Pharisees, (2) a retort good enough for him but not revealing the deeper truth -- Jesus' reply alluding to God's will in creation or the Androgynous Adam, (3) the request of the disciples -- in private the disciples ask for further information, (4) the full explanation in private -- there can be no valid divorce.¹¹

The original prohibition of divorce according to this theory is Mark 10:11f which reads:

11. D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1956, Chapter 6, pp. 141ff.

Ὁς ἀν' ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμήσῃ
 ἄλλην, μοιχᾶται ἐπ' αὐτήν, καὶ εἰάν ^ἡ γυνή αὐτῆ
 ἀπολύσῃ ^{αὐτὴν} τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς καὶ γαμήσῃ ^{ἄλλον} ἄλλον,
 μοιχᾶται.

However, the phrase ἐπ' αὐτήν (against her) was dropped, and the 'logion' evolved independently into Matthew 5:32 (the exceptive clause being added as in Matthew 19:9). This makes Matthew's version a secondary adaptation of Mark's, especially since Mark's version has Jesus contrasting one scripture text with another, which is said to be a typical feature of the 'ipsissima vox Jesu'. D.W. Shaner argues that,

"Mark's account without the exception is consonant with Jesus' previous argument for the permanence of marriage, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9; cf. Matt. 19:6). For the above reasons the genuineness of Mark must be accepted; the original teaching is: "Whoever shall divorce his wife and shall marry another is made a committer of adultery." 12

If we accept Mk. 10:11 as the oldest version of the divorce logion the additions and modifications made by the early Church can be easily detected. The first notable addition, apart from the exceptive clauses in Matthew, is found in Mark 10:12 where we have mention of a woman divorcing her husband. This is understood as an adaptation of our logion to Hellenistic-Roman

12. A Christian View of Divorce, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1969, p. 53.

conditions, where under Roman law women were granted the right of divorce as well as men.¹³

The Matthean versions of the divorce logion (5:32, 19:9) are not only secondary in form, but also secondary in their contexts. Their 'Sitz im Leben' is to be found in the Judaeo-Christian communities where the Pharisaic dispute about the interpretation of Deut 24:1 was still a living issue. The 'πορνεία' clauses in Matthew, in this view, are also best understood as secondary additions.

The original logion (Mark 10:11) seems to go back to Jesus who forbids divorce as contrary to the will of God who established the unity of marriage in creation.¹⁴

(2) Luke 16:18 as the Original Form of the 'Logion'

Rudolph Bultmann in his History of the Synoptic Tradition, holds that the original form of the prohibition is found in Luke 16:18 and Matthew 5:32(19:9) without, however, in the latter instance the exceptive clause, and that Mark 10:11-12 is a development of the more primitive teaching, expanded to cover the case of a woman divorcing her husband. Bultmann comments as follows:

13. P.E. Corbett, The Roman Law of Marriage, London, 1930, p. 222ff.

14. For a full development of this argument and its proponents see G. Delling, "Das Logion Mark XII (und seine Abwandlungen) im Neuen Testament," NovTest, 1(4, '56) pp. 263-274.

"The original text of Mark forbids a man to divorce his wife, and his wife to marry again; while Q (Lk 16:18 and Mt 5:32) forbids a man to divorce his wife or to marry a divorced woman. I believe the latter to be original, and account for the form in Mark by supposing that a legal ruling was wanted not only for the man, but for the woman too." 15

T.W. Manson comes to the same conclusion in his analysis of the marriage logia. Manson views the formulations given in the different logia of divorce by comparing them with Jewish legislation about the offence of adultery. Pointing out that the essential point is that in Jewish law adultery is always intercourse between a married woman and a man not her husband. The man could only commit adultery against another married man. Manson's first observation is that the principle that a man cannot commit adultery against his own wife is flatly contradicted in Mark 10:11f, where the words ἐπ' αὐτήν can only refer to the first wife.

Another significant difference noted by Manson was that Matthew in borrowing the dictum of Mark 10:11 made two significant changes (1) he introduced the exceptive clause and (2) he omitted the words ἐπ' αὐτήν -- against her. This brought Matthew's Gospel more in line with the Jewish doctrine of adultery, and fits the theory that Matthew's Gospel was addressed to a Judaeo-Christian community. Further, Mk 10:12 where the wife can divorce her husband flatly contradicts Jewish law, and must therefore be considered an addition by the early Church, brought about by Hellenistic influences.

15. R. Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, Oxford, 1963, p. 132.

Turning to the Lucan Logion 16:18 Manson suggests that it may well be the correct rendering of an original Aramaic which has been misunderstood and mistranslated in Mark 10:12. Thus his conclusions are "that the Q form of the saying (Lk 16:18) is the original."¹⁶

In contrast to the conclusions of Bultmann and Manson, other scholars are of the opinion that the logion in Luke, though thematically connected with the logion found in Mk 10:11f and Mt. 5:32 and 19:9, is historically independent and predates those found in Mk and Mt. E. Bammel¹⁷ attributes it to a source other than Christ's tradition going back to John the Baptist, and contends that Luke or the community before him may have found in Q. or Mt. a similar saying attributed to Jesus, and therefore assumed the same source for the logion preserved in Luke 16:16-18. H. Baltensweiler holds a similar opinion, contending that the logion in Luke can best be understood in the context of the Qumran milieu, and could quite possibly be a saying of John the Baptist.¹⁸ We shall return to these new developments in our re-examination of the marriage logia.

(3) Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 as the Original Form of the Logion

B. Vawter in arguing for the priority of Matthew 5:32, 19:9 states:

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16. T.W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, Cambridge, 1963, p. 138.
 17. "Is Luke 16,16-18 of Baptist's Provenience?," HarvThR 51 (1958), pp. 101-106.
 18. Die Ehe im Neuen Testament, Zwingli Verlag, Zurich, 1967, pp. 78-81.

"It is hard to see how anything short of a doctrinaire prejudice in favour of the total priority of the second gospel can account for the defence of Mark's version of the logion as the more primitive, when it is so obvious that his entire chronicle of the Pharisees' encounter with our Lord is an adaptation." 19

The priority of Matthew 5:32, 19:9 appears to be the most difficult to defend, and a cursory glance at the exegetical conclusions of some scholars practically rules out any possibility of establishing priority for these two passages in Matthew.

In the first instance Mt. 5:32, 19:9 is argued to be a modification of Q and Mark. As indicated earlier, Bultmann considered Mt. 5:32, 19:9 along with Luke 16:18 to be the original form of the prohibition of divorce, without, however, the exceptive clauses.²⁰ Most scholars, assuming Mark to be the earliest Gospel, written about A.D. 65 at Rome by Mark, conclude that Matthew written about A.D. 85 was dependent upon Mark 10:11, but modifies the logion by adding "except for fornication" and deleting ἐπ' αὐτήν to meet the needs of the Jewish-Christian community for which he wrote. Further, because of the close similarity between Matthew 5:32 and Luke 16:18 it is generally agreed that these two passages are dependent upon the one source Q.²¹ In addition to this

19. "The Divorce Clauses in Mt. 5,32 and 19,9" CathBibQ, 16 (1954), pp. 167.

20. The History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 132.

21. D.W. Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce, Leiden, 1969, p. 53, also A.M. Perry, "The Growth of the Gospels," The Interpreter's Bible, VII, New York, 1951, p. 64; A.H. McNeile, An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament, 2nd Ed., Oxford, 1953, pp. 82-83. For an opposite view see Bammel, HarvThR. 51 (1958), p. 104.

the authenticity of the exceptive clause in these passages has always been called into question, partly on the evidence that Matthew is secondary, and partly because the 'exceptive clause' itself appears to create a contradiction in the teaching of Jesus on marriage and divorce.²²

However, despite the overwhelming evidence against the Matthean passages some scholars have attempted to establish both the passages themselves and the 'exceptive clause' as authentic sayings of Jesus. The most novel argument in this regard is that of M.R. Lehmann,²³ who contends that a thorough knowledge of the Talmudic literature is necessary for our understanding of the Matthean logion concerning divorce, and that the 'exceptive clause' *παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας* (5:32) and *μὴ ἐπι πορνεία* (19:9) can be explained in the light of the Talmudic background of the divorce laws. Lehmann notes that the Talmud makes a distinct differentiation between divorce laws as they apply to Jews, and as they apply to non-Jews (including Noahides, i.e. Jews prior to the revelation at Mt. Sinai). The basis for divorce for Jews depended on the legal opinions of the schools of Hillel and Shammai which were founded on varying interpretations of Deut. 24:1. However, regarding the

22. This is the basic argument in most Protestant exegetical literature.

23. "Gen. 2.24 as the Basis for Divorce in Halakhah and New Testament", *ZAW*, 72 (3, '60), pp. 263-267.

Noahides and non-Jews the basis is entirely different. Here the law must be based on Biblical references applying to all of mankind universally, prior to the selection of the Jewish people as carriers of the law. Gen. 2:24 offers the most obvious foundation for such laws. Therefore, according to Talmudic tradition Gentiles are not allowed divorce at all. Thus Jesus' reply "from the beginning it was not so" refers to the Noahides period, and not to man's original bi-sexual nature. In this view Jesus gives the practical legal answer that expresses the view of Shammai, but He points out to the Pharisees that "In the beginning it was not so" - a reference to "They shall become one flesh (Gen. 2:24)". Clearly then the clause "except it be for fornication" is not an interpolation or scribal gloss, but the cardinal point in the Jewish law discussions of the time, and their omission in Mark and Luke may be considered the scribal gloss. This is further emphasised when Paul addresses the Gentiles in Corinth. For in 1 Cor. 7:10, he gives the law unequivocally, as he knows that the Jewish legal code considers non-Jews incapable of divorce. Therefore the non-Jewish divorce laws are codified not in Deut. 24:1 but in Gen. 2.24.²⁴

A more familiar argument²⁵ for the authenticity of the 'exceptive clause' in Matthew suggests that the phrase

24. The danger with this interpretation is the dating of the Talmudic sources.

25. This is the view of Augustine which will be discussed in full later in this Chapter.

μή ἐπι πορνεία (19:9) means "not because of adultery" and παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας (5:32) means "apart from adultery". In both cases Jesus is saying "I am not speaking of the case of adultery."²⁶ According to this argument Jesus rules out other causes but refuses to discuss the case of adultery. Other claims to authenticity will be cited for these passages in our separate discussion of the 'exceptive clause'.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached by scholars on the marriage and divorce logia in the Synoptics differ widely as to what the 'ipsissima verba' of Jesus were on the subject. Those working within the framework of the conventional picture of early Christian writing, that is, on the basis of the "two" or "four" document theory of the sources for the Synoptics, are generally agreed that the "exceptive clause" in Matthew, and Mark's mention of a woman divorcing her husband are interpolations by the authors of these Gospels. While there is no consensus as to which form of the logia in the Synoptics is authentic, it is generally agreed that Jesus taught total prohibition of divorce on the grounds that it was contrary to the will of God who established the unity of marriage in creation. In this way the contradiction of Jesus' teaching raised by Matthew's 'exceptive clause' is overcome. On the

26. T.F. Fleming, "Christ and Divorce", ThSt, 24 (1, '63) pp. 106-120.

other hand scholars working outside this conventional 'documents theory', and drawing upon information supplied by the discoveries of new texts, such as the teaching about marriage in the Qumran scrolls, have come up with strikingly different conclusions. Among them is the conclusion that the different logia in the Synoptics are not modifications of the same logion, and while they may be thematically the same, come from independent sources, sources other than Christ's tradition going back possibly to earlier sectarian teaching; Further, that the teaching of Jesus may well have included the 'exceptive clause'. These new conclusions challenge the older more accepted conclusions based on the 'documents theory', and might offer, at long last, some solution to the confusion we find in the exegetical literature on Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce. However, the task before us is to examine the different logia on marriage and divorce in the light of both the old and new developments, and to test the soundness of the conclusions against our selected criteria.

The 'Crux interpretum' of the Matthean Passages

The greatest insight into the problems of the marriage and divorce logia of the Synoptics may be gathered from an examination of the exegetical literature dealing with the 'exceptive clause' passages in Matthew's Gospel. These passages (5:32, 19:9) continue to excite both Catholic and Protestants, and in this way serve to give

us the views of both sides of Western Christendom. What is more interesting, the interpretation of these passages has lost its polemical interest, and has given way to sounder exegesis on the part of both Catholic and Protestant. This 'neutral' treatment of the text has contributed tremendously to the search for biblical truth.

Probably the best approach to our problem is to state the traditional interpretations both Catholic and Protestant, outline their shortcomings, and then go on to outline the recent attempts to overcome the inadequacies of these earlier theories.

1. The Classical Protestant Position

In Protestant circles the Matthean passages are held to express an exception to Christ's pronouncement against divorce i.e., because of adultery dissolution of a marriage is allowable, together with the remarriage of at least the injured party.²⁷ However, almost without exception it is maintained that the true logion of Christ is found in Mk 10:11f, Lk 16:18 and I Cor 7:10f;²⁸ in other words, the exceptive clauses in Matthew are

27. Alfred Plummer, An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, London, 1928, pp. 81f, 259ff; W.C. Allen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, New York, 1907-ICC, 52, 204. G.B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament, Edinburgh, 1901, p. 116f.

28. Cf. J. Klausner, From Jesus to Paul, Tr. by William F. Stinespring, New York, 1943, p. 572 and note.

interpolations.²⁹ Since the codices do not support the hypothesis of deliberate scribal corruption (the variants in the text appear to be quite innocent), it is concluded that the interpolation is made by the evangelist himself, inserted either on his own authority, because he felt that this was an exception that the Lord would have made,³⁰ or as a reflection of the interpretation of the primitive Church, which "had to legislate for hard cases."³¹

The basic exegetical reason for this position has been outlined in our earlier consideration of the logion. However, there are grave reservations about this popular Protestant position not least the arbitrary way in which it accuses the evangelist of not only adding to the teaching of Christ, but by this very addition contradicting it. B. Vawter notes that,

"for laudable theological reasons they do not permit Jesus to contradict himself, thus they lay the blame on his recorder." ³²

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29. Practically all commentators at the turn of the century considered the exceptive clauses to be interpolations. However, among the older commentators who held that the exception was original with Jesus was Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, New York, 1910, II, p. 335.
30. T.W. Manson believed that Matthew makes explicit what was implied in Mark, therefore Matthew is merely interpreting the mind of Jesus. Cf. The Teaching of Jesus, p. 200f.
31. Cf. Sherman E. Johnson, in the Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 7, p. 299. And for a complete review of the Protestant view see, B. Vawter, "The Divorce Clauses in Mtt. 5:32 and 19:9," CathBibQ 16 (1954) p. 159.
32. B. Vawter, *Ibid.* p. 159.

This effort to lay the blame on the evangelist has not proved that a contradiction actually exists and a more critical approach may well be to try to determine whether the alleged contradiction exists in fact.³³

The interpretation suffers from other shortcomings, especially the uncertainty of the meaning of *πορνεία*. While *πορνεία* can mean adultery, it is scarcely conceivable that the evangelist would have preferred this vague term to express what *μοιχεία* says exactly, for in the immediate context when he certainly means 'adultery' he has used the precise word in its verbal forms (*μοιχασθαι* and *μοιχευται* in 5:32; *μοιχευται* twice in 19:9). However, we will be looking more closely at the meaning of *πορνεία* later in this Chapter.

Recent Protestant Scholarship, while defending the traditional interpretation of Matthew 5:32, 19:9, have also attempted to answer the criticisms levelled against it. An example of this is found in an article by H. Baltensweiler³⁴ who attempts to answer the two criticisms just mentioned. Baltensweiler holds that the clauses which are exceptive are due to Matthew, for he says "it is not conceivable that the other Synoptics and Paul eliminated a traditional element". On the other

33. B. Vawter, *Ibid*, p. 159.

34. "Die Ehebruchsklauseln bei Mattaus. Zu Matth. 5:32; 19:9," *ThZ* 15,5 (1959) pp. 340-356.

hand, how can Matthew's procedure be explained, since normally he makes the demands of the Torah more rigid? The additions, according to Baltensweiler, reflect the historical situation of Matthew and his circle, -- that of the Judaeo-Christian community. 'Porneia' in these clauses means the same thing as in Acts 15:20, 29, i.e. 'incestuous marriage', forbidden by Lev. 18:16-18. The decree of Acts came from a community in which Jewish and Gentile Christians lived together; it gave the indispensable minimum of ritual law which the latter had to observe. Now Matthew's Gospel was formed within a similar group. The logion with its exceptive clause means that divorce is forbidden except when a marriage is against the prescriptions of Lev. 18. The reason for Matthew's addition was that Jewish practice allowed proselytes to contract such marriages or to remain in them if they were with relatives on the paternal side. However, the new Christian teaching did not allow such marriages, and among the Christian converts there would be some of these proselytes who contracted such marriages, therefore Matthew insists that such marriages are prohibited and must be broken. This, argues Baltensweiler, was the case with which the prohibition was primarily concerned, but it also applied to Gentile converts who had contracted such marriages and had passed directly from paganism to Christianity.

This development in the traditional argument still holds that the logion isⁿ Matthew as well as its parallels

is an absolute prohibition of divorce and goes back to Jesus.³⁵ However, it attempts to minimize the difficulties of the interpretation by explaining more fully Matthew's addition and his use of 'porneia'.³⁶ In this way, too, it accounts for the contradiction in the Matthean passages.

The Traditional Catholic Position

The traditional Catholic interpretation of the Matthean passages goes back to St. Jerome,³⁷ although he was not the first to propose it.³⁸ It holds that the texts do not constitute an exception to the Lord's words

35. This view that Jesus excluded divorce, even in cases of adultery, is not uncommon among Protestant scholars, and indeed underlies the basis of the above theory. Cf. the New Commentary on Holy Scripture, ed., Bishop Gore, 1929, p. 174. Also C.H. Dodd, Gospel and Law, Cambridge, 1951, p. 79.

36. Cf. F. Gavin, "A Further Note on πορνεία",^{Th.} 16 (1928) pp. 102-5. Gavin points out that in Acts 15:20, 29, 'porneia' (translated in the Gospel prohibitions as divorce or 'fornication') may mean 'incest' i.e. marriage within the forbidden degrees: so does Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum N.T., Vol. 11, p. 729.

The difficulty with this view is that while 'porneia' may mean 'incest' it commonly has a wider sense, 'unchastity', and an exception to the rule in the terms παρεκτος λογου πορνείας (5:32) and εἰ μὴ ἐστὶ πορνεία (19:9) would not naturally mean "unless the marriage is incestuous", especially to any one familiar with the differences between Shammites and Hillelites concerning the interpretation of Deut. 24:1. Cf. St. Luke, The Clarendon Bible, Oxford, 1930, p. 242.

37. In Matthaeum, 3, 19 (PL 26, 135). Other supporters of the traditional Catholic Position may be found in T.V. Fleming, "Christ and Divorce", ThSt, 24 (1963) p. 115, note 22. Also in J. Dupont, Mariage et divorce dans l'évangile, Bruges, 1959, p. 138, note 1-2

38. A. Tafi, "Excepta fornicationis causa", VerbDom, 26 (1948), pp. 18-26, suggests in note 1 that this teaching can be found in the Shepherd of Hermas (II Mand.), 4,1: PG 2,919.

recorded in Mk. 10:11f, Lk.16:18, and I Cor. 7:10f. It interprets Mt. 19:9 as follows: "Whoever puts away (i.e. separates from 'quoad mensam et torum, non quoad vinculum') his wife, except for adultery (in which case alone it is licit), and (after separation) marries another, commits adultery"³⁹ In other words, in a case of fornication (i.e. adultery) there may be separatio tori et mensae but without freedom to enter a new marriage.

This interpretation, like the Protestant one, is fraught with inadequacies, and seems to many commentators to introduce too many 'sub voce' explanations. Probably the biggest difficulty with this interpretation is the fact that the Pharisees, who asked our Lord about a complete divorce (a vinculo), had no conception of a lawful repudiation of a wife in such a way that a marriage bond would still remain.⁴⁰ Since, then, they asked about a full divorce, how could Christ have inconsequently answered about a mere separation which they could not have understood?⁴¹ A further difficulty arises in giving two different meanings to the phrase "to put away" (ἀπολυσεν). When the Pharisees asked

39. T.V. Fleming, "Christ and Divorce", ThSt, 24(1963) p. 115.

40. Some scholars argue that the mention of separation without remarriage was known in the early Church, earlier than Matthew, as Paul makes mention of it in I Cor. 7. Cf. T. Fahy, "St Matthew, 19:9 -- Divorce or Separation?" IrThQ, 24 (3, '57), pp. 173-174. Also A. Alberti, "II Divorzio nel Vangelo di Mattio," DivThom 60 (4, '57) pp.398-410, In NTA 3(58-59) No.72.

41. T.V. Fleming, Op. Cit. p. 115.

about "putting away" a wife (v.3), they evidently meant divorcing her completely. It is, therefore, unsatisfactory to say that when replying, Christ used the same word in a different sense, that is, signifying mere separation.⁴² Like the Protestant interpretation, the Catholic one also has difficulty in being clear as to what 'porneia' means in this particular context. And while it can mean adultery in a given context it does not seem that Matthew intends it to mean adultery here. It is argued that if he intended 'adultery' he would have used the more precise word 'μοιχεία'. Further, this interpretation seems to ignore the context of

42. For a full discussion regarding the use of ἀπολυειν and the word for 'separated' διαστασα, see D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1965, 365ff; also J. Dupont, Marriage et divorce et dans l'Évangile, Bruges, 1959, who follows the traditional interpretation of ἀπολυειν as signifying a separation which leaves the marriage bond intact, a meaning which the verb does not have elsewhere in the New Testament. Cf. F. Neiryneck, "Huwelijk en echtscheiding in het evangelie (Marriage and Divorce in the Gospels)", CallBrugGand, 6(1, 1960), pp. 123-130. Neiryneck interprets the verb 'apolyein' as a repudiation with the possibility of a second marriage. Cf. also E. Lövestam, "Apolyein --- en gammalpalestiniensisk skelmasosterm (Apolyein -- an Old Palestinian Divorce Term)", SvenskExeg, 27 (1962) pp. 132-135, NTA 9 (1964-65) No. 562.

"In Greek literature apart from New Testament, the word 'apolyein' does not occur with the meaning 'to divorce'. But the meaning is found in the corresponding Hebrew terms or in terms influenced by Hebrew thinking."

Matthew 19:3-9, where the question of the Pharisees involves the grounds for divorce according to Deut. 24:1, and where a pronouncement on the justification of a simple separation is completely irrelevant.

There is no end to the attempts at resolving these difficulties in Catholic exegesis. The first real attempt may be said to have begun with Augustine, who mentions this interpretation,⁴³ but apparently did not favour it, offering an alternative interpretation of his own. Augustine considered the exceptive clauses in Matthew as preteritions, i.e., they are exceptions to the proposition itself, not simply to the verb 'apoluse' (apoluon). Therefore *μη ἐπι πορνεία* is a negative adverbial phrase which modifies, again, not the verb 'dismiss' but our Lord's entire assertion. In this case they mean (5:32) "apart from adultery" and (19:9) "not because of adultery". This interpretation is said to put the logion in its proper context, that is, in the context of the question asked by the Pharisees --- what were the lawful grounds for divorce according to the Law? Or more specifically, they were asking whether the views of Shammai or Hillel represented a sound exegesis of Deut. 24:1, especially the interpretation of 'erwat dabar' --- 'a shameful thing'. Jesus' reply in Matthew 19:9 takes cognizance of this text, and while He refuses to interpret it, or accept its provisions, the exceptive

43. De conjugus adulterinis I, 9ff.: PL 40, 456ff.

clauses are His answer to the Pharisees. Thus He answers the question proposed to Him, reflecting the lax opinion of Hillel who allowed divorce for some moral defect, and the stricter view of Shammai who permitted divorce for something morally shameful (but not necessarily adultery). However, while refusing to discuss the subject of adultery in public, Jesus later and in private reveals the full truth to the disciples (Mk 10:10-12), which proclaimed the indissolubility of marriage.

However, while this explanation answers some of the criticisms of the traditional interpretation, it also raises criticisms of its own. Probably the greatest criticism against this explanation is the arbitrary way in which Augustine gives 'πορνεία' the meaning of adultery. While 'πορνεία' in a given text can mean something akin to adultery, it seems strange that the Evangelist used this rather ambiguous term to say what 'μοιχεία' says exactly. Recent scholarship, as we shall see, is not at all sure that 'πορνεία' in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 signifies adultery. Other critics have rejected this explanation on the ground that Christ here contrasts His teaching with that of Moses: "but I say to you" This implies that he is rejecting the Mosaic legislation instead of merely prescinding from it. Still others feel that the interpretation contradicts Christ's previous rejection of all exceptions to the indissolubility of marriage, for

e.g., "What God has put together, let no man put asunder".

All of this indicates that this "preteritive" interpretation fails to satisfy the critics and from here onwards a spate of theories has been put forward that attempt to overcome the objections raised by both the traditional interpretations and that of Augustine.⁴⁴

The most popular of these we will examine here, and move on to the more novel interpretations of recent exegesis.

U. Holzmeister⁴⁵ has summarized the literature on these texts (Mt. 5:32, 19:9), collecting the opinions which have been expressed into some seven different theories. While this summary and categorization is valuable to our study we will not attempt to outline all the theories here, or to emulate Holzmeister by adding more theories to the list. We will focus our attention only on those theories which have commanded the most attention from biblical scholars. Therefore, in addition to the three theories already discussed mention should be made of three other popular theories.

44. Augustine's interpretation is commendable for its linguistic simplicity, taking 'parektos' to mean "outside", "without", "apart from"; 'me' is considered a negative particle, which is used in this sense to nullify the force of the preposition 'epi'. Therefore, 'me epi porneia' is considered a negative adverbial phrase which modifies our Lord's entire assertion and not just the verb 'apoluon'.

45. "Die Streitfrage über die Ehescheidungstexte bei Matthaus 5, 32", 19,9" Bib 26 (1945), pp. 133-146.

(1) The "Rabbinic" Theory

Indirectly mention has already been made of this theory, as the work of H. Baltensweiler is representative of this point of view. However, the theory has received new momentum in recent years through the work of the Catholic exegete Joseph Bonsirven, and especially through his penetrating study of rabbinical literature in relation to the meaning of 'porneia'. This theory has shown that marriages held to be invalid because of the laws of Lev. 18:7-18 or otherwise, were called in rabbinic Hebrew 'z^enut = porneia'. Bonsirven outlines it as follows:

"We understand fornication in the sense of a null or false marriage; 'dimittre' in its ordinary meaning of complete divorce with freedom to marry again. Jesus would then have said, first in 19:9 (which is probably the original form) "Whoever puts away his wife, 'me epi porneia' (=not in the case of a false marriage) ..." and in 5:32 "whosoever puts away his wife, 'parektos logou porneias' (=except in the case of false marriage) ..."46

This interpretation proposes to understand our Lord's words, therefore, in this sense: "Whoever dismisses his wife, except in one of these cases which are simple concubinage, causes her"⁴⁷ The scriptural evidence for this is drawn from I Cor., 5:1, where it is argued by Bonsirven, that 'porneia' is used by Paul when speaking of "an incestuous union" of a Christian with his

46. J. Bonsirven, S.J., Le divorce dans Le Nouveau Testament, Paris, 1948, p.22.

47. T.V. Fleming, op. cit. p. 117.

stepmother, hence the word 'porneia' means "null or false marriage", as many commentators think that there was a question of a marriage ceremony.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Baltensweiler contends that 'porneia' in these clauses means the same as in Acts 15:20, 29 i.e., incestuous marriage, forbidden by Lev. 18. The reason he gives for Matthew's addition, as was noted earlier, is that Jewish practice allowed proselytes to contract such marriages or to remain in them if they had already contracted them before becoming proselytes, provided the marriages were with relatives on the paternal side. However, Matthew, abiding by the Jerusalem decree, insists that such marriages are prohibited and must be broken, and further, that Gentile converts who contracted such marriages and had passed directly from paganism to Christianity must dissolve such marriages as well.

While Bonsirven and Baltensweiler support the same theory there are subtle differences in their interpretation which ought to be noted. The most important is the fact that Baltensweiler considers the exceptive clauses of Matthew to be an interpolation by the evangelist, whereas Bonsirven treats the clauses as authentic 'sayings' of Jesus but makes them refer to false

48. Bonsirven follows the suggestion of H.W. Meyer, who comes to this conclusion in his exegesis of I Cor. 5:1-13, Cf. H.W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament, I Corinthians, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1881-2, p. 138ff. Also C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, London, 1968, p. 120.

or null marriage. The operative word in both interpretations is 'porneia'. For Baltensweiler 'porneia' in these clauses means the same thing as in Acts 15:20, 29 i.e., incestuous marriage, forbidden by Lev. 18:16-18. However, for Bonsirven, 'porneia' not only means 'incestuous marriage', but also concubinary unions.⁴⁹ Thus his whole thesis rests on the meaning of the word 'porneia' which, he argues, does not correspond to the Hebrew word meaning adultery (Gr. 'moicheia') but to the words whose root is 'znh', notably 'zenut', which designates prohibited and irregular unions.⁵⁰ Therefore, in Mt. 5,32;19,9 Jesus prohibits every matrimonial break-up, but He makes an exception in the case of incestuous marriages (Acts 15;20,

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49. Cf. B. Vawter, "The Divorce Clauses in Matthew 5,32, 19,9", CathBibQ 16 (1954) p. 163. Also B. Leeming and R.R. Dyson, "Except it be for fornication", Scripture 8 ('56) pp. 75-82. This article following the opinion of Bonsirven, Zerwick and Vaccari, interprets 'porneia' to mean 'concubinage', thus rendering the Matthean text "Whosoever dismisses his wife - unless she is not really his wife - and marries another, commits adultery".
50. J. Dupont, Mariage et divorce dans l'évangile Bruges, 1959, p.111, commenting on Bonsirven's attempt to prove that 'porneia' translates the Hebrew word 'z^enut', signifying 'a null marriage' says: "It is correct that 'porneia' normally renders the Hebrew Zenut, correct also that in certain cases these terms designate an illicit union But 'porneia' has not always this precise sense; it must even be recognized that it is not even its habitual meaning According to available evidence, it is not the meaning of the word in the only Synoptic passage in which it is found, Mt. 15:19 (=Mk 7:21); nor is it the ordinary sense of the word in St Paul; cf. I Cor. 6:13, 18; 7:2; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; I Thess. 4:3".

29; I Cor. 5:17) and concubinary unions: these shall be broken up.

The interpretation given by Bonsirven, while presented with much erudition and insight into the rabbinical literature, presents many difficulties especially when the whole theory hangs on the meaning of the uncertain term "porneia". As will be noted, "porneia" is not a technical term for specific marriages such as Bonsirven or Baltensweiler describe. On the contrary, it has many other meanings. For example, 'porneia' in the context considered by Bonsirven can carry its Hebrew equivalent of z^enut but may also mean apostasy from God and covenant violation.⁵¹ Further, if understood correctly, the discussion with the Pharisees is based on the implications of Deut 24:1, which is certainly being used by the Pharisees as the legal sanction of divorce in the strict sense, considered by them as a privilege which God had accorded his people to the exclusion of the Gentiles. In declaring the revocation of the Mosaic concession, why should Christ be imagined to have introduced gratuitously a matter governed by entirely different legislation, concerning which there was no controversy, and about which the Pharisees were seeking no advice.

51. Cf. A. Mahoney "A New Look at the Divorce Clauses in Mt 5:32 and 19:9", CathBibQ 30 (1, '68) pp. 29-38. Also T.V. Fleming, "Christ and Divorce", ThSt 24(1963) p. 117, T. Considine, "Except it be for fornication", AusCathRec. 33(1956), suggests that 'fornication' in Mt 19,9 likewise means 'adultery'.

In addition to these criticisms Vawter asks:

"To what purpose, moreover, would our Lord have confirmed the invalidity of 'zenut' marriages? Surely not to make the law of Lev. and its derivatives normative for his Church. In Acts 15,20,29, the prohibition of 'porneia' and the observance of the kosher laws are imposed on the gentile converts by the Apostles to avoid forcing an issue by giving needless offence to Jewish sensibilities. The very fact that such a decree was formulated should tell us that there was no logion of Christ relating to this matter."⁵²

In this sense 'porneia' could not mean a null marriage, because when the Pharisees asked about "putting away" (ἀπολυειν) a real wife, it is inconceivable that Christ would reply to their query with a ruling regarding the putting away of a false wife. The criticism levelled against Bonsirven's interpretation of 'porneia' can be applied to Baltensweiler's interpretation as well, in that the whole argument rests on the specific meaning attributed to it, that of "incestuous marriage".

Bonsirven and his followers seek further support for their argument by pointing out that this interpretation does not put any contradiction into the mouth of Jesus. However, all other explanations make the same claim. In fact, one of the greatest arguments against Bonsirven's position derives from the simple sociological facts of the situation. He argues that the consideration of adultery on the part of the woman alone does not represent the perfect equality of man and wife in face of the requirements demanded by the

52. B. Vawter, op. cit. p. 163.

unity of marriage. This may not reflect the Christian concept of marriage as we understand it in modern Western society with its equality of women, but it certainly reflects the sociological situation of Jesus' own time, and represents adequately the situation of inequality that existed between man and wife.⁵³ In fact, nowhere in the New Testament is there explicit teaching on the practice of concubinage and it is inconceivable that Jesus is attacking this custom here.

Counter-arguments have been made in defence of this interpretation by both the followers of Bonsirven and Baltensweiler;⁵⁴ however, the difficulties still remain, especially regarding the precise definition of 'porneia'. While this interpretation solves some difficulties it inevitably creates others. Thus it remains to be determined if there is a better solution to the "crux interpretum" of the Matthean passages.

(2) The 'Casuistic' Interpretation

This theory was proposed in the last century by J. Grimm⁵⁵ and revived by J. Sickenberger (1942).⁵⁶ It

53. Cf. J. Delarme, "Sens du Texte de S. Matthieu (V.31-32) sur le divorce", AmiCler 16(51, '56) pp.772-774. See also J. Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus trans. by F.H. and C.H. Cœve, London, 1967. (Chapter IV).

54. For a history of the development of this theory see U. Holzmeister, "Die Streitfrage über die Ehescheidungstexte bei Matthäus 5,32,19,9", Bib. 26(1945) pp. 133-146. For a brief outline of Bonsirven's theory see D.W. Shaner, A Christian View of Divorce, Leiden, 1969, p. 25-27.

55. Die Christliche Ehe, Schaffhausen, 1852, S.14, 57ff.

56. U. Holzmeister, Bib 26(1945) p. 134.

claims that our Lord having stated the absolute indissolubility of marriage from the divine law, proceeded to interpret the Mosaic concession of Deut.24:1 in favour of the teaching of the School of Shammai.

J.J. Murphy summarizes this theory as follows:-

"It suggests that they (the divorce clauses) were not intended to abrogate there and then the Mosaic permission, but (a) to answer the Pharisee's question by condemning the lax opinion, (b) to teach the Jews the true nature and condition of the Mosaic permission, (c) to give such an authoritative declaration of the divine law as would leave no doubt about the indissolubility of marriage in the minds of his followers, when his death should have abolished the whole of the Mosaic law, including the permission for divorce, and the original law of marriage should have come back into force once more."⁵⁷

According to this interpretation our Lord draws himself into the rabbinic dispute of the schools of Hillel and Shammai, condemning the lax opinion of Hillel and supporting that of Shammai. The explanation for this lies in the assumption that he intended to clarify a Law which was to remain operative for the chosen people until the definitive promulgation of the Gospel. This makes Christ's teaching on the subject a kind of 'interim' ethical teaching, for which there is no evidence.⁵⁸

Against this interpretation stands the unconditional rejection of divorce by our Saviour, when He proclaimed

57. J.J. Murphy, "The Gospels and Divorce", ClerRev. 23(1942) pp. 441-49.

58. Even if we took this interpretation in the broadest eschatological sense, the fact that in the 'eschaton' "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" would make the conclusion drawn here meaningless.

in the 'present' tense the indissolubility of marriage, "Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery". (Mk.10:11). The proponents of this theory argue that this latter statement "concerned the future and prescinded from the present in which the Mosaic permission still held good."⁵⁹ However, this pre-scission is not mentioned in the text, and it would be difficult to read this interpretation into it without doing an injustice to the text itself. Apart from this major criticism the casuistic theory is unacceptable in that it not only assumes a position for Jesus within the context of the rabbinic controversy for which there is no evidence, but also holds that 'porneia' = adultery, which in the view of current exegetes, is no longer an acceptable interpretation of the term.

(3) The 'Inclusive' Interpretation

The 'inclusive' theory, first expounded by J.N. Oischinger (died 1876),⁶⁰ interprets Matthew 19,9 in the sense "He who dismisses his wife, even in the case of adultery" . In other words, Jesus is saying in the exceptive clause of Matthew 19,9, that whoever divorces his wife, even inclusive of the case of adultery, causes her to commit adultery. This theory has been revived recently by M. Brunac,⁶¹ who attempts to avoid the

59. Cf. J.J. Murphy, op.cit. p.442.

60. U. Holzmeister, op.cit. 134ff.

61. "Tertio de clausulis divortii", VerbDom 27(1949) pp. 3-16.

defects of earlier proponents of the theory by interpreting "porneia" in the sense of Deut 24:1, thus making the clause read "not even in the case of uncleanness". Brunec is supported in this interpretation by M. Zerwick,⁶² and J.B. Bauer,⁶³ who supports Zerwick in confirming that 'porneia' cannot mean adultery, and that the text of Matthew 19,9 is closer to historical reality. The renewed strength of this theory rests very much on the linguistic evidence gathered in support of it by Brunec and others. In Brunec's view 'epi' is used to mean "over and above", "outside" (the case), while 'me' = "even not". Thus 'me epi porneia' is to be understood as "even not outside the case of uncleanness = even inclusive of the case of uncleanness". The operative word in this theory, like the others before it, is 'porneia'. Brunec argues that in order to grasp the meaning of 'porneia' in the logia of Matthew, it is necessary to study it in relation to Deut. 24:1. Thus *μη ἐπι πορνεία* is a reference to the 'erwat dabar' of Deut 24:1, and has a close parallel to the "logos porneias" of Matthew 5.32, which seems to

62. VerbDom. 38(4, '60) pp. 193-212, Cf. also NTA 2 (66-67) no. 201.

63. "De conuigali faedue quid edixerit Matthaeus?" (Mtt 5,31;19:3-12) VerbDom 44 (2,66) pp.74-78. However, from the literary point of view Matthew is purported to have amplified the text to meet the needs of his Church, he answers the question, what is to be done when a Gentile catechumen is 'involved in an Incestuous marriage?'

confirm the link with Deut., especially if it is observed that 'logos porneias' exhibits the same transposition as Shammai's formulation 'debar erwa'.

However, there are many difficulties with this linguistic interpretation, not the least trying to establish the meaning for 'epi' and 'me' that Brunec has attributed to them. 'Epi' with the dative sometimes takes a transferred sense, this is, however, because of a context in which a second term is expressed, as in the examples which Brunec cites (Luke 3,20; II Cor. 7:13,; Eph.6:16). However, in each instance the sense "outside of" is derived from the logic of the relation of the terms and is not inherent in the word 'epi'. There is, in fact, nothing to show that 'epi' used absolutely can mean "over and above". The same difficulty occurs when one attempts to make 'me' = "even not". It is inconceivable that Matthew could have chosen such an improbable locution to say what Brunec thinks he has said in 5:32, which would read: "whoever dismisses his wife, besides the unclean thing (which he found in her and because of which he decided to dismiss her), makes her become soiled by adultery".⁶⁴

Holzmeister, in commenting on these propositions, says:

"These formulas can take on an inclusive significance only when they introduce a phrase which has, either before or after

64. For linguistic analysis of this theory I have depended on the work of B. Vawter, op.cit. 161,2.

it, a co-ordinate phrase which by logical necessity presupposes something "in addition to" the first. But both the Matthew passages lack such a co-ordinate."⁶⁵

Holzmeister goes on to point out that if such a meaning had been there in the beginning, it could have been signified by the addition of a simple 'kai': *καὶ ἐπι λόγου πορνείας* .⁶⁶

The single contribution made by Brunec lies in his taking 'porneia' in the sense of Deut. 24:1, thus avoiding the defects of earlier proponents of the inclusive interpretation, who wished to read: "He who dismisses his wife, even in the case of adultery ..." Apart from his analysis of 'epi' Brunec's interpretation approaches those of Anton Ott (1960, 1939) and F. Vogt (1936) who also supported an inclusive theory.⁶⁷

New Exegetical Efforts:

Apart from these long-standing theories, there have been developed in recent exegesis, both Catholic and Protestant, some new theories in an effort to solve the 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages. While it is not possible to give a full inventory of all the new developments on this problem, we will make mention of some in order to show the direction in which exegetical thinking is moving.

65. Bib. 26 (1945) p. 138.

66. Ibid. p. 138ff.

67. See review of Fr. Vogt, Das Ehegesetz Jesu, Freiburg 1936, in Bib. 20(1939) 344f.

Probably the best starting point for a review of these new developments is with the work of H.J. Richards.⁶⁸ Richards is a supporter of the 'rabbinic theory' mentioned earlier. However, in his treatment of the material he combines both the 'interpolation' idea of Baltensweiler and the 'incestuous-irregular unions' of Bonsirven into the one theory. Richards contends that the clause "except it be for fornication", cannot mean that Christ is here giving an exception; that would make nonsense of the whole scene and of the teaching of the Epistles (Eph 5:21-33; 1 Thess 4:4-8; I Tim 2:15; 4:1-11; Heb. 13:4; I Peter 3:3-7). The most satisfactory solution to the long-disputed phrase is that in view of the legislation made at Jerusalem (Acts 15:7-20; cf. 1 Cor 5:1) Matthew has added a clause to Christ's teaching in order to tell the readers that marriage contracted contrary to the Jerusalem decree is not included in Christ's prohibition. The use of the word 'porneia' would have recalled the Jerusalem decree to the minds of his original readers.

This may be considered a development of the 'rabbinic theory', as it follows very closely the idea of Baltensweiler and Bonsirven. However, at the same time, it abolishes some of the draw-backs from which Bonsirven's theory suffers. The criticism that Jesus draws into his reply to the Pharisees, a matter

68. "Christ and Divorce", Scripture 11(13 '59) p.22-32.

(concubinage) governed by entirely different legislation, is overcome in Richards' interpretation by treating the clause as an 'interpolation' by the evangelist for the purpose of reminding his readers that Jesus' total prohibition of divorce did not include 'porneia' --- "incestuous, irregular marriages", contracted contrary to the Jerusalem decree. Further, this development also puts the logion in its proper context, that is, within the context of the question directed by the Pharisees to Jesus --- what were the lawful grounds for divorce according to the Law? Jesus reply, apart from the interpolation by Matthew, is clearly that marriage is indissoluble. However, Matthew later includes the 'exception' to remind his readers that the indissolubility of which Jesus spoke does not include those marriages contracted contrary to the Jerusalem decree, and that the use of the word 'porneia' is the cue to his readers for recalling this decree. While Richards' theory, like the 'rabbinic theory' on which it is based, rests on the specific meaning attributed to the term 'porneia', nevertheless, it offers to this idea a greater degree of acceptability and leaves open possibilities for further development.

The 'Porneia' Interpretation:

In recent exegesis the interpretation of these passages has focussed not so much on the "exceptive clauses" themselves, but more specifically on the term

'porneia'. Therefore, any shift in opinion or viewpoint usually has at its base the different shade of meaning attributed to this term.⁶⁹ This is the case with the view put forward by A.M. Dubarle.⁷⁰ He argues that the Matthean sayings on divorce should be interpreted in the light of Matthew 5:17-19 where Christ says that He has come not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it. It is understood here that Christ was referring to the Mosaic Law, which in three specific cases regarding the legislation on divorce allowed the innocent party to remarry (Ex. 21:7-11; Deut. 21:10-14, Deut. 24:1-4). Viewed in the light of this background, Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 permit divorce and remarriage in the case of 'porneia'. However, this term is not to be interpreted with Shammai of a single act of adultery. Rather the word means grave and continued infidelity.

F.J. Leenhardt,⁷¹ while working from a different premise, comes to the same conclusion regarding the meaning of 'porneia'. Leenhardt argues that the cultural background of Jesus' teaching on divorce lies in the rabbinic interpretations of Deut. 24:1, and Lev. 20:10. He says that while Deut. 24:1 was originally designed to protect the rights and dignity of the wife,

69. For a discussion of the term 'porneia' cf B. Malina "Does Porneia mean Fornication?" NovTest 14(1972) pp. 10-17.

70. "Mariage et divorce dans l'Évangile," OrSy 9(1, '64) pp. 61-73.

71. "les femmes aussi A propos du billet de repudiation," RevThPhil. 19(1, '69), pp. 31-40.

the term "indecent" was extended by Hillel to include almost all careless, frivolous behaviour (Gitt. 9:10), including the burning of a husband's dinner. Further, in Lev. 20:10 the prohibition against committing adultery with one's neighbour's wife was understood to include only Israelite women and to exclude all others (Sifra on Lev. 20:10). It was against these interpretations that Jesus was reacting. Therefore in Matthew 5:31-32 there is no mention of a man repudiating his wife to marry another woman, and the husband takes the full responsibility for adultery upon himself ("makes her an adulteress"). Yet the case of 'porneia' is seen as an exception. 'Porneia', therefore, is not adultery but rather a wilful and continuing misconduct on the part of a stubborn woman who resists all efforts of her spouse to turn her from her aberrations and to save the union. Therefore, while Jesus' basic teaching on divorce is found in Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9 --- "what God has joined", He does not say that a marriage still exists when the will of the partners has ceased to unite them together into one flesh. And, although Jesus condemns divorce as contrary to the original plan of God, he does not suggest a real marriage can exist independent of the partners. Therefore, divorce and remarriage is permitted in the case of 'porneia'.⁷²

If Dubarle and Leenhardt are considering "prostitution" as the grave and continued misconduct,

72. cf. NTA 14 (69-70) No. 140.

they have plenty of support from the Lexicons,⁷³ which almost invariably give 'porneia', in the first instance, the meaning of prostitution.

Dubarle's aim, presumably, is to bring some consistency to the teaching of Jesus, attempting to show that Jesus' teaching on divorce is in keeping with Mosaic legislation, and more particularly in keeping with Jesus' own statement that he had come not to abolish but to fulfil the law (Matthew 5:17-19). However, this interpretation encounters difficulties on two fronts: it is unable to account for the antithetical teaching of Jesus that we find in such passages as Matthew 5:21-48 --- "It was said to you of old but I say"; and secondly, while it attempts to overcome the contradiction in the teaching of Jesus regarding marriage and divorce, it only results in revealing similar contradictions in both the Mosaic legislation, which Jesus himself notes,⁷⁴ and in

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73. e.g. Moulton & Milligan (London, 1949) "originally meant prostitution, fornication, but came to be applied to unlawful sexual intercourse generally." Arndt & Gingrich (Chicago, 1957); "prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse." Liddell & Scott (Oxford, 1963) "fornication, prostitution, unchastity".
74. In Mk. 7:9-13 Jesus points out a contradiction in Mosaic law --- "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother; and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die" (11) but you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, what you would have gained from me is 'corban' (that is, given to God) - then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on ..."

the Synoptic teaching⁷⁵ which are not so easily reconciled by reference to Mosaic legislation, or as Leenhardt suggests, to rabbinical interpretations.

The interpretation of 'porneia' given here finds much support in the history of form and redaction critical considerations,⁷⁶ and supports their basic conclusion that 'porneia' does mean sexual misconduct which, by its nature, demanded divorce.

The 'New Temple' Interpretation

The most interesting approach in recent exegesis comes from a Swedish theologian, Abel Isaksson,⁷⁷ who seeks a solution to the crucial New Testament passages on marriage in the idea that in Jesus' mind His Church was to be the New Temple. The holiness of life expected of the priests of old because of their service in the Temple was often presented as an ideal for lay Israelites as well. This tendency to extend the ideal was well represented in Pharisaic and Essene currents and it influenced Jesus and the early Church in His and its teaching on marriage.

75. E.g. compare Luke 14:26 with Mk. 7:9-13.

76. Cf. A. Sand, "Die Unzuchtsklausel in Mt. 5,32 und 19,3-9", MunchThZeit 20 (2, '69) p. 118-129 for an examination of the data, of the history of exegesis and of form and redaction criticism on these texts.

77. Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple: A Study with Special Reference to Mt 19:3-12 and I Cor 11:3-16", Trans. by N. Tomkinson, Acta seminarii neo-testamentici Upsaliensis 24, Lund: Gleerup; Copenhagen 1965.

Isaksson lays the foundation for his argument by summarising the Old Testament teaching on marriage and divorce, in particular the meaning of Gen. 1:27; 2:24; and Mal. 2:20-16. He draws from his analysis of these passages several interesting conclusions -- first, he interprets Deut. 24:1-4, regarding the bill of divorce, as regulating man's relations with his divorced wife after she has been married to another man:

"The background to the rule in Deut. 24:1-4 is thus the Israelite view that a man must not have sexual intercourse with his wife after she has had it with another man. If her intercourse with the other man took place before the consummation of the marriage, she was to be stoned to death (Dt. 22:21) and the same was the case if it took place after the consummation of the marriage (Deut. 22:22). Even when the intercourse took place after divorce (Dt. 24:1-4) or under duress (2 Sam. 16.21-22, 20.3), the wife became so unclean that further sexual cohabitation with her was inconceivable."⁷⁸

Secondly, Isaksson presents a strong argument for the 'cultic interpretation' of Malachi, showing that in its prophetic context the statement, "let none be faithless to the wife of his youth for I hate divorce," refers not to the actual breakup of marriage but rather to infidelity to the religion of Yahweh.⁷⁹ This makes the only Old Testament text which was commonly cited by exegetes⁸⁰ as proof of a critical attitude towards divorce

78. Ibid, p. 23.

79. Ibid p. 31f, cf. also C.C. Torrey, "The Prophecy of Malachi", JBibLit. 17'1898) pp. 4-11.

80. Cf. for example, J.M.P. Smith A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi, (ICC), Edinburgh, 1937.

irrelevant to any consideration of human marriage, as it does not envisage it as such. This brings him to the conclusion that:

"Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any polemics against divorce as such. On the other hand, we can see from the rule in Lev. 21.7 that, on account of the sexual relations she had had with another man, the divorced woman was not considered to be suitable to be the wife of a priest. Thus the Old Testament does not pronounce any negative judgement on divorce itself. On the other hand, as is clear from this rule in Leviticus, the divorced woman was judged unfavourably; she could not be the wife of "a man sanctified to the Lord" (Lev. 21.7).⁸¹

Therefore, the wife of a priest could not be a harlot, a woman defiled, or a divorced woman. It is this holiness of life expected of the priests that Jesus presents as the ideal for his followers, following the trend of extending the ideal to the whole community,⁸² which was fashionable among other sectarian groups such as the Essenes.

Working on this premise, Isaksson turns to a full analysis of the Synoptic divorce texts. Here he makes a plausible case for an independent source for Matthew 19:3-9, a source independent of Mark 10:2-12 or Q.⁸³

81. Isaksson, op. cit. p.37.

82. Epstein notes that the idea of monogamy for priests was quite possibly borrowed from Egyptian religions, and that during the New Testament period, especially among the sectarian groups such as Qumran, it was extended to the whole community. This may have something to do with Paul's idea of the "priesthood of all believers". cf. L. Epstein, Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud, p. 148ff.

83. Isaksson, op. cit. p.39ff.

By comparing I Cor 6-7 with Matthew 19:3-9, he comes to the conclusion that Matthew 19:3-9 is not simply an improved and re-Judaized version of Mark 10:2-12, as is often maintained,⁸⁴ but that Matthew had access to an older marriage catechism of the early Church, of which Paul was also aware. He sums up his argument as follows:

"Thus Matthew did not derive the context of this pericope from Mark nor from any hypothetical source called M. In every Christian Church there must at an early stage have been teaching about the Church's radically new view of marriage. To facilitate this teaching, the sayings of Jesus on marriage must have been collected very early on into a marriage catechism in an oral or written form. It is therefore most likely that Matthew took over the content of Matthew 19.3-9 from the tradition of the Church of which he himself was a member and from which he also received the wording of the logion on divorce in Mt. 5:32."⁸⁵

Isaksson further argues that Mt. 19.3-9 represents an apophthegm derived from what Jesus Himself said about the indissolubility of marriage.⁸⁶ In his presentation of this point of view he sets forth a strong argument against the idea that the teaching contained in Matthew 19:3-9 is a creation of the early Church. He concludes his survey of the arguments presented in favour of 19:9 being an 'interpolation' by saying:

84. Cf. "MK 10:1-12 as the Original Form" p.106f above

85. Isaksson, op. cit. p.113.

86. Ibid. p.91.

"None of the answers given so far to the questions, by whom, when and why was the clause inserted, have proved to be satisfactory. In fact it would seem to be easier to explain satisfactorily why it dropped out of a number of logia that have been preserved than to explain why it was inserted in Mtt. 5:32 and 19:9 at a later stage in the formation of the tradition."⁸⁷

However, his treatment of the origin of the passage (19:3-9) does not suffice to show that the crucial 'exceptive clause' goes back to Jesus Himself and is not a 'halakic' interpretation of the original prohibition of divorce uttered by Jesus and amplified by Matthew or the community he represented.⁸⁸

However, Isaksson's real contribution comes from his analysis of the 'exceptive clause', and especially the meaning he attributes to 'porneia'. After a review of past and current interpretations which he finds inadequate, he suggests the translation "premarital unchastity" for the term 'porneia'. This term does not mean 'moicheia' (adultery), but is closely related to the use of 'porneia' in Deut. 22:21. It refers, according to Isaksson's reasoning, to a sexual offence committed by a betrothed virgin whose marriage had not yet been consummated. This interpretation fits in perfectly with the sociological process of marriage outlined in Chapter Two of this

87. Ibid. p. 91f.

88. Cf. p.115 "In the exegesis of this passage in Matthew we can start by saying that we are dealing here with a tradition which derives from what Jesus Himself said about marriage being indissoluble and why it was indissoluble."

thesis, and comes closest to historical reality. Isaksson concludes that Jesus, in the Matthean form of the saying, is insisting on the impossibility of divorce except in the case of the premarital unchastity of a virgin betrothed to a man who had paid the higher bride-price for a virgin and was deceived; he was obliged by the law to put her aside.⁸⁹

The absolute indissolubility of marriage set forth in the Matthean pericope testifies to something more than Jesus' attitude to an isolated ethical question.

According to Isaksson:

"His utterance on the indissolubility of marriage, which is undoubtedly authentic, gives us in fact a glimpse of his consciousness of his own role. According to the First Book of Enoch, a new Temple is to be established in the Messianic age. Jesus taught his disciples that they were chosen for and consecrated to the service of God. But they can only achieve this close relationship with God if in their relations with the other sex they live according to the rules governing the New Temple in Ezek. 44:22."⁹⁰

Some critics will admit that Jesus may have given prominence to the idea of a new Temple in his preaching, but will be hesitant to agree that His remarks on marriage were inspired by Ezek. 44:22 rather than Gen. 1:2.⁹¹ However, Isaksson's approach, while different from traditional interpretations, has much to commend it. It

89. Cf. Gen. 22:13-19, where there is recorded the custom of proving the girl's virginity on the night of the wedding, Cf. Chapter Two, p.78ff. Isaksson uses the case of Joseph's doubts about Mary's virginity to prove his point (Mt. 1:19).

90. Ibid, p. 147.

91. Cf. G. Dellling, ThL. 92(4 '67) pp. 276-77.

takes into consideration the New Testament social environment --- both the orthodox and sectarian attitudes which played such an important role in the shaping of ethical behaviour. Without having to distort either the historical situation or the pericope in Matthew, he is able to show that the teaching of Jesus fits into the pattern of first century social life. The understanding of Mt. 19:9 can be seen as the contracting of a marriage on the understanding that the virginity of the woman was an essential condition. However, if she was guilty of 'porneia' (pre-marital unchastity), the husband was duty bound to divorce her since the marriage was null and void.

Some of the more startling conclusions of Isaksson may be summed up as follows: (1) that the O.T. has no polemic against divorce. However, a divorced woman is discriminated against in that, for example, she is not allowed to become the wife of a priest; (2) that the origin of Matthew 19:9 has an independent source --- possibly an older catechism of the early Church; (3) that Matthew 19:9 represents an apophthegm derived from Jesus himself about the indissolubility of marriage; (4) that 'porneia' in the exceptive clauses means 'premarital unchastity'.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the exceptive clauses, as we have seen, has been dealt with in the following ways: (1) the establishment of traditional theories, both

Protestant and Catholic; (2) the development of variations on these traditional theories to account for inherent weaknesses in the explanations; (3) the development of alternate theories to the traditional ones; (4) new attempts at re-interpretation of older theories; and (5) new exegetical efforts such as attempting to interpret the meaning and purpose of the 'exceptive clauses' through an understanding of the term 'porneia', or analysing the passages in the light of a totally different set of criteria, for example, against the background of Ezekiel 44:22 and the 'New Temple' idea found in the New Testament.

All of these theories offer insights into the problems presented by the 'exceptive clauses' in Matthew, yet none are free from serious criticisms and weaknesses. Thus the search is still on for a solution to the 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages, and in fact, for an understanding of Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce in the New Testament. What is called for now is a radically new approach to the texts themselves and the methodology used to interpret them. However, this approach, like any other, must be bounded by the criteria of sound exegetical research, and must rely on those exegetical principles that have proven their value over time.

A New Approach

The 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages has to do with overcoming an apparent contradiction in the

teaching of Jesus on marriage and divorce.— That on the one hand Jesus teaches an absolute indissolubility of marriage, and on the other hand He allows for an exception "except for 'porneia'". However, if we look more closely at the Synoptic teaching of Jesus on the subject of marriage and the family we will notice that this "contradictional element" is not ~~only~~ confined to the Matthean passages on marriage and divorce but is to be found throughout the Synoptics. It may be said that Jesus' teaching calls for the ruin of the family as we know it. When we compare Luke 14:26, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple", with Matthew 19:19: "Honour your father and mother, and, you shall love your neighbour as yourself", it would appear that while Jesus is upholding the traditional Jewish honour of the family, he is also proclaiming a philosophy of division such as we find further developed in Mark 13:12f and parallels (Mt. 10:21f, Lk 21:16f). How do we account for this contradictional element in the teaching of Jesus about the family and especially on the subject of marriage? In dealing with the exceptive clauses in Mt. 5:32, 19:9 exegetes have attempted to do away with the contradiction by treating it as 'apparent', or by interpreting it as an 'interpolation' by the evangelist, or by minimizing it in some other way. As Vawter puts

it, "for laudable theological reasons they do not permit Jesus to contradict himself". However, no amount of ingenuity in explaining the contradiction away can solve the problem, since contradiction runs through the whole teaching about the matter of the family and is not confined to the subject of divorce. A more logical explanation is therefore necessary.

To find a solution to the 'contradictional element' presented in the Matthean passages, and the divisive passages on the family in the Synoptics generally, we must return to the question of authenticity, and more particularly to a re-evaluation of the sources which make up the "canonical texts". In this respect Isaksson has already broken new ground by suggesting that Matthew had derived the contents of his pericope (19:3-9) from a source independent of Mark 10:2-12 or Q.⁹³ If this is the case, (and Isaksson makes a good argument for it), it calls into question the conventional method of looking at these texts --- that is, analysing them on the basis that the sources of information may be traced to "two" or possibly "four" basic documents which stand behind the canonical texts. This opens up the possibility that there may have been other documents, in either written or oral form, which contributed to the

93. A. Isaksson, *op. cit.* p. 93f.

collection of writings that we call the Synoptics.⁹⁴ Therefore, by freeing our analysis from the "documents" theory we are in a better position to establish the actual origin and "Sitz im Leben" of the sayings on marriage and the family.

By treating this contradictory element in the teaching of Jesus in its broader sense, it can be shown that the 'sayings' attributed to Jesus regarding the family, and possibly those regarding divorce, are not necessarily authentic, but find their origin in earlier Jewish apocalyptic and sectarian writings.

Let us look more closely at the family sayings in the Synoptics with a view to solving the 'contradictional element' in the whole teaching by tracing the origins of these sayings in the documents that are available to us. We may begin our inquiry with Mark 13:12f and parallels (Mtt.10:21f, Luke 21:16f).

"And brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

These words fall within the context of the so-called "Little Apocalypse" of Mark, and give a description of the "tribulation" or "woes" in store for the elect prior to the end of all things.

94. This is not to deny the validity of the "two document" or "four document" theories as valid methods of analysis, but at the same time we must be open to the possibility that other documents in either written or oral form, contributed to the collection of writings that we call the Synoptics.

However, Judaism knew of similar eschatological "woes of the Messiah", and thus of the division which faith or unbelief would bring to a man's household. I Enoch, a Jewish Apocalypse from the first century after Christ, describes the tribulation before the end in this fashion:

"And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten and brothers one with another shall fall in death, till the streams flow with their blood. For a man shall not withhold his hand from slaying his sons and his son's sons.

And the sinner shall not withhold his hand from his honoured brother: from dawn till sunset they shall slay one another."⁹⁵

The Mishnah, the collection of the traditional oral law of Judaism, describes the "footprints of the Messiah" in a similar way:

"With the footprints of the Messiah presumption shall increase and death shall reach its height Children shall shame the elders, and the elders shall rise up before the children, for the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother-in-law: a man's enemies are the men of his own house. The face of this generation is as the face of a dog, and the son will not be put to shame by his father."⁹⁶ (Sotah or The Suspected Adulteress," 9:15).

Roy H. Harrisville⁹⁷ notes that:

"the similarity between the discourse in Mark and in Jewish literature is striking enough to suggest to source critics as well as historians of the oral forms lying behind the Gospels that the words here attributed to

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95. I. Enoch 100:1,2 - Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, (R.H. Charles) Vol. II, p. 271.
96. The Mishnah, trans. by Herbert Danby, London: 1933, p. 306.
97. "Jesus and the Family", Interp. 23 (1969) p. 427.

Jesus are not altogether unique with him, but actually have their origin in Judaism".

Rudolph Bultmann, for example, believes that the source underlying Mark 13:5-27 is a Jewish Apocalypse.⁹⁸

Therefore the saying on the division of the family in Mark 13:12f and parallels turns out to be a teaching borrowed from early apocalyptic Judaism rather than the 'ipsissima verba' of Jesus Himself. Thus Mark 13:12f and parallels do not measure up to the criterion of dissimilarity since it is paralleled in earlier apocalyptic literature. The same may be said for the other passages referring to divisions in the family. Take, for example, Luke 14:26. This passage finds a parallel in the (Gnostic) Gospel of Thomas:

"He who will not hate his father and his mother cannot be my disciple. And he who will not hate his brothers and his sisters, and carry his cross as I have, will not become worthy of me. (56 of 98)"⁹⁹

In this case some form-critics and historians¹⁰⁰ argue for the secondary and heretical character of this Gospel

98. The History of the Synoptic Tradition, pp. 125f.

99. R.M. Grant and D.W. Freedman, The Secret Sayings of Jesus, London, 1960, p. 129.

100. Among those who argue for a secondary and heretical character for this Gospel are: R.M. Grant and D.N. Freedman, The Secret Sayings of Jesus, 1960; H.E.W. Turner, "The Theology of the Gospel of Thomas", in H. Montefiore and H.E.W. Turner, Thomas and the Evangelists (Studies in Bib. Theology 35 (1962). H.K. MacArthur "The Gospel According to Thomas", New Testament Sidelights, (1960) pp. 143-47.

on the hypothesis of its dependence upon the canonical texts. This assumption is based largely on the later and uncertain dating of Thomas, which fluctuates anywhere from the latter part of the second century (ca 180 A.D.) to somewhere in the fourth century. However, a considerable number of scholars¹⁰¹ have come forward with substantial evidence showing that the origin of Thomas' Gospel tradition comes from a more primitive and independent source than that of the canonical texts.

G. Quispel, argues that the 'sayings' of the Gospel of Thomas must have "come from a different and independent Aramaic tradition."¹⁰² This view is upheld in the detailed and careful study of H. Montefiore who concludes "that Thomas's divergences from Synoptic parallels can be most satisfactorily explained on the assumption that he was using a source distinct from the Synoptic Gospels. Occasionally this source seems to be superior..."¹⁰³ The most substantial support for this position comes from the confirmation through form critical analysis that ~~that~~ Pap. Ox. I:5 ("no prophet is acceptable in his fatherland, and

101. Cf. R. McL. Wilson, "Thomas and the Growth of the Gospels," HarvThR 53 (1960) pp. 231-250; idem "Thomas and the Synoptic Gospels", Exposit 72 (1960-61) pp. 36-39; idem, "Studies in the Gospel of Thomas" (1960); E.W. Saunders, "A Trio of Thomas Logia", BibRes 8 (1963), 43-59; R. North, "Chenoboskion and Q", CathBibQ 24 (1962) pp. 154-170.

102. "The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament", VigChr 11 (1957), pp. 189-207; cf. also his article "Some Remarks on the Gospel of Thomas", NTSt 3 (1958-59) pp. 276-90.

103. "A comparison of the Parables of the Gospel according to Thomas and of the Synoptic Gospels," in H. Montefiore and H.E.W. Turner, Thomas and the Evangelists, (Studies in Biblical Theology 35:1962) p. 78.

no physician performs healings amongst those who know him"), which is a part of the Gospel of Thomas, is more primitive than the present narrative in Mark 6:1:6.¹⁰⁴ Thus the evidence, although not conclusive, does seem to suggest the derivation of the entire (or almost entire) tradition contained in the Gospel of Thomas is from an independent early stage of the sayings tradition, and would seem to confirm Quispel's original suggestion that the sayings in Thomas "come from a different and independent Aramaic tradition".

In view of the evidence presented for both sides of this argument in the literature the writer is inclined to support the claim that the origin of Thomas's Gospel tradition lies in a more primitive and independent source than that of the Gospels. This position, while assuming no more than the other view, enables us to consider the Gospel of Thomas in our analysis, and to make use of material that may be contemporary with the Synoptics in an effort to understand and analyse the concept of marriage in New Testament times. If this view can be sustained, then we must do a "re-think" regarding the authenticity of such passages as Luke 14:26 as their origin and 'Sitz im Leben' becomes even more uncertain.

Turning to the passage under discussion (Luke 14:26) we may note that this command to discipleship is not paralleled in either Jewish apocalyptic or rabbinic literature, nor in fact do we find anything like it in

104. History of the Synoptic Tradition, p. 31 "I believe that Wendling's view is right, that the dominical saying preserved in Pap. Ox. I, 5, is the more original than Mark 6, 4f."

the Qumran literature. For the Jews the family or 'mishpaha' is the source from which life springs, and thus those who are of the same kin have community of life --- the term 'haya' or "life" is actually used interchangeably with 'mishpaha' in the Old Testament --- to be "cast out" of one's family or to "perish from the family" is tantamount to losing one's life, to being "blotted out". To desire such can only be interpreted as self hate. This appears to be the force of the concluding phrase in Luke 14:26 "yes, and even his own life". Therefore such a call as we have in Luke 14:26 is foreign to normative Judaism. For Judaism, love for parents, care of the family, was second only to love for God and Torah! Furthermore, this attitude toward the family is even foreign to the sectaries of Qumran. The Qumran community, while practicing a separation through celibacy or sexual abstinence, never concretely conceived the separation of a man from his family. Qumran seems only to have known separation in general terms --- separation of the community as over against those outside.

In the light of the Jewish concept of the family, Jesus' call to discipleship in Luke 14:26 suggests another allegiance which supersedes that due to the family, and to the Torah, at least as his contemporaries construed it. Furthermore, this allegiance carries with it a demand that is more akin to the eschatological hopes of the earliest Christian community than that of the preaching of Jesus who rejected any speculation

concerning the last days. A passage in Rev. 14:4 may well help us here. We note in this passage that the moral qualities attributed to the 144,000 mark them out as distinguished for their holiness, especially their asceticism; they are celibates (*παρθενoi* , v.4). The practice of asceticism, it is argued, was encouraged by the early Church (mtt. 19:12, 1 Cor. 7: 23-40) and in the time of John's writing of his Apocalypse the practice of celibacy seems to have been widespread, as the strong eschatological emphasis favoured celibacy as the legitimate and honourable way of living the Christian life, and viewed marriage as belonging to that form of the earth which was passing away.

This passage, however, has caused endless difficulties to scholars. The opening phrases in verse 4 "It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes", appear totally enigmatic. The idea presented here, that the very elite of the Christians consists of ascetics, and that, too, male ascetics, appears to be totally un-Jewish and un-Christian. Therefore some scholars, despite the fact that these phrases are supported in earlier textual evidence, argue that they are at best a "monkish interpolation", which has been added by a Christian redactor, and ought, therefore, to be eliminated from the text.¹⁰⁵ Others

105. Cf. T.W. Crafer, A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, C. Gore, et al, eds., London, 1928 p. 698.

have interpreted the passage as referring neither to a particular state of life in the Church nor to the unmarried, but understand the statements in the historical prophetic sense of those who have succumbed to false worship, as in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea.¹⁰⁶

However, despite the difficulties of this passage neither of the above explanations is satisfactory. While there may be hesitancy in taking this passage literally, owing to the apocalyptic nature of the text itself, there is need for a second look at what John was trying to say either literally or symbolically to the Christian community for whom he wrote. Firstly we must ask if the idea of celibacy expressed in Rev. 14:4 is as un-Christian as commentators make it out to be? In the eschatologically oriented Church for which John wrote, great emphasis was placed on the moral purity of its members, with the cardinal virtues of Christianity -- chastity, trust, ready following of the Lord, and blamelessness --- fully stressed. Those virtues were sought by the true believer, with chastity, as Rev. 14.4 indicates, a pre-requisite to fulfilling the other demands of discipleship. Therefore, if this statement is taken literally, it would imply that the elite of the Christians were celibate. However, we are here dealing with part of an apocalypse written in symbolic language.

106. Cf. John J. Scullion, in A New Catholic Commentary on Scripture, London, 1969, p. 1297 (970a).

The source of John's symbolism is not, however, that of false worship, but rather the idea of 'holy war' which is found in several places in the Old Testament (e.g. Deut. 20:23; 9-10; 1 Samuel 21:5; II Sam. 11:11). What John appears to have done is to take this 'holy war' idea with its ceremonial purity which was required of the soldiers who were 'consecrated for war', and turn it into a moral purity for those who would follow the 'exalted' Lord. It is not difficult to imagine John using this imagery as the context of his message is indeed one of 'holy war' in the sense that his church is being stormed by the forces of evil from without.

It has been suggested that John may have been drawing on the literature and practice of the Qumran community, and that he is here setting up demands of discipleship for his Church similar to those at Qumran. This cannot altogether be ruled out, especially since the concept and ideas expressed in John's writing bear striking similarities to the practice of Qumran. It would be difficult to prove whether John relied on Qumran or some other sectarian source in forming an ascetic attitude toward Christianity, but one may well argue that both John and the sectaries at Qumran found in the symbolism of the 'holy war' a basis from which to express their ascetic ideas.

What John succeeds in doing through his 'holy war' symbolism in Rev. 14:4 is to give impetus to an already present trend in the post-resurrection Church --- that of

practicing celibacy or sexual abstinence as a Christian virtue. What is most significant about the whole passage is that the 'following' is in the context of the 'exalted Christ', which puts this demand of discipleship in the period of the post-resurrection Church rather than that of the ministry of Jesus.

Returning to the saying in Luke 14:26; we have already seen that it is not expressed within the framework of Jewish apocalypticism which largely determined the content of Jesus' preaching, but appears to be a product of the post-resurrection Church. If we understand the passage in Revelation correctly, the saying in Luke 14:26 is in line with the eschatological perspective of the earliest Christian community which considered family relationships of only secondary importance --- superseded by one's allegiance to Christ. Given our Lord's understanding of eschatology as realized -- as the Kingdom of God already present,¹⁰⁷ the statement in Luke 14:26, (and indeed in Luke 18:29:30) where it states quite plainly that some disciples have already left (ἀφῆκεν) their wives and children for 'the sake of the Kingdom', that is, in anticipation of the Kingdom, reflects the belief of the early Church, not of Jesus. The sayings regarding divisions in the family in both the canonical texts and the non-canonical

107. Cf. C.H. Dodd, The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, Cambridge, 1956, see also Van A. Harvey, A Handbook of Theological Terms, New York, 1964, pp. 140, 141.

Gospel of Thomas can best be understood as a product of the post-resurrection Church which made 'chastity' a cardinal virtue for those who followed the Lord.

The harsh sayings, therefore, regarding hatred for one's father, mother, sister, brother, and the general rejection of family relationships in favour of discipleship can be more logically traced to an origin other than Jesus. Furthermore, the contradictions which appear to be so real dissipate as soon as the statements attributed to Jesus are restored to their original sphere of influence. What becomes clear is the fact that the Synoptics are composed of teachings drawn from many sources --- Jewish Apocalyptic, Rabbinic, the early Christian Community, and other Sectarian sources, which have been compiled and attributed to Jesus who becomes a kind of magnetic field for the teaching of the various popular logia. Therefore the only way out of the 'contradictional dilemma' in the Synoptics regarding marriage and the family is to re-examine the individual sayings with a view to establishing the authenticity of each statement in the light of the new evidence made available in newly discovered documents and by new advances in exegetical analysis.

If the 'contradictions' on the family can be explained by tracing the origin of the sayings attributed to Jesus to apocryphal, rabbinic, or sectarian sources then the possibility is that the "crux interpretum" of

the Matthean passages results from similar attributions to Jesus of materials that contradict each other. This calls for a re-examination of the divorce logia in the Synoptics, with a view to establishing their origin.

A Re-Examination of the Divorce 'Logia'

Luke 16:18 is considered by most scholars to be the least modified of the original sayings of Jesus on divorce; and for some this passage represents more than any other the 'ipsissima verba' of Jesus.¹⁰⁸ However, priority or authenticity cannot be claimed for the Lucan version on the basis that it is the least modified^{109/ form} of the original saying of Jesus on divorce, on the contrary the nature of the saying in Luke may well prove that it is not an authentic saying of Jesus at all, but that its origins may lie somewhere beyond Jesus in an earlier sectarian tradition.

Scholars have been puzzled by the loosely connected sayings in Luke 16:16-18, experiencing great difficulty in connecting them with what precedes and with one

108. Cf. for example, R. Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, op.cit. p. 132, Also T.W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, op. cit. p. 138ff.

109. That is, it contains none of the accretions of the early Christian community such as we have in Mark and Matthew where we find the influences of the early Church has modified the teaching to suit particular needs. It is interesting to note, too, that Jesus' prohibition of remarriage after divorce is without any reservations and contrasts with the laxity of one school of Pharisees, but is, oddly, not made relevant by Luke to a Gentile society in which either partner could divorce the other, as in Mark 10:12. cf. W.R.F. Browning, The Gospel According to Saint Luke, Torch Bib. Com.

another.¹¹⁰ Some have suggested that the arrangement we find in Luke 16:16-18 is most likely the work of an editor,¹¹¹ or, as the Dutch Theologian Van der Palm suggests, that Luke was merely utilizing a spare fragment on the page by inserting isolated words of Christ.¹¹² The stock answer of the older commentators was that "these verses (16-18) are all from Q and owe their present position to Luke".¹¹³ However, this answer does not overcome the major difficulty, that of the strange setting in Luke, or the obscurity of the Lucan sequence of ideas, for example the retention of the law with the exclusion of divorce. Those who adhere to the view of the older commentators are too easily satisfied that the source of these seemingly 'unconnected sayings' is Q, and therefore fail to trace the Formgeschichte or the Redaktionsgeschichte of this key passage. However, since David Daube¹¹⁴ has been able to show a continuous chain of ideas in this previously obscure and unconnected passage, exegetical analysis has been confronted with a

110. Cf. J.M. Creed, Gospel according to St. Luke, London, 1930, p. 206f, also Canon F.W. Farrar, St Luke, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Cambridge University Press, 1886, p. 268; G.B. Caird, The Gospel of Luke, The Pelican Gospel Commentaries, A. & C. Black, London, 1963, p. 189.

111. J.M. Creed, *ibid* p. 208.

112. Cf. Canon F.W. Farrar, St Luke, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, London, 1886, p. 268.

113. B.S. Easton, The Gospel According to St Luke. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary, New York, 1926,

114. The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1956, pp. 292ff. Cf also E. Bammel, "Is Luke 16,16-18 of Baptist Provenience?", HarvThR 51 (1958) pp. 101-105.

new situation. And what is more the historical place of the passage becomes exceedingly important to our understanding of the divorce logia in the Synoptics. Daube assigns priority to Luke on the basis of the "greater obscurity of the Lukan sequence of ideas", for he asks "What have the permanence of the Law and the rejection of divorce to do with one another? Their association must be pre-Lukan: it is so abrupt."¹¹⁵ On the basis of this Daube sets out to "seek its roots in an ancient layer of development crystallized in our documents."¹¹⁶ The connection which he sees in the passage has to do with the intimate link between the sanctity of every jot of the law and the condemnation of polygamy in the teaching of heterodox Jewish groups of the New Testament epoch. Daube shows this connection by tracing its relationship in Talmudic and Jewish sectarian literature, beginning with Simeon ben Johai's story (about the middle of the second century A.D.) of the book of Deuteronomy, which went up to heaven to charge Solomon with annulling a 'yodh' in precepts respecting the King. Instead of 'l'yrbh (with vowels lo'yarbe), 'he shall not multiply wives to himself', Solomon read 'l'rbh' (le'arbe), 'to a multitude of wives for himself'. Such a cancellation of a 'yodh' in a way amounted to a cancellation of the

115. D. Daube, *ibid* p. 297.

116. D. Daube, *ibid* p. 294.

entire law.¹¹⁷ For this cancellation God assured the complainant that "Solomon and a thousand like him will perish, but a word of thee will not perish."¹¹⁸ This pronouncement 'Solomon and a thousand such' and so on is fairly close to Luke's "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass", and so on. Furthermore, Simeon was a strong opponent of divorce as well as polygamy, and his argument that "all Israelites are children of kings" led him to consider as generally binding the law that "the King shall not multiply wives to himself" ---- a universalistic tendency similar to that found in Luke.

However, it is in the Zadokite Fragments that Daube finds the closest parallel to the obscure passage of Luke 16:16-18. In the section against polygamy, and almost certainly against remarriage after divorce (CDC 5:1ff),¹¹⁹ the scriptural texts adduced are 'Male and female created he them', 'there went in two and two into the Ark', and -- 'He shall not multiply wives to himself'. Regarding the latter we are told that David did not consult the book of the Law, hence his transgressions of this prohibition. But the latter is treated as obligatory on any pious person, not only the King, thus the Zadokite Document, like Luke, ascribes to it universal validity.

117. D. Daube, *ibid* p. 298.

118. Pal. San. 20c, Exod. Rabba on 6.2

119. Cf. C. Rabin, Zadokite Documents, Oxford, London, 1954, p. 18.

It becomes clear that the rule "He shall not multiply wives to himself" is a primitive law in the struggle to ban polygamy and divorce which antedates the Lukan passage, going back to an ancient stratum before David, which suffered neglect, and that this neglect in a sense affected the entire Law. However, this neglected law was given dramatic expression in the sectarian teaching of Qumran whose strict observance of Mosaic law placed strong emphasis on the role of the 'yodh' in the field of polygamy and divorce.¹²⁰

It is against this background that the perplexing combination of the Lukan passage -- the retention of the Law and the exclusion of divorce --- becomes clear. For as Daube states:

"Most probably we have before us a connection similar to that in the Zadokite Fragments and Simeon's Story --- between the sanctity of the precept 'He shall not multiply wives to himself', or rather, the 'yodh' in it, and the rejection of polygamy and divorce."¹²¹

If this is so, it is quite possible that what we have in Luke 16:16-18 is a development of this ancient law against polygamy and divorce, which presupposes an origin that can be traced to and beyond the Qumran sect. However, to establish this we must take a closer look at the Lukan passage and the Zadokite Documents which gave expression to this ancient and neglected law.

120. Cf. D. Daube, *ibid*, p. 292f, also, notes on the passage in C. Rabin, Zadokite Documents, Oxford, 1954, p. 18f.

121. D. Daube, *ibid*, p. 299.

Some scholars are of the opinion that Luke 16:16-18 does not belong to the Lukan framework.¹²² Its radical rejection of divorce over against the Christian "Gemeindebildung" which permitted divorce (Mt. 5:32, 19,9, I Cor. 7,11f), and the orthodox Jewish community which accepted it as a normal practice of the society, indicates that it may have come from a sectarian source. Again, its close association with the law passage (vv. 16,17), which proclaims an intensification of the Torah does not fit into the framework of Jesus' theology of history but is more akin to the Torah-justice found in the Zadokite Fragments.¹²²

On the basis of Daube's findings that there is a connection between the verses in Luke 16:16-18, we must reassess the passage in an effort to establish, if at all possible, its pre-Christian background and the possible lines of transmission of this teaching into the Christian Gospel.

H. Baltensweiler in summarizing the efforts of commentators to find some logical connection in these passages concludes that "all attempts to make clear what Luke had intended by this arrangement, remain unsatisfactory."¹²³ However, he proposes two possible

122. Cf. E. Bammel, HarvThR 51 (1958) p.101; Also H. Conzelmann, Die Mitte der Zeit, 1954, s.14, maintains this for verse 17. C.B. Caird, The Gospel of Luke, London, 1963, in reference to verse 17 states that "any Rabbi may have said this, but we cannot imagine it on the lips of Jesus, especially in view of the fact that the very next verse contains an alteration of the Mosaic law of divorce". p. 190

122. Cf. note 121 above.

132. Die Ehe im Neuen Testament, Zurich, 1967. p. 172.

solutions to this problem in Luke. He agrees that Luke 16:16-18 was borrowed from the Q source in its present form and that the insertion of it in this passage was the intention of the writer. The reason for this is that both parables, the Unjust Steward and Dives and Lazarus, had to do with wealth and the entrance into the kingdom. Therefore, Luke, by mentioning the "money-loving" Pharisees of vv. 14, 15 illustrates the lesson of the first parable by showing that in essence they were more keen about their material than their spiritual welfare. As the second parable had to do with a rejection of the Law and the Prophets because of "Mammon-Worship" --- "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets ...", Luke found it necessary to insert vv 16-18 which stood in reference to the law. Therefore Luke 16:16-18, like vv 14,15 is used primarily to illustrate the lesson of the second parable. In this sense the passage is not altogether out of place, but is used by Luke as a 'link' to hold the whole passage together - Luke 16: 1-31.

However, his second proposal seeks a connection in vv 16-18, not under the key word "Pharisees", but under the title "John the Baptist". It is usually presumed that v. 18 has been spoken by Jesus in connection with John the Baptist. But v. 17 does not seem to fit into the milieu of Jesus' teaching -- it sounds more like the utterance of a Torah rigorist. However, one is aware that Matthew furnishes in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:18) a similar form of the words found in Luke 16:17 ... "so long as heaven and earth endure, not a letter,

not a stroke, will disappear from the law until all that has happened has happened." This statement that the Torah holds absolute sway is in strong contrast to the new attitude to the law which Jesus expresses in Matthew 5:21-48. Such an acknowledgement of the law, although many scholars think Jesus made it in as many words,¹²⁵ cannot go back to him, --- certainly not an intensification of the Torah as it is proclaimed here and in the Zadokite Fragments. This passage could best be understood as the preaching of John the Baptist possibly transposed to Jesus. Thus what we have in Luke 16:16-18 is a sequence from "Johnspruchen", which had been attributed to Jesus by the author of Luke's gospel.¹²⁶

The idea that Luke 16:16-18 is of Baptist provenience has been previously suggested by E. Bammel in an article cited earlier.¹²⁷ Working on the theory that Luke 16:16-18 is a logically connected whole and not a series of isolated and unconnected sayings of Jesus, he sees much that would suggest the period of the Baptist. We know that the Baptist was a teacher of Torah-justice (Mt 21, 32). His ascetic traits and those of his closer circle indicate an intensification of the Torah (cf. Mk. 2:18, Lk. 11:1). It appears too, that in

125. H. Windisch, The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount, Trans. S. MacLean Gilmour, 1942, p. 124-153.

126. H. Baltensweiler, op. cit. 172ff.

127. Cf. p. 110 above.

the field of marital relations he saw the cardinal point of strict observance, and his objection to a lax interpretation of the marriage laws brought about his downfall.¹²⁸

However, something of this transposition of the Baptist's words to Jesus may be understood if we take into account Luke's portrait of John the Baptist. Luke has retained nothing of John's role as Elijah that we find in Mark and Matthew. In fact Luke treats John as nothing more than a forerunner of the Messiah. Yet at the same time Luke develops a comparison between Jesus and Elijah, not in order to portray Jesus as the eschatological prophet of the end time (for Acts 3:21 does not portray this) but in order to establish Jesus' authority as a "great prophet" (7:16).¹²⁹ From this point of view the theology of history portrayed in v. 16 is attributed to Jesus by Luke as the "Elijah redivivus motif" is transposed from John to Jesus. The 'Motivgeschichte' for this on the part of Luke was to assimilate all honorific and exalted titles to Jesus.¹³⁰ Therefore what actually happens in Luke's gospel, is that Luke conforms John's preaching to the Christian evangelistic pattern (3:14-18), where John participates

128. Cf. Luke 6:14ff.

129 W. Wink, John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition, Cambridge, 1968, p. 45

130. W. Wink, *ibid*, p. 45f.

in the period of fulfilment even while preparing for it, and his ethical teaching becomes valid for the Christian readers of Luke's gospel for successive periods.¹³¹

This "Christianization" of John is only possible, however, because in Luke's conception he stands within Christian times. Therefore the theology of history in v. 16, while more reminiscent of a pre-Christian period, has been made a part of redemptive history because Luke extended the period of fulfilment backwards to include the Baptist's 'εὐαγγέλιον', and by so doing makes John's ministry the beginning of the gospel. However, Luke does not attribute this to John, but to Jesus who has replaced John as the "Elijah redivivus". Therefore, what was previously pre-Christian ethical teaching has become in Luke's gospel Christian teaching, and he gives it authority by attributing the various 'logia' to Jesus.

However, apart from the theology of history which indicates the time of John the Baptist, can we bring such a conclusion into agreement with the facts of 'Traditionsgeschichte?'

The opening verse of this pericope appears also in Mt. 11:12 following Christ's testimony to the Baptist, which is taken over by Luke with the exception of vv.12-14. The contents of v. 12f are modified in Luke 16:16 and those of v.14 in Luke 1,17. However, it is generally

131. W. Wink, *ibid.* p. 39ff.

agreed that the sequence of the sayings in Luke is the more logical.¹³² This indicates that the Synoptic state does not presuppose a simple dependence of Luke on a Matthean pattern.¹³³

Looking at the details of the passage we find it is equally unproductive in supporting a development from a Matthean tradition. The order *νομος και προφηται* cannot have been chosen by Luke in opposition to Matthew, as the problem of the Jewish law becomes of secondary importance to him, nor is he likely to be responsible for the abandonment of the '*προφητευσιν*' of Law and Prophets.¹³⁴ Probably the most telling evidence lies in the fact that Luke does not like '*εὐαγγελιον*', but does frequently use '*εὐαγγελισιν*' though usually in the middle voice. However, Luke 7:22 forms an exception, a passage in which there is little or no editorial work. Consequently Luke 16:16 must either also be derived from the Q-source and so be superior to Matthew 11:12, or have a different origin.

As Bammel notes, to regard the two passages as independent revisions of Q material does not get us very far. Just as Luke 16:16 lacks specific Lukan characteristics, so specifically Matthean characteristics are missing in Matthew 11:12.

132. E. Bammel, HarvThRev 51 (1958), p. 103, note 17.

133. The argument presented here follows closely that of E. Bammel in the article cited above.

134. Cf. E. Lohse, "Lukas als Theologie der Heilgeschichte" Evangel. Theologie 14 (1954) pp. 256-275.

Looking again at v. 16a it is quite probable that this saying is better preserved than in the Matthean parallel.¹³⁵ The original saying according to E. Jungel, should read:

"Ο νόμος και οί προφηται μεχρι Ίωαννου απο
τοτε ή βασιλεια βιαζεται και βιασται
εραπαζουσιν αυτην"

The reason for Matthew's alteration of the logion is that he wants to place John on the same side of the "change of aeons" as Jesus.¹³⁶ However, G. Barth¹³⁷ sees the alteration of Matthew as an effort to combat antinomians who denied the validity of the law (cf. Mt. 5:17-18; 7:12-27; 24:10); hence the use of 'πας' in connection with the law (3:15, 5:18; 23:3; 28:20). Luke's version, that is Q, or possibly some other source, implied that the law was valid up until John, and Matthew was therefore forced to alter it.

However, in v.16b Matthew's version seems the more original since it gives the 'connexio difficilior', whereas Luke's is a simplified 'christianized' version. The original seems to have referred to a violation of the

135. S.G. Wilson, "Lukan Eschatology", NTSt 16, (1969-70) p. 334.

136. E. Jungel, Paulus und Jesus, 1962, p. 191.

137. G. Barth, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, London, 1963, pp. 63-4.

Kingdom by its enemies, who are not defined. Luke appears to have replaced it with a reference to men who violently push to get into the kingdom. M. Black¹³⁸ suggests that it is possible to give Luke a similar meaning to Matthew by taking 'εἰς' to mean against --- a possible, though rare, meaning of the word ---- or by taking 'εἰς' as the equivalent of an Aramaic preposition not used in the Greek, but included because a direct translation was being made.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the "preaching" in v. 16b is something that John does (Lk 4:43; 8:1, 9:11, 60ff), and is also a characteristic of the early Church in Acts (Acts 8, 12; 20:25, 28; 23:31). This further emphasizes the strong 'Christianized' flavour of this passage, and the connection which Luke makes between John, Jesus and the early Church. Interestingly enough, Luke, who appears to take pains to write for a Gentile audience, does not change the context of v.18 to suit the Gentile practice as does Mark,¹⁴⁰ but retains the saying in its original form.

In the light of what has already been said, it has been suggested that Luke may have been here drawing on another source, and that this source is probably from

138. An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, 2nd ed., 1954, p. 84f. *L 3ed.*

139. *Ibid.* p.84. This also fits into Quispel's argument for an Aramaic source for the family sayings mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

140. Mark changes the saying to allow women the right of divorce, a Roman-Hellenistic practice.

the Baptist tradition, as this passage appears to belong to the considerable number of references which Luke makes to John the Baptist.¹⁴¹ But how did this saying get into Christ's tradition? Bammel argues that "Luke or the community before him may have found in Q or Matthew a similar saying attributed to Christ, and therefore assumed the same source for the logion now preserved in Lk 16:16-18".¹⁴² Originally the saying (16:16-18) may have contained the message of the Baptist, i.e. his claim to offer something new with regard to the Law and the Prophets, in which the past was not suspended but radically preserved.

This transposition of the Baptist's preaching to Jesus is understandable in the light of the fact that the actual Jesus-tradition acted as a magnetic field upon the most varied logia. Therefore, the "christianization" of John's tradition by Luke conditioned the development of the logion as a genuine saying of Jesus. However, if this is so, and we shall assume this for the moment, we must look at the position of John the Baptist, and attempt to find out if such a radical teaching about divorce originated with him or if he is actually the transmitter of a sectarian teaching, namely that of Qumran.

F. F. Bruce in an article in New Testament Studies enumerates the similarities between the Qumran community and early Christianity as follows:

141. E. Bammel, op. cit. p. 104.

142. E. Bammel, *ibid.* p. 105.

"--- the two movements share a general historical background and ancestry. We find this general background and ancestry of both in the pious groups, the 'quiet' in the land', the true remnant of believing Israel, among whom the 'messianic' hope burned brightly, and who had little confidence in the arm of flesh as the instrument of the divine purpose, whether this was supplied by Judas Maccabæus and his brothers in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes or by the Zealots two hundred years later."¹⁴³

A personal link between the two movements has been sought through John the Baptist.¹⁴⁴ John A.T. Robinson offers a plausible hypothesis when he states that,

"John was sent (on the death, perhaps, of his parents?) to be reared in the desert discipline of the Qumran Community. This community had, as we know, considerable following among priestly families (which provided at least one for every ten or more of its members; 1 QS 6.3; 1 QSa 2.22; CDC 15.5) and it appears more likely to have drawn this, not from the Sadducean priesthood it anathematized, but from those rural circles whose ideals of piety, as represented in the Lucan birth narratives, are the closest approximation to those of Qumran to be found in the New Testament. It would, moreover, explain why he had come to sever his connection with the Temple cult and found himself fiercely opposed both to and by the Jerusalem priesthood (Mt 3.7 = Luke 3.7; Mk 11:27-33; and pars; Mt 21.32; cf John 1.19)"¹⁴⁵

This association of John the Baptist with the Essenes seems to be confirmed also in the secular writings of

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143. "Qumran and Early Christianity", NTSt 2 (1955-6) pp. 189f.
144. Cf. W.H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls", Interp. Vol 9 (1955) pp. 71ff. Cf also J.A.T. Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community", in Twelve New Testament Essays, 1962, p. 16 also C.H. Scobie, John the Baptist, 1964, p. 33ff
145. "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community," in Twelve New Testament Essays, 1962, p. 16.

Josephus¹⁴⁶ who uses the same words to describe the activity of the Essenes as he does for the activity of John the Baptist.¹⁴⁷ Apart from H.H. Rowley's¹⁴⁸ scathing attack on an easy identification of John's baptism and ministry with the Qumran community, it is generally agreed that the Baptist may well be the link between the two communities.

No doubt John the Baptist, himself the son of a priest, might have found something specially appealing in this movement; but when 'the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness (Luke 3.2)', as it had come to many prophets before, he learned and proclaimed the necessity for something more than the teaching or practice of Qumran. Nevertheless, the Baptist brought with him as part of his 'εὐαγγέλιον', the influences and teaching of the Qumran sect. How did this possibly affect his teaching regarding marriage and divorce?

146. Josephus' account of John's baptismal doctrine is similar to that of the Essenes: 'he taught that baptism would appear acceptable to God provided that they underwent it not to procure pardon for certain sins but with a view to the purification of the body when once the soul had been purified by righteousness (Ant. 18.5.2)'. It has been suggested by F.F. Bruce, that "in view of the discrepancy between Josephus's explanation of John's baptism and that implied in the New Testament, it may be thought that Josephus misinterpreted it in terms of Essene lustration, which was more familiar to him". Cf. "Qumran and Early Christianity", NTSt p. 189, note 3.

147. C.H. Scobie, John the Baptist, London, 1964, p. 40f

148. New Testament Essays, ed. A.J.B. Higgins (1959) pp. 218-29.

The Qumran community was, as far as can be gathered from the indigenous literature and contemporary writers, divided into two communities, one celibate and the other practicing marriage.¹⁴⁹ The Zadokite Fragments from which Daube traces the connection in the Lucan passage brings fresh severity and rigour to a legal code already strict in itself. It tightens up the marriage laws, imposing new sanctions for the community. Whereas it is written in Lev. 18:13, 'You shall not approach your mother's sister, she is your near kin', in the Zadokite Fragments (CD 5:9) this precept is extended to include a man and his niece within the degrees of forbidden kinship, with the comment: 'Although the laws of incest are written for men, they also apply to women,' i.e., if a nephew is forbidden to marry his aunt, so is a niece prohibited from marrying her uncle (CD 5:9-12). Furthermore, the Zadokite Fragments

149. Cf. Josephus, War II 8.2-13, also A.R.C. Leaney, The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning, London, 1966 p. 61.

true teaching of Moses and in 'taking a second wife while the first is alive commits the sin of fornication.'¹⁵¹ The document also reiterates the importance of keeping the vows that are made between a man and his wife (CD 7:7,8). Likewise, specific mention is made of divorce (CD 13:17). However, the text is so corrupt as to leave the interpretation of the passage obscure and open to conjecture.¹⁵² Interestingly enough, the intelligible

nacheinander? Auch das zweite scheint verpont) ..." p.112; However, Walter Baumgartner is more definite, Cf. his "Die Bedeutung der Hohlenfunde aus Palastina für die Theologie", Schweizerische Theologische Umschau XLIV, Bern 1954, pp. 49-63, especially p.56. Also J.L. Teicher, "Jesus' Sayings in the Dead Sea Scrolls", JJS 5(1954) p. 38; K. Schubert, "The Sermon on the Mount and the Qumran Texts", in The Scrolls and the New Testament, New York (1957) pp. 118-128.

For a more detailed account of the development of interpretation regarding the Zadokite Fragments see Paul Winter's article, "Zadokite Fragments IV 20,21 and the Exegesis of Genesis 1:27 in late Judaism", ZAW 67-68 N.F. 26-27 (1955-56) pp.71-84. Winter notes in this article that "if it had been the writer's intention merely to denounce polygamy, one would have to ask what is meant by the words "during their lives" p.77.

151. G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1962, p. 32.
152. C. Rabin implies in a note referring to this passage (The Zadokite Documents, op.cit. p.17, note 21) that "divorce is actually mentioned as permitted 13:17". He arrives at this conclusion from his own restoration of the passage under consideration. However, if we assumed that his restoration established the original reading, the passage, like Luke's, would only contain directions of conduct with regard to a man "who divorces". The prohibition of divorce is not explicit in Luke, or the Zadokite Documents; however, such limitations ~~is~~ placed upon "he who divorces" that the strong condemnation of it cannot be mistaken. Hugh Montefiore states that "In the Zadokite Fragments 7:1 (Charles' documentation), probably connected with the Essene circles, divorce seems actually to have been forbidden", "Jesus on Divorce and Remarriage", The Report of the Commission of the Christian Doctrine of Marriage, SPCK, 1971, p.80. Also M. Dieckhaus, "Mt 19.9 (5:32)" Revist Ecl.Brus 28(2', '68) pp. 425-427.

rendering of what is contained in CD 13:17 "with regard to him that divorces his wife" is not unlike the opening of the statement in Luke 16:18 "everyone who divorces his wife". One wonders if such a close wording of the two passages is coincidental, or if there may not have been originally in the corrupt text of the Zadokite Fragments a teaching very close to what we have preserved in Luke 16:18? On the evidence at hand one cannot assume that CD 13:17 is a 'fragment' of the 'whole' that we have in Luke 16:18. However, the tightening up of the marriage laws, and the strong stand against polygamy, and divorce in the other passages,¹⁵³ would seem to suggest that the fragment in CD 13:17 may well be a pronouncement against divorce similar to what we have in the Lucan account.¹⁵⁴

The intensification of the Torah that we find in the Lucan passage (Luke 16:16-18) is very well reflected in the Zadokite Fragments, especially with regard to marriage. And it is in this area that John the Baptist saw the cardinal point of strict observance.

153. Cf. for example, CD 7:5,6; 19:6.

154. The theory of the Roman Catholic papyrologist Jose O'Callaghan that fragments found in the Qumran caves bear resemblance to, and is actually a passage from, Mark's Gospel, opens up a whole new area of development in New Testament scholarship. Should his theory prove correct, the question of the relationship between Qumran and the Christian sect will have ramifications for the whole of New Testament research. For a survey of O'Callaghan's theory see L. Sabourin, "A Fragment of Mark at Qumran"? BibThBull II (1972) pp. 308-312.

If we accept as historical the account of Luke 3,19, the attack on the marriage of the tetrarch may be adduced as the main reason for the arrest of John the Baptist. Antipas had put away the daughter of the Arabian King Aretas to take up with Herodias his half-brother's wife, who was his half-niece. Apparently, Herodias deserted her husband, and sought a divorce under the Greek-Roman law whereby female members claimed the independent right of divorce,¹⁵⁵ which was not conceded by the Jewish system.¹⁵⁶ This divorce was apparently granted.¹⁵⁷ However, even if no divorce took place,¹⁵⁸ Jewish jurisprudence acknowledged legally granted marriage acts (Gitt. 9,2), thus it would seem impossible to speak of an illegitimate relationship in this case. What then was the reason for the attack by John the Baptist? It seems that the two factors that may have provoked criticism, the fact that Herodias married the man who was (a) her half-uncle and (b) the half-brother of her former husband, were not contentious issues, as the practice of niece-marriage was acceptable in first century Judaism, in fact it was praised (sa Bar Jeb 62b; Tas Kidd 1.4; Tos Jeb. 2).

155. Josephus, Ant. 15 No. 259.

156. However, there were exceptions in the Jewish law. Cf. E. Bammel "Markus 10:11f und das jüdische Eherecht", ZNeutW 61 (1-2, '70) pp. 95-101. See also Chapter Two "the position of women" p. 79f.

157. Cf. R. Eisler "*Ἰησοῦς βασιλεὺς*", 15 footnote 1. However D. Daube notes that Herodias "did not write her husband a bill of divorce but simply 'separated' -- *διαστᾶσα* . (Josephus Ant. 18 5.4.136). New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, op. cit. p. 365.

158. See note 3 above, even if plain '*διαστᾶσα* ', it was acknowledged by Jewish jurisprudence.

Marriage with the ex-husband's half-brother is not evaluated in the sources: Gitt 9.2 and Lev. 18:16 do not supply direct information. Therefore if the Baptist opposed this marriage it was on the basis of incest --- seeing the marriage as within forbidden degrees of kindred according to the Torah-intensified laws of the Zadokite Fragments, which forbade niece-marriage on both the father's and mother's side.¹⁵⁹ If this is the case, and one is at a loss to find other reasons for his attack, then the connection between John the Baptist and the Qumran Community appears the more likely as his attitude toward marriage and divorce coincides precisely with that of the Qumranites.

However, can we trace an association between the Lucan passage under discussion (16:18) and Qumran? We have already identified the passage with John the Baptist, and have thus posited an indirect connection with Qumran, but is there other evidence that might indicate an association between this passage and the Qumran Community? Some scholars argue for a direct connection between this passage and the Qumran community primarily on the basis that Luke in 16:8 uses Qumran terminology, "Sons of Light", which is found nowhere else in the

159. Cf. CD. 4.20ff, 5:1-6.

Synoptics, and only in two other passages in the New Testament (John 12:36; 1 Thess. 5:5).¹⁶⁰ H. Braun takes the argument a step further by identifying "μαμωυδς της ἀδικίας" in Luke 16:9 as also Qumran terminology which is found in 1 QSa 10.19, and is used in the same sense that Luke uses it in his Gospel.¹⁶¹

In addition to this radical teaching about marriage and divorce, Luke's whole Gospel seems to echo a strong ascetic attitude, which might indicate a further connection with the sectaries of Qumran. Q. Quesnell¹⁶² notes that Luke appears to express a different attitude towards virginity and celibacy from Mark and Matthew. Luke, for example, in 28:29 includes 'women', 'wife' among the list of persons and things which a man 'leaves

160. "Sons of Light" is found in 1QS 1,9;2,16;3,13.24.25, also in 1Qm. Cf. also H. Baltensweiler, Die Ehe im Neuen Testament, Zurich, 1967, p. 174ff.

161. For a fuller discussion on the Lucan use of "Sons of Light" see, W. Grossouw, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament: A preliminary survey", StC 26 (1951) 289-299; 27 (1952) 1-8; F. Nötscher, "Judische Monchsgemeinde und Ursprung des Christentums nach den jungst am Toten Meer aufgefundenen hebraischen Handschriften", Bibel und Kirche (1952) 21-38; F.M. Braun, RBib 62 (1955) 5-44; H. Braun, Bhth 24, 1957 I, II, 39a.1.; M. Burrows, Die Shriftrollen vom Toten Meer, Munchen, 1957, p. 273f; - Burrows thinks that the terminology used here by Luke may not have been drawn from Qumran but from a Jewish circle, he bases his conclusions on the fact that the apocalyptic outlook of Jesus and the Qumran community were different, so too was their eschatology. Nötscher, on the other hand, argued for an Old Testament derivation. ke

162. "Made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven (Mtt. 19:12)", CathBibQ 30 (1968) pp. 335-58.

for the kingdom of heaven'. Matthew 19:29, however, makes no mention of the wife and neither does Mark 10:29. Quesnell suggests that Luke took this idea from Q while Matthew omitted it.¹⁶³ However, it could be that Luke got this ascetic teaching from a different source, possibly from the sectarian community of Qumran. The strong ascetic influence comes through in Luke especially when we note that Luke has four items to be renounced which Matthew does not have here (brothers, sisters, wife, life), but that all these do come up elsewhere in Matthew for explicit renunciation ('leave brothers, sisters' Matthew 19:29; 16:25f; 10:39), with one exception 'the wife'.

Another interesting passage which illustrates this divergence in attitude is the Lucan story of the great feast (14:15-20), which is a figure of 'eating bread in the kingdom of God' (14:15). In Luke, the invited guests excuse themselves from coming by saying 'I have bought a field' (v.18); 'I have bought five yoke of oxen ...' (v.19); and finally, 'I have married a wife and on account of this I cannot come' (v.20). Matthew, preserves the first two items but omits the third, which suggests that marrying a wife might interfere with following the call to the kingdom. Quesnell suggests that the redactional difference is significant when Matthew uses 'gamos'

163. *ibid* p. 344.

(wedding feast) as a fitting figure for the Kingdom of God (Mtt. 22:1-14), whereas Luke uses only 'deipnon' (banquet; Luke 14:15-24).¹⁶⁴

Probably, the most important observation which Quesnell makes has to do with Matthew's significant divergence from Luke in the saying about marriage which occurs in the dispute about the resurrection (Luke 20:27-40; Matthew 22:33-35; Mark 12:18,27). Luke distinguishes two classes of men, and describes the two classes in general propositions: 'the sons of this world marry and are given in marriage, but those judged worthy to arrive at this world and the resurrection from the dead do not marry nor are they given in marriage (Luke 20:34-35);' the verbs are in the present tense.¹⁶⁵ However, Matthew follows Mark and simply describes the 'future' situation at the time of the resurrection, --- 'In the resurrection, they do not marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven' (Matt. 22,28,30). Matthew omits, if he knew of it, the Lucan implication of the two classes of men 'the sons of this world who are now marrying, and 'those judged worthy of arriving at that world' who are not (now) marrying. This seems to reflect very much the ascetic structure of the Qumran community, which according to the most widely accepted theory consisted of these two kinds of men --- those who married, and those who do not marry nor are given in marriage.

164. Q. Quesnell, *ibid.* p. 346 Here Quesnell assumes this to be a parallel passage. This has been questioned.

165. γαμουσιν, ἐγαμισκουται

Luke 17:27 (Mtt. 23:38) also seems to suggest a negative attitude toward marriage, and the phrase 'marrying and giving in marriage' (or 'marrying and being married'?) was almost certainly a catch-word which originated among the ascetic Jewish circles older than Luke and possibly older than Q.¹⁶⁶ Thus the attitude toward marriage expressed in Luke generally seems to have been drawn from a very early ascetic tradition that can be detected in such ascetic circles as Qumran. The logion in Luke 16:18 with its radical rejection of divorce is in keeping with this ascetic attitude, and on the evidence of the whole Gospel must be considered of sectarian origin.

The evidence so far adduced seems to confirm Daube's findings that the Lucan passage may well be a re-assertion of the ancient stratum of law which was earlier reaffirmed and emphasized in the sectarian Community of Qumran. This reaffirmation which we find in Luke's Gospel may have been transmitted in two different ways - through the author of the Gospel himself having been influenced by the ascetic practices of the various sects operating at that time, or, more probably, through a disciple of the sect who was familiar with its practices, and who considered the teaching on marriage a cardinal point for those who wished to share in the new kingdom.

166. D.L. Balch, "Background of I Cor. VII: Sayings of the Lord in Q; Moses as an ascetic 'THEIOS ANER' in II Cor 3," NTSt 18 (1972) pp. 351-64.

The preaching and actions of John the Baptist are reminiscent of such a disciple, and most probably it is he who reaffirmed this radical sectarian teaching in his preaching in the Jordan. The records (Mark 6:14ff, Matthew 14: 1ff; Luke 3:18ff) bear witness to the fact that in the area of marital relations he saw the cardinal point of strict observance, and as a result of his insistence on the matter, especially in the case of Herod Antipas and Herodias, was imprisoned and eventually beheaded. However, the desire of the early Christian writers, (especially Luke who extends the ministry of Jesus backwards to include the period of John), to attribute all popular teachings to the Jesus-tradition conditioned the development of this saying as being accepted by the early Church as a genuine saying of Jesus.

The connection between Jesus and John the Baptist on this whole issue of marriage and divorce can best be understood when we consider the political implications of John's preaching. F.C. Burkitt reminds us that 'a curious sidelight can be thrown on the public actions of our Lord from this point of view. In the estimation of many the Galilean prophet was first and foremost the successor of John the Baptist, who had lost his life in protesting against the loose pagan morals of Antipas and Herodias.¹⁶⁷

167. F.C. Burkitt, "St Mark and Divorce", *JThSt.* V. (1903-1904) pp. 628-30.

Conzelmann in his book The Theology of St Luke,¹⁶⁸ puts a great deal of emphasis on the geographical motifs in Luke's presentation of John the Baptist. The ministry of John the Baptist is separated from the ministry of Jesus in Luke's Gospel according to Conzelmann, by Luke's schematizing the Jordan as the locale of John, and Judea and Galilee as the specific domain of Jesus. Conzelmann concludes, therefore, that 'the Jordan is the region of the Baptist, representing the region of the old era, whereas the region of Jesus' ministry - 'Galilee and Judea', is the region of the new era -- the period of fulfilment. This geographical schematization represents and emphasizes the discontinuity between the preparatory work of John and the ministry of Jesus. However, some scholars¹⁶⁹ see this geographical schematization as traditional and not in the least a desire on the part of Luke to separate areas as if they were aeons. What Luke is doing is merely heightening the discontinuity which is already traditional with the other Synoptic Gospels, since all three treat the ministries of John and Jesus as separate spheres tangent only at the point of Baptism.

Burkitt calls our attention to a more realistic geographical motif in the gospels than that of Conzelmann's, and may well account for the geographical separation of John's ministry from that of Jesus.

168. H. Conzelmann, The Theology of St Luke, London, 1960

169. Cf. W. Wink, John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition, op. cit. p. 44ff.

Few scholars in attempting to understand the teaching in the New Testament on marriage and divorce take into account the political and social implications of what is being preached, and its possible repercussions. Jesus, as Burkitt notes, was a successor of John the Baptist, and on the news of John's death our Lord returns at once to a 'desert place' (Mk. 6.31). Soon afterwards we find him and his disciples taking a quite extended journey to the north away from the dominions of Antipas (Mk. 7:24ff). From there he journeys to the district of Caesarea Philippi i.e., the North East district of Herod the Great's realm, outside Antipas's tetrarchy (Mk.8.27-9,29). After a short stay there, he passes secretly (Mk. 9.30) through Galilee on his way to Jerusalem. This policy of concealment lasts until He comes 'into the borders of Judea.' There he is outside the jurisdiction of Antipas and once more resumes his teaching where 'crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them.' (Mk.10:1)

From these movements of our Lord it can be seen that he took pains not to get embroiled with the civil authorities, especially just before the Passover. However, the question of divorce, which was the means of John the Baptist's undoing, was apparently used by his enemies in an effort to entice Him to make a pronouncement that would implicate him with the authorities and hopefully lead to his arrest, and possible execution, since the

death of John the Baptist had already set a precedent for such action. However, the ambiguity of the answer given by Jesus must have been disappointing to his questioners. Jesus does not condemn publicly the loose Roman practices of the Herods, but instead calls the questioners' attention to the will of God in creation and bases his answer on the natural constitution of man (possibly androgynous man!) as opposed to the Mosaic law. Not until later when he is alone with his disciples in private does he offer what can be taken as a special condemnation of Antipas and Herodias. It is then that he repeats the radical teaching of John the Baptist on divorce, endorsing what John had said. However, He does this in such a way as to avoid a confrontation with the authorities.

Therefore the geographical Motif^m which emerges in the Synoptics is not a deliberate effort on the part of Luke or Mark to divide the ministries of John and Jesus into two different periods, but the result of a deliberate avoidance on the part of Jesus of the territory of Antipas owing to the fact that Antipas and the general public considered him a successor to the Baptist and therefore one who endorsed John's stand on marriage and divorce.

An interesting connection is made by Burkitt in this regard. He notes that a few weeks before the utterance on divorce, just before Jesus started from Bethsaida to go to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, the disciples

had come in a boat to the place called Dalmanutha or Magadan (Mk 8:9-15), an unknown spot not so very far from Tiberias. There they were met by some "Pharisees" who ask for a 'sign', which is refused (Mk 8:10-12). When they have hurriedly re-embarked to go to the border town of Bethsaida on the North of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus bids the disciples beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (Mk 8:15). Why Herod? The sudden move to Bethsaida, so sudden that no provisions were put on the boat, suggests a flight from imminent danger. This narrative of Mark is also mentioned in a separate pericope in Luke 13:31-33. According to this passage the Pharisees say 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you'. The answer which Jesus gives indicates the course of action which he intends to take. He accepts the Pharisees' warning and leaves the territory of Antipas, concealing himself and keeping quiet when he passed through Galilee, because he was determined that the inevitable crisis would take place at Jerusalem and not in the district of Antipas.¹⁷⁰

What are we to make of all this? The movements of Jesus, and possibly the areas where he preached may have been dictated by the fact that Antipas, who for political and social reasons had beheaded the Baptist, was also seeking his successor -- Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus, being aware of this, avoided the area of the Jordan, and

170. F.C. Burkitt, JThSt. v (1903-1904) pp. 628ff.

especially the area where John the Baptist attacked publicly the lax marriage practices of the Herods. There is little doubt that the attack by the Baptist on the tetrarch and his wife was of tremendous consequence, as the whole area registered the feelings of the man who was their ruler. The situation would be equal to the *furor* which occurred in Britain when King Edward VIII abdicated to marry Mrs Simpson. The seriousness with which the incident was taken is marked by the death of John the Baptist and the curtailment of Jesus' ministry in the Jordan.

Recapitulation of Luke 16:16-18

To recapitulate our re-examination of Luke 16:16-18 we find that the work of D. Daube has stimulated new interest in this passage, calling into question the findings of earlier commentators. Scholars such as E. Bammel, and H. Baltensweiler, taking Daube's lead have identified the saying with the period of John the Baptist, and because of the Torah-intensified nature of the saying (16:16-18), and the radical rejection of divorce which does not fit into the 'Gemeindebildung' of the earliest Church which allowed divorce (I Cor. 7:11ff; Mtt. 5:32; 19:9), have suggested that the teaching is of sectarian origin, probably drawn from the teaching of Qumran. The transmission of this teaching is difficult to determine. The weight of evidence seems to point to John the Baptist, who is said to have had some association with the Qumran community. If we can rely on Luke 3:19f

as historical, John appears to have made the Zadokite regulations regarding marriage (CD 5:1ff) a cardinal point of strict observance. Furthermore, the theology of history expressed in the passage, especially v 16a, is, according to most scholars, pre-Christian.

However, the 'logion' is drawn into the Jesus-tradition by the author of Luke's gospel, who has a tendency to attribute popular teachings to Jesus. In fact Luke has extended the Christian period backward to include the period of the Baptist, thus making his ethical teaching a part of the Christian gospel. Therefore, what we seem to have in Luke 16:16-18 is a saying of the Baptist transferred to Jesus. This becomes the more likely when we consider Jesus's close association with the Baptist at the beginning of his ministry, especially regarding the crisis that caused John's arrest and eventual execution. It is most likely that Jesus may well have repeated John's teaching on marriage, but gave it, as we shall see, a different basis from the Torah-justice of Qumran.

The Development of Mark and Matthew

This understanding of the Lukan passage sheds new light on the whole Synoptic teaching of marriage and divorce. And on the basis of what has been said, a logical explanation can now be put forth to explain the "contradictions" which seem to appear in the teaching of Jesus in the marriage 'logia' of the Synoptics.

There is little doubt that the radical sectarian attitude toward marriage and divorce expressed in the

Lukan logion (16:18) forms the kernel for the different logia in the other Synoptic gospels. Mark and Matthew both adopted this radical sectarian teaching and each in his own way attempts to make it applicable to the situation for which they write. Thus, there is evidence that the teaching in Mark has been filtered through the prism of the Hellenistic Church in a Roman setting, while that of Matthew seeks to make itself relevant to Jewish Christians, possibly in Antioch.

Mark 10:1-12

The teaching in Mark, which still maintains the radical sectarian attitude, is reconstructed along the lines of the traditional rabbinic form that was popular in Jewish sources where controversies dating from the first few centuries A.D. are recorded.¹⁷¹ The Markan Church in Rome appears to have permitted separation,¹⁷² (perhaps following the Pauline Church), but not remarriage. In addition it extended its warning against divorce to include women (Mk 10:11ff) ---- a change from Jewish Christian practice made necessary by Rome's advanced civil law where women were also given the right to divorce.

In examining the controversy in Mk 10:1-12 between Jesus and the Pharisees, it becomes clear what Mark

171. D. Daube, New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, op.cit. p. 141ff.

172. R.N. Soulen, "Marriage and Divorce. A Problem in New Testament Interpretation", Interp. 23(4, '69) pp. 439-450.

attempts to do in an effort to retain the radical sectarian teaching of Luke. Instead of presenting the teaching as a piece of Torah-intensification as it appears in Luke, Mark gives the teaching a new twist, by having Jesus contrast the will of God with that of the Torah (Mk 10:4-9). This is more acceptable to his Gentile readers, and at the same time enables him to make use of material from the polemics of the Church, while retaining the basic teaching of indissolubility, v.11f.

Mark's whole reconstruction is not hard to follow. He attempts to set out the debate between Jesus and the Pharisees in a unified way. However, the awkwardness of the construction shows its artificiality.¹⁷³ The fact that Mark 10:2 has to start with a question without any reference to any act is indicative of the artificiality of the setting, and becomes the more glaring when Jesus replies with the counter-question in v.3: 'τι ὑμῖν ἐνετείλατο Μωυσης'; that is, indirectly with a quotation from scripture, though neither counter-question or quotation is in place at this point.¹⁷⁴ As Bultmann notes "the counter-question is in no sense a counter-argument, and

173. R. Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, op. cit. p. 27.

174. Mark's quotation from Scripture Gen. 2.24 follows the Septuagint word for word; and it is from this quotation that the statement "and the two shall become one flesh" is taken, while the Hebrew text reads only "they shall become one flesh". Mark makes this Greek reading a constitutive element in Jesus' reply. cf. P. Hoffmann, Conc. Vol.5, No. 6, May (1970), p.55.

the scripture reference does not really answer the opponents, but is subjected to their criticism!"¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, v. 4 which in any real debate should have stated the conditions for divorce, does not do so, but instead simply states that the Mosaic law allowed divorce, a fact already understood from v.2. However, the conditions for divorce are missing because Mark wants to keep his teaching in line with the teaching in Luke 16:18, and therefore makes Jesus reject divorce altogether. Therefore, according to Mark there are absolutely no conditions for divorce.

Mark makes a transition in v.10 to the originally independent saying v.11f which is actually the 'logion' which we find in Luke 16:18 with a slight Hellenistic modification. Mark joins it on to his argument with *και λεγει αυτοις* . However because Mark's presentation does not lend itself to the kind of controversial form for which the Rabbinic form was designed, that is, a discussion of 'conditions' regarding a particular 'halakah' judgement, in this case divorce, the form of the teaching suffers from an artificiality, which in Mark's case cannot be avoided if the end result is to have Jesus radically reject divorce.

Some scholars¹⁷⁶ argue for a Qumran origin for the sayings of Jesus in Mark 10:1ff and parallels. J.L.

Teicher, for example, argues on the basis of Mark 10:6
175. Ibid. p.27.

176. Cf. Note 150 on page 180 and 181 of this Chapter.

While I disagree with Teicher's theory that the Zadokite Documents are of Christian origin, and see little in the literature that indicates a literary dependence upon these documents by the writers of the Synoptics (apart from a few isolated examples, of which the text under discussion is one) I am inclined to agree with Daube's suggestion that this teaching is drawn from a common tradition, which was used by both the Qumran community and the early Church.

The Origin of the Common Tradition:

The origin of this common tradition underlying both the Qumran text and that of the New Testament can only be guessed at. However, the interpretation of Genesis 1:27 in the literature of pre-Christian and contemporary Judaism gives us some indication as to the origin and possible developments of this tradition. It is again the work of D. Daube¹⁷⁸ that helps to unravel the various lines of tradition, and to take some of the guesswork out of such an inquiry. Daube suggests that Gen. 1:27 has at its base an underlying concept of man ($\square \uparrow \downarrow \mathcal{N}$) having "in the beginning" been created male-and-female, i.e. with an androgynous nature. The idea of an androgynous creature, a man-woman, was expressed in mythical form from Babylon to Greece. Records of such myths can be found in Sumerian tablets¹⁷⁹ as well as Aristophanes'

178. "Evangelisten und Rabbinen", ZNeutW 48, p. 119-126.

179. Cf E.A. Speiser, "Akkadian Myths and Epics" in Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by James Bennet Pritchard, Princeton, New Jersey 1950, on pp. 99-100.

discourse on love in Plato's Symposium.¹⁸⁰

Late Jewish tradition¹⁸¹ relates a myth similar to that found in (Aristophanes'^{Plato's}) Symposium, and the use of certain Greek words such as ἀνδρόγυνος "carved up" seems to indicate a dependence upon the myth expressed in Aristophanes' writing.¹⁸² However, the use of אָדָם בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית (Gen. 1:27) occurring in a place where no mention had yet been made of Eve's emergence from Adam's sleep is strong evidence that the Genesis myth itself is permeated with a mythical concept of the androgynous character of primordial man.

This ancient myth portraying a bi-sexual concept of man came to be used for various purposes, and in time its interpretation often became unrelated to its original meaning, for example when it was given an ethical interpretation with a social motive, as in the Zadokite

180. "πρωτον μιν γαρ τριχ ην τα γενη τα των ανθρωπων, ουχ ωσπερ νυν δυο, αρρεν και θηλυ, αλλα και τριτον προτην κοινον ον αμφοτερων τουτων, οδ νυν ονομα λοιπον, αυτο δε ηφανισται. ανδρογυνον γαρ εν τοτε μιν ην και ειδος και ονομα εξ αμφοτερων κοινον του τε αρριμου και θηλεος." (Symposium 189d, e).

181. Cf. for e.g., Rabbi Yirmeyah ben ('E) Leazar's comment "When the Holy One --- blessed be He --- created Adam, He created him bi-sexual (אָדָם בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית), for it is said: Male and -female created He them and called their name Adam". (Midrash Rabbah Genesis 81) also Midrash Rabbah Leviticus 14:1, T.Y. Berakhoth IX 7, T.B. Berakhoth 61a; T.B. 'Erubin 18a. Other examples can be found in L. Ginzberg's The Legends of the Jews, Vol. 1, Philadelphia, 1947, pp.52-55.

182. Cf. Midrash Rabbah Genesis 8:1.

Fragments and the New Testament. Nevertheless there seems to be, in all periods, a veiled awareness of the original meaning of the Genesis narrative, and one would have difficulty in denying that in various Jewish-Christian circles of the time it was held that man is properly bisexual, and that there will be a return to a hermaphrodite type of existence at the 'eschaton', an idea expressed as late as 2 Clem 12:2, as well as in section 23 of the (Gnostic) Gospel of Thomas. Paul Winter observes that in Pseudo-Clement's Homily III, liv 2 the quotation occurs with the pronoun in the singular; Ἄρσεν και θηλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτον . This, according to Winter, seems to provide conclusive proof that even before the time of Rabbi Yirmeyah and Rabbi Shemuel the concept of Man's originally bi-sexual character was fairly current among Jews, and that the words from Genesis were used to sanction that view.¹⁸³

There is little doubt that this mythical concept played an important part in the development of the monogamic ideal in Jewish and Christian circles, where one man and one woman were (within the limits of a temporal existence) permanently united, and represented an approximation to the supposed quasi^hmetaphysical model of the primordial Adam. Only one woman was individuated from archetypal man, and this was taken to exclude

183. P. Winter, "Genesis 1:27 and Jesus' Saying on Divorce", ZAW 69-70 (1957-58) p. 260.

divorce, polygamy, and prostitution.¹⁸⁴ This seems also to have motivated the use of the 'one flesh' idea in reference to extra-marital intercourse in I Cor. 6:16, and in the other New Testament passages which make specific reference to the 'henosis' concept of Genesis 2:24.

The Genesis passages (1:27, 2:24) which underlie both the Qumran text and the divorce logia in Mark and Matthew underwent varying interpretations by pre-rabbinical, sectarian, philosophic, and rabbinical exponents who were eager to find confirmation for their convictions on the authority of Scripture. Therefore the meaning attributed to the original mythical concept of primordial man in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 was often remote from its original meaning. This becomes all too clear when one attempts to find some continuity in the history of the interpretation of these passages in Genesis. Three different lines of interpretation can be discerned. For Philo the Genesis passages explain an intellectual process, where the general character of the species "♂_T ♀_T", comprising both male and female members, was forecast in Adam even though males and females themselves had not yet been individually formed. 'Adam' was the prototype created before the actual specimen. Philo also gave the passage a practical

184. Mishnah Yebhamoth IV 11, Kethuboth X 1-6, Qidushin II 7).

application, interpreting it as clarifying the relationship of a man to his wife, emphasizing the authority of the husband and the subservience or obedience of the wife.¹⁸⁵ In rabbinic literature the interpretation turns on the metaphysical, interpreting the passages on the idea that originally God conceived Man as an androgynous creature, from which males and females had sprung only by a process of separation; the completeness intended by God could now be restored only by the union of (one) man and (one) woman. Rabbi Eleazer ben Pedah is representative of this view when he says:

אדם בלי אשה אינו אדם
 Any man who has no wife is not (yet) a human being.¹⁸⁶

What is meant, of course, is that man within himself is only 'part' of the divine creature, and that man and woman needed each other to regain the 'completeness' of the divine image originally expressed in the primordial Adam. In its practical application the passages were often used for 'halakhic' purposes, with Genesis 2:24, for example, understood primarily as a means of specifying what marital relationships are prohibited.¹⁸⁷

However, the thread of continuity that interests us here is the ethical interpretation which is familiar to

185. "Questiones et Solutiones in Genesin" 1, 29. Loeb Classical Library, London, 1919.

186. Cf. T.B. Yebhamoth 63 a.b.

187. Cf. B.T. Sanhedrin 58a PT Quid 1.1.

both Qumran and the New Testament. In both these sects the passage from Gen. 1:27 was involved to deduce the permanence of marriage relations, an interpretation remote from the original meaning of the text. It is in these sects rather than in Orthodox Judaism that a sense of moral consciousness and an awareness of social responsibility persists and subtly changes the meaning of the ancient myth. This ethical interpretation with a social motive, is unique with the Qumranites and the early Church, which suggests either dependence upon a common tradition, which emphasized this ethical interpretation, or, more likely, the adoption of this tradition by the early Church, who received it from a disciple (John the Baptist) or disciples of the Sectarian Community. And barring the possibility that Jesus himself was the Teacher of Righteousness,¹⁸⁸ it must be acknowledged he embraced this ethical interpretation of Scripture thus making his 'Gospel' an instrument of social change.

Matthew 19:1-9

However, in the Matthean logion the saying loses its radical character, as Matthew not only permits separation without remarriage, but in instances where the wife had committed adultery he permitted divorce and remarriage (5:32; 19:9). However, Matthew has made an excellent formal correction in introducing *κατα πασων αιτιων* in 19:3. That is, he reckoned the question

188. Some Scholars have attempted to identify Jesus with the Teacher of Righteousness of the Qumran Community, among them is J.L. Teicher, op. cit. p.38.

about the conditions of divorce to be necessary, and therefore his addition of *κατα παν αἰτιαν* gave the argument a logical sequence, and enabled him by a transposition to advance the Scripture quotation as a counter-argument against the Pharisees (19:7). However, in attempting to correct Mark's poorly constructed form he deprived the discussion of its radical character --- that of having Jesus completely and unequivocally reject divorce. For while, in Mark, Jesus radically rejects divorce, which is entirely in keeping with the teaching of the original logion preserved in v. 11f, in Matthew the debate turns on the issue between Hillel, who allowed divorce "*κατα παν αἰτιαν* ", and Shammai who allowed divorce for "*πορνεια* " only. (19:9). ("*Πορνεια* " being understood by Matthew possibly as an interpretation for 'some unclean thing' in Deut. 24:1.) Therefore, what Matthew has done, is to take the teaching from Mark, correct its form, and at the same time make the teaching relevant to the Jewish Christians, possibly at Antioch. In making these changes he brought the teaching into line with the conservative view of Shammai allowing divorce and remarriage in cases of adultery only.

Matthew in making the addition of "*μη ἐπι πορνεια* " (19:9) and "*παρεκτος λογου πορνειας* " (5:32) in his accounts of the logion was aware of the fact that the radical character of the teaching in Mark and Luke (Q) was not a law in the Christian Community, as was probably

the case in Qumran, and that the early Church did not make this radical viewpoint a cardinal point of observance,¹⁸⁹ as the Pauline Church had already allowed separation (1 Cor. 7:11f). The members of Matthew's Church, while adopting the new faith, still considered themselves in the mainstream of Judaism, where the conventional customs of Jewish culture were still valid. However, the Mosaic permission to divorce is reduced in Matthew's Church to one basic reason "παρεκτος λογου πορνειας". This in itself was a gigantic step in tightening up the lax morals of 1st-century Judeo-Hellenistic culture, where divorce, polygamy, and concubinage were commonplace.

The Authenticity of the Divorce Logia

On the basis of the evidence presented it appears that the logion in Luke is not original with Jesus, but is paralleled in earlier sectarian writings. Mark and Matthew in their own way, and for different situations, give the original 'logion' a setting, adding the necessary modifications to meet their particular needs. However, while Mark retains the radical character of the saying, Matthew relinquishes it in favour of a formal

189. H. Montefiore points out that in this regard Jesus' teaching was not 'halakah', a rule governing conduct, but 'haggadah', edifying exaggeration, appealing to the heart by way of imagination, and in this sense the N.T. evidence cannot support a totally rigorist view. Cf "Jesus on Divorce and Remarriage", from The Report of the Commission of the Christian Doctrine of Marriage, SPCK, 1971 pp. 90-95.

correction of the logion, and the necessity to make the teaching relevant to his circle. The logion in all three Synoptics fails to meet the criteria of authenticity selected for our analysis. The first and most important criterion, that of dissimilarity is not upheld in either of the versions of the 'logion', as the original teaching (Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11f, Matthew 5:32, 19:9) can be traced to an earlier stratum of law going back to and beyond the Qumran community. And what is more, the setting given to the saying in Mark and Matthew, and the biblical texts used, are also drawn from a much older tradition that was used in heterodox circles, especially Qumran, as an argument against polygamy and divorce.

The point at issue is the basis on which the Church is justified in maintaining a condemnation of divorce on the authority of the scriptural texts examined here. For while the texts are attributed to Jesus by the authors of the Synoptic gospels, it becomes clear that their authenticity is not so easily established. Furthermore, the radical attitude toward marriage and divorce expressed in the logia is not in keeping with the practice of the early Church, which by all accounts allowed separation and divorce among its followers (1 Cor. 7:11f; Mtt. 5:32, 19:9). However, the significant fact concerning the 'logia' in the Synoptics is that the authors, while interpreting the teaching for their own purposes, attribute its origin to Jesus which is a strong

indication that Jesus in some stage of his ministry, possibly at the beginning during the crisis of the Baptist, made reference to, and used in some way, this ancient argument against divorce. However, the exact purpose for which he used it, and the meaning he gave it has been lost by the filtering of the 'saying' through the prism of the early Church, which changed the content of the 'saying' to meet its particular needs. Therefore, the Church, or any branch of it, is not justified in developing a theology of marriage or a doctrine of indissolubility in terms of the divorce 'Logia'. The Christian concept of marriage cannot, and must not, be confined to a rigid interpretation of the emphatic attitude expressed in the divorce logia, but instead must be sought in the wider terms of Gospel. Thus while the 'gospel' speaks to men in terms of their own imperfect human structures, of which marriage is one, it calls them to a realization of the essential meaning of these structures. Marriage theology is doomed to failure if it is assumed that the New Testament has a teaching on marriage that emphasizes the form and conditions of the contract rather than the essential meaning of the relationship. For as Schillebeeckx points out:

"(Jesus) did not tell us where the element that constituted marriage was situated, what in fact made a marriage a marriage, what made it the reality which he called absolutely indissoluble. This is a problem of anthropology, since it is concerned with a human reality, the essence of which we must try to clarify in its historical context."¹⁹⁰

190. E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery, New York, 1965, p. 207 (Vol. 2).

It is this 'essence' rather than the 'form' with which the New Testament is concerned, and it is in the realm of 'meaning' that the Gospel speaks authoritatively on this human institution whose 'form' is dependent upon those cultural practices which are subject to the changing circumstances of place and time.

Equally important in a sound theology of marriage is that our understanding of marriage must be related to the central proclamation of the New Testament and not to some peripheral point that emphasizes, more than anything else, a static structure of marriage conditioned by a particular cultural attitude and outlook. Christians must take seriously into account historical change of all phenomena including marriage. The biblical experience of God has constituted the understanding of our world as something historical and abiding in history, which does not consist in timeless cosmic structures, but has its origins in the will of God. Marriage, like all historical structures, undergoes change, as can be seen in the radical changes which took place in the institution within the biblical context --- a change from polygamy to monogamy. Under the influence of Jesus' teaching the marital relationship became internalized, and for the first time was understood as a mutual relationship. However, this advance had not truly come into its own, until the marriage relationship emancipated itself from the realm of economics, establishing as its essential motive love for each other.

The problem of the 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages which dictates, one way or the other, the basis of a doctrine of marriage, is the result of a continuing error in developing a Christian theology of marriage, that of using a particular peripheral concern (the question of indissolubility) as its point of orientation. The end result is usually the major disaster of attributing some all-embracing principle for an ethics of marriage. If we are to accept the fact that marriage, like all other human institutions, is subject to the changing circumstances of time, then we must treat the biblical understanding of marriage in the first instance as conditional to a particular period and place. If we no longer consider the Bible as a text book on science, why should we continue to consider it a marriage manual? The major problem of any theology, but particularly marriage theology, is how to interpret the biblical experience and translate it into a meaningful message for modern living.

It would be rash to say that the teaching of Jesus found in the writings of the New Testament had nothing to say about the institution of marriage, either for his own time or ours. It had. Jesus cut through all the casuistry of his day and proclaimed that the attitude of the heart was as important as the act of the hand, because all ethics are in essence personal in character. Jesus, too, in the context of his own time, did not come to abolish law but to give to it its true meaning as

the expression of the divine will (cf. Mt. 5:17-20). The 'essential element' in his teaching is in fact the emphasis of the will of God over against legalism in whatever form. Bultmann defines the meaning of his teaching as follows:

"God does not lay claim to man only so far as conduct can be determined by formulated laws (the only way open to legalism) leaving man's own will free from that point on. What God forbids is not simply the overt acts of murder, adultery, and perjury, with which law can deal, but their antecedents: anger and name-calling, evil desires and insincerity (Mt. 5:21f., 27f., 33-37). What counts before God is not simply the substantial, verifiable deed that is done, but how a man is disposed, what his intent is."¹⁹¹

The emphasis that God demands the whole will of man and knows no abatement of His command is the unique feature in the teaching of Jesus. And it is this element which emancipates it from legalism in any age, giving it a relevancy for all time. What Christ does is to call man in his existential condition, whether first century or twentieth century, to a realization that perfect freedom comes only when his will is in total obedience to the Will of God. In this sense adultery has just as much to do with a man's disposition and intent as the outward act.

However, in moving out from the narrower treatment of marriage on the basis of specific texts, to that of the broader basis of 'gospel', we must *keep* in mind certain developments and tendencies within the early Church which

191. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, London, 1952, p. 13.

bear scrutiny. The singling out of sex as a special sin; the legalizing of sexual morality; stress on the hierarchical relationship between the sexes, and the emphasis on the static concept of the order of creation as opposed to the more dynamic order of redemption, are some of the developments that we will be concerned with in the next chapters. These developments, however, are the results of influences such as eschatology, social custom, and ascetic influences. However, the early Church caught in the crucible of so many conflicting tendencies and pressures sought within the context of its social milieu to make the 'gospel' speak to the human situation. In this sense the 'gospel' became an instrument of change, helping to cleanse the imperfect human structure of its imperfections, inequalities, and limitations, elevating it to a higher level of human perfection.

Conclusion.

The conclusion to be drawn from our analysis is that the teaching in the Synoptic 'divorce logia' does not represent a contradiction in the teaching of Jesus, but instead is the result of a radical sectarian teaching having to be tempered by the early Church in order to make it pragmatically applicable to a social situation that was in line with the religious and social customs of traditional Judaism. Neither the radical attitude toward divorce nor the rejection of it can be attributed to Christ. However, one must acknowledge the fact that

at some point, and for reasons unknown to us, Jesus made reference to this ancient argument in reference to the problem of divorce. The early Church itself not being clear as to the exact teaching of Jesus on the matter, interpreted the 'sayings' for themselves, quickly burying the actual teaching of Jesus underneath its own interpretative accretions. Therefore, because of the uncertain connection of Jesus with this teaching, and the use He made of it, it becomes necessary to seek an understanding of marriage on a different basis. The basis suggested here is that of the 'gospel', for it is in the proclamation of the Gospel by both Jesus and the early Church that we find the bonds of custom and religious, social, and moral law, broken, and while the gospel may use the vehicle of custom and law to communicate its message, it breaks through the plane of law into that of reality, --- revealing the reality of a human relationship in which God lays direct claim to man's response. The uniqueness of Christ's teaching is not so much the defence and preservation of human laws, whether social or religious, but that God lays claim to man's whole will, thus freeing him for meaningful human relationships.

CHAPTER IV

PAULINE TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we have seen how the Synoptic teaching on marriage and the family is a mosaic of various logia drawn from different sources, and woven into a 'Jesus tradition' by the individual authors, redactors, or editors of the Gospels in an effort to meet the cultural, ethical and religious needs of the different branches of the earliest Christian community.

The most notable feature of the Synoptic teaching on marriage, however, is not so much its 'interdependence' which can be explained, in part, by the 'documents theory', but its continuity in using the same body of material consistently in its teaching on marriage and family relationships. While the origin of these 'sayings' on marriage and the family, can, for the most part, be traced to various sources in heterodox and apocalyptic Judaism, they are said to be an authentic part of the 'Jesus tradition' because at some point these 'sayings' are said to have passed through the prism of Jesus' ministry thus making them the foundation of Christian ethical teaching.

This continuity in the use of a common 'Jesus tradition' underlying the teaching of the earliest Christian community on marriage and the family is not confined to the Synoptics, but can also be found in the

Pauline Epistles, which supports C.H. Dodd's theory that "a tradition coeval with the Church itself" underlies both the Gospels and Paul.¹ Dodd is also convinced that a 'substructure of New Testament ethics' as well as theology underlies the Pauline Epistles to which Paul was indebted and whose origin points to Christ Himself.² von Campenhausen,³ Piper,⁴ Dungan,⁵ and Balch,⁶ have already demonstrated that the teaching of Paul on marriage and the family has many points of contact with the Synoptic tradition.⁷

Background of Pauline Thought

F.J. Foakes-Jackson, almost a half-century ago, warned us that "the study of the world in which Paul lived is necessary to understand him. Without acquaintance with the thought of the age much of his writing is unintelligible."⁸ This was by no means a call for scholars to engage in a neglected area of

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1. C.H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development, London, 1936, p. 56
 2. C.H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures, London, 1952, pp. 108ff.
 3. H.F. von Campenhausen, 'Die Askese im Urchristentum', Tradition und Leben, Krafte der Kirchengeschichte, Tübingen, 1960, pp. 144-6.
 4. O. Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex, London, 1942, pp. 15ff.
 5. D.L. Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, Oxford, 1971, p. 132f.
 6. D.L. Balch, "Backgrounds of I Cor. VII: Sayings of the Lord in Q; Moses as an Ascetic *θελος αυτου* in II Cor. III," NTSt, Vol. 18, No. 3, April, 1972 p. 2357. 351-64
 7. J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, Krit. -exeg. Komm u. d. N.T. 7, Göttingen, 1910.
 8. The Life of St Paul, New York, 1926, p. 17.

biblical research, for the pendulum had already swung several times from Hellenism to Judaism in an effort to establish the background and sources of Paul's thought. The question as to whether Paul's thought patterns were Jewish or Hellenistic was, and still is, a major problem for biblical exegetes. The history of exegesis show that scholars have taken widely varying views as to the source and background of Pauline thought. Those following F.C. Baur's⁹ reconstruction of Paul as the "Hellenizer of Christianity" interpreted Pauline thought from the standpoint of a modified Hellenistic Judaism, seeing Pauline terminology such as "flesh and spirit" in Rom. 6-8 as an ethical dualism, and "dying" and "rising" as a spiritual transformation - a concept of man which finds its roots in an anthropological dualism. However, others¹⁰ were quite certain that Pauline thought was Jewish to the core, citing as proof that Paul viewed man in an Old Testament Jewish framework and not in the Platonic dualism of the Hellenistic world (1 Thess. 4,

9. Symbolik und Mythologie, Tübingen, 1832, Cf. also R. Reitzenstein, Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, Leipzig, 1927.

10. A. Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, London, 1912, pp. 179-236; H.A.A. Kennedy, St Paul and the Mystery Religions, London, 1913; J.G. Machen, The Origin of Paul's Religion, Grand Rapids, 1947, pp. 225-90; Cf also R.E. Brown, "The Semitic Origin of the Pauline 'Mysterion'," Biblica 39 (1958), pp. 426-48, 40 (1959) pp. 70-78; CathBibQ 20 (1958), p. 417f.

I Cor. 15). Others¹¹ seeing the dilemma of those who stuck rigidly to one side concluded that Paul held both Jewish and Greek views simultaneously, 'side by side', without any thought of their essential inconsistency.¹²

Twentieth century studies of Pauline thought have built on the exegetical efforts of earlier scholars, such as Baur and Weiss, and may be considered a further development of the above three positions. Recent studies, however, have moved away from a strictly Hellenistic background, viewing Paul's thought as a development arising out of the failure of the apocalyptic hope which caused him to shift his anthropological view toward that of Greek dualism. In this sense Paul is pictured somewhere between Jewish apocalyptic and fully developed Gnosticism, a man who started out with a Jewish world view, but exchanged this in the process of his ministry for a more pragmatic Hellenistic view of man. However, the question arises as to whether Pauline thought is an amalgam, gathered here and there, or the expansion and application of a central tradition rooted in the mind of Jesus Christ and the earliest Church?

11. O. Pfleiderer, Paulinism, London, 1891, p. 264; Cf. also E.E. Ellis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters, Grand Rapids, 1961, Note 81, p. 26.

12. E.E. Ellis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters, Grand Rapids, 1961, p. 26.

The work of such scholars as W.D. Davies has shown the close relationship between Pauline thought and Palestinian rabbinism and apocalypticism, and has demonstrated that Rabbinic Judaism forms the background of many Pauline concepts formerly labelled Hellenistic.¹³ The Dead Sea Scrolls with their ethical dualism have also demonstrated the close relationship of Pauline thought with heterodox Judaism.¹⁴

The more compelling proof of a continuing Jewish tradition in Pauline thought comes from the recent studies of specific Pauline concepts¹⁵ which have confirmed that Pauline anthropology is in line with the Old Testament view of man and not the Platonic dualism of the Hellenistic world. Paul's 'corporate body' terminology is seen as a reflection of Jewish corporate solidarity rather than Stoic dualism. His thought on man can be more logically related to rabbinic speculation on the body of Adam, especially in his use of the "one flesh" idea of Gen. 2:24. Therefore in line

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13. W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1955, pp 1-8. Cf. also, D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1956, pp. 442ff.
14. K. Stendahl, ed., The Scrolls and the New Testament, New York, 1957, pp. 94-103, 157-82; F.F. Bruce, Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts, Grand Rapids, 1959, pp. 66-77; S.E. Johnson, "Paul and the Manual of Discipline," HTR 48 (1955) pp. 157-65.
15. W.R. Nelson, "Pauline Anthropology," Interp 14, 1960, p. 15 R. Bultmann, New Testament Theology I, London, 1952, p. 209ff; J.A.T. Robinson, The Body, London, 1952, R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, 1971.

with his Jewish heritage Paul stresses the totality of man over against a dichotomy or trichotomy of Hellenistic thought. He thinks of man as a unity, so that physical and mental and spiritual life are regarded as different manifestations of the same self, or ego.¹⁶ This affinity of Pauline thought to a Jewish background is consistent with the findings of those scholars who see in Paul a close relationship with the Synoptic tradition.¹⁷ Therefore what we seem to have in Paul is essentially an expansion and application of a central tradition rooted in the mind of Jesus and the earliest Church.

The Pauline Milieu

While the source of Paul's thought may well have been rabbinic apocalyptic Judaism one cannot deny that Paul was influenced by the various philosophical, religious and political forces that were operating in the Hellenistic milieu where he conducted his ministry. Paul, just as much as twentieth century man, lived in a time of revolutionary and rapid change. The simpler patterns of an old world order were overthrown by the changes brought about by the great Roman Empire. Political, religious and social changes came with earth-shaking suddenness, setting men adrift in search of new

16. R. Nelson, "Pauline Anthropology", Interp 14 (1960) p. 15.

17. See notes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 in this Chapter.

life styles to fit the rapidly changing society. Kee and Young observe:

"The old worship of local gods had been disrupted by attempts to make all men worship Universal deities, or at least to give new and unfamiliar names to the old ones. Politically, a man's allegiance to his city or to his petty Prince was irreparably shaken; religiously, the world revealed by his widening horizons was too vast to be controlled by local gods."¹⁸

Into the vacuum created by the revolutionary changes of first century Roman domination came first of all the decline of public and private morality. Men were left with no sense of religious certainty or moral direction. The strict moral philosophy that the Romans had borrowed from the Greeks had withered away and men searched for a religion that would deliver them from the evils of this world and would provide a promise of new life in the next.

Religious and moral revival received impetus from the current philosophies of the time. Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Platonism were among the most influential. Eclectic philosophers such as Seneca and Philo were able to combine ideas from various philosophies and use them for moral teaching. In Philo's case he was able to combine Stoic and Platonic philosophy in interpreting the Old Testament, thus joining religion and philosophy (together) in a meaningful way.

18. H.C. Kee & F.W. Young, The Living World of the New Testament, London, 1960, p. 14.

Philosophy was not the only basis for religious revival, the growth of cults, mystery religions, magic, astrology and gnosticism, all indicate the strong desire for religious identity in this time of change and revolution. No society was exempted from the influences brought about by these movements, and all registered in some way the influences of a changing world order. Judaism, too, felt the strain of such catastrophic changes, and within its own structure bifurcation occurred. Sectarian groups arose that expressed certain differences in the interpretation of the faith. The spectrum of belief and behaviour was now expanded by the sects to include such beliefs as resurrection and eschatology on the part of the Pharisees, and asceticism on the part of the Essenes. Thus a man's faith even within Judaism could have different ethical and religious orientations.

This was the world of Paul --- a world of transition and change. It was into this environment that Christianity was born and developed. It would be naive to state that Paul or the earliest Apostles were impervious to the influences exerted by these movements. A more logical argument is that early Christianity, Paul in particular, was able to borrow the symbols and terms of these movements to communicate the faith, and thus launch Christianity unto the world scene.

Pauline Anthropology and I Cor. 7

If we are to accept the results of much recent New Testament scholarship and deny completely any Greek influences in favour of a Hebrew understanding of man in Pauline theology, we shall be faced with a difficult problem in dealing with Paul's teaching on marriage in I Cor. 7. R. Bultmann recognizes this difficulty when he states:

"though Paul shows himself to be influenced in II Cor. 5:1ff and 12:2-4 by the Hellenistic-dualistic depreciation of the body conceived as physical corporeality, this influence goes still deeper in his treatment of the marriage question (I Cor. 7:1-7). For here, in keeping with the ascetic tendencies of dualism, he evaluates marriage as a thing of less value than "not touching a woman" (v.1); indeed, he regards it as an unavoidable evil ("on account of fornication," v.2, tr.)."¹⁹

Bultmann, however, is quick to remind us that it would be "an error in method" to unfold the Pauline anthropology from this base. For while there appear to be definite signs of Hellenistic dualism in this passage, the evidence is quite convincing that Paul's anthropology is grounded in rabbinic Judaism. Some scholars have attempted to account for this dualism in Pauline anthropology in I Cor. 7 by suggesting that Paul is here confronting a group of Corinthian gnostics,²⁰ and in

19. Theology of the New Testament, I, London, 1952, p.202

20. Cf. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, 1971, p. 255f; U. Wilckens, Weisheit und Torheit. Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu I. Kor. I und 2, Tübingen, 1959. Against a gnostic influence in Corinth see N.A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth According to I Corinthians 1:10-4:21," in Christian History and Interpretation, Studies Presented to John Knox, ed. W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule and R.R. Niebuhr, Cambridge, 1967, p. 333; J.C. Hurd Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, New York, 1965; R. Scroggs, "Paul: σοφός and πνευματικός" NTSt XIV (1967-68) pp. 33-55.

communicating with them he repeats some of their slogans, for example, "it is well for a man not to touch a woman" (I Cor. 7:1), in order to refute them. What is more, Paul takes up as a tool against the gnostics the use of their own technical terminology, for example, the gnostic use of 'soma', in an effort to combat the gnostic idea that the body being essentially evil is not important.

W.G. Kümmel²¹ attributes the difficulty in understanding Paul's anthropology to Paul's "careless" use of current anthropological terms. S. Laeuchli goes a step further and suggests that the difficulty may be due to the fact that Paul himself is not interested in anthropology, therefore "the Pauline anthropology is not fully solved, because it is not fully solved in Paul. And perhaps it is not solved in Paul simply because Paul did not intend to solve it."²² This is why Paul could take over some Hellenistic views of man into his rabbinic background because he was not interested in a systematic view of man but in the salvation of whatever man there is.²³

Paul may have taken over Hellenistic terminology to combat the anti-somatic views of the Gnostic enthusiasts at Corinth, or simply to communicate his message of salvation for whatever man there is, whether he be a 'corporate whole' or a 'dualistic' entity. However,

21. W.G. Kümmel, Man in the New Testament, London, 1963, p. 38f.

22. S. Laeuchli, "Monism and Dualism in the Pauline Anthropology", BibRes. Vol. 3, 1958, p. 16.

23. S. Laeuchli, *ibid*, p. 27.

this does not necessarily mean that Paul had taken over the original meaning of the terminology which he used.²⁴ It is difficult to see how he could possibly communicate a message of any kind to a group of people by using a terminology familiar to them but attributing different meanings to the terms.

Now while Paul uses anthropological terms promiscuously²⁵ in his teaching (1 Cor. 7), with shades of two concepts of man coming through, it becomes exceedingly difficult to hold him to one definite anthropology. It can quite plausibly be argued that Paul, working in a totally Hellenistic milieu, has come to appreciate the idea of man as a plurality in the Hellenistic concept of man, and that in some of his statements on man he takes cognizance of this fact, by not always viewing man as a unity. This might well have been necessary in order to communicate with his hearers.

Turning to our particular concern, 1 Cor. 7, we can approach it in two ways. First we may suppose that Paul is here engaged in polemics against the Gnostics and therefore repeats their language in order to refute their antisomatic slogans. The dualistic tendencies expressed

24. W.G. Kümmel, *ibid*, p. 47f.

25. W.G. Kümmel, *ibid*, p. 43.

are then understood not as intentional, but are attributed to Paul's careless use of the adopted terminology.²⁶ Secondly, Paul's attitude could be taken as the result of a genuine Hellenistic-dualistic influence which on occasion comes to the surface in Paul's teaching.²⁷ On the other hand it may well be that Paul is coming to grips with the problem of pluralism in his hearers' concept of man -- He is aware of certain layers, stages, conflicts within man's self. There is will, reason, there is 'sarx', there is 'soma', there are emotions and desires. I Cor. 7 may well be Paul's attempt to formulate the plurality of the body.²⁸

However, this plurality of which Paul speaks can only be understood in the light of a basic monism of man. As Laeuchli describes it:

"Pluralism exists only 'sub specie unitatis'; under the assumption that man is basically one, even if he struggles with different parts, and if the different parts struggle with one another. The analogy between the organism and the Church in I Cor. 12 is significant in this respect. If the organism is originally a unity, it is not a unity when it comes to the various struggles within it, the protest against the performance of the will, the "no" of the members against the mind. The organism is one in relation to the created man: he is 'sarx', he is fallen, he is a total sinner, not only a bodily one. And one he is when it comes to the resurrection, which is not a resurrection of mind

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26. Cf. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, 1971, p. 255f. See also note 20, page 7.
27. Cf. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament I, London, 1952, p. 202-209.
28. S. Laeuchli, op. cit. BibRes. Vol. 3, 1958, p. 23.

or 'nous' but one of 'soma', of the total self. But when it comes to the struggle between these two, Paul becomes aware that different sides are at work. He never worked them out systematically (therefore he can use 'soma' for 'sarx'), and he was probably never conscious of a terminological change in his writing. He simply reflects his own struggle." 29

Therefore the pluralism which Paul attempts to formulate in I Cor. is different in a number of ways from the basic dualistic or triadic concept of Man in Hellenistic thought. The pluralism which Paul seeks is merely to understand the struggle of the different parts within the one unity. We cannot ignore the majority of Paul's statements on man which speak of this basic unity in favour of a Hellenistic anthropology. Further, Paul's pluralism has nothing to do with the gnostic concept of man with its series of different stages, beginning with the higher 'nous' and ending with the 'soma-sema'. Paul attributes no hierarchial value to his anthropological terminology. He is concerned with the 'total self' which includes both 'nous' and 'soma'. Therefore I Cor 7, and indeed the Corinthian epistles in general do not indicate a bland acceptance of a dualistic concept of man by Paul, but rather a genuine effort on the part of Paul to understand the dualistic concept of man as a "plurality within the one basic unity". Paul is not altogether engaged in a kind of 'careless' use of terminology, but is struggling here to show, that soma, sarx, nous, pneuma, kardia, psuche, etc., are different

29. S. Laeuchli, *ibid*, p. 26.

sides of man's total self. In this way Paul is able to present his rabbinic concept of man as an acceptable theological teaching to his Hellenistic hearers. Therefore in I Cor. 7 we move a stage further in Pauline theological formulation; Paul is not accepting dualism, but is accommodating this understanding of man as plurality to his basic concept of man as a 'total unity'.

I Cor. 7, despite the introduction of a discussion of man as a plurality can only be understood in the light of a basic monism of man. Man is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3.16; 6.19); man's body glorifies God (6.20); "Christ will be honoured in my body" (Phil. 1,20). The understanding of the 'body' as good in all its parts, a body under discipline, but a discipline according to the 'charism' of the individual, for some the unmarried state, for others the married, shows the non-dualistic and non-ascetic nature of Paul's teaching.

In our treatment of this crucial passage (I Cor. 7), we must be aware of this basic emphasis in Pauline anthropology -- the totality of man over against a dichotomy or trichotomy of Hellenistic thought. We must not seek to develop a Hellenistic anthropology on the basis of what we find in I Cor. 7, this would, as Bultmann points out, get any exegesis off to a wrong start.³⁰

30. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament I, p. 209.

Our exegesis of Paul's correspondence must be governed by three principles, first, his reliance on a 'common tradition' which he shares with the authors of the Synoptics and the earliest Church; secondly, the development of new teaching brought about by new situations for which tradition sets no precedent; thirdly, the background from which he develops this teaching - that of rabbinic/apocalyptic Judaism. Our next step is to determine what constitutes the authentic Pauline Corpus.

The Authenticity of the Pauline Epistles

As early as the beginning of last century³¹ commentators and exegetes were in disagreement as to what letters may be considered genuinely Pauline. Since that time much study has been done regarding place of origin, linguistic analysis, similarities of expression, subject matter, adversaries involved, and other factors in an effort to establish Pauline authenticity or unauthenticity. While the discussion has made considerable progress since it was first raised more than a century ago, there is still a considerable variety of opinion as to which letters are Pauline and which deutero-Pauline. The traditional canon of fourteen letters is no longer accepted in present day scholarship, as even the more

31. F.C. Baur, (1831) held that Romans, I, II Cor., and Galatians were authentic with Paul.

conservative scholars are beginning to treat the Pastorals and Ephesians as Post-Pauline writings.^{32a} In an effort to solve the problem some scholars have sought help from the computer. A.Q. Morton,³² using computer analysis, has come to the same conclusion that F.C. Baur reached at the beginning of last century, that the Pauline letters consisted of Romans, I, II Cor., and Galatians. However, H.H. Somers,³³ also making use of computer analysis, holds that the traditional Canon of fourteen letters is genuine. Such diverse results indicate either poor programming, or the fact that 'Computer Analysis' has not yet "come of age" in New Testament exegesis, whatever its value for the future.

The problem of authenticity becomes particularly important to our analysis of the Pauline teaching on marriage and the family. In addition to the various approaches made to the problem such as linguistic analysis, Christology, etc., the ethical teaching of the Pauline corpus may give us some clue not only to its authenticity but also to the development of ethical teaching in the early Church. Taking the whole Pauline corpus (14 letters) into consideration there appear to be

32a. Cf. D. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, The Pauline Epistles, 1961, also A.T. Hanson, Studies in the Pastoral Epistles, London, 1968.

32. A.Q. Morton, "The Authorship of the Pauline Corpus", in The New Testament in Historical and Contemporary Perspective, Essays in Memory of G.H.C. MacGregor, 1965; Christianity and the Computer, with J. McLeman, 1964.

33. H.H. Somers, "Statistical Methods in Literary Analysis" in The Computer and Literary Style, ed. J. Leed, 1966.

two distinct stages or developments in its ethical teaching. The first stage consists of ethical teachings of a highly eschatological nature, where men are urged to pay little or no attention to the maintenance of human institutions as these are aspects of the old world order which is about to pass away, an order to be replaced by the kingdom of God which was expected at any moment. Therefore, under this eschatological principle no effort was made to change the social institutions in which men found themselves. Instead, men were urged "to stay as you are" for the time is short. I Cor. 7 is a good example of this particular kind of ethical teaching, where Paul urges those who are single, married, widowed, enslaved, etc., to remain in the state in which they find themselves, for the 'eschaton' is imminent. However, in the same corpus of writings a second ethical development is discernible. This teaching, while adhering to the social customs and accepting them without question, & (in fact endorsing the institutions of the period such as slavery, subordination of women, patriarchal idea of marriage) sought to help the Church to adjust to the demands of everyday life in an ongoing world. It is quite clear that the 'eschatological scare' is past, and the Church has come to realize that it needs to formulate an ethical code in order to define its position in the world in a positive way for the future. This development appears to be post-Pauline representing the Church at the turn of the first century. However, the

question to be asked and answered is whether these two stages of ethical teaching are genuinely Pauline --- Did Paul change his mind one way or the other regarding the coming eschaton? Or do we have in the Pauline corpus writings that represent different periods in the early Church which show a change and development in its ethical teaching?

One cannot divide the Pauline corpus solely on the basis of this one criterion --- a change in ethical teaching. However, it is interesting to see how this ethical teaching divides when the Pauline corpus is divided on the basis of other criteria. G. Bornkamm³⁴ in his lucid study of Paul, considers Romans, I, II Cor., Galatians, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and Philemon as the unquestionably genuine Pauline letters.³⁵ Bornkamm comes to this conclusion after carefully weighing the evidence presented by biblical research. Further, Bornkamm works on the premise that the Pauline correspondence consists of real letters, written for particular situations.³⁶ For Bornkamm the letters do not contain a systematic theology or a collection of "universal timeless truths and religious experience".³⁷

34. Paul, trans. by D.M.G. Stalker, New York, 1971, p. 241ff.

35. Ibid p. XIV

36. Ibid p. XXII

37. Ibid p. XXIII

Other scholars³⁸ are quite willing to consider the Pastorals and Ephesians as non-Pauline. J. Blank³⁹ considers as authentic only Romans, I, II Cor., I, II Thes., Galatians, and Colossians. It is interesting to note that in the most conservative division of the Pauline corpus only one letter containing the 'Haustafeln' (Colossians) which is representative of the second ethical development, is considered genuinely Pauline.^{39b} We shall show a little later in this analysis that the 'Haustafel' section of Colossians is a later addition. Thus leaving aside the Colossians problem for the moment, we have a division something like this:

Genuinely Pauline:

Romans
I, II Corinthians
Galatians
Philippians
I Thessalonians
Philemon

Deutero-Pauline:

Ephesians
I, II Timothy⁴⁰
Titus
Debatable:
Colossians
II Thessalonians

*Acts is considered secondary.⁴¹

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38. C.L. Mitton, The Epistle to the Ephesians: its authorship, origin, and purpose, London, 1951.
39. ^{us} Pauline und Jesus, Eine theologische Grundlegung, Munich, 1968.
- 39b. However, we shall see later that the 'Haustafel' in Romans 13:1-7 is quite possibly an interpolation. Cf. J. Kallas, "Romans 13.1-7: An Interpolation" NTSt XI (1965) pp. 365-74.
40. For a full discussion of the question of the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles cf. H. Conzelmann, M. Dibelius, Die Pastoralbriefe, Tübingen, 1966, 4th ed., p.1, C. Spicq, Les Épîtres Pastorales, 4th ed, Vols 1, 2, Paris, 1969; J.N.D. Kelly, The Pastoral Epistles, London, 1963; P.N. Harrison, "The Authorship of the Pastorals", Expost, 67, (1955), pp. 77-81; Id.; "The Pastoral Epistles and Duncan's Ephesian Ministry," NTSt 2 (1955-56), pp.250-61; C.K. Barrett, The Pastoral Epistles, Oxford, 1963; A.T. Hanson, The Pastoral Epistles, Cambridge, 1966; K. Grayston - G. Herdan, "The Authorship of the Pastorals in the light of Statistical Linguistics," NTSt 6, (1959-60) pp.1-15.
41. Cf. G. Bornkamm, Paul, Trans. by D.M. Stalker, New York, 1971.

The division that we have arrived at here is on the basis of criteria other than that of the ethical teaching in the Corpus, yet we find that the two stages or ethical developments are divided along the same lines, showing genuine Pauline writings representing one ethical viewpoint and the deutero-Pauline writings representing another. However, the question still remains as to whether Colossians is genuinely Pauline, and as it is considered Pauline by most scholars we ought to have a closer look.

W. Munro in an article in New Testament Studies⁴² concurs with the majority of scholars, and especially with C.L. Mitton's theory that Colossians is Pauline and that Ephesians is dependent on Colossians. However, he contends that Col. 3:18-4:1 is dependent ^{on} and therefore subsequent to Ephesians 5:21-6:9, both being a later literary stratum added to the original Epistles. Col. 3:18-4:1 is the section concerned with the 'Haustafeln' -- domestic or local "tables of law" which ^{are} representative of the second ethical development in the Pauline Corpus. Munro reviews the history of 'Haustafeln' research stating the findings of M. Dibelius and K. Weidinger, which holds that the 'Haustafeln' were current in Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism, and that Col. 3:18-4:1 represents its most primitive form in Christian circles,

42. "Col. III. 18-IV.1 And Eph. V.21-VI.9: Evidences of a Late Literary Stratum?", NTSt, Vol. 18, No. 4, July, 1972, pp. 434-447.

with Ephesians 5:21-6:9 representing its more Christianized version. However, "form-critical analysis" gave little support to this literary dependence theory, therefore P. Carrington and E.G. Selwyn attempted to solve the problem by suggesting that an oral primitive catechism was behind both Colossians and Ephesians. C.L. Mitton rejected this idea of an oral catech^{er}ical code by pointing out that Ephesians is dependent on Colossians.⁴³

Munro, upon analysing the 'Haustafel' passages in Colossians and Ephesians, comes to the conclusion that both Ephesians 5:21-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1 are of a later literary stratum, with Col. 3:18-4:1 being dependent^{on} and therefore subsequent to Eph. 5:21-6:9. The reasons he gives for the dependence of Col. 3:18-4:1 on Eph. 5:21-6:9 are as follows: (1) While both versions make contact with Romans 2:11, Ephesians is closer to it in that it contains "παρ' αὐτῷ" which corresponds with παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, while Colossians omits it. This is not a result of expansion on the part of Ephesians but is omitted in the process of abbreviation on the part of Colossians. (2) Colossians' κομίζεται as compared to Ephesians' ἀγαθὸν . . . κομίζεται . . . εἴτε . . . εἴτε is further evidence of contraction on the part of Colossians. (3) Evidence shows that Ephesians is dependent on Philippians 2:12 and that Colossians instead of depending on this primary source is dependent on Ephesians.

43. The Epistle to the Ephesians, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951, pp. 192-4.

In showing that Ephesians 5:32-6:9 is a later literary stratum than the rest of the Epistle, Munro demonstrates that where Ephesians 5:21-6:9 can be shown to be dependent on the rest of the (Ephesian) Epistle, the wording in the main body of Ephesians is closer to an earlier source, e.g. Gal. 1:10, 2:20, and seems therefore to be prior. His conclusion is "that the signs of the dependence of Ephesians 5:21-6:9 on the rest of the Epistle and the priority of the latter do in fact distinguish this passage from its literary context."⁴⁴

Turning to Colossians and basing his findings on verbal parallels Munro comes to the following conclusions: (1) that Col. 3:18-4:1 show signs of dependence on Ephesians 5:21-6:9, which seems, therefore, to be prior. (2) Col. 3:18-4:1 appears to be dependent on the rest of Ephesians as well as Colossians. Therefore if his conclusions are correct the order of writing was as follows, Colossians, Ephesians, Ephesians 5:21-6:9, Col. 3:18-4:1.⁴⁵ Munro further substantiates his findings by drawing attention to the following: confirmation that Col. 3:18-4:1 is later than both Ephesians and Ephesians 5:21-6:9 is to be found in Col. 3:20 which has the appearance of a conflation combining Ephesians 5:10 with 6:1. Col. 3:18-4:1 can also be seen to be an interpolation because it interrupts the

44. W. Munro, NTSt Vol. 18, No. 4, July 1972 p. 439.

45. Ibid p. 440f.

flow of ideas, style and rhythm of the passage. Continuity of the passage could only be restored if Col. 4:2f were joined to Col. 3:16f, leaving out the intervening material. The reason why the passage was included at this particular juncture in Colossians is that Colossians 3:17b is very close in appearance to Ephesians 5:20, and assuming that ^{the author} he had Ephesians before him 5:21 ὑποτασσομενοι ἀλλήλας etc. ... attached to Ephesians 5:20, εὐχαριστοῦντες... τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ closely resembles εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι' αὐτοῦ in Colossians 3:17b.⁴⁶

His conclusion is that Colossians 3:18-4:1 and Ephesians 5:21-6:9 are to be regarded as roughly contemporary additions to the text, introduced in the later stages of the development of the Pauline corpus. Therefore while Colossians may be an early Epistle of Paul, the passage which concerns us is an interpolation that comes from a later literary stratum of the early Church. This lengthy analysis by Munro seems to confirm our earlier thesis that the Pauline corpus contains two different ethical developments, representing different stages and outlooks in the teaching of the early Church. Even if we admit Colossians to be authentic, Munro's findings suggest that the 'Haustafel' section contains ideas which are a later development of

46. Ibid p. 441ff.

the main Pauline corpus. Having established this fact we can now go on to examine the Pauline teaching on marriage as it is contained in the genuine Pauline Epistles, leaving Col. 3:18-4:1 to be discussed under the subject of 'Haustafeln'.

The Corinthian Correspondence

The sudden shifts of subject matter, tone and situation in the Corinthian correspondence (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12, 7:1, 10:23, II Cor. 2:14, 6:14, 7:2, 10:1), as well as references to letters that do not correspond to either of the canonical letters to Corinth (1 Cor. 5:9, II Cor. 2:4) have given rise to much speculation as to what may have been the original form of the material now contained in the two canonical epistles. Probably the most successful attempts at solving this problem have been made by explaining these incongruities on the basis of the two canonical epistles as they now stand. Among the many partition schemes advanced,⁴⁷ that of J. Weiss,⁴⁸ with the modifications of W. Schmithals,⁴⁹ appears to be the most acceptable. Schmithals divides the Corinthian materials into six separate letters.⁵⁰

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47. Cf. J. Harrison, "St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians", ExposT., 87 (1966) pp. 285-286.
48. Cf. J.C. Hurd, Jr. The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 45.
49. W. Schmithals, Die Gnosis in Korinth. Eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen, Göttingen, 1956, 2nd ed. 1965
50. Cf. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, Brill, 1971, p. 23-26. Jewett gives a full outline of Schmithal's hypothesis and the reasons for the above divisions in the Corinthian correspondence.

When we divide up the Corinthian material⁵¹ according to subject, tone and situation, I Cor. appears to be composed of two large letters, with letter A including 1 Cor. 9:24-10:22 + I Cor. 6:12-20 + I Cor. 11:2-34 + I Cor. 15 + I Cor. 16:13-24. Schmithals also argues that the warning against mixing with the heathen in II Cor. 6:14-7:1, a section considered out of place in that Epistle, fits perfectly as the beginning of Letter A.⁵² Letter B. would include I Cor. 1:1-6:11 + I Cor. 7:1-9:23 + I Cor. 10:23-11:1 + I Cor. 12:1-14:40 + I Cor 16:1-12. In this way we can see how the references to previous correspondence (e.g. I Cor. 5:9), II Cor. 2:4) is accounted for.

Schmithals' analysis of II Corinthians, which is supported by Bornkamm,⁵³ suggests that this epistle as it now stands represents four different letters. This is based on the fact that II Cor. 2:14-7:4 breaks up the continuity of thought in the "joyful letter" II Cor. 1:1-2:13 and II Cor. 7:5ff, and furthermore that II Cor. 10:13.13 can belong with neither of these sections.⁵⁴ The

51. Cf. also G. Bornkamm, Paul, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, London, pp. 244.

52. Cf. W. Schmithals, Die Gnosis im Korinth..., op.cit. p. 12ff.

53. G. Bornkamm, Paul, op. cit. 244f.

54. Cf. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, Brill, 1971, p. 25f.

sequence and contents of the four letters are as follows: Letter C consists of II Cor. 2:14-6:13 + II Cor. 7:2-4; Letter D, the letter of tears, is II Cor. 10:1-13:13; Letter E contains only II Cor. 9:1-15; and Letter F, the letter of joy, includes II Cor. 1:1-2:13 + II Cor. 7:5-8:24.

The time of composition of this material has been attested by scholars⁵⁵ as the mid-fifties during Paul's stay in Ephesus and Macedonia. A more precise dating of each letter can be worked out when the data of Schmitals' hypothesis are taken into account. However, the letters were supposedly written in the sequence outlined above, with Letter A written first, and Letter B, since it contains answers to the congregational questions which arose upon their receipt of Letter A, coming some months later. The dating of the letters in II Cor. depends very much upon the detailed reconstruction of Paul's travels.⁵⁶ Letter C could conceivably be written after the short visit to Corinth in 55?, Letter D was written just prior to his expected 3rd visit to Corinth (II Cor. 13:1,10), Letter E was written a short time later and possibly brought by Titus to stimulate the collection of

55. Cf. C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, A. & C. Black Ltd., London, 1968. p. 5f; C.T. Craig, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Interpreter's Bible Vol. 10, New York, 1955, p. 13; also F.V. Filson, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 10. p. 265ff.

56. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, op. cit; p. 27.

the Jerusalem offering, the final Letter F, was probably written in the following spring.⁵⁷ The time for the whole sequence of correspondence could possibly have been a year to a year and a half.⁵⁸

Reflected in these six letters are evidences of congregational factions, as well as intruding missionaries of Letter B (I Cor. 9:2ff). While earlier scholarship⁵⁹ has identified from I Cor 1:12 the existence of three or more factions in Corinth, some recent exegetes⁶⁰ have argued that the congregation was not divided at all. However, in the light of the "jealousy and strife" among the groups (I Cor 3:3ff) it is difficult to argue that there were no fundamental differences within the Church.

Little is known of the intruding missionaries of Letter B (I Cor 9:2ff). However, it has been long disproved that they were Judaizers as identified by F.C. Baur last century. Later studies have shown that they may have been from a Hellenistic circle within the earlier Jerusalem congregation.⁶¹ The Midrash of

57. This order of writing is derived from Schmithals' hypothesis.

58. R. Jewett, *Loc. Cit.* p.27.

59. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, pp. 96ff.

60. J. Munck, Paul and the Salvation of Mankind, trans. F. Clarke, London, 1959, p. 167. J.C. Hurd, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 106ff. See also N.A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth according to I Cor. 1:10-4:21," in Christian History and Interpretation, Studies presented to John Knox, edited by W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule, and R.R. Niebuhr, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 313-335.

61. R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, Leiden, 1971, p. 23ff.

II Cor. 3 which Paul refutes is a Christian Midrash based on Exodus 34:29-35, and apparently forms the basis of his opponents' theology.⁶² Paul sets up in opposition old and new covenants as well as Moses and Christ, while his opponents draw very close connections between these pairs, seeing Moses as the first "Divine Man" which could possibly be reflected in the ascetic expressions in I Cor. 7.⁶³

Apart from the intruders mentioned above there appear to have been factional groups who preferred the preaching and teaching of different Apostles, an Apollos group (I Cor. 3:6), a Petrine group (I Cor. 6:1-11, 9:1-12, 10:14-11:1), and a Pauline faction (I Cor. 1:12).⁶⁴ Another group which seems to have caused the most radical divisions within the congregation may best be described as a Gnostic faction⁶⁵ which emerged within the congregation itself. Paul deals with this group and their libertine attitude towards sex in his first letter (A). In Letter B. the conflict between the Gnostic libertines and the conservative ascetic attitude of the intruding missionaries become particularly visible in I Cor. 7, where both attitudes challenge and endanger the traditional concept of marriage.

62. D.L. Balch, "Backgrounds of I Cor. VII: Sayings of the Lord in Q: Moses as an Ascetic *θελος ἀνήρ* in II Cor. iii", *NTSt* Vol. 18, pp. 351ff.

63. *Ibid.* p. 352.

64. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 94ff.

65. R. Jewett, *op. cit.* p. 119f, 254f, 352ff.

Letter A - I Corinthians 6:12-20.
Paul deals with Fornication and Gnosticism.

Letter A was apparently written in response to the report of the situation in Corinth brought by Stephanas and his companions (I Cor. 16:15ff).⁶⁶ What they reported to Paul was a rejection of traditional moral discipline (I Cor. 9:24ff), which expressed itself in indiscriminate and impure relationships with unbelievers, (II Cor. 6:14:7:1) and prostitution (I Cor. 6:12-20), in open participation of Christians in heathen temple meals (I Cor. 10:14ff), in disorderly innovation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, (I Cor. 11:17f) and in a breakdown of the established role of women in the Church (I Cor. 11:2ff).⁶⁷

Paul saw behind this breakdown of the traditional order the emergence within the Church of a kind of Gnostic contempt for the body.⁶⁸ Some of the members, at least, believed that what is done with the physical body has no damaging effect on the destiny of the soul. They have separated the physical and the spiritual, regarding the physical body as having no permanent significance in a man's life and therefore available for

66. R. Jewett, *ibid* p. 254. Jewett believes that Stephanas was a convert of Paul at Corinth, and is considered a resident who delivered to him a full report of the situation.

67. R. Jewett, *ibid*, 254.

68. Cf. Schweizer, TWNT, Vol. VII, p. 1061, lines 1ff.

use in whatever way brings sensuous pleasure. Paul replies to the gnosticizing Christians at Corinth by emphasizing the rabbinic concept of man as a "corporate whole", where the body (*σωμα*), transformed, will be raised at the resurrection (cf I Cor. 15:35-44; Philip. 3:21), therefore it cannot be used indiscriminately for any kind of sensuous pleasure. In reality the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in this age and will be the basis of "bodily existence" in the age to come (I Cor. 15:35-44; II Cor. 4:14).

Paul's argument against the Gnostics in Corinth is based on the fact that he chose to use the anthropological terminology in a traditionally Jewish manner. In the passage regarding fornication (I Cor 6:12-20) Paul uses *σαρξ* and *σωμα* interchangeably, e.g. using the word *σαρξ* (I Cor. 6:16) to prove a point about *σωμα*. This exchangeability between *σαρξ* and *σωμα* seems to be a consequence of Paul's return to traditional holiness categories.⁶⁹ II Cor. 7:1 "let us cleanse ourselves from every impurity of flesh and spirit", is typically Jewish, being clearly paralleled by CD, Hermas, the Test. Iss., and Pseudo-Clementine materials where the words are generally exchangeable and neutral in meaning.⁷⁰ As this is only possible within the concept of Jewish anthropology, we must conclude here that Paul is reverting

69. R. Jewett, op. cit. p. 119.

70. Cf. H. Windisch, Der zweite Korintherbrief, Göttingen, 1924, pp. 28ff.

to his previous heritage. Paul's concept of traditional holiness would naturally involve the idea that 'holiness' was in some way a 'quasi-material substance' which could be transmitted, and by unnatural relationships defiled. This can be seen in I Cor 7:14 where Paul affirms that a believing husband or wife can transmit holiness to his or her non-Christian partners, and also to the offspring of the carnal relationship. However, regarding as a result of fornication, especially with temple prostitutes, the body is defiled, which goes against the idea of keeping oneself pure in flesh and spirit (II Cor. 7:1), for the body must be kept "unblemished" until the parousia (I Thess. 5:23).

Paul's reversion to the traditional concepts of holiness was necessary because of the situation at Corinth. The rejection of the body as evil and in opposition to the spirit could only be adequately rebuffed by drawing on the idea that the body as a "corporate whole" -- physical and spiritual, has significance for the Christian. Paul is aware of the dangers that this primitive interpretation of holiness can bring, and in I Cor. 6:12-20 he makes a classification regarding bodily sins, signifying "fornication" alone as "a sin against the body" (I Cor. 6:18). The significance of this can be seen in Letter B (I Cor. 7:1ff) where Paul refutes the Corinthians' unnatural attitude towards sex as a threat to morality generally, which could possibly result in worse breaches than have already

occurred. By making "fornication" alone a sin against the body in I Cor. 6:18, he could speak positively about the natural sexual relationships within marriage in I Cor. 7. In this way sexual intercourse within marriage is not seen as defiling, but rather as a means of salvation (I Cor. 7:7).

However, Paul in his initial correspondence (Letter A) has difficulty with the anthropological terminology.⁷¹ While he argues in the beginning of the letter (II Cor. 7:1) that the body ought to be kept holy until the parousia, he refers to the body as the enemy in I Cor. 9:27, a totally gnostic attitude.⁷² Commentators are not ready to accept gnostic influence upon Paul's thought here, and explain this particular usage as a careless mixing of metaphors on the part of Paul, resulting in a clumsy handling of both metaphors and ideas.⁷³

It becomes clear that Paul in these early sections of Letter A is attempting to work out a basis on which he could counter the Gnostic view of bodily relationships which found expression in the motto: "The body is for fornication and fornication for the body" (I Cor. 6:13).

71. Cf. W.G. Kümmel, Man in the New Testament, London, 1963, p. 47f.

72. Robertson, A, and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, 2nd. ed. ICC, Edinburgh, 1914, p. 197.

73. Ibid. p. 197, also R. Jewett, Paul's Anthropological Terms, op. cit. p. 255.

In the section I Cor. 6:12-20 Paul opposes the gnostic argument expressed in the formula: "Food is to the stomach as fornication is to the body" (I Cor. 6:12ff). This argument assumed that all bodily relationships are irrelevant to the question of salvation, and that what is done to the physical body has no damaging effect on the destiny of the soul. Paul agrees with the first half of the gnostic thesis, but refutes the second half, arguing that the body is not for fornication. This argument must have been difficult for the Corinthians to follow as they would naturally have considered 'κοιλια' as part of the 'σωμα'. However, when we examine Paul's reasoning we find that he does not argue from the physical and natural origin, but rather from God's action and promises. J. Behm in commenting on this passage says:

"In I Cor 6:13, too, the *κοιλια*, or digestive system, is depreciated, but with a different purpose from that of the dominical saying in Mt. 7:19. To justify sexual freedom the libertines of Corinth were pleading the moral indifference of the body and its functions. Paul takes up their slogan in order to overthrow it. The belly, as a creaturely organ which is necessary to maintain earthly life, is corruptible. When we are transfigured and the conditions of earthly life no longer obtain, it will not be needed (cf. I Cor. 15:50, cf. 35ff; II Cor 5:1; Rom. 8:21ff; 14:17). But the belly (*κοιλια*) is not the same as the body. The body (*σωμα*) still belongs to the risen and living Lord. Hence it must not be abandoned to licentiousness (v.13b.f). ... The point is that the *κοιλια* is part of the perishing creaturely world, cf. Mt 23:30. Only because of this, and not because it is sinful, is it doomed to destruction."74

74. J. Behm, TDNT, Vol. 3, p. 788.

Therefore in refuting the gnostics Paul puts forth two reasons why the body cannot be thought of as belonging to the same sphere as *κοιλια*. First, God will raise the one and not the other, and second, the body of the Christian has been incorporated into Christ, (I Cor. 6:15), and thus in peculiar fashion belongs to him (I Cor. 6:14). It is because God relates himself to the '*σωμα*' that it belongs to a different sphere than the '*κοιλια*'.

Paul attempts to show the significance of these relationships by showing that sex relations with a prostitute and union with Christ are incompatible (I Cor. 6:15-17). The use of *ἡμας* in I Cor. 6:14 in place of *σωμα* does not indicate that Paul is substituting a union of personalities for the corporal union which he emphasizes earlier.⁷⁵ *ἡμας* here does not define *σωμα* as a 'corporal entity' (whole person) who enters into corporal relationship with another person or God.

However, the continuity of Paul's analogy is brought out in I Cor. 6:18, where *ὁ δε πορνευων εἰς το εδιον σωμα ἀμαρτανει* relates to v.15, dealing with corporal unity with Christ, where the destiny of the body is explained in terms of being a member of Christ. To sin against one's own body (fornication) is so to act as to hinder or sever this relationship with Christ. Therefore as soon as one joins (*κολλημενος*) with a prostitute and clings to her

75. Cf. E. Best, One Body in Christ, A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, London, 1955, p. 75. Here Best takes the view that Paul is speaking of a union of personalities.

(κολλησθαι) he severs his relationship with Christ, for the two relationships are mutually exclusive. Essentially what Paul is saying is that union either with Christ or with a prostitute results in corporal unity, and that the one excludes the other.

Paul drives the point home in I Cor 6:19 by referring to tradition by means of the rhetorical formula *ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε* . However, in I Cor. 6:19 he combines for the first time the somatic union idea with an earlier 'temple' tradition, substantiating his present teaching by reference to traditional teaching although it was not as yet used in this way --- for Paul uses both the 'temple' and the 'body' idea to establish the principle of exclusive corporal relationships.⁷⁶

Paul's anti-gnostic polemic is discernible in the use of the 'body' as the temple (I Cor 6:19), as the 'temple' tradition may well have been used by the gnostics as an anti-somatic argument --- considering the body to be the temple of God's spirit. However, by introducing the 'body' concept into the temple tradition Paul is able to refute the dualism of the Corinthian gnostics.

The use of *ἐν πνευμα* in v.17 does not weaken Paul's argument for corporal unity, but in a real sense strengthens it. The linking together of *ὁ δε κολλημενος* and *ἐν πνευμα* brings out what Paul is saying, that is, "it is he who cleaves exclusively to Christ who

76. R. Jewett, op. cit. 262.

is one spirit with him". - The implication being of course, that he who joins himself with a prostitute on the principle $\pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\ \mu\omicron\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ could not by definition be $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ with Christ.

This teaching of corporal unity in I Cor. 6:12-20 was in sharp contrast to contemporary ideas regarding the body. Raymond B. Brown notes that,

"Paul's admonition to 'glorifying God in your body' contrasts boldly with the teaching of his Stoic contemporary, Seneca, who never would have suggested that a man glorify God with his body. He believed that a person could glorify God with his mind or soul but not with his body, which he regarded as a threat to purity of spirit, a shell, a garment worn only for a while, a prison."⁷⁷

If Paul, as is evidenced here, based his argument against the gnostics on a Jewish concept of man as a 'corporate whole', and used the anthropological terminology in an exclusively Jewish manner, is it possible that the basis of his "corporate unity" idea might be the ancient myth of the andrygnous man? In various Jewish circles of the time it was held that man is properly bisexual, and that there will be a return to an andrygnous type of existence at the 'eschaton', an idea which is expressed in II Clem. 12:2, and in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas 23.⁷⁸ It has already been noted that Paul in his argument against the gnostics has returned to traditional holiness categories similar to

77. Cf. Raymond B. Brown, Broadman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 10, Broadman Press, 1970, p. 324.

78. Cf. R.M. Grant and D.N. Freedman, The Secret Sayings of Jesus, London, 1960, pp. 136ff.

those practised at Qumran.⁷⁹ Further, in I Cor. 6:16 Paul quotes the same passage (Gen. 2:24) as the Qumranites in defence of his "corporal unity" theory.⁸⁰ However, the Qumranites seem to have quoted this passage as a prohibition against polygamy and remarriage after divorce on the grounds of man's bi-sexual nature, giving it, however, a reserved mode of interpretation which was taken to provide a sort of mythological model for the ethical justification of permanent monogamous marriages.⁸¹ Moreover it was held by certain teachers,⁸² that monogamous marriage, wherein one man and one woman were permanently united, represented an approximation to the supposed quasimetaphysical model of the primordial Adam. Only one woman was individuated from archetypal man, and this was to exclude divorce, polygamy, and prostitution. It is quite possible that this particular use of the "primordial man myth" in contemporary circles, may have motivated Paul's use of the "one flesh" formula with regard to extra-marital intercourse in I Cor 6:16, where relationships with a prostitute resulted in a kind of organic existence where a one-many relation replaces the one-one balance of the

79. See above p. 248⁴

80. Compare CD 4, 20-21; 5.1-6.

81. Cf. Chapter 3, p. 84f, also D. Daube, "Evangelisten und Rabbinen", ZNeutW 48 (1957) pp. 119-126.

82. J. Héring, The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, Trans. by A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Alcock, London, The Epworth Press, 1962, p. 34

original and ideal man. Speculation aside, the evidence seems substantial enough to suggest that Paul is drawing on a definite Jewish tradition in his polemic against the gnostics, and that this tradition seems to be inexplicably linked with both Qumran and the Synoptics, which indicates that all three, Qumran, the Synoptics, and Paul, were drawing from the same tradition whose origin goes back to the Genesis narrative.

What is important to bear in mind here is that this initial correspondence lays the basis for his whole teaching on ethical issues in his subsequent letters. Here he has singled out "fornication" as a sin against the body, and as we shall see the dangers and prevention of "fornication" dictate the type of ethical behaviour that ought to be practiced in the Churches of Paul.

Letter B I Corinthians 5:1-13 'Porneia' --
General and Particular

In his second letter Paul, in responding to the questions of the Corinthians, calls their attention to a particular case of 'πορνεία' among them (I Cor. 5:1). J. Héring⁸³ interprets ὅλος in I Cor 5:1 in the sense of 'everywhere' referring to the fact that this particular case of fornication, that is, of the man living with his stepmother, has become general knowledge

83. The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, trans. by A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock, London, 1962. p. 34.

among the Churches. However, what seems to make more sense, in addition to giving some continuity between Letters A and B, is Meyer's interpretation of ὅλως ἀκούσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία as meaning the practice of fornication among Corinthians generally, which Paul had already dealt with in Letter A (cf. I Cor. 5:9),⁸⁴ with καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία signifying a particular case among them which he is now calling to their attention. Paul appears to be especially outraged by the fact that the Corinthians not only ignored his teaching in Letter A that no 'πορνός' of whatever kind, has any part in the kingdom (I Cor. 6:9),⁸⁵ but is here tolerating a case of πορνεία within the Church of a kind that was condemned even by the pagans.

The syntax seems to indicate that the relationship referred to in I Cor 5:1 is one of incestuous marriage or concubinary union.⁸⁶ This cannot and must not be

84. H.A.W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament, I Corinthians, Vol. 1, Edinburgh, 1881-2, p. 138.

85. Hauck/Schulz, TDNT, Vol. 6, note 82, p. 593.

86. Cf. C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, London, 1968, p. 120; H.A.W. Meyer, op. cit. also notes that the use of v.2 and κατεργασαμένου, v.3 to designate the matter conveys the idea that an incestuous marriage had taken place; J. Bonsirven, Le Divorce dans le Nouveau Testament, Paris, 1948, builds his theory concerning the exceptive clauses Mt. 5:32, 19:9 on the idea that πορνεία here means an incestuous marriage or concubinary union.

tolerated. Paul has already made his decision (I Cor 5:3), and urges the Corinthian congregation to do what he has already done, that is censure this act of immorality by excommunicating the guilty party from the membership - ἐκκαθαράτε v.7 = to purge out, indicating he wants this evil removed entirely. To support this decision he relies heavily on his Jewish tradition and the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:8, Deut. 27:30), which prohibited such unions. However, he gives as the authority for his discipline not the Mosaic law of Lev. 18:8 but the 'power' and 'name' of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:16). The passover analogy and Pascal Lamb symbolism shows Paul's heavy reliance on his Jewish tradition. His insistence that the guilty party be "removed" (I Cor. 5:2,13) is not unlike the practice of Qumran where the erring member is also excommunicated (1 QS V.26-VI.1).⁸⁷

Paul again reinforces his demand that the guilty one be removed by referring to tradition by means of the rhetorical formula οὐκ οἶδατε - Do you not know? A formula which he uses six times in his teaching on morality in Chapter five and six (I Cor. 5.6, 6.2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19). This formula while sounding rhetorical strongly indicates that Paul was seeking authority for his teaching in a tradition that was common to the earliest Church community, and one which the Corinthians themselves should have known and followed.

87. Cf. S.E. Johnson in The Scrolls and the New Testament, 1958, ed. K. Stendahl, p. 139; see also C.K. Barrett, loc. cit., who attributes little importance to this connection (p. 122.)

Letter B Marriage Problems
I Corinthians 7

J. Héring notes that the questions Paul attempts to answer in this section were raised by a group of ascetic Christians probably of a gnostic tendency, who were inquiring whether complete continence was not required by the nearness of the Parousia, or from the general circumstances of belonging to the body of Christ.⁸⁸ This conclusion is reached by assuming that the opponents in I Cor 7 are the same as the libertinistic gnostics of Letter A, and the early part of Letter B (I Cor 5). However, there is reason to believe that the group Paul is addressing in I Cor 7 are not the same as those addressed in Chapters five and six, and that their asceticism is not the result of their adoption of gnosticism, but the combination of two factors, their interpretation of certain sayings of the Lord reported in Q, and their understanding of a Christian Midrash on Ex 34:29-35 which forms the background of II Cor 3:3, 6, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 19. The latter is a Moses typology which a certain group⁸⁹ of Corinthians have adopted as the basis of their theology, and from which they draw their ascetic ideas - a theology with which Paul does not agree.

88. J. Héring, I Corinthians, op. cit., p. 48.

89. This group could quite possibly be associated with the visiting missionaries mentioned earlier.

James Robinson⁹⁰ has suggested that there is a connection between the Q sayings of our Lord and Paul's opponents in I Cor. Against this hypothesis it is interesting to note the strong ascetic nature of the Q sayings in Luke⁹¹ and the attitude expressed in I Cor. 7. It has been suggested that some of the sayings of the Lord which appear in Luke (and possibly in Q) were among those debated in Corinth.⁹² This probability has been made the more probable by the following observations; the verbs *γαμεω* and *γαμίζω* which occur together in I Cor. 7:36 and 38 also occur together in Q and Luke (Luke 20:35).⁹³ This phrase "marrying and giving in marriage" seems almost certainly to be a catch phrase which originated in ascetic Jewish circles older than Luke and which Paul is forced to discuss in I Cor. 7.

Von Campenhausen⁹⁴ is also convinced that Paul in I Cor. 7 has grounded his advice to the Corinthians in

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90. "Basic Shifts in German Theology", Interp., XVI (1962), pp. 82-6; and "Kerygma and History in the New Testament, in The Bible and Modern Scholarship, ed. by H.P. Hyatt, London, 1965, p. 127-31.
91. Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 169 ff.
92. D.L. Balch, "Background of I Cor. vii: Sayings of the Lord in Q; Moses as an Ascetic *θειος αληθης* in II Cor. iii," NTSt Vol. 18, No. 3, April 1972, p. 356.
93. Cf. R. Kugelmann, "I Cor. 7.36-38", CathBibQ. X (1948), p. 69, also R.H.A. Seboldt, "Spiritual Marriage in the Early Church: A Suggested Interpretation of I Cor 7:36-38", Concor 30 (1959) pp. 103-109 and 176-89.
94. H.F. Von Campenhausen, 'Die Askese im Urchristentum', Tradition und Leben. Krafte der Kirchengeschichte, Tubingen, 1960, pp. 144-6.

the Gospel tradition, giving both eschatological (I Cor. 7:26, 28, 29-32) and christological (I Cor 7:32f compare Luke 14:26 and par) reasons for remaining unmarried. Therefore what appears to have occurred at Corinth was that both Paul and the Corinthians were using sayings of the Lord to support the practice of remaining unmarried. However, Paul did not like some of the attitudes at Corinth, especially the idea of married couples divorcing (I Cor 7:1-7, 12-16), and the attitude that marriage is an evil and that it is better to remain single even if one is consumed by passion (I Cor 7:8-9, 36). Therefore the whole discussion in I Cor. 7 is an attempt by Paul to correct these misinterpretations of the Lord's sayings by the Corinthians.

Balch⁹⁵ suggests that the reason for the extreme attitude of the Corinthians regarding marriage in I Cor 7 stems from their understanding of a Christian Midrash on Ex. 34:29-35 which forms the background to II Cor 3. (A Moses typology is here under discussion, which Paul understands differently from the Corinthians.) The interpretation of Ex 34 in the Hellenized Judaism of the period apparently always involved some very ascetic ideas.⁹⁶

95. "Background of I Cor. vii ...", NTSt Vol. 18, No. 3, 1972, p. 361.

96. Balch, "Background of I Cor. vii", p. 358.

Therefore those who supported the 'theology' expressed in II Cor 3 would also practice its asceticism, following the traditional interpretation of this Moses typology as it appears in Qumran⁹⁷ and rabbinism.⁹⁸ The idea behind the asceticism was that Moses withdrew from co-habitation with his wife in order that he might be in constant readiness to receive divine revelation. In the apocalyptic environment of Qumran the same idea was expressed in their preparation for 'Holy War', when normal sexual relations were dispensed with.

These findings suggest that the opponents whom Paul is addressing in I Cor. 7 are not the gnostic libertines of Chapters 5 and 6, but a group within the Church who have based their theology and practice on the ascetic sayings of the Lord from Q, and the Christian Midrash of II Cor. 3. This would account for the ascetic nature of the questions posed by the group, and the way in which Paul handles these questions. What Paul appears to be doing in I Cor 7 is arguing for celibacy on the basis of the gospel tradition, while at the same time refuting the Corinthian brand of celibacy which derives its radicalism largely from the Christian Midrash of II Cor. 3, (a

97. Cf. O. Betz, "The eschatological Interpretation of the Sinai-Tradition in Qumran and in the New Testament", Revue de Qumran, VI (1967) pp. 89-107.

98. Judah Goldin, The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan, vol. 13 in Yale Judaica Series, New Haven, 1955, Chapter 2, pp. 18-19.

theology and practice with which Paul does not agree.) This theory accounts for the ascetic Christians of I Cor 7, as against the licentious libertines of I Cor 5 and 6. This would also account for the married couples in I Cor. 7:1-7 wanting to separate, for the unmarried and widows in 8, 9 wanting to remain unmarried, for the believing husbands or wives in 12-16 wanting to divorce their unbelieving partners, and finally for the 'spiritual couples' of vv. 25-38 living without sexual intercourse.⁹⁹

Concerning Marriage: I Cor. 7:1-24, 39-40

I Cor. 7 is a literary unity¹⁰⁰ comprising three main sections, vv. 1-16 concerns the married, or those who have been married, vv. 17-24 an exhortation for all to remain in the state in which they were called, and vv. 25-38 concerning virgins. Not only is the subject matter in these sections closely related but 7:39, 40, concerning widows, appears to be an afterthought to 7:8, 9. Paul, having given in 7:8, 9 general permission to "the unmarried and widows" to marry (if necessary), added in 7:39, 40 a special word to widows: they more than the rest should try not to remarry, but if they

99. Balch, *ibid*, p. 361.

100. Cf. J.C. Hurd, Jr. The Origin of I Corinthians, S.P. C.K., London, 1965, p. 154, also L. Swain, Paul on Celibacy, ClerRev. 51 (1966) p. 785-91.

should marry again, then it must be "only in the Lord."¹⁰¹

The central section (vv 17-24) although apparently a digression,¹⁰² in fact dominates the whole chapter, since the essence of Paul's advice is that each person should remain in the state in which he was called (vv. 23, 24). Integral to the structure of Paul's thought and teaching is a kind of ambiguous attitude towards marriage which is evidenced by a mutual inter-play between the section on marriage (vv. 1-16) and the section on virginity (vv. 25-38). In the section which concerns marriage predominantly (vv. 1-16) Paul expresses his preference for the state of celibacy (vv. 1, 5, 7, 8, 15), and in the section concerning virginity (vv. 25-36) he insists on the goodness and dignity of marriage (vv. 27, 28, 36, cf also 39). This ambiguity may stem from the same theological milieu that formed the attitude to marriage at Qumran.¹⁰³

101. J.C. Hurd, Jr. *ibid*, p. 154.

102. Wm. F. Orr, "Paul's Treatment of Marriage in I Cor 7," *Pitts Persp.* 1967, Vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 16; Also L. Swain, "Paul on Celibacy", *ClerRev.* 51 (1966) p.785-91.

103. Cf. F.M. Cross, Jr., The Ancient Library of Qumran, London, 1958, this ambiguous attitude toward marriage in Qumran and the early Church, according to Cross, is the result of the combination of two streams in Judaism which have dualistic tendencies, one the ancient priestly distinction between ritual purity and pollution (Compar. I Cor.6:18, 7:14) and the other, the later developing apocalyptic movement which understood history as a drama of divine warfare. In Qumran these two streams were combined resulting in a way of life that make celibacy or continence a means of bringing about victory in the drama of divine warfare. However, marriage was not condemned, for according to Josephus (War II 8, 2-13) some of the Essenes decried celibacy and thought marriage necessary. Therefore, celibacy among the Qumranites was not a general requirement. Paul too recognizes the value of celibacy as 'service to the Lord' (I Cor. 7:32-35), but has to remind the Corinthians that celibacy is a 'gift' and not an obligation. Cf. Cross, p. 71ff, also D.L. Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, Oxford, 1971, p. 115.

The history of exegesis show that commentators are divided as to the nature of the questions asked by the Corinthians. Some scholars,¹⁰⁴ held that two basic questions were asked by the Corinthians (1) Is marriage to be allowed, and (2) Is it necessary to separate from an unbelieving partner? The reason, it is believed, that these questions were asked was to settle an argument between the 'Cephas' group who upheld marriage, and the 'Paul' group who argued that a celibate life was better.¹⁰⁵ A small group of scholars,¹⁰⁶ however, have argued that the Corinthians' correspondence to Paul contained no questions but instead demanded that marriage be made the rule. This suggestion only intensified the defence of the traditional position that the Apostle in his reply to the questions asked (above) justifies marriage, at the same time pointing out where and when celibacy had its place.¹⁰⁷ Therefore the

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104. Cf. J.D. Michaelis, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. and edited from 4th Germ. ed., of 1788 by Herbert Marsh, 6 vols, Cambridge, 1801, Vol. IV, p.64; J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, Göttingen, 1925, p. 169, 1723; E-B. Allo, Saint Paul: Première Epître aux Corinthiens. "Etudes Bibliques", Paris, 1935, pp. 153-4, W. Meyer, Der erste Korintherbrief, 2nd ed., Zurich, 1947, p. 105.
105. G.G. Findlay, Letter of the Corinthian Church, p.404, Wm. M. Ramsay, "Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians", The Expositor, Ser. 6;1 (1900) p. 28.
106. Cf. Wm. M. Ramsay, *ibid*, p. 381; F. Godet, Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans. A. Cusin, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1893.
107. J. Massie, "Did The Corinthian Church Advocate Universal Marriage? A Study in Interpretation", JThSt II (1901) p. 527, 538.

presence of an ascetic tendency in the Corinthian Church was acknowledged by a large number of scholars.¹⁰⁸

However, the problem which seems to divide scholars most is whether the question "is marriage to be allowed?", included an inquiry as to whether sexual intercourse between married persons was desirable for Christians. Chrysostom may have been nearer the truth when he wrote "They had written to him, 'Whether it was right ($\delta\epsilon\iota$) to abstain from one's wife, or not".¹⁰⁸ Other scholars¹⁰⁹ have since adopted this view by suggesting that there were some Christians in Corinth who regarded all sexual intercourse as improper --- even within marriage. This, however, was nothing new in the ancient world for it was found among the Essenes, the Therapeutae, and also in Hellenistic Judaism.¹¹⁰ The same asceticism could well have influenced a group within the Christian community at Corinth.

108. Saint John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, trans. H.K. Cornish, J. Medley, and J. Ashworth, Revised by T.W. Chambers. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff, 1st Ser. Vol. XII.) New York, 1889, Homily XIX, p.105.

109. H. Lietzmann, An die Korinther I/II, Tübingen, 1949, p.76; K. Lake, The Earliest Epistles of St Paul: Their Motive and Origin, 2nd ed. London, 1938, p.180; C.T. Craig, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Exegesis", in the Interpreter's Bible, New York, 1951-57, p.76.

110 Lietzmann, op. cit. p. 76.

Recent exegetes, while acknowledging an ascetic tendency or group in Corinth which was suspicious of sexual relations, generally have concluded that the Corinthians asked not two but four questions:

- (1) I Cor 7:1-7. Is it desirable for the married couples to continue with or to abstain from intimate relations with each other?
- (2) I Cor. 7:8,9. Is it desirable for persons not yet married to remain as they are?
- (3) I Cor. 7:10,11. Should Christians divorce?
- (4) I Cor. 7:12-24. What about mixed marriages, where one partner is a believer and the other is not? ¹¹¹

I Cor. 7:1-7

'It is good for a man not to touch a woman' (v.1), is apparently the opinion of the Christian ascetics which Paul quotes here in order to specify what he is about to discuss among the questions they raised in their letter.¹¹²

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111. W.G.H. Simon, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: Introduction and Commentary, ("Torch"), London, 1959, p.88-90.
112. Cf. J.J. Von Allmen, Pauline Teaching on Marriage, London, 1963, p.13; D.L. Duncan, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul, Oxford, 1971, p.81ff; This phrase poses several problems in itself, especially the meaning of ἀπεσθαι and the implication of καλον. To 'touch a woman' has been interpreted in the exegetical literature in two ways, the mean sexual intercourse and marriage. καλον has been given a variety of meanings (cf. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, pp. 159ff). However, the most acceptable solution to these problems is (1) that ἀπεσθαι in v.1 most probably means 'to touch sexually' and not 'to marry', and that 'καλον' may best be understood as the goal of morality, the highest member of a series of lesser 'goals'. For a full discussion of this problem see J.C. Hurd, *ibid*, p. 138ff.

Paul does not condemn this opinion but instead argues on the basis of "yes ... but".¹¹³ He recognizes the value of celibacy for the sake of service for the Lord (vv.32-35), and makes of his own personal inclinations and conduct an example (v.7); however, he is at pains to teach the Corinthians that any changes in their marital relationships must be dictated only in obedience to what is clearly imperative in our Lord's teaching. Therefore, while he is able to agree in part with this ascetic opinion he feels that it must be qualified. Thus vv.1-7 is an appeal to the overzealous ascetics that the physical side of marriage should not be rejected. If this group of ascetics is, as we have supposed, those who subscribe to the Christian Midrash of II Cor. 3, they may have refrained from sexual relations within marriage following the example of Moses who did so in order to receive divine revelations,¹¹⁴ or, in their own case because of the nearness of the 'eschaton'. Paul did not agree with their theology or practice, and therefore attempts to point out where and when celibacy had its place. Paul stresses the prevalent danger of sexual immorality (v.2) which could result from wholesale celibacy, and also reminds them of the conjugal rights of each partner

113. J.J. Von Allmen, *ibid*, p. 13.

114. Philo, Moses II. 66-70 in Loeb Classical Library, Tr. by F.W. Colson, Cambridge, Mass. 1935.

within the relationship. Traditional Christianity does not allow celibacy within marriage, nor the practice of total abstinence by all Christians as suggested by this group. Therefore those who are married should carry out their marriage obligations and respect each other's conjugal rights. Furthermore, Paul points out that celibacy itself is not a rule, or an obligation to be observed but a 'gift' -- *χαρίσμα* -- so too is marriage.

I Corinthians 7:8,9
The Unmarried and Widows

Paul in vv. 8,9, addresses the 'unmarried' and 'widows'. *τοῖς ἀγαμοῖς* is masculine and refers possibly to "unmarried men" or "widowers".¹¹⁵ However, widows who can decide for themselves whether to marry or remain single are apparently also included here, and are similarly advised in v. 39f. The case of maidens is discussed later (vv. 25ff). Paul opens his argument at the beginning of this chapter by maintaining that because of the danger of sexual immorality, the Corinthians

115. Wm. F. Orr, Paul's Treatment of Marriage in I Cor 7, PittsPersp. Sept, 1967, Vol. 3, No. 3. Orr interprets v.8 "Now I am speaking to the widowers and the widows. It is good for them if they remain as I". His reasons for this are (1) it retains a balance "widowers" and "widows"; (2) vv. 25 onwards discusses people that have not been married; (3) by translating the term "widower" the difficulty about Paul's own state is relieved. p. 13f. Cf. also H. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Corinthians, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1881-1883, Meyer also argues that *τοῖς ἀγαμοῖς* applies to both sexes.

should not discourage the physical side of the marriage relationship (vv. 1-7). In vv. 8, 9, he turns to the "unmarried and widow". To them he says "It is well for them to remain (single, widowed!) as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. Hurd notes that:

"This pair of statements is closely parallel to the pair in 7:1,2. Each opens with a statement beginning *καλον* followed by the dative of the person(s) concerned. Each statement is immediately qualified with a counter-statement. In each case the first statement is in opposition to marriage and normal sexual relations, and the second advocates both as a means of avoiding *πορνεια*"¹¹⁶

Hurd goes on to say, "It appears probable, therefore, as many scholars have suggested, that the Corinthians had made some statements indicating their general disapproval of marriage."¹¹⁷ This would certainly be in keeping with the view that the ascetics addressed here were those who practised the kind of asceticism which resulted from following the theology of II Cor. 3. It is most likely that they reinforced their argument by reference to Paul's own status -- "It is best that they remain as you are".

It must be noted that Paul bases his teaching on what he has laid down in Letter A, that marriage for both the married and unmarried must take its normal course because of *πορνεια*.

116. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 166.

117. J.C. Hurd, Jr., *ibid* p. 167.

I Corinthians 7:10-16

In vv. 10-16 Paul turns to two important questions put to him by the Corinthians. One concerns divorce among Christian couples and the other deals with mixed marriages, where one of the partners is not a Christian (vv. 12-16). Paul straightway anchors his advice in the Jesus tradition by way of reference to Jesus tradition "not I but the Lord", (v.10) and affirms that for Christian couples divorce is forbidden.¹¹⁸ The fact that Paul rejects divorce with such emphasis seems to imply that the Corinthians had made some statement in its favour.¹¹⁹ Some scholars seem to think that the general disapproval of marriage by the Corinthians eventually led to their regarding divorce as desirable for Christians.¹²⁰ This view, however, makes it difficult to understand why some of them at least (vv. 1-7) were willing to practice intra-marital asceticism, where divorce would serve no useful function. The question of divorce for Christians may have been a real issue at Corinth but it was not

118. J. Héring, The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, London, 1962, p. 51.

119. J.C. Hurd, Jr., op. cit. p. 167.

120. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, 2nd ed., ICC, Edinburgh, 1914, p. 140; T. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. by J.M. Trout et al, 3 vols. New York, 1917, vol. 1, p. 127; K. Lake, The Earlier Epistles of St Paul: Their Motive and Origin, 2nd ed., London, 1914, p. 183; J. Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, London, 1938, p. 78.

embraced by the whole community (vv. 1-7), as some were interested in abstinence rather than divorce. The real problem seems to have been the differences of opinion and practice among Christians themselves --- one party believing in sexual freedom (6:12-20), another believing in total abstinence (7:1-9), with others holding to the orthodox view of marriage. The difficulty in understanding vv. 10,11, may well have resulted when a member or members from one Christian group married a member of another group within the Christian community itself. The ascetics who insisted on abstinence within marriage would certainly cause problems for a Christian partner who did not adhere to this particular view. This may well be the reason for Paul's advice concerning conjugal rights (vv 3,4). Furthermore, Paul attempts to overcome the factionalism in the Church by calling their attention to the command of the Lord which insists on the indissolubility of marriage (v. 10). However, it must be marriage that allows normal sexual relations, and not licentious unions envisaged by the libertines (6:12-20), or the marital asceticism of the ascetic Christians.

The parenthesis ' *ἐάν δε και χωρισθῆ* ... ' (v. 11), which indicates that some separations have already taken place is not an exception allowed by Paul from the command of the Lord, but is advice given in cases where separations have already occurred. If the separations were caused by a desire to live a celibate

life in keeping with the theology and practice of the Christian Midrash of II Cor. 3, then the question of a second marriage does not arise. What the parenthesis seems to say is that if she does practice celibacy and later discovers that she does not have the 'Χαρισμα' to continue then she must be reconciled to her husband. This makes Paul's teaching consistent with traditional Christian practice, that for Christians there is no talk of divorce.

In vv. 12-16 Paul deals with a new situation, one for which there was no precedent in tradition. In this case the continuance of marriage depends upon the will of the non-Christian who does not accept the authority of Christ. If he is a Jew, rabbinic law permits him to divorce his wife, if a Greek or Roman, Roman law permitted either partner to divorce the other.¹²¹ Paul in answering the Corinthian inquiry regarding Christians married to unbelievers, makes it quite clear that for the Christian divorce is out of the question. The only way in which a separation could occur is on the initiative of the unbeliever who might exercise his legal prerogative and divorce his Christian partner.

Paul defends the traditional Christian view that marriage is indissoluble by resorting to the concept of 'primitive holiness'. The close contact of the

121. Wm. Orr, "Paul's Treatment of Marriage in I Cor. 7", PittsPersp. Sept. 1967, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 14.

partners produces a corporal unity between the two so that the unbelieving member of the marriage is sanctified by the faith of the believer (7:14). Paul used this ancient concept in Letter A (6:12-20) to show how relations with a prostitute defiles the body which may have been misconstrued by the Corinthians to mean that relations with all non-Christians were defiling. However, Paul in using this traditional concept of holiness was careful to classify in Letter A (6:12-20) "fornication" alone as a "sin against the body" (6:18), thus making it possible to use these same categories to show that holiness can be transmitted from believer to unbeliever, and that instead of being defiled by their relations with their pagan partners, the pagan partners are sanctified. He reinforces this astounding statement by the further claim that if it is not true then the children of the relationship are unclean; but they are holy --- holy because of their being children of believers. In the same way the non-Christian partner being united by the union of the flesh with the believer is holy.

Paul's saying in v. 15 "the brother or the sister is not bound" has been taken by Roman Catholics and some Protestants as well, to mean that where an unbeliever exercises his prerogative under law to divorce his Christian spouse the Christian who has

been deserted or divorced is free to marry again.¹²²
 This is the ground for the "Pauline Privilege"¹²³ in Roman Catholic circles and the basis of the Westminster Confession's idea of desertion as a Scriptural ground for divorce. However, the case of second marriages does not come up here, and can only be implied from the text.

122. The orthodox Roman Catholic view on divorce is that marriage is indissoluble, except in the following two cases, (1) when of two pagan spouses one is converted to Christianity, if the other does not consent to live in peace, not only is the converted party no longer bound to live with the consort, but he or she is free to contract a new marriage (Pauline Privilege), (2) the dispensation of a "matrimonium ratum, non consummatum", is the only case where the Catholic Church admits the possibility of a divorce properly so called. Cf. P. Dulou, "The Pauline Privilege", CathBibQ. 13 (1951) pp.146-163. For the long list of Protestant exegetes who support this interpretation see note 30, Chapter 1. p.22.

123. Dulou in commenting on the scriptural grounds for the "Pauline Privilege" remarks, "It is possible that later St Paul, acting as an authorized interpreter of the will of God, granted to the Christian who was in this situation permission to remarry, but we cannot affirm this with certainty, it seems to me. We cannot be sure that such a permission is granted in this passage of the First Corinthians", The Pauline Privilege, CathBibQ 13 (1951) p. 147; J.B. Bauer also states, "certainly the earliest and also some of the most recent exegetes find in I Cor 7:15 an expression of the so-called Pauline Privilege (in a broader sense the privilegium fidei), namely that in a marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian the bond can be dissolved (ou dedoulotai = is not bound like a slave) is in that case interpreted as applying to the married bond; but against this interpretation is the fact that in I Cor 7:39 and Rom. 7:2 Paul uses 'dedetai nomo (i) = 'for is bound by the law', and furthermore refers the freedom of which he is there speaking explicitly to the admissibility of a second marriage, all of which is not stated in I Cor. 7:15" J.B. Bauer, Ed., Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology, 3 vols. London, 1970, Vol. 2, p. 553.

In summary, section 1 appears to come to grips with the ascetics at Corinth. Paul accepts their objections regarding intra-marital asceticism and the marriage of single persons, but in each instance he added a limitation. Abstinence within marriage, he said, is to be only for short periods "lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control" (7:5). In each case he based his exception on the danger of the contagion of πορνεία . In his previous Letter A, we are reminded of his argument on the subject of immoral men. This is Paul's strongest denunciation of πορνεία (6:12-20) which still forms the basis for his teaching in the present Letter B. Thus the reason which he gives for practicing marriage, is that it is a bulwark against immorality (δὲ τὰς πορνείας).

Hurd puts forth a very plausible argument regarding the question of divorce among the Corinthians. He contends it arises not so much from their own desire to sever marital relationships in order to practice asceticism, but is a reaction to Paul's exaggeration in the previous letter of the dangers from πορνεία and from ἀπίστοι . This stems from his strong statement in Letter A forbidding contact with immoral men (6:12-20). Therefore, the Corinthians statement concerning divorce is actually an objection by the Corinthians to Paul's prohibition of association with unbelievers. The Corinthians protest was "What of those married to unbelievers? Do you mean that they should be divorced?"

Paul's reply follows naturally: (a) there must be no talk of divorce among Christians (I Cor 7:10, 11), and (b) Christians married to unbelievers should not separate unless, that is, the "peace" of the marriage is threatened (I Cor 7:12-16).¹²⁴ This could well be the case, as the question on divorce would naturally arise out of the statement concerning relations with unbelievers in Letter A. However, this would only concern the question of divorce among those married to non-Christians (vv. 12-16), and not divorce among the Christians. The latter would, as already suggested, come from within the Christian community and would have resulted from a difference of opinion regarding sexual relations and marital unions.

I Corinthians 7:17-24
The Eschatological Influence

Some scholars¹²⁵ consider vv. 17-24 as anterior to the discussion of marriage. The collection of statements about retaining the circumstances in which you existed before you became a Christian seems at first sight to be totally unconnected with the subject of marriage. However, a closer look will show that this statement "let each person remain in the state in which he is called" (I Cor 7:20), is the overriding theme of the

124. J.C. Hurd, Jr. The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 224.

125. Cf. Wm. Orr, "Paul's Treatment of Marriage in I Cor 7" PittsPersp. Sept, 1967, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 16.

whole section (vv. 1-40), and that it expresses Paul's whole eschatological outlook. For Paul the Parousia was imminent --- the time was short --- that during the life-time of those who now embraced the Christian faith Christ would come and establish his kingdom. In this Kingdom the old social order would be done away, and His new order would be established. Thus for Paul there was no reason to change one's social status, nor to change the social structures which were so much a part of "this present age". Therefore, if you were married remain married, if circumcised remain so, a slave continue in your slavery, for very soon the 'old order' with its inequalities, shortcomings, and anxieties will be suspended, and the "new order" of the kingdom will be ushered in. Under this highly charged eschatological principle we can understand why Paul is able to advise the married to remain as they are, likewise the widows, widowers, and unmarried men (vv. 8, 9). It is this overriding eschatological principle that conditions his advice to all concerned. Had Paul been confronted with the possibility that the kingdom was not imminent, his advice may have been somewhat different. However, as it stands the only reason for change on the part of those contemplating changes in their marital status is to avoid what Paul considers the deadliest of sins --- *πορνεία*. Other than this, one should "remain as he is" due to the impending distress.

I Corinthians 7:24-38
Concerning "Virgins"

The meaning of *παρθευος* in this section has been the centre of controversy among scholars. Some take it to mean both 'young men' and 'young women' who have not previously been married.¹²⁶ Most scholars, however, believe that *παρθευος* in I Cor 7:25-35 is used in a general sense to mean "those women who have never been married", and that the word takes on a narrower meaning in 7:36-38. It is the interpretation of 7:36-38 which divides commentators. The traditional opinion is that Paul's cryptic remarks in 7:36-38 concern the problem of Christian fathers who are anxious to know what to do about their unmarried daughters.¹²⁷ Recent

126. Wm. F. Orr, *ibid* p. 17 Orr argues that by taking *παρθευος* to mean unmarried persons of both sexes we discover that Paul is actually dealing with a different group from those he has discussed before. According to Orr's reasoning this is the fifth group Paul addresses in his letter concerning marriage. The first group involved a discussion as to what is proper for married people; next, what is proper for those whose marriages have been or will be dissolved; thirdly; what is proper for those who are thinking of divorce; fourthly, what is proper for those who are now involved in a marriage of mixed religion; and finally vv 25 considers previously unmarried people whether male or female.
127. A Robertson and A. Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, 2nd ed., ICC, Edinburgh, 1914, p. 158; J.B. Lightfoot, Notes on the Epistles of St Paul, ed J.R. Harris, London, 1895, p. 234; R. St. John Parry, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians in the Revised Version with Introduction and Notes, (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Cambridge, 1916, p. 78.

scholarship¹²⁸ believes that the "virgins" referred to in this section are women who have entered into "spiritual marriages" with men who have vowed themselves to celibacy.

R.H.A. Seboldt translates vv. 36-38 as follows:

"But if any man thinks that he is acting improperly toward his virgin in his spiritual marriage, if his passions are strong ... let him do what he wants -- let them be married; he is not sinning. But the man who has decided in his own mind to keep his virgin in her present state will be doing the right thing." ¹²⁹

This is probably the most popular view among commentators today, as it presents no philological difficulties and seems to account for the term *παρθενος* throughout.

However, a third view is that the "virgins" mentioned in this section are "engaged couples" who were wondering whether to go ahead with their wedding plans,^{129b} in view of the shortness of the time.

Hurd has outlined the points of disagreement between the two most divergent theories that of "fathers and daughters" and "spiritual marriages", pointing out that the exegesis favours that of spiritual marriages. In the case of "engaged couples" Hurd points out that there

128. For a list of scholars who hold this view see J.C. Hurd, The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 170, note 2.

129. R.H.A. Seboldt, "Spiritual Marriage in the Early Church; A suggested Interpretation of I Cor. 7:36-38, Concor. 30 (3, '59') pp. 176-189.

129b. W.G. Kümmel, "Verlobung und Heirat bei Paulus (I Cor. 7, 36-38)" in Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann, Berlin, 1954 p. 277.

is no evidence against such a theory, however, he concludes that "the ascetical relationships which had arisen in the Corinthian Church were probably marriages in every respect save marital intercourse and the resulting parental responsibilities."¹³⁰

The exegetical base upon which the "spiritual marriage" theory is maintained argues that the whole section deals with a single problem.¹³¹ This is accomplished when we set aside the Father and daughter theory, and treat the two passages (vv. 25-8, 36-8) as referring to the man and what his actions should be toward his virgin. In this case the use of the word carries a single meaning in the whole section (vv. 25-38), and refers to the man and woman who have entered into a "spiritual marriage", and not in the first instance (vv.25-8) to the 'unmarried daughter' of the father. This reasoning also implies that a special relationship or vow appears to be involved in 7:36-38 as well as 7:26-28.

Looking at the section in its totality (vv. 25-38) we note that Paul's construction follows very much the pattern of the whole unit (vv. 1-40), with vv 29-35 being

130. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Cor., op. cit. p. 178.

131. J. Weiss, Der erste Korintherbrief, ("Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament", begründet von H.A.W. Meyer, 5. Abt., 10. Aufl.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1925, p.194

a digression much like vv. 17-24 -- The whole unit itself having a tripartite structure (7:1-16; 17-24; 25-40). In each case the middle section is a digression which sets the argument in a larger context, with the first and last sections having the same or similar subjects. It appears that the special relationship which lies behind 7:36-38 is in fact the subject of the whole passage "concerning virgins", and that the digression of vv 29-35 is but a re-emphasis of what we have already encountered in vv. 17-24. Here Paul puts the whole issue in a broader context -- that of the eschatological principle which rules his whole teaching -- because "the appointed time has grown very short" (v. 29) it is well for a person to remain as he is. Paul opts for the "status quo" regarding the institution of marriage at Corinth. However, it appears that someone, or some group had found it advisable to dispense with normal marital relations and to practice a type of marital asceticism. Paul does not openly object to this view but cautions them to be careful about such relationships as such an exercise requires a special 'gift' *χαρισμα*, and not merely the taking of a vow or the acceptance of some regulation.

Paul favours celibacy not on theological grounds, but as a pragmatic means of service to the Lord, since it frees one from earthly responsibilities. However, in his favouring celibacy he is careful not to weaken the dignity of the matrimonial state. Thus he emphasizes that celibacy is not a command, but a counsel for those

who have a special grace or charism. Others who do not possess this gift should marry, and he is anxious to stress when talking of celibacy (vv. 24-38) that marriage is not a sin, but a gift in itself. The two sections (vv. 1-16) and (vv. 24-38) seem to be interrelated, one section complementing the other in that in speaking of one state, e.g. marriage (vv. 1-16) he also speaks positively of the other. Paul's favouring of celibacy is solely on the basis that it gives the individual a spiritual advantage, since it facilitates the striving for perfection by freeing the individual from the "cares of the world". The tension between marriage and celibacy throughout the discussion in Chapter 7 is dominated by the eschatological principle that the end of this age was imminent, and what tips the scale, if anything, in favour of virginity is Paul's principle that everyone should remain in the state in which he was called.

This brings the whole chapter into focus. If our suggestion is correct, that the celibates whom Paul is addressing here are members of a particular group at Corinth who have accepted the theology of the Midrash of II Cor. 3, and consequently its practice, then we can understand Paul's cautiousness in treating the subject of marriage and celibacy. Paul, unlike his opponents, has grounded his teaching on an early Church tradition that goes back to Jesus. Where this teaching can be applied Paul applies it, and where new situations arise that have

no precedent in tradition Paul gives his own opinion on the matter, considering himself to be judged worthily to deliver counsel in these situations.

Letter D II Corinthians 11:1-6
The Christ-Church 'hieros games'

In this letter Paul appears to be on the defensive, and the purpose of this marriage imagery is not so much to say something about Christ and the Church, or about marriage in particular, but to establish his own threatened authority. Paul is anxious to show to the Corinthians that he is not inferior to these 'superlative apostles' (11:5, 12:11), and thus he seeks to illustrate his superior position by using the marriage imagery. He begins by asking the readers to bear with him in a little foolishness (2 Cor. 11:1).

The short statement concerning the imagery of the marriage of Christ and the Corinthian Church is contained in II Cor. 11:2b:

ἤρμωσαμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθενον ἄγνην
παρῆσθησαί τῷ Χριστῷ.

"For I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband".

A great deal is packed into this short statement. It recalls first of all Paul's unique relationship with both the Corinthian Church and Christ, for according to Paul he was "the friend of the bridegroom" who presented the bride (the Corinthian Church) to the bridegroom (Christ). In the marriage customs of New Testament times the 'friend of the bridegroom' was the most

important person outside the couple themselves, and it was his responsibility to put the bride at the groom's disposal (*παρδοτῆσαι*), and to supervise the betrothal and actual marriage to insure that no deception is practiced by the bride. This role would be readily understood by the Corinthians, and would be sufficient to illustrate that Paul held a superior status to his rival apostles (II Cor. 11:5, 12:11).^{131a}

Probably the most important implication of the whole metaphor is contained in the use of *παριστήμι* (II Cor. 11:2), for it pertains primarily to the formal

131a. The metaphor of Christ as bridegroom and the Church as his bride is based upon the Old Testament prophetic image of Israel as the spouse of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5-7, 62:4f; cf also Hosea 2:7; Amos 3:2). Moreover, Israel's lapses into idolatry are referred to as adulterous union with strangers (e.g. Ezek. 16:15-43; Hos. 4:10-15). The days of Covenant making in the wilderness of Sinai are spoken of as the time of Israel's 'espousals' (Jer. 2:2, 43, 60, cf also Ezek 16:60-63). The New Testament writers think of this prophecy as having been fulfilled in the marriage-covenant between Christ and the Church. The metaphor of the husband-wife relationship, it would seem, was accepted teaching in the early Church; we find it in the Pauline correspondence, the post-Pauline letters (e.g. Ephesians 5:22-33), and in the Apocalypse (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9). This metaphorical usage will have been suggested by Jesus himself in sayings and parables which represent his parousia as the coming of the Bridegroom (Mt 25.6; Luke 12:35-40), and the blessedness of the redeemed as a marriage feast in the age to come (Mt 22:1-14). However, this metaphor can only be said to have a specific sexual ethical context in Ephesians 5:21-33, where the metaphor of Christ and the Church is used to show the meaning and significance of the marriage relationship. Cf. A. Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, London, 1958, pp. 256-58; C.L. Chavasse, The Bride of Christ, London, 1940, p.60 J. Jeremias, *ὁ νυμφῶς*, TDNT, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964, pp. 1101-1104; E. Stauffer, *γαμεῶ*, TDNT, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964, p. 653f.

presentation of the bride to her husband.¹³² Paul is apprehensive that the bride (the Corinthian Church) will be deceived by these intruding Apostles into insincerity and lack of dedication to Christ, and he uses a general reference to Eve's deception by the serpent (Gen. 3:4) as a means of giving voice to this fear that the Church's fate will be the same as Eve's. Here again Paul calls on his Jewish tradition and heritage to make his point.

This 'hieros gamos' imagery is taken over later by the author of Ephesians and applied more specifically to Christ and the Church, and to the marriage relationship.^{132b}

It may be well to consider one other passage in the Corinthian correspondence at this point, and that is the passage in Letter A where Paul uses for the first time the analogy of husband and wife to describe man's relationship to Christ (I Cor. 11:2-6).

One of the questions raised in considering this typology of Paul's is the way in which he supports the social hierarchy of his day in his actual presentation of the Gospel. The most pertinent verses are 2 & 3:

"I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband and the head of Christ is God."

132. J.P. Sampley, 'And the Two Shall Become One Flesh', Cambridge, 1971, p. 83.

132b. Cf. Chapter 5 above, also J.P. Sampley, *Ibid.*, p. 148ff.

Paul believes firmly in this teaching because it has its roots in the customs (συνήθεια) of the Churches, and further it is an element which constitutes apostolic 'traditions' (παραδόσεις v.2). The Apostle's teaching apparently is in agreement with that of the Twelve, in that within the marriage relationship the man has precedence over the woman, since this was God's decision in creating him first (vv. 8-9), and it is not for the Church to contradict the will of the creator. It is interesting to note that in this typology Paul describes Christ as κεφαλή of παντός ἀνδρός, not the "head" of the Church, and that God is the head of Christ. From this analogy Paul states that man is the "κεφαλή", the "head" of the woman (v. 3), in the same way that Christ is the κεφαλή of every man. Leaving aside the question of the veiling of women which appears to be the subject of this passage, we learn a great deal of the social 'mores' which were current at the time, and of Paul's acceptance of this hierarchial relationship in its social reality.¹³³ However, while Paul sees marriage in its traditional historical context with the man being the 'head' of the woman, it has been argued that he does not view the relationship as one of

133. M.S. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, New York, 1930, pp. 134ff C.A. Scott, Christianity According to St Paul, Cambridge, 1927, p. 224-5; R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, London, 1964, p. 250 "In I Cor. II:3, however, it is clear that St Paul was attempting to explain the place of the sexes in the divine plan of creation without making value judgements".

submission,¹³⁴ but like that of Christ's headship, the husband's headship is always understood in the context of love, and the wife's submission and subordination is in response to the husband's love. Love becomes the foundation of the marriage relationship just as it becomes the foundation of one's relationship to Christ. Further, it was a special kind of love that required a special word to comprehend its meaning -- agape. Thus in a sense, while Paul adheres to the social customs of his day in his teaching regarding marriage, it can be argued that he cut through the customs and laws of the historical situation and revealed the meaning of a relationship that finds its source, stability, and strength in a mutual love for each other.

Other Correspondence

Letter B in the Corinthian correspondence seems to be the only place where Paul deals specifically with the subject of marriage. However, in his other correspondence to the Gentile communities there are references made by way of analogy, example, and

134. E. Kahler, Die Frau in den paulinischen Briefen, Zurich/Frankfurt am Main, 1960, pp. 109, 165, 201. Dr Kahler examines the places where Paul discusses the relationship between woman and man, paying particular attention to the concept of submission (ὑποτασσω). In her study of I Cor. 7, 11, 14 she notes that the concept of submission occurs in none of these chapters. The word itself occurs only in Ch. 14 and there it does not refer to submission of man. What has been misunderstood is that submission has been identified with obedience.

admonition, that help to determine more precisely Paul's position on marriage, divorce, and celibacy.

Romans 7:1-6

In this passage (Rom. 7:1-6) Paul proceeds to show that the old bond to the law is dissolved by way of an illustration from the marriage laws. This illustration has been considered by some scholars¹³⁵ as an important contribution to the understanding of marriage in New Testament times, and what is more it confirms Paul's own position regarding second-marriages.¹³⁶ The illustration, as understood by these scholars, confirms Paul's stand as expressed in I Cor. 7:10 that marriage is indissoluble with death alone dissolving the relationship. Hence this text is frequently used by scholars^{137^a} refuting the biblical evidence for the 'Pauline privilege' (I Cor. 7:15), by attempting to show that this reference confirms the evidence that Paul believed only in simple separation and not in dissolution of the marriage bond with a view to re-marriage. However, if we look more closely at this illustration (vv. 1-6) we

135. J.B. Bauer, Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, 3 vols, London, 1970, Vol. 2, p. 553f.

136. Cf. R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, London, 1964, p. 250 "The Pauline Privilege, therefore, is an extension of the Pauline concession of separation, developed by the Church's teaching authority in favour of the believing partner. For the Church's decision in this, however, the point is of the importance that the Christian partner in such a case is abandoning a natural marriage in order to contract a Christian, sacramental marriage".

137a. Cf. P. Dulou, "The Pauline Privilege," CathBibQ pp. 146-163.

notice that Paul says nothing of the husband divorcing his wife. Under Jewish law, especially Mosaic law which is under discussion here, the man only has the right to divorce and the woman has no right under law to divorce her husband --- death alone being the only possible means of dissolving the relationship for her. Therefore Paul's illustration is in keeping with orthodox Jewish practice with the question of divorce not being ruled out because Paul says nothing of the rights of the husband, he merely comments on the rights of the woman who is by law bound by the marriage until her husband's death. Thus from the point of Jewish law the above illustration (Rom. 7:1-7) confirms, more than anything else, Paul's orthodoxy in his view of women and the social institutions of his time.

I Thessalonians 4:1-6
The Theme of Immorality

In I Thess. 4:1ff we are again confronted with Paul's major theme in combating immorality among the believers, and once again he imparts his teaching of I Cor. 7:2 "because of fornication, let each have his own wife". Writing from Corinth, Paul is especially aware of the sexual immorality of the Gentile world, and he loses no opportunity in giving a warning in this matter to his other Churches. To the Jew, idolatry, fornication, and murder were the three cardinal sins, but to the Gentile immorality was lightly regarded. In Acts 15:29 the Council of Jerusalem decided that less could not be

required of Gentile christians than that they abstained from fornication. As we have already observed this war against fornication underlies Paul's whole teaching on marriage. He lays the foundation of this teaching in Letter A (I Cor. 6:12-20) of the Corinthian correspondence, by making "πορνεία" alone a sin against the body, a sin which severs the relationship between Christ and the believer (I Cor. 6:12-20).

Paul is aware, however, of the fact that immorality is lightly regarded among the Gentiles, and that adherence to his teaching required a radical and difficult change in standards for them. Therefore he constantly and persistently returns to the theme of immorality always holding before them the consequence of such sins. (Cf. Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:1, 6:13, 7:2, Gal. 5:19ff, and Col. 3:5). The passage in I Thessalonians 4:1ff sums up very well the teaching of Paul in combating "πορνεία". It runs as follows (1) Christians must abstain from all extra-marital sexual relationships (v.3), (2) each must know how to take a wife for himself, understanding the difference between Christian and heathen marriage, marriage being a part of his sanctification, (3) the believer, above all, must honor his wife, and consequently, there must be no selfish invasion of a brother's rights, that is, by adultery or fornication in marriage.¹³⁷

137. Cf. W.B. Harris, I and II Thessalonians, London, 1968, p. 61ff; A.L. Moore, I and II Thessalonians, New Century Bible, London, 1969, p. 62ff.

Summary

In reconstructing the sequence of events according to the work of recent exegesis we find that Paul in his letter (A) to the Corinthians warns them against the dangers of immorality (6:12-20), suggesting as a means of avoiding *πορνεία* that Christians should marry. It has been suggested¹³⁸ that on his founding mission Paul may have by way of inclination and conduct encouraged celibacy, and that the slogan "It is best for a man not to touch a woman" may have been part of his preaching against sexual immorality. This statement, if Paul's, would have encouraged extra-marital asceticism, discouraged marriage for single persons, and would have suggested to the Corinthians a type of "spiritual" (i.e. celibate) marriage. If this was the case the advice of his first letter would have raised serious questions among the Corinthians. Margaret E. Thrall points out this problem by saying:

"If we suppose that II Cor. 6:14-7:1 is part of the earlier letter referred to in I Cor. 5:9 we might suggest that the warning found there against marriage to unbelievers had caused some Christians already married to heathen partners to wonder whether divorce was not only allowable but a positive duty. In any case the question would arise quite naturally. The early Christians were conscious of the fact that as God's people they were in some way separate from the rest of the world and that it was their duty to remain so."¹³⁹

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138. J.C. Hurd, Jr., The Origin of I Corinthians, London, 1965, p. 96ff.
139. The Cambridge Bible Commentary, I and II Corinthians, Cambridge, 1965, p. 52.

Paul's advice is that Christians should not talk of divorce. Only if an unbeliever desires it is a separation possible. Paul in responding to this query also corrects their misinterpretation of this teaching by making it clear that he did not "mean avoid contact with all immoral men," but that believers are to shun immoral Christians.¹⁴⁰

In view of the factions at Corinth the questions which Paul attempts to answer in I Cor. 7 must be seen to come from a particular group of Christian ascetics at Corinth, who, like Paul, have based their asceticism partly on tradition,¹⁴¹ partly on the teaching and example of Paul, and more probably on the theology introduced by the wandering missionaries, who in the intervening period introduced into the Corinthian Church the theology and practice of the Christian Midrash on Ex. 34:29-35 in II Cor. 3, which they interpreted in the same manner as we find in Philonic exegesis.¹⁴² Paul while agreeing in part with their ascetic ideals seeks to curb their radicalism, which resulted from their association with the Christian Midrash on Ex.34, by

140. Cf. C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, London, 1968, pp. 122f, W.C.H. Simon, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Torch Bible Paperbacks, London, 1959, p. 50.

141. Cf. D.L. Balch, "Backgrounds of I Corinthians VII", NTSt Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 351ff.

142. Cf. Philo, Moses II .66-70 in Loeb Classical Library, Tr., by F.W. Colson, Cambridge, Mass 1935.

recalling them back to the traditions of the earliest Christian community, and pointing out that celibacy is not the object of a human choice, not even a vow --- it is itself a 'χαρισμα' it is given to some and not to others (I Cor. 7:2, 9). Morton Scott Enslin's remark is pertinent in this regard when he stated:

"Christianity did not make the world ascetic; rather the world in which Christianity found itself strove to make Christianity ascetic".¹⁴⁰

The one underlying factor in his whole teaching on marriage, and the reason why he advised it was to combat the sexual immorality of the Gentile world. In writing to the Churches at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Colossae and Thessalonica Paul reminds them of the danger of 'πορνεία', and advises them that marriage is the best means of fighting against this cardinal sin.

Paul's eschatological outlook dominates his whole ethical teaching with two factors uppermost in his mind (1) the nearness of the 'parousia' and (2) that because of the care of marital responsibility the unmarried person may be better able to serve the Lord. However, Paul is under no illusions that the present situation at Corinth or in any of the Gentile communities is, as it were, ripe for the parousia. In point of fact he sees the present practices as a hindrance to the kingdom, where the breakdown of the social order gives Satan a foothold

140. The Ethics of Paul, New York, 1930, p. 180.

by making men vulnerable to natural passions. Despite his eschatological outlook Paul is still saying to the Corinthians --- we are still living within the context of the old order where there is marrying and giving in marriage, and we must as best we can adhere to the practices of the existing institutions.

This teaching may best be described as "situation ethics", in that the teaching in the Corinthian correspondence deals specifically with a particular situation in Corinth which has its own peculiar characteristics. Likewise, his advice to the gentile churches seem to be geared to combating the sexual immorality which posed a major threat to the high ethical standards of the early Church.

Paul's teaching offers little that can be practically applied to the concept of marriage as we understand it today, apart from his restatement of the Christian ideal that marriage is indissoluble (I Cor. 7:10). However, his treatment of the subject in this particular historical context, and his use of particular biblical references, analogies, and concepts, help us to trace the origin and development of the marriage institution in the Christian community. Three factors emerge from the study of Pauline teaching on marriage which help us to understand the Christian attitude toward marriage in New Testament times: (1) that Paul along with the authors and editors of the Synoptics draws upon a body of tradition that has its origin in apocalyptic

Judaism, and more particularly in heterodox Jewish circles; (II) that this tradition having been adopted by the earliest Church community passed through the prism of Christ's ministry and became the ideal for the Christian community; and (III) that this teaching underwent modifications in the everyday living of the early Church (cf. Mt. 5:32, 19:9, I Cor. 7:12-16). This modification of the "impossible ethic" surfaces in Mt's tempering of the total prohibition of divorce as recorded in Mark and Luke, and is once more tempered in Paul's teaching regarding mixed marriages (I Cor. 7:12-16).

The difference between the ideal and actual practice in the New Testament literature, particularly in the communities of Matthew and Paul, gives the whole teaching on marriage an air of ambiguity, for, while we have the Christian ideal expressed in the radical teaching on indissolubility attributed to Jesus in Luke and Mark, we have from the earliest records of the Church references to the practice in some form of divorce and separation.

What is of equal significance in the Pauline presentation of the gospel is the fact that Paul reflects in his teaching the social customs and institutions of his day. To the sociologist the examples Paul uses are as important as the teaching itself, for they illustrate how customs, laws, 'mores', etc., were observed in the first century New Testament world. What is more the examples Paul uses for the positive teaching of the Gospel indicate that he was

very much a part of the culture he reflected in his presentation of the Gospel, and very much in support of the social institutions of his time. Therefore it is not surprising to find him approving a hierarchial type relationship in marriage, the submission of women (II Cor. II:1-6), the right of the husband over the wife (Rom. 7:1-7), and the right of the father over his children.

However, while Paul is influenced by the social structures of Judaism, there are occasions when his teaching transcends the cultural milieu and speaks dynamically to the marriage relationship --- reminding the couple that their marriage is an experience of surrender without absorption, of service without compulsion, of love without conditions. This he tries to do while walking a "tight rope" between two factions in Corinth who see no value or virtue in marriage as a meaningful relationship that can also be a means of 'serving the Lord'.

CHAPTER V

NEW TESTAMENT 'HAUSTAFELN' TEACHING

INTRODUCTION:

In the previous Chapter we identified, in accordance with the findings of recent criticism, the genuine Pauline Epistles,¹ noting particularly that the division of the Pauline Corpus into Pauline and deutero-Pauline letters, on the basis of criteria other than ethical considerations, resulted also in a clear bifurcation of its ethical teaching. The genuine Pauline Epistles represented an eschatological ethic which viewed all social institutions as a part of the present world order that was about to 'pass away' because the 'parousia' was at hand. This teaching resulted in a negative attitude toward all social institutions with marriage having a positive value only in so far as it acted as a bulwark against 'πορνεία', which was prevalent in the Gentile world. The deutero-Pauline Epistles on the other hand considered more positively the social institutions in which men found themselves, and therefore spoke constructively of the reciprocal obligations and duties of the different classes of people who participated in the social institutions of the time, for example, husbands, wives, fathers, slaves and masters. The purpose of the deutero-Pauline writers, or those who

1. Cf. Chapter 4 pp. 229ff

edited these writings, was to prepare the Church in a positive way for the future.

The Question of 'Dates'

The writings we are about to consider here are representative of the Church at the turn of the first century. They reflect a church in the process of constructing, on the basis of existing ethical codes, a set of guiding principles which will help the believer in his social relationships. There is strong evidence that earlier pre-Christian 'Haustafeln' were taken over by the early Christians and gradually 'christianized', first by the additions of some distinctly Christian touch, like "in the Lord", or "well pleasing to the Lord", and later were more decidedly altered.² These 'Haustafeln' along with distinctly Christian teaching prepared the Christians for an indefinite period in the world, as the return of the Lord, while expected, was no longer considered imminent, or at least happening within the present generation. Thus rules had to be made and social institutions maintained in the light of the fact that the 'parousia', while always a possibility within one's lifetime, ^{might} ~~may~~ not come for many generations.

2. Cf. M.S. Enslin, The Ethics of Paul, New York, 1930, p. 162.

The dates of the letters³ in which the 'Haustafeln' are contained are still a matter of controversy among scholars, with Ephesians and Colossians affording the greatest divergence of opinion.⁴ However, while controversy rages in the literature regarding the dates of Ephesians and Colossians, it is the opinion of the writer that the 'Haustafeln' sections of these Epistles are a later literary stratum added to the original or edited Epistles somewhere around the turn of the century.⁵ Therefore the establishment of a late date for these Epistles is not important to our argument, if our thesis of a later literary addition for the 'Haustafeln' section can be maintained.⁶ The dates of

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3. The letters considered to include the 'Haustafeln' are Ephesians, Colossians, I Peter, I Timothy, and Titus. According to M. Dibelius, Rom. 13: 1-7 should be listed here as well: An die Kolosser Epheser und Philemon, Tübingen, 1927, p. 34f and 71f. Some scholars have suggested that Romans 13:1-7 might well be an interpolation. Cf. J. Kallas, "Romans 13.1-7: An Interpolation", NTSt, XI (July 1965), pp. 365-74. However, it is generally agreed that this passage (Rom. 13:1-7) may more properly be called 'Gemeindetafeln' or 'Staatstafeln'. Cf. J.P. Sampley, 'And The Two Shall Become One Flesh', Cambridge, 1971, p. 19, note 1.; See also R. Schnackenburg, The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, London, 1964, p. 264.
 4. For a discussion of the argument regarding the date of Ephesians and Colossians see D. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, The Pauline Epistles, 1961, p. 99f, 135f. also H.F.D. Sparks, The Formation of the New Testament, 1952, p. 72; W. Michaelis, Einleitung in das Neue Testament,² 1954, p. 199.
 5. Cf. Chapter 4, pp. 234ff. Also W. Munro, "Col. iii. 18-iv.1 and Ephesians v.21-vi.9: Evidences of a Late Literary Stratum?", NTSt, Vol. 18 (July 1972) pp. 434-447.
 6. Cf. Chapter 4, p. 234 ff, and W. Munro, Op.cit. pp. 434ff.

the Pastoral Epistles, according to the theory of non-Pauline authorship, are placed around the end of the first century.⁷ Some scholars who note the supposed relationship between the Pastorals and second-century Gnosticism place the Pastorals as late as A.D. 140.⁸ M. Dibelius notes that the Pastorals offer "a bourgeois ethic in an established Church, from which the dynamic tension of Paul's eschatological gospel is absent."⁹ 'Bourgeois' is to be understood here in the primitive sense of an ethic of the members of the people of God, of the "citizens" of the new priestly people.¹⁰ These letters constitute an important stage in the development of a code of Christian morality, and focus more on a series of advices for Christian practice than on a truly distinctive theology.

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7. The late date of the Pastorals has now been generally accepted by most scholars. ~~The late date for the~~ ^{and} ~~Pastorals~~ has been largely confirmed on the basis of the 'fragments theory'. Cf. J. Moffatt, Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, 1912, p. 416; E.F. Scott, Literature of the New Testament, 1932, p. 194; C.K. Barrett, The Pastoral Epistles, Oxford, 1963; and A.T. Hanson, Studies in the Pastoral Epistles, London, 1968. In Hanson's view if we accept about 20 verses which are authentically Pauline fragments, the Pastoral Epistles were written "about the year A.D. 105 probably in Asia Minor".
8. Cf. F.D. Gealy, I and II Timothy and Titus (IB) 1955, pp. 351ff among others.
9. Die Pastoralbriefe, Tübingen, 1931, p. 3.
10. Cf. R. Pesch, "Christliche Bürgerlichkeit (Tit. 2:11-15)", Am Tisch des Wortes 14 (Stuttgart 1966) pp. 28-33.

I Peter is considered by most scholars to be a pseudonymous writing under the name of the Apostle Peter.¹¹ The style and content of the Epistle make it quite clear that it was not the work of the Apostle, but was written at a later date.¹² The generally accepted view is that a Christian presbyter wrote to the Christians in Asia Minor around the year A.D. 95, to encourage them in the face of persecution. H.C. Kee and F.W. Young comment:

"In seeking to strengthen the persecuted Christians in Asia Minor (1:1), the presbyter called to mind the teachings they had received at baptism. He added a formal epistolary introduction (1:1-2), and a letter (4:12-15:11), in which he dealt with the immediate threat of persecution and with more general matters, and concluded with the salutation (5:12-14). He wrote in the name of Peter to give his writing the added authority of the famous apostle."¹³

E.J. Goodspeed¹⁴ assigns the Epistle to the end of Domitian's reign (A.D. 90-95).

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11. Cf. K. Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries", in the Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament, London, 1965, p. 4.
 12. Cf. H.C. Kee and F.W. Young, The Living World of the New Testament, London, 1960, pp. 433f. The authors outline the argument for a late date.
 13. Ibid p. 434.
 14. New Solutions of New Testament Problems, p. 115; Cf. also W.G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, London, 1965, p. 299; F.W. Beare, The First Epistle of Peter, Oxford, 1947, pp. 9-19. Beare gives a lucid account of the problem of date and place of I Peter.

The 'Haustafeln' in the New Testament

The New Testament 'Haustafeln' material is considered, on the basis of recent exegesis,¹⁵ a product of the established Church around the turn of the first century. This stage in the development of Christian ethics indicates that the Church has freed itself from the dynamic tension of Paul's eschatological gospel, and is seeking in its present circumstances to lay down some fundamental principles to guide the social behaviour of its members in a positive way for the future. In the first instance Christianity's eschatological message was not a teaching about the responsibilities in society. The message of the inbreaking of the Kingdom and the imminent return of Jesus generally caused Christians to withdraw themselves from social responsibilities (cf. Luke 18:29-30; I Cor. 7:29), which left them unprepared for everyday practical ethics. However, when the need arose for a practical ethic they adopted the moral instructions they already knew from their Hellenistic and Jewish environment. This need came when the Christian community realized that they would have a protracted history, and that the second coming of Christ might not occur in their lifetime. Thus general theological truths were no longer adequate for resolving

15. The 'Haustafeln' sections as found in the Epistles under discussion are considered by most exegetes to be written around the end of the first century. This includes the accounts in Colossians and Ephesians.

practical ethical problems. It was in this circumstance that the community turned to the familiar household codes for guidance.¹⁶

It has been generally agreed that the following passages constitute the New Testament 'Haustafeln': Col. 3:18-4:1; Eph. 5:22-6:9; I Peter 2:18-3:7; I Tim. 2:8-15; 5:3-8 (widows) 6:1-10; and Titus 2:2-10. Similar Christian household codes also figure in early Christian literature of the first post-New Testament period: I Clem. 1,3; 21:6-9; Epistle of Barnabas 19:5,7; Didache 4, 9-11; Polycarp ad Phil 4. The presence of these 'Haustafeln' forms in the post-New Testament non-canonical writings testify to their popular currency in this period.¹⁷

New Testament 'Haustafeln' studies have taken two forms in the exegetical literature: (1) a study of 'Haustafeln' origins, which attempts to trace the pre-Christian origins of the Haustafeln in earlier Greek and Jewish sources, showing the New Testament 'Haustafeln' as a development from earlier ethical codes found in Hellenism, Stoic philosophy, Hellenistic and Palestinian

16. M. Dibelius, An die Kolosser, Epheser, und Philemon, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1912, Dritte Auflage, 1953, pp. 46-50. K. Weidinger, Die Haustafeln. Ein Stück urchristlicher Paränese, Leipzig: J.C. Heinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1928.

17. See note 3 above.

Judaism,¹⁸ and (2) a synoptic study of the New Testament 'Haustafeln' texts themselves in order to define the fundamental components of the tradition. This synoptic comparison of New Testament passages, not only identifies the common characteristics -- words and motifs of the underlying tradition, but also shows how the individual authors adapt this traditional material for their own purposes, and build upon it more elaborate instructions!¹⁹

The synoptic study of the 'Haustafeln' texts suggested by P. Carrington and E.G. Selwyn seeks to provide an alternative to the 'dependency theory', which suggests that the many points of contact between the different 'Haustafeln' texts were due to one author depending upon the written works of another. Carrington and Selwyn suggested that by the year A.D. 60 there were already established in common use throughout the Church liturgical formulae and catechetical codes which exerted considerable influence upon the different N.T. writers. They argue that the different authors wrote their

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18. Cf. F. Hahn, Alfred Seeberg's, Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit, München: Chr. Kaiser, 1966. A reprint of Seeberg's first contribution to Haustafeln study in 1903; M. Dibelius, An die Kolosser, Epheser, und Philemon, Tübingen, 1912; K. Weidinger, Die Haustafeln. Ein Stück urchristlicher Paränese, Leipzig, 1928; D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1958; and E. Kamlah, "Ἐπιτομασσεῖσθαι" in dem neutestamentlichen 'Haustafeln', Verborum Veritas, ed., Otto Bocher und Klaus Haacker, Wuppertal, Rolf Brockhaus, 1970, pp. 238ff.
19. Cf. P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism, Cambridge, 1940; E.G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St Peter, London, 1949.

Epistles independently of each other, and explain that the similarities of form and style are due to the reproduction of the thought and phraseology of the standardized affirmation of the primitive Christian catechism which underlie the author's own innovations and instructions. The acceptance of Carrington's and Selwyn's hypothesis does not rule out the possible dependence by one author on another in his reproduction of such a catechetical code.²⁰

By way of survey we can say that these two different approaches to the study of N.T. 'Haustafeln' show that the N.T. 'household codes' consist of three layers of material : (1) the pre-Christian elements from Greek and Jewish sources, (2) the Christian elements which are common to the tradition — possibly a catechetical code in use throughout the Church, and (3) the additions made by the individual authors of the Epistles.

Since this study is concerned more with the Christian elaboration through the influences of a common tradition and the individual innovations of the authors themselves, only a summary sketch of the pre-Christian elements from Greek and Jewish sources is possible.

Pre-Christian Origins

Seeberg, Dibelius, Weidinger, Daube and Kamlah,²¹ have attempted in their own way to trace the pre-

20. Cf. C.L. Mitton, "The Relationship Between I Peter and Ephesians" JThSt, n.s. 1, (1950) pp. 67ff.

21. See note 18 above, p.301.

Christian origins of the New Testament 'Haustafeln', emphasizing the influence of Greek and Jewish moral traditions on the 'household codes' as they presently exist in the New Testament.

Alfred Seeberg²² was the first to recognize the 'Haustafeln' passages as traditional material. In his analysis of the N.T. 'Haustafeln' texts he identified a moral teaching (Sittenlehre) and a formula of belief (Glaubensformel) as general catechetical instructions with pre-Christian origins. This catechetical material in the N.T. was seen by Seeberg to have Jewish antecedents. He believed that after the death of Jesus a Christian catechism was created, the content of which was passed on by missionary preaching and was learned at baptism by converts. This teaching produced an early Christian "way" of moral teaching for social relationships,²³ and followed very closely the pattern of the "Two Ways". This early Christian "way" which was learned at Christian baptism was embodied in a tradition known by Jesus and Paul. This tradition of Jewish baptismal instruction was later borrowed by the early Church and used for its own baptismal teaching.²⁴

22. Cf. F. Hahn, Alfred Seeberg, Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit, München: Chr. Kaiser, 1966, a reprint of Seeberg's first contribution to Haustafeln study in 1903, pp. 1-44.

23. Ibid p. 38.

24. Ibid p. 42, 211ff.

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C.H. Dodd considers this catechetical instruction as a channel through which the sayings of Jesus were transmitted, thus maintaining that despite the late Christian development of the 'Haustafeln', the Jesus tradition is still present.²⁵

M. Dibelius disagreed with Seeberg's hypothesis, seeing the 'Haustafeln' as the end product of catechetical practice which different circumstances within the Churches have altered, and not an instant codification or borrowing of pre-Christian material from an identifiable source such as the "Two Ways". The 'Haustafeln', according to Dibelius, were not the exclusive work of the early Christian Church, but had been borrowed from earlier Greek and Jewish moral traditions. Dibelius argued that the decisive impulse in the Christian usage of the 'Haustafeln' schema was a waning interest in the 'parousia' and a growing awareness on the part of Christians that they had to come to terms with the world. Therefore, Dibelius suggested a Greek origin,²⁷ pointing out that Christians borrowed from the oral popular ethics of Hellenism, Stoic popular philosophy, and propaganda literature of Hellenistic Judaism, maintaining in their 'Haustafeln'

25. Cf. C.H. Dodd, "The Primitive Catechism and the Sayings of Jesus", in More New Testament Studies, Manchester, 1968, p. 16.

27. Ibid p. 36.

form the Hellenistic schema of popular ethics.

K. Weidinger²⁸ supported and expanded Dibelius' theory that the 'Haustafeln' were derived from popular moral codes of the Hellenistic world, and supported the idea that a waning interest in the 'parousia' and the growing awareness on the part of Christians that they had to come to terms with the world, was the decisive factor in the Christian usage of the 'Haustafeln' schema. However, Weidinger, in his analysis, noted the existence of a number of Stoic 'Haustafeln' in addition to the material gathered by Dibelius,²⁹ and, as a result, he shifted the emphasis from the 'Haustafeln' of Hellenistic Judaism to those of the popular philosophy of the Roman period.³⁰ Therefore the 'Haustafeln' schema, according to Weidinger, was essentially Stoic in nature and was based on the Stoic concept of duty (καθῆκον). The Stoic καθῆκοντα in turn were adaptations of the ancient Greek νόμιμα ἔγγραφα : fear of the gods, honor towards parents, proper care of the dead, love of friends and fidelity toward country. The Christian 'Haustafeln' differ from their non-Christian parallels only in the additions with which they were "Christianized". Weidinger, however, not only shifted the emphasis with

28. K. Weidinger, Die Haustafeln. Ein Stück urchristlicher Paränese, Leipzig, 1928.

29. Ibid p. 23, 25, 26 -- For example, Epictetus, Dissert., 2. 14.8, Seneca, Epist. 94.I, and Stobaeus, Anthologia, 1.3.53, are especially typical, the last named expressing the Stoic doctrine of civil duties.

30. Ibid p. 30.

regard to origin, but also shifted the emphasis of the argument to a different dimension. He saw the transition from an interest in the 'parousia' to the formulation of a Christian ethical code on the basis of the non-Christian 'Haustafel' in terms of the adjustment of the convert to life in this world: a gradual weakening of his original enthusiasm in which he felt that all problems were solved ἐν πνεύματι . Practical problems arose which demanded concrete, practical solutions for which the 'Haustafeln' provided guidelines, therefore Christianity made use of these non-Christian codes in meeting the need of everyday practical ethics.³¹

While Weidinger's theory has received wide acceptance the evidence is not conclusive, and so the debate continues. The most recent piece of 'Haustafeln' research³² attempts once again to establish a Palestinian Jewish origin for the New Testament Haustafeln. However, before discussing it, it may be profitable to note the earlier contribution made to the Jewish source theory by David Daube. Daube has suggested in an essay entitled "Participle and Imperative

31. Weidinger's theory has been generally accepted by most scholars today, which is evident from the majority of commentaries that accept Weidinger's evidence as conclusive.

32. Cf. K. Kamlah, "ὑποτασσέσθαι in dem neutestamentlichen 'Haustafeln'", Verborum Veritas, ed., Otto Bocher und Klaus Haacker, Wuppertal, Rolf Brockhaus, 1970, pp. 238ff.

in I Peter"³³ that certain linguistic features of the 'Haustafeln' were directly translated from Hebrew codes. The particular use of the participle as an imperative in the Haustafeln is seen by Daube as evidence for this Jewish influence. Daube thus rejects the view of J.H. Moulton,³⁴ who affirmed that the participle as an imperative is a Hellenistic development.³⁵ However, in refuting Moulton's theory Daube had to reckon with the fact that there were no Haustafeln-like codes in the Rabbinic literature which use the participles as imperatives. Faced with this initial problem he suggested that the Haustafeln codes used by the New Testament writers are best understood by combining the style and content of three distinct Rabbinic writings: (1) the Demai, containing special obligations (tithes and cleanliness) expressed in the participle; (2) the Aboth, containing personal forms of advice on the right mode of living; and (3) the Derek Eres literature, containing social duties which use the participle as an

33. In E.G. Selwyn's book The First Epistle of St Peter, London, 1949, pp. 467-488; Also Daube's, New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1956, pp. 90-7. Here he discusses why the participle was used as an imperative in the Tannaitic literature.

34. J.H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, I. pp. 180ff and 232ff; A.T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, pp. 945f.

35. Cf. D. Daube, "Participle and Imperative in I Peter", in E.G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St Peter, London, 1949, p. 467.

imperative to some extent. In other words the style of the Aboth and the Demai is combined with the content of the Derek Eres literature to produce the Haustafeln tradition. Daube strengthens his argument by noting a second linguistic feature of the Haustafeln which suggest that they were translated from Hebrew codes, that is, the use of the 'nominative of address'. In this case the article and nominative of the persons addressed is used instead of the vocative. Daube notes that the "nominative of address" occurs in other places of the New Testament where Hebrew is translated.³⁶ These 'Hebraisms' suggests that the Haustafeln were translated from Hebrew codes.³⁷

36. Ibid p. 482ff, also The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, London, 1956, pp. 90-7.

37. Cf. H.G. Meecham, "The use of the Participle for the Imperative in the New Testament", Exposit 57 (May, 1947), pp. 207f; Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, Edinburgh, 1965, pp. 167ff; Kenneth Dupar, Haustafeln in the New Testament, unpublished thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1970. pp. 174-180. Dupar gives the following criticism of Daube's theory: (1) The Rabbinic material cited by Daube may be too late for evidence of possible Hebrew Codes during the formation of the Haustafeln tradition. (2) Although the participle imperative is a rare idiom in Hellenistic Greek it is still present. (3) It is not necessary to assume a text of Hebrew codes from which N.T. Haustafeln tradition was translated in order to explain the presence of a Hebraism in the New Testament Haustafeln, for it is quite probable that such Hebraisms were generally assimilated into N.T. Greek from Semitic influences and employed in the Haustafeln.

K. Kamlah, on the other hand, working from a sociological perspective rather than a linguistic one, sees a Jewish background to the predominant *Haustafeln* instruction:- to be submissive.³⁸ Kamlah recognizes that the command "to be submissive" to the state, to husbands, and to masters is customary, but is absent in comparable Greek and Jewish codes cited by Weidinger. Therefore, it becomes obvious that the New Testament 'Haustafeln' reflect the conservative, patriarchal structure of state and household. However, when these instructions are placed within a Christian context, they acquire new meaning.³⁹ This new meaning is derived from the new motive attributed to these 'codes' by the Christians. Thus, submission to the state, husbands or masters no longer stands by itself, but takes on new implications for the Christian. The idea of submission on the part of the slave, wife, child, may well reflect the customs of the day, but the author of I Peter, for example, gives them a new meaning. The patient suffering of the slave and the quiet modesty of the wife are forms of submitting to God. Therefore, submission in the *Haustafeln* tradition is to be interpreted as

38. K. Kamlah, "υποτασθαι in dem neutestamentlichen *Haustafeln*" Verborum Veritas, ed., Otto Bocher und Klaus Haacker, Wuppertal Rolf Brockhaus, 1970, pp. 238ff.

39. Ibid p. 240ff.

reflecting not only the conventional social customs of the day, but also the Jewish sense of humility.⁴⁰ This Jewish sense of humility, which is fundamental in the Christian's relationship to God and a prominent motif in early Christian paraenesis, is expressed by the Christian's submission to others. Therefore, Kamlah argues "to be submissive" is a Christian command which is rooted in the Jewish sense of humility: to be humble before God^{41a} is to be submissive before others. Carrington, also notes that ὑποτασσείν and ταπεινοῦν which belong to the tradition have the 'appearance of being derived from Jewish Torah.'⁴¹ Carrington further notes that the verb ταπεινοῦν - to be humble is closely associated with ὑποτασσείν in I Peter, James and I Clement, and is used in connection with ὑψος - exaltation, in other New Testament passages, a connection which may refer to a well known 'aphorism of Jewish Torah (cf Ecclus 1.30)'.⁴²

Carrington's synoptic analysis of the New Testament Haustafeln led him to support Seeberg in stressing Jewish origins. He suggests that the Haustafeln tradition is one component of a broader scheme of baptismal teaching.⁴³

40. Ibid p. 242

41a. The influence of these codes ^{is} are evidenced in the Jewish world (e.g. Tobit iv.2-23; Sir vii.20-39); here they are intermingled with Jewish elements, showing the Jewish element of "The Fear of God".

41. P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism, Cambridge, 1940, p. 50

42. Ibid p. 50

43. Ibid p. 81ff.

Therefore he sets out to reconstruct this more comprehensive baptismal catechism by investigating the common teaching from Col., Eph., and I Peter, following a four point catechism with the 'household tables' taking their place in a section he terms 'subiecti'.⁴⁴

Therefore drawing on evidence bearing on oral instruction in the religious-social community, both Christian and Jewish, Carrington indicates in what respect apostolic and post-apostolic Christianity developed on the same lines as Rabbinic Judaism. Edward G. Selwyn⁴⁵ took up Carrington's theory and developed it into a five-fold schema which included a broader compass than the field of Haustafeln study. Selwyn intends to prove that I Peter is not dependent on the Pauline Epistles at a number of points, as is sometimes supposed, but instead is representative of traditional teachings widely known in the early Church. He distinguishes three levels of material in the Haustafeln of I Peter, an analysis which also applies to other Haustafeln passages in the New Testament:

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44. The four points, which follow a similar sequence and vocabulary in each letter are designated by phrases which come from the passages e.g. (1) Wherefore putting off all evil 'Deponentes', (2) Submit yourselves 'Subiecti', (3) Watch and pray 'Vigilate', and (4) Resist the Devil 'Resistite!' *ibid.*, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 31-65.
45. E.G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St Peter, London, 1949, p. 437ff.

"At the top are the superstructures of theology which St Peter builds on the teachings about slaves and St Paul on the passages about wives and husbands and civic obedience. These are products of the thought of the inspired writers individually. Below these, and occupying the middle part of the scene, are outstanding elements of common teaching which are indisputably Christian ... (and) what appears to be the original substratum, a fusion of Jewish and Gentile thought."⁴⁶

Regarding the pre-Christian origins of the Haustafeln, the most reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that they are in their pre-Christian elements a combination of both Jewish and Greek practices. Whether this fusion of Jewish and Gentile thought came about in the compilation of a primitive catechism underlying the New Testament Haustafeln will not be pursued here as the investigation of such a possibility is beyond the compass of this thesis. However, as far as can be established on existing evidence the New Testament 'household codes' are based on both Hellenistic and Jewish practice which are combined and used by the different New Testament authors for their own teaching purposes.

New Testament 'Haustafeln'

Our purpose in looking at the New Testament Haustafeln is to determine how these 'domestic codes' helped to lay an ethical foundation on which the Christian community was able to develop its own ethical principles, and more particularly to try and determine

46. Ibid p. 437.

how these household codes, with their Christian development, influenced the institution of marriage. Because of this particular interest we will be focusing upon those aspects of the Haustafeln that deal with domestic duties.

Even though there is a recognizable minimal conformity between all the New Testament 'Haustafeln', there is at the same time no evidence that the traditional duties were transmitted in one fixed order. Indications are that the 'Haustafeln' do not constitute a rigid tradition that must be taken over in a fixed fashion, but that the form and order may be adapted for the particular purposes of the author.

The 'Haustafeln' in Ephesians, Colossians, and I Peter are considered to be the most complete forms,⁴⁷ and are illustrative of the common characteristics of the Haustafeln tradition as well as of the modifications and additions made by the authors of the Epistles. In Ephesians and Colossians, for example, three sets of classes are involved: wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters (Eph. 5:22-6:9; Col. 3:18-4:1). However, in I Peter the situation is somewhat different, the same sets of classes are not maintained, and new additions are made. For example, I Peter is introduced by an additional injunction calling for submission "to

47. Cf. J.P. Sampley, And the Two Shall Become One Flesh, Cambridge, 1971, p. 19.

every human institution" (2:13ff) and succeeded by commands addressed to servants, wives, husbands, and "all of you" (2:18-3:7). Thus it becomes clear that the 'Haustafeln' form acted only as a nucleus for the author's own teaching, being adaptable with regard to the total number of classes addressed and with regard to the order of their presentation. However, it did offer a list of classes, some of which served the purpose of one author, while others, with some overlapping, best suited the needs of another.⁴⁸

In the Ephesian and Colossian 'housetables' which are identical in form, (that is, regarding the classes of individuals and sets of relationships in order of occurrence and number,) there are significant differences. For example, the expansion of the admonitions to one class does not necessitate a similar development of the injunction to the corresponding class (cf. Col. 3:22-25 regarding slaves and 4:1 regarding masters). Very often the expansion by the individual author may be identified by the *ἐν κυρίῳ* addition, indicating that submission to the master, husband, state, is in a way serving the Lord.

The brevity of the Colossians' form of the 'Haustafel' has contributed to the assumption that it is the most primitive 'Haustafel' in the New Testament.⁴⁹

48. Ibid p. 19.

49. Cf. P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism, Cambridge, 1940, pp. 92-3. Cf. also H.J. Holtzmann, Kritik der Epheser - und Kolosserbriefe, Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1872.

However, recent biblical exegetical analysis⁵⁰ has shown that this is not necessarily the case. J.P. Sampley, for example, states:

"Though the Haustafel in Colossians is concise, it is highly stylized and systematically arranged. Brevity of form is not unambiguous as a canon for early dating of a tradition; formalization sometimes serves a limiting and refining function. Such observations caution against a too facile declaration that Colossians contains the most primitive NT Haustafel."⁵¹

On the basis of the late literary stratum theory for the Haustafeln sections of Colossians and Ephesians outlined in Chapter Four, we believe that Colossians rather than being the most primitive Haustafel in the New Testament, is an edited edition of the much longer version in Ephesians, the author making his own changes according to the purposes he has in mind.⁵²

These characteristics in the Haustafeln form in Ephesians, Colossians, and I Peter furnish guidelines for a look at the other NT occurrences of the form, all of which are to be found in the Pastoral Epistles (I

50. Supra p. 229 ff, Chapter 4. The conciseness and refining function of the Colossians Haustafel is considered to be the result of editing by a redactor who edited the Ephesians account and added it to an already existing Colossian Epistle.

51. J.P. Sampley, loc. cit. p. 24.

52. Cf. Chapter Four above, pp 234ff. See also W. Munro, "Col III. 18 iv.1 and Eph. V.21-VI.9; Evidences of a Late Literary Stratum?" NTSt, 18 (1972) pp. 434-447.

Timothy 2:8-15; 5:3-8 (widows) 6:1-10; Titus 2:2-10).

The first notable difference between the Haustafeln in the Pastoral Epistles and those in Ephesians, Colossians and I Peter is that the forms in the Pastorals are not as complete in classes addressed; for example there is no address to masters, nor is there an admonishment to children. Furthermore, the corresponding classes are not always mentioned, for example slaves are to be admonished (I Tim 6:1ff, Titus 2:9-10), without any accompanying directions for the masters. It seems that the Pastorals are not so concerned to maintain the integrity of the Haustafeln, but in fact use them in a fragmentary fashion, and for different purposes. A good example of this is the Haustafeln form found in the letter of Titus. The duties here deviate from the usual 'Haustafeln' structure because they are not written to the people for whom the Haustafeln are intended. In this instance they are written to Church leaders who are to teach young wives, young men, slaves and all Christians to be submissive to their superiors and the state. In Titus the classes of people in the 'Haustafel' are written in the accusative case, as those to be taught, and the instructions are in the infinitive form. However, the traditional Haustafel duties must have circulated in the structure most common to the Haustafeln texts: a nominative of address, instruction and motive. This change from direct address of the classes to an individual, such as to Timothy or Titus,

prescribing requirements to be placed upon the Christians that are his congregation, indicates the pretence under which the Pastorals were written as Pastoral letters addressed to individuals.⁵³

Another significant difference may be found in Titus 2:2-6 where we find a division within groups of men and women on the basis of age. The classes encountered are:

πρεσβυτας (2:2) πρεσβυτιδας (2:3) νεαυς (2:4) and
νεωτερους (2:6).

With this acknowledgement of the common characteristics and differences we may move on to consider in greater detail the implication of each Haustafel passage for the question of marriage.

Common Tradition
Ephesians 5:22-33

P. J. Sampley describes the Ephesian Haustafel as a mosaic made up of different traditions extant in the early Church,⁵⁴ which the author of the Haustafel section has skilfully incorporated into the Haustafel form. The fact that these different traditions are already present in the early Church and are drawn together here lends support to a late origin for the Haustafel section.

53. Cf. E. Kamlah, Die Form der Katologischen Paranesen im Neuen Testament, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1964, p. 199. n. 3, also J.P. Sampley, op. cit. p. 23.

54. E. Kasemann considers the entire Epistle as a mosaic composed of extensive as well as tiny elements of tradition, with the author's skill displayed in the way he selects and orders the material available to him. Cf. E. Kasemann, Leib und Leib Christi, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1933, p. 288.

It is significant to note that the admonition to wives and husbands (Eph. 5:21-33) is disproportionately expanded in the Ephesian Haustafel, consisting of nearly 60 per cent of the total Haustafel --- just one third of the form. This expansion by the author is made in three ways: first, by the author's own commonplace expressions, e.g., 'no man ever hates his own body' (5:29), and 'Masters ... forbear threatening!' (6:9). Secondly, Christological references and reminders of some aspects of Jesus' ministry are to be found rather often (cf. 5:29, 6:6). Thirdly, the use of Old Testament both implicitly and explicitly is greater in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 than in any other Haustafel in the New Testament.

Ephesians 5:22-33 is best understood as a unit in itself as it deals with reciprocal duties of wives and husbands and is developed by the author according to the theme of the unity of Christ and the Church which permeates all of the Epistle. However, while the author of the Ephesian Haustafel expands the traditional Haustafel form disproportionately regarding wives and husbands, he holds true to the original Haustafel form as may be evidenced by a comparison of the basic Haustafel elements regarding wives and husbands which are:

- (1) Mention of the class of individuals in question -- wives and husbands.
- (2) One main verb that specifies the action or posture that the class of individuals should undertake or assume e.g. ὑποτασσομαι
- (3) A direct object that mentions the other class of individuals constituting the set, e.g., the address of the wives will mention in its object the husbands, and vice versa.

Upon this basic Haustafel framework the author of the Ephesian Haustafel has added a considerable amount of traditional material which he has gathered, for the most part, from what appears to be important OT tradition.

Sampley traces the origins of the traditions used by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel back beyond the New Testament into the traditions of early Judaism based on Old Testament texts and ancient Jewish practices,⁵⁵ which the Haustafel author has

55. Sampley traces the origin of the traditions contained in Ephesians to two important Old Testament texts, Lev. 19:18 'Love your neighbour as yourself', where he points out that πλησιον is used in the LXX as a term of endearment for the bride, and therefore, the injunction to the husbands 'love your wives' (v.25a) - is in part expounded by the author in the light of Lev. 19:18 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. This use of Lev. 19:18 is consonant with his second OT quotation from Gen. 2:24b (5:31b), which identifies man and wife as one flesh. Sampley traces the range of interpretation of Gen. 2:24 in (1) Philo, (2) Tannaitic literature, and (3) Intertestamental literature, and finds that the intertestamental literature (especially the correlation of Lev. 19:18 and Gen. 2:24 in Sirach 13:15-16) affords the closest parallel to these two OT verses in Ephesians 5:21-33. This, according to Sampley, raises the possibility that the author of Ephesians may be using a

woven together in a skilfully balanced fashion to provide instruction for wives and husbands. However, in view of the late date of the Ephesian Haustafel we must consider the possibility that the author relied more on existing Christian writings which, no doubt, derive their origins from these earlier traditions. The author's reliance on earlier Christian writings, and quite possibly on the Ephesian Epistle itself,⁵⁶ can be clearly demonstrated from New Testament material. All the motifs and Old Testament references used by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel are found in earlier Christian writings. The

traditional formulation that he adopts and uses for his own purposes. The 'heiros gamos' which permeates the whole of Ephesians 5:21-33 is argued to be closely related to the imagery used in Ezek. 16:18 and Songs of Songs 4:7ff as both reflect a 'hieros gamos' in which the groom cleanses his bride by washing with water, and in which the result is a strong emphasis on the beauty and purity of the bride and the groom's love for the bride. (Cf. C.H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology, London, 1952; also C.K.

Barrett, Epistle to Romans, New York, 1957, These writers trace this formulation back to Isa. 53, the last of the Servant Songs). The terminology of head, body and member, is said to be pervasive in Hellenized Judaism and rabbinic tradition (cf. W.L. Knox, St Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, Cambridge, 1939, pp. 160-3), rather than from a strictly Hellenistic Gnostic source. The traditions of purity are grounded in Judaism, first in the requirements of purity for the bride (Ezek. 16, Song of Songs, Ps. 45), and also requirements for priests (Lev. 21). Closely paralleled with the purity mentioned in Ephesians is the purity pervasive in the writings of Qumran, which speaks of a purity that is demanded of those who desire to gain or retain a place in the community. It is significant to note, that the authors of the New Testament Haustafeln have transposed the emphasis of purity from that of bodily blemishes and defects to that of ethical behaviour. Cf. J.P. Sampley, loc. cit. pp. 16-66.

56. W. Munro, op. cit. p. 434.

three passages that bear a close relationship to Eph. 5:21-33, especially with regard to similar formulations and association of terminology and ideas are I Cor. 6:12-20; I Cor. 11:3ff and II Cor. 11:1-6.

In the first passage I Cor. 6:12-20, there are some clear patterns of formulation that are also present in Ephesians 5:22-33. The quotation of Gen. 2:24b is quoted in the same fashion as in Ephesians 5:22-33, and further the *σωμα-μελος* terminology is closely related to Gen. 2:24 as it is in Ephesians 5:21-33. This association is not altogether unusual, but reflects a possible convention in the early Church which the author of Ephesians has taken over and used for his own purposes.

The terminology about the body organisms such as 'head' (I Cor. 11:3ff) has also been discussed earlier,⁵⁷ and while there is some confusion in the understanding of *κεφαλή*, *σωμα* and *ἐκκλησία* in Ephesians,⁵⁸ it can be shown that Ephesians is possibly dependent upon the earlier Corinthian passage. While there are some notable differences, for example in I Cor. 11:3 it is stated that God is the head of Christ, this is nowhere explicitly stated in Ephesians, nevertheless the basic

57. Supra, Chapter 4, p. Cf. also K.L. Schmidt, *TDNT*, III, p. 509f.; H. Schlier, *Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, Paul Siebeck, 1930, p. 38.

58. See note 57 above.

terminology is the same and the description of the man as the head of the wife is identical. The differences here may be accounted for by the different purposes for which each author makes use of the *παρὰδοσεῖς* (I Cor. 11:2). In the context of marriage it would be unnecessary to speak of God's headship over Christ, for, in the 'hieros gamos' context in which the whole passage is set, such a reference would be out of place.

The third passage which is closely associated with Ephesians is II Cor. 11:2-3. This reference to Christ as the bridegroom of the Church, focuses more on the importance of 'the friend of the bridegroom' whom Paul considered himself to be, and who presents the bride as a *παρθενὸν ἄγνωστον* to her *ἐντὶ ἀνδρὶ*, than on the bridegroom himself. In Ephesians this imagery is taken over but is used, as we shall see, for a different purpose. However, the emphasis on the purity of the bride in II Cor. 11:3 is present and greatly emphasized in Eph. 5:21-33.

Now while we can draw these parallels between the Corinthian correspondence and the Haustafel passage in Ephesians, noting their close relationship regarding imagery and terminology, it is not necessarily the case that the author of the Ephesian Haustafel borrowed these ideas from this particular source, as both the imagery and terminology used were in both cases well known and widely used in the early Christian community. It might even be argued that this metaphorical usage (Christ as

the Bridegroom, Church as Bride) may have been suggested by Jesus himself in sayings and parables which represent his 'parousia' as the coming of the Bridegroom (cf. Mt. 25:6; Luke 35-40), and the blessedness of the redeemed as a marriage feast in the age to come (Mt. 22:1-14).

The Old Testament texts cited by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel were also common currency in the early Church, with Jesus making Lev. 19:18, "Love your neighbour as yourself" the very cornerstone of Christian practice. He also quoted Gen. 2:24 in reference to the marriage relationship (Mark 10:7, 8; Mt. 19:5), following a tradition that may be traced to Qumran and early Judaism. In a real sense, this Haustafel form may well be, as C.H. Dodd points out, a channel for the transmission of the Jesus tradition.⁵⁹

It is not necessary for us to attempt to determine here from what specific source or sources the Ephesian author may have gathered these pieces of traditional material which he wove into his Haustafel account; it is sufficient here to point out the presence of this traditional material in the early Christian tradition and its ready availability to the author. Our main task is to find out the author's motives and the meaning of the material that he has woven together in his Haustafel account, and to determine if in using the Haustafel form

59. Cf. C.H. Dodd, "The 'Primitive Catechism' and the Sayings of Jesus", in More New Testament Studies, Manchester, 1968, p. 16.

he retained its original meaning, that is, emphasizing an ethical teaching or uses it for christological or theological purposes.

The best approach to the understanding of the ethical significance of the Haustafeln in relation to marriage, is to examine them synoptically, noting the common instructional themes, and the unique contributions by the different authors.

The Instructional Theme of the Haustafeln

The Haustafel form supposedly borrowed from Jewish and Greek sources,⁶⁰ was originally designed as ethical instruction, a guide in matters of social and moral conduct. This code, before it was 'Christianized' by the different NT authors and given definite Christian motives, had a basic instructional theme or motive that supported and maintained social and moral order in society. In a sense the Haustafeln were the props which supported the existing social structures -- a formulated defence of what behaviour and moral conduct ought to be, and were no doubt, worked out on the basis of existing social patterns, for example, patriarchal family structure, a master's relationship to his slaves, and a parent's responsibility to his children. The New Testament authors had no difficulty in borrowing these social codes, as they lived in the same social milieu and adhered

60. See above pp. 106-13.

in principle to the same social order. These codes were in essence, a reflection of their own human experience and were as natural as the air they breathed. However, it was on the basis of this human experience, codified in the long-standing Haustafeln, that the Christian authors wished to put forward their Christian teaching and witness, while allowing them to add new motives to the traditional material.

The main instructional theme of the Haustafeln is "to be submissive". This is reflected in all the NT Haustafeln by the use of the verb ὑποτασσῶμαι. This 'submission' is expected with regard to civic authority, and superiors in society, as the authorities are considered to be instruments of God's justice. I Peter 2:15 advises Christians to 'submit to every human institution for the sake of the Lord, whether to the sovereign as supreme, or to the governor as his deputy for the punishment of criminals and the condemnation of those who do **right**.' The 'submission' is also expected of subordinates, wives, slaves, and children. The idea of submission in the Haustafeln merely reflects the social 'mores' of the period, where women, slaves and children are considered inferior and therefore subject to superiors -- husbands, masters, parents. The familiar phrase "women, slaves and children",⁶¹ clearly indicates

61. Cf. M. Ber iii, 3; M.R. Sh. 1, 8.

the social significance of the subordination referred to in the Haustafeln. The woman, like the slave and child has over her a master, and while she may have had marginal rights in addition to those of the slave and child, her status was practically the same.

This submission is not, however, to be passive, but entails 'doing good'. For it is by 'doing good' that the structures of the society are maintained. Now, while it is not practical to instruct superiors to be submissive to their subordinates, superiors are expected to show to their subordinates reciprocal obligations of love, kindness and fairness. In this sense the submissive ethic runs the whole gamut of society, first of all men to submit to authority, and secondly, to various classes of people in society to 'submit' to their superiors.

We shall see how the Christian authors, while adhering to this basic motif of the original Haustafeln, add additional motifs that give the Christian version its own unique presentation. It is the unique interpretation of this basic 'submissive ethic' by the various NT authors that will concern us in the following discussion.

J.P. Sampley, in pointing out the hermeneutical problems in Ephesians 5:31-2, draws our attention to a pattern in the treatment of the Haustafeln material by the NT authors and notes two identifiable elements in it (1) a basic adherence to the basic motif of 'submission' regarding women, and (2) a reference to Torah as a means

of supporting the concern with the subordination of women. In the first element the author is restricted to this basic concept of 'submission', however, in the second, he has the freedom to adapt the form to his own purposes, the only limit being that the reference he uses must, in some way, imply grounding the subordination in Torah. The author is at liberty to choose whatever verse, or allude to whatever story in the law would best serve his needs at the moment.⁶² This pattern of women being submissive and a reference to a verse or story in the Torah can be substantiated in only three of the NT Haustafeln. In I Timothy 2:8-15, I Peter 2:18-3:7, and Ephesians 2:21-33, this pattern can be easily discerned with the authors using a story, example, or text from the Torah in support of the ethic of submission. However, this pattern is not followed in Colossians 3:18-4:1, and Titus 2:2-10. Sampley does not give an explanation for this, even though he insists on the pattern. However, the reason why the pattern does not occur in Colossians and Titus may best be explained by the following factors. If the Colossians Haustafel is an edited version of Ephesians then the Torah reference was left out in the interest of brevity. The Titus version deviates from the usual Haustafel structure in that it is not written to the people for whom the Haustafeln are intended. In this instance ^{it is} they are written to Church leaders who are

62. J.P. Sampley, op. cit. p. 97.

to teach young wives, young men, slaves and all Christians to be submissive to their superiors and the state. Therefore, classes of people are expressed in the accusative case, as those to be taught, and the instructions are given in the infinite form. In this case the Church leader is at liberty to choose whatever verse, or allude to whatever story in the law would best serve his needs in his particular situation.⁶³

The Christian Motifs of the Haustafeln

Earlier in this chapter we noted that the Haustafeln consisted of three levels of material: (1) pre-Christian elements from Greek and Jewish sources; (2) Christian elements common to the tradition (Compar. e.g. Eph. 5:22-33 with I. Cor 6:12-20; 11:3ff; and II Cor. 11:1-6); and (3) the additions given by the individual authors of the Epistles. It is on this third level of material that we will now focus our attention, endeavouring to determine the Christian motifs added to the basic Haustafeln instructions by the different authors of the Epistles.

As the Haustafeln cover a range of relationships such as a citizen's relationship to civic authority, a slave's relationship to his master, a child's relationship to his parents, and vice versa, we will focus only on those

63. This pattern of stating the basic principle of the submissiveness of women to men and then having it supported by a reference to the Pentateuch seems to have been a widespread early Christian convention which was applied to the understanding of the position of women in marriage in early Christian times. Cf., for example, II Cor 11:2f, I Cor 14:33^{b-4} and in non-canonical literature I Clem. 57:2ff.

domestic relationships that have direct bearing on the subject of marriage. Thus the relationship of husbands and wives will be our chief concern.

Wives and Husbands

The Haustafeln tradition gives mutual obligations to wives and husbands (Col. 3:18f; Eph. 5:22-33; I Peter 3:1-7; Titus 2:4-5 and, indirectly I Tim. 2:9:15). The duty of the wife always precedes the duty of the husband, and the passages give separate instruction for each. However, in the Pastoral Epistles the situation is somewhat different as the sets of classes are not treated in the same way --- the instructions to wives are not followed, as in Ephesians 5:22-33, Col. 3:18f, and I Peter 3:1-7, with reciprocal duties for husbands; instead the Haustafel form seems to be used in a more fragmentary way, with the authors of the Pastorals deviating from the usual Haustafel structure, largely because they are not writing for people for whom the Haustafeln are intended, but to the leaders of the Church who are to pass on the instruction to the membership. The emphasis, too, is upon the maintainance of social and moral order in both Church and State.

Ephesians 5:22-33

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself up for it, to consecrate it, cleansing it by water and word, so that he might present the church to himself all glorious, with no stain or wrinkle or anything of the sort, but holy and without blemish. In the same way men also are bound to love their wives, as they love their own bodies. In loving his wife a man loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own body: on the contrary, he provides and cares for it; and that is how Christ treats the Church, because it is his body, of which we are living parts. Thus it is that (in the words of Scripture) 'a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become a single body'. It is a great truth that is hidden here. I for my part refer it to Christ and to the Church, but it applies also individually: each of you must love his wife as his very self; and the woman must see to it that she pays her husband all respect. Ephesians 5:22-33 (N.E.B.)

It is quite clear that the author of Ephesians develops the instructions for submission according to a major theme of the letter: the unity of Christ and the Church. There is much discussion as to whether the author of the Ephesian Haustafel eclipsed the meaning of the original Haustafel by bringing the relationship of Christ and the Church to the fore. However, while Christological and theological motifs are much in evidence in the Ephesian passage dealing with wives and husbands (5:22-33) one must see it as a two-pronged effort by the author with both ethical and Christological significance.⁶⁴

64. This passage is often interpreted with emphasis on the theological aspect of covenant relationship, which is well illustrated in the passage by virtue of the illustration the author chose to use. However, the author is equally concerned, if not more, with exhortations to Christians in connection with their married lives. In the light of the total context of the Haustafel, we must give priority to ethical considerations on the part of the author. However, there is no doubt that he is attempting to show by use of the Christ/Church imagery the covenant relationship between Christ and His Church. By way of theological considerations see, G. Bornkamm, 'musterion', in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Vol iv, Ed. G. Kittel, Stuttgart, pp. 809-34; R. Batey, "The mia sarx Union of Christ and the Church", NTSt, 13 (3, 67) pp. 270-8, Cf. also Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, London, 1966, pp. 519 who comments: "The Christian approach to the marriage relationship is

Wives

As already noted, the Haustafeln reflect the sociological patterns of the era in which they were formulated, in which wives were to be submissive to their husbands and were thereby relegated to a secondary role.

V. 21 "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ", is not itself a part of the Haustafel, but acts as a counter-balance to what we might consider a 'sociological injustice' regarding the position of women that we find in the Haustafel itself. 5:21 may best be understood as the author's critique of the basic stance of the Haustafeln form wherein one group is ordered to be submissive to another group vested with authority over it. By introducing the Haustafel form in this way the author qualifies the absolute submission and the absolute predominance of one or the other class by way of a mutual submission — ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ. This innovation by the author is of ultimate significance because it immediately affects the social relationships of the classes involved in the traditional Haustafeln. The author wishes to make clear at the beginning that

based on the analogy of the relationship of Christ to His Church. In this section the purely practical issues become an opportunity for an exposition of Paul's doctrine of the Church. (1) It is the body of Christ, who is its Saviour; (2) it is the special object of His love; (3) it is made clean through His self-offering and will be presented to God without blemish, and (4) it is nourished by Christ. The relationship between Christ and His Church becomes, in fact, the pattern for Christian homelife". p. 519.

while submission and dominance is a part of the social order, Christians themselves are to share a "duty of reciprocal humility" in their relationships one with the other and with the pagan world. Already we see the influence of the Christian faith moving against the social inequalities that were inherent in the social codes based on the sociological patterns of the ancient world. While submission was still an aspect of the teaching, it was to be viewed in a different light, seen on a new plane --- the absolutes of submission and dominance were to be subsumed under a new 'humility' which is expressed in one's relationship to his fellow man and which becomes itself a duty of humility towards God.⁶⁵

With this basic stance toward the social structure of his day the author of the Ephesian Haustafel goes on to put the human relationship of wives and husbands in an entirely new context - one of 'reciprocal humility'. He manages this without doing violence to the Haustafel structure which he takes over and upon which he builds his 'hieros-gamos' theme. It is not practical when it comes to the role of husbands to instruct them to submit to their subordinates, this in effect would result in total chaos within the family relationship and would contribute to the breakdown of the social order which the codes themselves were designed to maintain. However, while the wife was to be submissive it was to be in

65. Cf. P. Carrington, op. cit. 50ff.

response to a reciprocal duty of love, kindness and fairness on the husband's part. Furthermore, the idea of 'submission' itself was taken out of the strictly social sphere as it is understood in the original Haustafeln, and given a new set of motives. The wife was to be submissive, not because it was her duty according to society, but because it was a means of serving the Lord. Submission becomes a means of doing good, of exemplifying Christian action and witness to the whole pagan world. 'Submission' becomes a Christian missionary motive, a means by which the Christian woman can influence and attract others to the Christian faith.

The author has developed the original Haustafel form to include his epistolary motif of the unity of Christ and the Church. He works out a theme of 'unity' which is also a theme of the Epistle itself, and bases the wife's submission on the analogy of the Church's submission to Christ.

The choice of Gen. 2:24 by the author is thought by Sampley⁶⁷ to serve a double function. It at once suggests a posture of passivity for the wife. The wife being the recipient of the action undertaken by the husband; she is never the actor. This is consistent with the admonitions to the wives in 5:22-33, and indeed

67. J.P. Sampley, op. cit. p. 111, 112

with the tone of the whole passage in which the wives are consistently expected to be submissive.

At the same time it can be taken to support the basic Haustafel admonition to the husbands -- "husbands, love your wives". Gen. 2:24 speaks of the husband leaving his father and mother to cleave to his wife. It is this same kind of activity and pre-eminence that is expected of the husband throughout Ephesians 5:22-33. In a real sense Gen. 2:24 sets forth in some detail the reciprocal relations that must obtain between a man and his wife.⁶⁸ This interpretation of Gen. 2:24 in the context of Ephesians 5:21-33 could have these possible implications. If so, they are used in this way for the first time. Generally Gen. 2:24 is used in most contemporary literature to refer to the matrimonial state in the conventional sense,⁶⁹ and while the ingenuity of the author of the Ephesian Haustafel may be at work here, there is evidence that the ideas of mutual

68. Ibid. p. 112

69. Cf. R. Batey, "The Mia Sarx Union of Christ and the Church", NTSt, 13 (3, 67) pp. 270-8. The conventional sense is here understood as those forms of social relationships that were in force at the time, and which are reflected in the literature such as the Haustafeln. R. Batey, in the above article, cites some of the ways in which the Old Testament quotation was understood and interpreted in contemporary literature, especially noting its connection with the myth of the ~~androgynous~~ *androgynous* man.

reciprocal relationships are themselves borrowed from earlier Haustafel forms.⁷⁰

The more logical reason for the inclusion of Gen. 2:24 by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel, is that it is the basic OT text in support of marriage in the early Christian tradition, being quoted in the Gospels, and the Pauline Epistles, and readily available to him through the common tradition of the Church.

The Ephesian teaching regarding wives is based on the command to be submissive, represented in the tradition by the participle imperative *ὑποτασσάσθαι*. However, the idea of submission is given a new dimension by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel, by linking it with the idea of Jewish humility and making it a means of service to God: to be humble before God is to be submissive before others.⁷¹

Husbands

The reciprocal duties of the husband are not altogether those of submission, but are rather obligations of love, kindness and fairness. The use of the verb *ἀγαπάω* could well have been the main verb

70. Cf. T. Beryh, *Pœtæ Lyrici Graeci*, Pars II, Leipzig, Teubner, 1915, p. 82, line 8. The Poem of Pseudo-Phocylides gives specific instructions for the marital relationships, and commands husbands to love their wives. Philo also gives the same instructions, urging the husbands to love their wives, and mentions also reciprocal obligations for wives. Cf. Philo, *Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit*. IV, 17 and 19.

71. loc. cit. p. 24 Off K. Kamlah

in the Haustafel form⁷² received by the author of the Ephesian Haustafel. This idea of ἀγαπάω in the original Haustafel gave the author of the Ephesian Haustafel an opportunity to construct his 'hieros gamos' analogy in order to bring out the depth and extent of this love. However, the end result of the husband's humble, Christ-like, love for his wife is a bond of unity, as Christ is united to His Church.

Colossians 3:18-4:1

"Wives, be subject to your husbands: this is your Christian duty. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for that is pleasing to God and is the Christian way. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, for fear they grow disheartened." vv. 18-21.

Working on the premise that Colossians is a shortened edited version of Ephesians, we expect very little that might be considered new. Nevertheless, the editor of the Colossian Haustafel makes some notable additions of his own.

In his conflation of the Ephesian Haustafel the editor omits any reference to the Torah, but rather mentions the submission of the wife to the husband as a Christian duty. The ἐν κυρίῳ has an ethical significance here, meaning what is ethically 'fitting' for Christian wives who are in the body of Christ, the Church. The phrase ὡς ἀνηκεν ἐν κυρίῳ teaches

72. See note 70 above, both the poem of Pseudo-Phocylides, and the writing of Philo mention a husband's love for his wife.

submission as an act complying with the character of Christian women. As was already noted, the idea of submissive quietness is a virtue to be sought by women within the Christian worshipping community (cf. I Cor. 14:34). However, the idea of submission, especially within the context of the Church, may reflect the idea of woman's sinfulness which would reinforce the custom of women remaining submissive and silent.⁷³

The only addition to the Ephesian admonition to the husbands made by the Colossian editor is the phrase "do not be harsh with them". This also comes up in Philo.^{74a}

The Haustafel in Colossians appears with very little elaboration on its original form, with the major emphasis being put on the 'Christianizing' of the code by the appropriate phrases such as *ἐν κυρίῳ*.

73. The idea of women being sinful, and indeed the transmitters of sin, is essentially a Semitic creation going back to the earliest epics. Cf. A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis and The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels, both Chicago, 1963. This same idea of women being sinful carried on in the Old Testament tradition, where women are almost always spoken of disparagingly, cf. for example, Prov. 21:9, 27:15-16; 31:3; Eccles. 7:26-28; Isa. 3:16-24; Sir 9:2-9; 25:2-25; 42:9-14. In Tobit 3:8, 6:14 we find an echo of the popular superstition that women attract demonic lust. This idea that women were in some way the transmitters of sin into the world was still prevalent in the ancient world of the New Testament.

74a. Cf. Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit. IV, 17 and 19.

I Peter 3:1-7

"In the same way you women must accept the authority of your husbands, so that if there are any of them who disbelieve the Gospel they may be won over, without a word being said, by observing the chaste and reverent behaviour of their wives. Your beauty should reside, not in outward adornment -- the braiding of hair, or jewellery, or dress -- but in the inmost centre of your being, with its imperishable ornament, a gentle, quiet spirit, which is of high value in the sight of God. Thus it was among God's people in days of old: the women who fixed their hopes on him adorned themselves by submission to their husbands. Such was Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him 'my master'. Her children you have now become, if you do good and show no fear.

In the same way, you husbands must conduct your married life with understanding: pay honour to the woman's body, not only because it is weaker, but also because you share together in the grace of God which gives you life. Then your prayers will not be hindered."

The Haustafel in I Peter 2:18-3:7 may be said to contain in its Christian elaboration a missionary motive. While the basic instructional theme of submission is adhered to, additional motives are given to this same theme. The author of I Peter 3:1-6 offers the following two additional motives for the woman's submission and proper adornments: (1) to make a favourable impression on the pagan world. The behaviour of the wife must in this sense be beyond reproach, setting an example of good morals and attracting the attention of the pagan world by her chaste and reverent behaviour: (2) the second motive for such submission is to emulate the women who have hoped in God. Following the pattern of quoting a story from Torah to illustrate his point, the author of I Peter made mention of Sarah the wife of Abraham as an

example of the 'holy women' who hoped in God and were themselves submissive to their husbands. "Such was Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him 'my master'."

In his treatment of the reciprocal duties of husbands he expands the motives for loving the wife on both natural and Christian considerations. First of all he points out that a man ought to have consideration for his wife because she is the weaker sex. More significantly, he expresses a measure of equality in the marriage relationship by suggesting that both husband and wife are joint heirs of the grace of God. This recognition of the wife as an equal heir of the grace of God is a Christian innovation. However, this equality does not supplant the customary authority of the husband, but gives the husband the responsibility to respect his wife as a Christian, and as an equal in the fellowship of Christ's Church. Furthermore, the husband in showing consideration, understanding and faithfulness to his wife, will find that his prayer life is not hindered but enhanced. In other words, good marital relationships will contribute to one's religious well being.

The Pastoral Epistles

"Women again must dress in becoming manner, modestly and soberly, not with elaborate hair-styles, not decked out with gold or pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, as befits women who claim to be religious. A woman must be a learner, listening quietly and with due submission. I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet." I Tim. 2:9-14.

"Let the older men know that they should be sober, high-principled, and temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. The older women, similarly, should be reverent in their bearing, not scandal-mongers or slaves to strong drink; they must set a high standard, and school the younger women to be loving wives and mothers, temperate, chaste, and kind, busy at home, respecting the authority of their own husbands. Thus the Gospel will not be brought into disrepute".
Titus 2:2-5

As was noted earlier, the Pastoral Epistles make use of the Haustafel form in a fragmentary way, rather than following the traditional form of addressing sets, or classes. The Pastorals further deviate from the Haustafel structure because they are not written to the people for whom the original Haustafeln were intended. In Titus, for example, they are written to the Church leaders who are to teach young wives, men, slaves and all Christians to be submissive to their superiors.

The motif which the author of Titus seems to attach to the Haustafel form is *ἵνα μὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ βλασφημηται*. It appears that the author of Titus was concerned with the maintenance of sound doctrine within the Church (Cf. Titus 2:1b;6ff). Throughout his Epistle there appears this curious notion that the "word of God" is to be defended by the good ethics of Christian women. Wrong ethics is said to bring blasphemy against God (his name, his doctrine, and his way) by Gentiles, and, as a correlative, right ethics will defend God's name and teachings against blasphemy.

The idea of a woman "listening quietly and with due submission", not being permitted to teach, nor dominate man; but be quiet (I Tim. 2:11f), appears from the example used by the author (the story of the fall, Gen. 3) to be an emphasis on the Jewish idea of women's sinfulness.⁷⁴

The Haustafeln in the
Apostolic Fathers

The Haustafeln in the Apostolic Fathers are used in the same fragmentary way as in the Pastoral Epistles. In all cases only those parts of the Haustafel are used that best serve the needs of the writer.

I Clement 1.3: 21,6-9

The author of I Clement does not, if he is familiar with the traditional Haustafel form, follow the pattern of classes addressed. Instead he reverses the traditional pattern of addressing subordinates first, and arranges his lists in a hierarchical order, following the sequence, rulers, presbyters, (older men), young men, wives.

The form of the Haustafel in I Clement is also similar to Titus in that the rules are not addressed directly to those who are to carry them out, e.g., wives, children, etc., but instead are addressed to the Church leaders to be passed on as catechetical instruction. The motives given for submission are also similar to those given in the Pastorals, that a wife is to be

74. See note 73 above.

silent, obedient and of exemplary character as a means of defending God's name and teachings against the blasphemy of the pagan world.

Like the New Testament Haustafeln, the Haustafel idea of submission in I Clement was a means of combining the social obligations of the day with an active and positive Christian witness.

Epistle of Barnabas 19:5,7

In Barnabas 19:7 we have a construction that resembles the Haustafeln form. Subordinates are addressed followed by reciprocal duties for superiors. However, this particular section of the Haustafel cited here has to do with "slaves and masters" and not with the relationship between husband and wife. But, the author gives his own Christian motive for submission - subordinates are to treat their superiors with reverence and fear; superiors are to be considerate to their slaves and servants, because both they themselves and their subordinates share equally in the one hope; are equal recipients of God's grace. Because of this equality before God superiors are to exercise consideration.

Didache 4, 9-11

This passage contains the same teaching of the "Two Ways" as Barnabas 19:5,7. However, the Haustafel form is reversed with superiors addressed first followed by

subordinates, e.g., fathers, children, masters, and slaves. The motives for obedience and consideration by subordinates and superiors are identical with that of the Epistle of Barnabas.⁷⁵

Polycarp ad Phil 4

Polycarp uses the Haustafel form in the same fragmentary way as the author of I Timothy, in fact, this passage has so much in common with I Timothy that some commentators⁷⁶ believe that Polycarp is quoting from the Epistle, and that the form of the Haustafel here is little more than a reproduction of I Tim. 5:5.

From this cursory glance at the Haustafel tradition in the Apostolic Fathers, it can be seen that the authors of the various post-New Testament writings, while possibly familiar with the Haustafeln form, did not adhere to its structure, but instead used it in a fragmentary way for their own purposes. It is quite possible that some, (Polycarp, for example) relied on a New Testament Epistle such as I Timothy in his use of the Haustafeln. All of them, however, express the traditional social obligation of 'submission' in relation to subordinates, but at the same time give it a Christian motive, making it an active and positive means of Christian witness.

75. For a more detailed commentary on the passages in the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache see A. Kraft, The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 141, The Didache and Barnabas, London, 1965, p. 153ff. / 141

76. Cf. P.V.M. Benecke, "Polycarp", in The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, Oxford, 1905, pp.84ff, especially p. 95.

Social and Religious Implications of the Haustafeln

Form critical analysis of these 'Haustafeln', which provide ethical standards for all kinds of social relationships --- (relationships between husband and wives, parents and children, master and slaves, rulers and subjects,) -- shows that they go back to the household codes common in the popular ethics of the Judaeo-Hellenistic world.⁷⁷ These codes summarized the civil duties of man as a "political being", that is, as a citizen, or member of a human society. In the beginning these codes may have had some religious base, but in time were secularized, that is, they became ethically based on "human nature" and on the human conscience. Therefore, these 'Haustafeln' by virtue of their natural base became the 'universal natural codes' of the period. When Christianity had occasion to take over these codes in order to guide its members in their social existence, it imbued the 'code' with "Christian motives" and raised them to the level of religious commandments, where the obedience of the duties were to be carried out "in the Lord" or "as Christ loved the Church". Here was the beginning of a more permanent ethical theology being founded on the basis of an ethical appreciation already existing in society, and in connection with the planning and regulation of social life, both in the smaller community of the then prevalent extended family and in the greater community of the state.

77. 313ff above.

The question which arises here, especially for our particular problem of marriage, is this: Are we confronted here with a Christian confirmation of existing ethical forms which are thus presented in the New Testament as an unchangeable norm? Or, are we to suppose that what we are to experience "in the Lord" are the ethical values and social structures already present in society, and that these existing values should be preserved? This question becomes of ultimate significance when we consider it in the context of the New Testament assertion that the husband is the "head of the wife", and of the wife's subordinate position and factually inferior social status in the ancient world which resulted from this assertion. Are we to suppose from what we know of these assertions, that the authors of the Epistles under discussion, are merely "sugar-coating" the old social order with its inequalities, making it more palatable by adding, as reasons for adherence, Christian motives?

E. Schillebeeckx⁷⁸ reminds us that the Christians shared in both a 'human' and 'divine' tradition, that co-existed in time and were not always explicitly distinguishable by the believing community in expressing their convictions. He remarks:

78. E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery, p. 248, London, 1965.

"In the assumptions on which the community of the faithful lived, and on which it based much of its thought and action, there was not only a whole area of convictions that went back to the revelation of God's word, but also a not inconsiderable group of convictions derived from the universally received ideas of a definite period of time. These convictions formed the communal property of human awareness at a given period and were only replaced when new situations and fresh discoveries showed them to be outdated."⁷⁹

The Christian community did not live in a social vacuum in the ancient world. Its 'human' tradition was inherited from the same social milieu that created the 'Haustafel' codes. Its religious convictions went back to an inner demand made by revelation which ^(were) they expressed thematically in conceptual terms borrowed from the existing view of man and the world. Very often their religious convictions were expressed in the framework of the "human tradition", for example in terms of the social relationships that were prevalent at the time, such as the relationship between husband and wife. However, when changes occurred in the social and economic structure, the believing community was forced to re-examine its convictions to see whether what they believed was essentially a religious truth expressed thematically, or simply an adherence to outdated social structures which were in the process of being replaced by newer ones.

A comparison of the structure of domestic life in the New Testament with domestic life in the secular world

79. Ibid p. 248.

of the period shows that the New Testament structure contained the same basic elements, with the wife's position in the New Testament very similar to the low social status of the married woman in the whole of the ancient world.⁸⁰ The husband was very much the 'master', being the head of both family and society. Looking at the minor details of the historical and social data of the New Testament we find that the husband "married", whereas the woman was "given in marriage" (Cf. Luke 27:27, 20:35). A husband was to "love his wife", but the wife in turn was to be "subject to her husband" (Col. 3:18f, Eph. 5:22ff; I Peter 3:1ff; Titus 2:5).⁸¹ In all likelihood it appears that what we have expressed in the New Testament idea of 'submission' is the ancient idea of 'paterfamilias' expressed in Christian terms.

The New Testament Haustafeln express the idea, universally current in those days, of the wife's status in the 'oikos', that is, in marriage and the family. It is therefore, not an expression of the general subordination of women in society, but referred chiefly to the wife's subordination to her own husband, and

80. Cf. J. Leipoldt, Die Frau in der Antike und im Urchristentum, Gütersloh, 1953.

81. In the Epistle to Titus, the author urges the Church leaders, "to train the young women to love their husbands and their children." (Titus 2:4). This, as we shall see, is a reflection of the new attitude which is developing in the ancient world toward women at this time.

consequently there is no direct mention of women's subordinate position in contemporary society. This observation is of particular interest in the light of the new developments that were taking place regarding the status of women in the ancient world. To quote Schillebeeckx again:

"It is undisputed that human values and social relationships were beginning to change in the secular world, both before and during the first century A.D., despite the existence and widespread use of the household codes in the secular sphere. . . . The husband remained the paterfamilias, but a change was taking place in the sphere of human feelings, and husband and wife were gradually coming to treat each other more as equals. The ancient social structures were not swept aside as yet, but they were filled with a new spirit ---- a spirit of increasing equality."⁸²

What we have reflected in the NT Haustafeln is the feelings and attitudes of a society in transition --- a movement from the rigid hierarchical social structure of the ancient past to a more humane reciprocal social structure, where women were experiencing a degree of "female emancipation". Therefore, in the NT Haustafeln we have reflected something of what was, what is, and what is hoped for, in the pattern of human relationships.

This spirit of increasing equality is not so easily detected in the Pauline Epistles, in fact there is evidence that Paul saw the emancipation of women as threatening the normal domestic order and harmony that

82. Op. cit. p. 253-4.

existed in society. In a real sense, Paul can be blamed for defending an out-dated social order and family pattern against the threat of a new and freer way of life.⁸³ The relationship of man and woman, in Paul's view, was threatened by the prevailing spirit of the age, especially in the case of the Greek Christians.⁸⁴ Therefore, it was partially in defence of this traditional social pattern, in which the man had priority

83. Paul's attitude toward women was very much in line with the Jewish orthodox view expressed in Josephus, "The wife, says the Law, is subject to the husband in all things", Contra Apionem, 2.24. In I. Cor. 11:3 Paul's statement "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God", reflects the notion that the woman is to be subordinate to man not only in the home, but in society and in the Church. In Corinth, the Women's Liberation Movement, which expressed itself in their appearing unveiled at public religious meetings, and in their rising to speak at these meetings together with the men, was seen by Paul as threatening the cherished traditions of the accepted social order. Thus he sought to defend the traditional social order in which the man had priority over the woman, by drawing on traditional arguments in Mosaic law (I Cor. 14:35-5), Rabbinic tradition (I Cor. 11:16), and Stoic philosophy (I Cor. 11:6, 7-10). His strong defence of this tradition was in response to the new spirit that can be detected in the writings of his contemporaries, for example, Epictetus, who remarks on the growing custom of addressing girls as Kyria "lady" or "madam", as the counterpart of Kyrios "lord" or "sir". Cf. J. Leipoldt, *op. cit.* p. 47ff.

84. While this view had not penetrated to the sphere of legislation, it was quite clear that in both Greek and Roman society the woman was beginning to experience a degree of emancipation. Cf. W.J. Woodhouse, "Marriage (Greek)", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed., by James Hastings, VIII, (1916), p. 488ff.

over the woman, that Paul appeals to the Yahwist account of Creation (Gen. 2:24ff), in which the woman's position and function in the social system of the time is one of subordination.⁸⁵ It is significant to note Paul's use of this particular account of Creation, when the second account (Gen. 1:27ff) gives no such impression of inequality. In Gen. 1:26-28 there is no indication whatsoever of rank between man and woman. The three-fold reference to God's 'creating' in v. 27 leaves no room for any distribution of rank or status. Both man and woman are equally in immediate relationship to the Creator and his act. Furthermore, both together receive (v. 28) the blessing as well as the command to subdue the earth (1:28). In this later account of Creation (Gen. 1:26-28) the idea of social subordination on the part of the woman is viewed negatively, if not attacked, by the author, who sees the social relationship of man and wife as expressing a reciprocal relationship that derives its basis from the theological idea that man and wife are equals before God, and equal heirs to all that he has ordained. Paul pays scant attention to the Priestly account (Gen. 1:26-28) with its emphasis on

85. The account given in the second Chapter of Genesis which is the older of the traditions, known as Yahwistic, dates from about the tenth century B.C.. The second account, given in the first chapter of Genesis (1:26-8), the Priestly narrative, was written some five centuries later. The Priestly narrative is not influenced as much by the social system as it is by the theological idea of equality before God.

equality, and instead prefers the much earlier Yahwist account (Gen. 2:24ff) that refers to the actual social situation in which women occupied a subordinate position. This social pattern, maintained throughout the history of Israel,⁸⁶ became the basis of Paul's theological formulations ---- with the priority of the man over the woman being used by Paul to illustrate the relationship of Christ and the Church.

In the New Testament Haustafeln we still have to a large extent a defence of the social order where the man is considered "the head of the woman". Yet, at the same time we have the acceptance of the new spirit of equality which was beginning to change the social values and human relationships of the ancient world. The woman was now seen, in some respects at least, as man's equal. The absolutes of dominance and subordination which were so prevalent in the ancient world were gradually being replaced by a more reciprocal relationship which gave the woman a degree of dignity and equality. The values of the old world and the rising expectations of an enlightened humanity meet in the Haustafeln teaching. However, the one does not contradict the other but instead the authors of the Haustafeln attempt to transform the old values of dominance and submission by attributing

86. In fact this social pattern still exists in Near Eastern society, with the man being very much the head of the family. Cf. R. Patai, Family, Love and The Bible, London, 1960, pp. 60ff; also H. Granqvist, Marriage in a Palestinian Village, II, Helsinki, 1935.

to them new motives; — Motives which bring them more in line with the secular developments in human society.

There is evidence in the New Testament *Haustafeln* that the Church is moving with the times, adjusting and developing its theology along the lines of secular developments in human society. However, its ethical theology is still very much tied to the social patterns of society, amounting to little more than a theological substructure that reflects the social system of the time. Nevertheless the Christian Church must be seen in the vanguard of social change, and whether it borrowed the idea of equality from the Hellenistic world or from its own convictions, there is ample evidence that women in the Church obtained a place which must have caused quite a sensation in contemporary society. Christ, himself, initiated this new attitude toward women which was in total contradiction to contemporary Jewish custom (Cf. Jn 4:7-11,27; Mt 8:14; Lk 13:10-17; 8:1-3). The Church carried forward this tradition by permitting women to speak in the community of believers (Acts 2:17-18),⁸⁷ and giving them equal rights with men in the election of the Apostles (Acts 1:14,26). This attitude towards women was alien to the Jewish spirit, and, although it was to some extent intelligible to the Hellenistic world, it nevertheless represented a radical break with the established views of the time on the position of women in society. This ethical development in the Christian community did not come at once, or without complications. While Jesus,

87. Compare for example, I Cor 11:34.

to the consternation of his Apostles, broke the customary attitudes towards women, Paul defended these traditional customs, drawing on numerous arguments from tradition in support of his stand -- the priority of man over woman.⁸⁸ At times the community is divided as to the direction in which it should move, whether it should go with the current of social change, or hold conservatively to the existing social order. Paul chose to do the latter, but the spirit of the Christian community generally was such that it compelled it to examine its convictions in the light of social change, and to test these convictions to see whether they originated as an essential religious truth, or merely the reflection of out of date social structures which had in the meantime been replaced by newer ones. The Haustafeln in the New Testament are a good example of the Church's awareness of the changing patterns in society, and of its efforts to incorporate these social changes in the Gospel message; For what we have in the NT Haustafeln is not so much a condemnation of the old values as a combination of the old with the new, which is essential for the Church's survival in the world.

The Christian Meaning of Submission

Two questions need to be answered regarding the NT Haustafeln: Why did the Christian community require to

88. See note 83 above. p. 349.

borrow the 'Haustafel form' for its ethical instruction? And secondly, how did this form influence the different social relationships, especially marriage, within the Christian community? The simplest answer as to why they borrowed the 'Haustafeln' as a framework for their ethics is that expressed by Kenneth E. Kirk who suggests that "the Jewish and the Greek world ... were demanding clear, authoritative, and easily remembered instructions on ethical questions."⁸⁹ The Gentile converts were asking questions that demanded a clear understanding from the Church on matters of a practical ethical nature. It was the Church's genius to be able to combine in its teaching to its Gentile converts the ethical knowledge and formulations of the Hellenistic world with the Christian message. However, while this contact with the Hellenistic world may be a major cause for the Church's adoption of the 'Haustafeln', it is, I believe, not the most important cause.

The 'Haustafeln' as we have seen pre-date Christianity, having their roots in both Greek and Jewish society ---- being a kind of universal ethical code for the ancient world, with the different societies emphasizing those aspects that reflected their particular social structure and ethical outlook, and deleting those which did not apply. Thus while it expressed itself differently in the different cultural settings of the ancient world, it was always in evidence, like a natural

89. K.E. Kirk, p. 118.

law of moral behaviour. Christianity, no doubt, was aware of this ethical code from its inception, either in its Jewish form or quite possibly in its more structured Greek formulation. However, why Christians did not adopt this 'ethical code' at the beginning can best be explained by noting the unique ethical development of the early Christian Church. In matters of ethics the early Church may be said to have passed through three stages. The first stage of its ethical development was governed largely by an apocalyptic outlook, where ethical behaviour was subsumed in a rigorous sectarian practice similar to that of Qumran. At this stage the whole community was based on a religious ethic which assumed the functions of regulating individual piety and virtue, and also of prescribing a science of social and communal behaviour. Thus the standard and sanction of morality were firmly grounded in religious faith. Ethics became not only the adherence to external laws, but became internalized to govern thoughts as well as actions (Mt 5:28; Mk. 10:5). Therefore, instead of specific ethical instructions to guide behaviour, ethical decisions were handed down through theological generalizations --- good ethical behaviour being a consequence of one's religious practice. However, this apocalyptic approach, where ethical behaviour was a direct consequence of religious faith, became no longer adequate when the Church began to move out beyond its Jewish sectarian boundaries to the Hellenistic world. The need for

cultural assimilation to the teaching of the Gospel soon became apparent. Matthew writing to his Jewish-Christian community found it necessary to bring the rigid apocalyptic view of marriage and divorce into line with the cultural practices of his people. (Mt 5:32;19:9f). So, too, did Mark when he wrote to his Gentile congregation possibly in Rome (Mk. 10:1-10). Thus the early Church in these existential circumstances was faced with the realities of divergent cultures, and the need to deal with the practical issues of everyday ethics. However, in the beginning it was possible to practice a sectarian type ethic governed by apocalyptic thinking, as the environment in which Christianity began, that of Judaism, made possible, and in some ways encouraged such practice.

Upon the death of Jesus, however, the apocalyptic hope of the followers of Jesus quickly faded, leaving the Apostles and followers momentarily faced with the realities of human existence. I say momentarily, because almost immediately their attention was diverted from the circumstances of everyday life by the new eschatological hope. This hope, that Christ would return in their lifetime and establish His Kingdom became the over-riding principle in the Church's life. In this situation there was no need for an ethical code, for the human institutions in which men found themselves were about to be replaced by Christ's Kingdom. Those who were to share in this new kingdom were to stand in readiness,

living lives that were spiritually and morally acceptable for membership in the New Kingdom. Therefore, the need for ethical codes to guide moral behaviour was not felt as one's moral behaviour was still invariably linked with religious faith. The eschatological principle governed both faith and actions.

When this eschatological hope subsided the community was once more brought back to a sense of reality --- having to face once more the need for a practical ethic. It was at this stage that the Church proved its ingenuity by combining the Christian hope of the Second Coming with the ethical knowledge for practical ethics from the Haustafeln tradition. This was not an abandonment of the eschatological hope, but a sober acknowledgment by the Church that the second coming of Christ, while expected, may not occur in the present generation. Therefore there was need to speak realistically and practically to the everyday human relationships that were now taking on a degree of permanency for the Christian. This need was met by the Church's adoption of the Haustafeln, which provided a basis for the development of a Christian ethic. By adopting the Haustafeln form as a basis for ethical teaching the early Church 'christianized' these codes, and gave them, as we have seen, Christian motives in addition to the basic underlying social motives that already supported the social structures of the society. This three stage development may best be understood in terms of

W.D. Davies'⁹⁰ idea of the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions of early Christian morality - that is to say that in the Apocalyptic and eschatological period the primary stress is on the 'vertical' dimension --- that is, the Church's attachment to the Jesus of history and the risen Lord, and the expectation of His immediate return. In the third stage, however, the 'horizontal' dimension plays a larger role, where the absolutes of Jesus' teaching are transformed into practical rules of conduct. In this situation the emphasis is placed not so much on the 'vertical' dimension, but on the place of the Christian community in the world, and to meet its ethical needs the Church not only domesticated the absolutes of Jesus, but took over domestic virtues from the world.

The works of recent exegesis help to detect in the NT literature this three stage development of early Christian ethics. While the Synoptic gospels were written later than the genuine Pauline Epistles, they are, at the same time, dependent on documents which go back to the earliest Christian community (e.g.Q), and are attempts to record the first beginnings of the Christian Church, and more particularly the ministry of Jesus. These Synoptic accounts are unanimous in portraying an apocalyptic outlook in Jesus teaching, and shows evidence

90. Cf. W.D. Davies, "The Moral Teaching of the Early Church" in The Use of The Old Testament in the New and Other Essays, Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring, edited by James M. Efird, Durham, N.C., 1972, pp 310-332.

that Jesus and the earliest Christian community were influenced by the highly apocalyptic teachings of heterodox Judaism. Thus the first stage of Christian ethics is governed by apocalyptic thinking which expressed itself in a rigorous sectarian practice similar to that of Qumran. The second stage is clearly seen in the genuine Pauline Epistles, here the apocalyptic idea is displaced by an eschatological hope. In this crisis situation in the Church ethical codes were considered unnecessary, as one's moral behaviour was governed by the eschatological principle. However, when this hope subsided due to the delay of the 'Parousia', the Church moved to the third stage of its ethical development, and adopted the traditional Haustafeln codes as guides for moral behaviour. This was an important move on the part of the Church as it enabled it to prepare itself in a positive way for the future. This stage is clearly seen in the deutero-Pauline Epistles.

The idea of 'submission' in the New Testament Haustafeln differed significantly from the idea of 'submission' in the secular household codes. The difference, however, is not so much in the meaning of the term as in the motives attributed to the concept of submission as understood by the early Christians. The Christians in borrowing the idea of submission from the Haustafeln changed it from a passive social obligation that was imposed on subordinates into a dynamic and

positive way of spreading the Gospel. While the concept of submission in the New Testament Haustafeln carries with it the idea of subordination in the context of social relationships, it adds three distinctive characteristics to the idea of submission, which lift it out of its cultural context making it into an instrument of social change and Christian witness. First of all to the New Testament authors of the Haustafeln submission came to mean 'non-retaliation'. The author of I Peter sets forth the whole principle of suffering for righteousness sake by showing Jesus to be our perfect example of non-retaliation:

"To that you were called, because Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example; it is for you to follow in his steps. He committed no sin, he was convicted of no falsehood; when he was abused he did not retort with abuse, when he suffered he uttered no threats, but committed his cause to the One who judges justly." I Peter 2:21-23.

Life takes on a new quality, it becomes 'a fine thing' if one is able to suffer for righteousness sake following the example of Christ. It is by this kind of non-retalitory behaviour that Christians shall win others to Christ, whether they be unbelieving husbands or wives, or any others who disbelieve the Gospel. Secondly, the idea of submission for the Christian did not mean that the subordinates were to be passive towards the people under whom they served. Submission was to be a positive and creative means of influencing non-Christians. To the authors of the NT Haustafeln the idea of submission

was very much akin to the Jewish idea of doing good as a means of changing the social situation, for example the doing of good as a means of changing one's enemies (Proverbs 25:21f). Therefore, submission was not so much a static concept with them, where subordinates passively accepted their role in the hierarchical social structure of the day, but, in actual fact, became a means of change. The doing of good by the Christian believers and the acceptance of their position in the spirit of non-retaliation according to the example of Christ were important elements in the missionary campaign of the early Church. The third element which gave a new impetus to the Gospel message in the Gentile world was the fact that the basic idea of submission in the Haustafeln tradition was a means of combining the social obligations of the day with an active and positive Christian witness. This factor is of utmost importance in that the success of the Church in the Gentile environment depended very largely on its ability to assimilate its message to the different cultural and ethical patterns of pagan society. It was here that the Church proved its viability and versatility by adopting these 'household codes' and making out of them, not only precepts of moral conduct for its followers, but a potent missionary tool for the evangelization of Gentile society.

These changes had an influence on all the social institutions of the ancient world, not the least the institution of marriage. While marriage maintained its

traditional social pattern with the man having priority over the woman, the idea of submission in the marriage relationship was no longer passive on the part of the wife, in fact it no longer existed in the form of the old social absolutes of submission and dominance. Man and wife were beginning to view their relationship as mutual, with the old servile relationship being replaced by one of mutual understanding, sharing, helpfulness and concern. Marriage was becoming a positive and meaningful relationship among Christians, a relationship that not only contributed to the individual's well-being but contributed importantly to the growth and well-being of the Church. However, at this stage marriage was not the old institution of the Hebrews or the Greeks, it was an institution in a state of transition, with the new influences of Church and State combining to bring about changes that helped marriage develop into the kind of institution that reflected the teaching of the Gospel.

CHAPTER VI

THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO MARRIAGE IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The swing from an emphasis on a life of virginity under the tension of Paul's eschatological gospel, to a positive approach to marriage when this eschatological hope faded was vital to the survival of the Christian community. Had the Church insisted on a custom of 'consecrated virginity', which came into prominence under Paul's eschatological preaching, it would have turned into a celibate community and might well have disappeared as a historical reality. However, once the Church became aware of its role as the body of Christ in the world, and that its presence in the world was not to be one of isolation, it made the necessary adjustments for its survival and mission. One of these adjustments for its survival called for a positive approach to the most basic of all human institutions -- marriage. Therefore the Post-Pauline Church became anxious to point out that this ancient institution was "an honourable estate, ordained by God", and what is more, an instrument through which the Church may, by precept and example, make known the Gospel of Christ.¹

However, was this swing in the Church's thinking as marked as the 'Haustafeln' teaching seem to indicate? Do

1. Cf. I Tim. 5:10,14f, Titus 1:6, Also I Tim. 2:15; Heb. 13:4.

we find this positive attitude expressed in the rest of the Pastorals, contemporary New Testament writings, and the non-canonical Christian literature of the period? The purpose of this chapter is to determine if this positive approach to marriage was a definite characteristic of the Christian community at this time, and whether it was, in part, a reaction to the asceticism that had crept into the Church as a result of the earlier eschatological hope.

The Pastoral Epistles

The strongest reaction to asceticism in the Pastorals occurs in I Tim. 4:3-5:

"They forbid marriage and inculcate abstinence from certain foods, though God created them to be enjoyed with thanksgiving by believers who have inward knowledge of the truth. For everything that God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is taken with thanksgiving, since it is hallowed by God's own word and by prayer."

There has been, and still is, considerable discussion in the exegetical literature as to what group or groups the writer is referring to in making this statement regarding marriage. Some early commentators² believed that the statement was directed against those who followed the sectarian practices of the Essenes, who were understood to have made abstinence from marriage a necessary

2. Cf. J.E. Huther, Pastoral Epistles, in Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, Edinburgh, 1881, trans. by David Hunter, p. 170. See note 1, which gives the position of some early exegetes.

condition of holy life.³ Most recent commentators,⁴ however, believe that the heretics mentioned here are of a Gnostic type. C.K. Barrett is representative of this view when he states:

"It is clear from this passage that men are in mind who practice a gnostic kind of asceticism, believing (it seems) that matter and everything connected with it (such as sexual relations) is intrinsically evil. They forbid marriage, so did the (later) gnostic heretics.

Paul did not do this, though he scarcely shows the positive attitude to marriage and child-bearing found in the Pastorals (I Cor. 7). It must be added that Paul's reservations with regard to marriage rested on grounds quite different from those of the Gnostics."⁵

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3. If we consider the scrolls of Qumran as the literature of the Essenes, which is the view of most scholars (e.g. Y. Yadin, M. Black, R. de Vaux, M. Dupont-Sommer), we find this view of Essene marriage is brought into question. While Philo, Josephus and Pliny the Elder have recorded the abstention of certain segments of the Essene community from sex and marriage, the Scrolls themselves, and the evidence of its cemetery, where the remains of women have been found, indicate that the community practiced marriage. In the texts so far published there is no evidence of asceticism being practiced. The Manual of Discipline does not mention abstention from marriage. The Damascus Document recovered from three of the Qumran caves in two slightly varying manuscripts takes for granted marrying and begetting children. Cf. IQS A, VII, Vermès, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 103ff; CD I, *Ibid.*, p. 119.)
- The only deviation from normal marriage relationships contained in the scrolls is the deferment of marriage until the age of twenty in a culture that used puberty as the norm. Cf. The War Scroll, VII, *ibid.*, p. 133. See also Chapter 3 above.
4. Cf. A.R.C. Leaney, The Epistle to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, The Torch Bible Commentaries, London, 1960; E.K. Simpson, The Pastoral Epistles, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, pp. 65ff, among others.
5. The Pastoral Epistles, Oxford, 1963, p. 54.

A few scholars are not as definite about the identity of the heretics mentioned here, or, if in fact they were heretics in the strict sense of that word. J.N.D. Kelly states:

"... the discouragement of marriage, as of sex generally, was a definitely Gnostic trait, and came to the fore in the great second-century Gnostic systems. ... This has tempted many to identify the heretics as Gnostics proper, but this is to ignore the Jewish background of their teaching and the fact that all the main features of developed Gnosticism are absent from it. There is evidence of a negative attitude toward sex, not perhaps so radical as this, in the Corinthian Church (I Cor. vii.1ff.: and Paul had earlier dealt with this in his sensible way. What we have to do with here is not so much thorough-going Gnosticism as an incipient tendency in that direction manifested by converted Jews in a syncretistic environment."⁶

Kelly had noted earlier that:

"It is in fact unrealistic to look to the well-known Gnostic or near-Gnostic systems of the second century for light on the teaching which provoked the Pastorals. Everything suggests that it was something much more elementary; and it is significant that much of the writer's polemic is directed, not so much against any specific doctrine, as against the general contentiousness and loose living it encouraged."⁷

It has been suggested that the asceticism referred to in this passage (I Tim. 4:3f) is not altogether the asceticism of a heretical sect, similar to what was encountered in the Corinthian correspondence,⁸ but is,

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6. A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, London, 1963, p. 95.
 7. *Ibid*, p. 14.
 8. Cf. Chapter 4 above, pp.242ff.

in fact, an instance of over-realized eschatology⁹ on the part of some Church members.

The whole problem seems to centre around a misunderstanding of the resurrection on the part of certain false teachers.¹⁰ They believed that by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Christian community has been projected into the Age to come,¹¹ and that the conditions of life in that age were now in force. For them the resurrection lay in the past, and therefore Jesus' statement that in the resurrection men neither marry nor give their children in marriage demanded that marriage cease (Mt 22:30). The whole difficulty lay in the fact that the false teachers, and those who followed them, failed to distinguish the present time of refreshing, which the resurrection of Jesus had initiated, from the consummation to be

9. W.L. Lane, "I Timothy IV.1-3. An Early Instance of Over-realized Eschatology," NTSt, 11 (1964-65) pp. 164-7.

10. Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching that the resurrection was already past, $\tau\eta\nu \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$
 $\eta\delta\eta \gamma\epsilon\gamma\omicron\nu\epsilon\nu\alpha\lambda$, (II Tim. 2:18)

11. It is interesting to note that such a confusion regarding the resurrection was also entertained by later Christians. Cf. Iren., Adv. Haer., I, XXiii,5, of the Samaritan Menander, a disciple of Simon Magus (cf. Justin, Apol. I, 26); Justin, Dial. 80; Tertullian de Anima 50, of Marcion. Minucius Felix, Octav. II, comments, 'By a peculiar blindness they add faith to that which they have invented. You would think, to listen to them, that they were already resurrected!'

inaugurated by the yet future resurrection at Christ's second coming. Therefore, what the author of the Pastoral is anxious to make clear is that the present experience of the Christian community is an experience of life in Christ, but is different from the eternal life promised at the Second coming of Christ.

The key to the understanding of this passage (I Tim. 4:3ff), and to the author's hostile attitude to this ascetic practice, is found in I Tim. 4:8, which makes this distinction between the present reality and the future hope crystal clear:

"The training of the body does bring limited benefit, but the benefits of religion are without limit, since it holds promise not only for this life but for the life to come".

This brings us back to J.N.D. Kelly's remark that "everything suggests that it was something much more elementary", than the heretical teaching of a Gnostic faction within the Church. This much more elementary "something" appears to have been this confusion regarding the meaning of the resurrection within the Christian community; and those who interpreted the resurrection of Jesus as having inaugurated the New Kingdom, believed also that the conditions of life in that Age were now in force. This misunderstanding of the resurrection which resulted in a false conception of the eschatological Age needed to be refuted in the strongest possible terms. Therefore, the author of I Timothy is anxious to point out to all believers that the present circumstances in which the Church finds itself ^{are} ~~is~~ not the eschatological

Kingdom, but the concrete realities of human existence to which the Church is called to experience Christ. This meant, too, that believers were to participate in those 'orders of creation' which God had instituted for man in his earthly life; therefore marriage, as an institution ordained by God, was to be honoured and enjoyed by all believers.

No doubt the author of I Timothy is aware of the false asceticism of the Gnostic Christians, and the widespread practice of asceticism in the pagan world,¹² but appears here to be more concerned with correcting the misunderstanding that has arisen in the Christian community --- a misunderstanding that threatens to disrupt the harmony of social life by the false belief that the eschatological Age has already arrived and therefore there is no need for the basic institutions of earthly existence, such as marriage. Aware of the Church's historical reality, the author makes plain to his readers that they are still bounded by the circumstances of everyday earthly life, and that the life to come remains a future hope. Therefore, orderly marriage, blest with children, is the sound order of life

12. Cf. H. Preisker, Christentum und Ehe in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten, 1927, p. 21ff. Preisker gives us some indication of the extent of celibacy in the ancient world when he remarks: "In order to circumvent Augustus' law against celibacy, mock-marriages were arranged with poor men, who made themselves available for this role against a money payment". On the law itself, cf. pp. 63ff.

in the Christian community (I Tim. 5:10, 14f; Titus 1:6).

I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6

Further light from the Pastoral Epistles comes from the regulations regarding Church officers, contained in both Timothy and Titus. The phrase "Faithful to his one wife" (I Tim 3:2, Tit. 1:6), is understood by many recent Protestant scholars as forbidding remarriage after the death of the first wife;¹³ this is also the classic interpretation of the Catholic Church and has strong support in the ancient canons¹⁴ and in the Fathers.¹⁵ On the other hand, many Protestant exegetes, and not a few Catholic scholars,¹⁶ interpret the text as a prohibition of polygamy.

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13. Among Protestant scholars who hold this view are: Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, Heinrich Greeven, Karl Müller, Herbert Preisker. Cf. Preisker's book, Christentum und Ehe in den ersten 3 Jahrh., 1927, pp. 148ff.
 14. For references to support in the ancient canons see, W.A. Schulze, "Ein Bischof sei eines Weibes Mann ... Zur Exegese von I Tim 3.2 und Titus 1.6", Kerygma und Dogma, IV (1958) pp. 288, 9.
 15. The Fathers most frequently quoted in support of this view are, Athenagoras of Athens, Apology 33, Tertullian, 'De Exhor. cat., De monogamia; Jerome, 'Adv. Jovinianum' I, 34, PL 23, 269. For a complete catalogue of references to the above view see, "Remarriage after Divorce in the Primitive Church: A Propos of a recent book", H. Crouzel, IrThQ., 38 (1971-72) pp. 21-41.
 16. For a list of Catholic scholars who hold the view that the texts refer to a prohibition against Polygamy, see S. Lyonnet, "Unius uxoris vir (I Tim 3, 2.12; Tit 1.6)", VerDom 45 (1967) p. 6.

In support of the first opinion we have in the Fathers such exponents as Athenagoras of Athens, Tertullian and Jerome. Athenagoras, in his Apology, states the case quite plainly:

"A person should either remain as he was born or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only decent adultery. ... For he who deprives himself of his first wife, even though she be dead, is a cloaked adulterer, resisting the hand of God, because in the beginning God made one man and one woman."¹⁷

Tertullian's works, on the other hand, are a bit more ambiguous, owing, no doubt, to his later conversion to Montanism. In his earliest treatise on the subject 'Ad uxorem' (two books, c.203), he asks his wife either to remain a widow or to marry only a Christian after his death. However, during his Montanist period, he produced two other works 'De exhortatione castitatis' and 'De monogamia'. In the first he exhorts a friend who is a widower not to contract a second marriage, which he actually calls a "kind of fornication"; in the second he unleashes a violent attack on the unlawfulness of the second marriage.

17. Apology 33, Translation by J. Quasten, in Patrology, Spectrum Publishers, Utrecht-Antwerp, 1965, p. 235.

W.A. Schulze¹⁸ sees no support for the prohibition of a second marriage in Tertullian's and Jerome's appeal to the alleged practice of pagan cults which would not accept for their priesthood a man who had been married more than once; in fact he points out that historical study has proved this practice to be non-existent.¹⁹

Furthermore, little value is added to the argument by

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18. "Ein Bischof sei eines Weibes Mann ... Zur Exegese von I Tim 3.2 und Titus 1.6", Kerygma und Dogma, IV (1958) pp. 295.
19. Ibid. pp. 295ff. While this practice (remarriage) may have been non-existent in the pagan priesthoods of the cults, there is strong evidence that Tertullian and Jerome were basing their arguments on the monogamy practiced in the Jewish priesthood, interpreting the Christian priesthood to be the whole body of believers (I Peter 2:5). In this sense all Christians, and not just the bishops and deacons were to practice monogamy. To show the likelihood of this interpretation I need only to quote a short passage from L. Epstein, Marriage Laws in the Bible and Talmud, 1942, showing the emphasis on monogamy in the Hebrew priesthood, and a passage in Tertullian's 'De monogamia'. Epstein remarks "it is noteworthy that not a single case is recorded in the Bible of a priestly family living in polygamy The new Testament denies polygamy to bishops (I Tim 3.2, Tit. 1.6). The Mishnah assumes that the high priest had only one wife (M. Yoma 2a), and the Talmud reads into the biblical text itself the prohibition of polygamy for high priests (Yoma 13a, Yeb. 59a on Lev. 16.9,11). These facts give us ground for the suspicion that perhaps older Hebrew tradition restricted the priestly tribe to monogamy". Tertullian is aware of this monogamy in the Hebrew priesthood, and also aware that we are called to be a priestly people: "The Law (of Moses) prohibits priests from marrying a second time. The daughter also of a priest it bids, if widowed or repudiated, if she have no seed, to return into her father's home and be nourished from his bread. ... Us moreover Jesus has made "priests to God His Father" according to John ... Priests we are withal called by Christ; debtors to monogamy, in accordance with the pristine Law of God, which prophesied at that time of us in its own priests." (Ch. VII).

appealing to Roman burial inscriptions praising a woman as 'univira', for these epitaphs only reflect the egotism of the husband who did not wish his wife to remarry after his death, and, significantly enough, inscriptions are lacking which praise a man for not remarrying after the death of his wife.

The key figure in support of the argument against a second marriage is undoubtedly the Alexandrian theologian, Clement. Clement was the first Christian author to give a systematic treatment of sexuality, marriage and virginity, and the principles which he constructed became commonplace in later centuries. Clement defends marriage against all attempts of the Gnostic sects to discredit and reject it. He not only recommends marriage for moral reasons, he goes so far as to regard it a duty for the welfare of the country, for the succession of children and for the perfection of the world.²⁰ It is on his understanding of the concept of matrimony that he is against any second marriage.²¹ For Clement matrimony is higher than any sexual union; it is a spiritual and religious union between husband and wife so that he avers: 'Sacred is the state of matrimony'.²² So sacred is marriage that even death does not dissolve

20. Paed. 2, 10, 83, 2.

21. Strom. 3, 12, 82.

22. Strom. 3, 12, 84.

this union completely. It is because of this spiritual unity that Clement is against any second marriage.²³

However, this view was not unanimous throughout the early Church, and one has only to take a cursory glance at the early Christian writings to see that there was a wide variety of opinion as to what the authors of I Tim. 3,2, and Titus 1.6 may have been referring to in their regulations to Church officers. One of the earliest non-canonical writers, the Shepherd of Hermas, contrary to a number of Christian authors, permits remarriage:

"If, Sir, said I, a wife, or on the other hand a husband die, and the survivor marry does he sin so doing? He does not sin, said he, but if he shall remain single, he shall thereby gain for himself more exceeding honor and great glory before the Lord; but even if he marry he does not sin."²⁴

According to J. Pospishil²⁵ quite a large number of the Church Fathers permitted remarriage after the divorce of some persons, and some interpreted I Tim. 3,2 as a regulation against polygamy in the Church. To take just

23. Ibid. For a full treatment of Clement's systematic treatment of sexuality, marriage and virginity, see Jean-Paul Broudehoux, Mariage et Famille Chez Clement D'Alexandrie, Paris, 1970.

24. Mand. 4, 4, 1-2.

25. Among the Fathers listed as permitting remarriage after divorce are: Theodoretus, Ambrose, Lactantius, Theophilactus, Epiphanius, Chromatius, John Chrysostom, Hilary of Poitiers, Tertullian, Basil the Great, and Theodoros of Mopsuestia. Cf. "Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church", IrThQ 38 (1971) pp. 338f.

* For a positive view of marriage in the fifth century cf. "Theodoret of Cyrhus on Marriage", G.W. Ashley, Theology, 72 (1969) pp. 482-491.

two examples we might look at the interpretations of Theodoret and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Theodoret explains the regulation found in I Tim. 3.2 on the basis of the polygamy practiced by both Greeks and Jews; and in I Tim 5.9 the author is thought by Theodoret not to be thinking of a widow who has not entered upon a second marriage but of a widow who has lived honourably in the married state.²⁶

Theodore of Mopsuestia, in his Commentary on our texts,²⁷ is in strong agreement with this same view. According to Theodore's thinking the reference in I Tim 3, 12 of 'a woman being the wife of one husband' does not refer to a woman who has not contracted a second marriage, for, as Theodore points out, the author himself advised people to remarry (I Tim 5:14) and therefore could not have deemed a second marriage quite unsuitable. In Theodore's view the author of I Timothy is speaking of a woman who has lived uprightly with her partner whether she has only one husband or has wed a second, provided that she has not thought of a second at the same time when she had the one partner.²⁸

26. Cf. PG. 82, 805.

27. Theodore Mopsuestenus, In epistolas B. Pauli commentarii. Ed. H.B. Swete, vol. III (1882) pp. 99-106 (de I Tim 3,2) et p. 160-1 (de I Tim 5.9).

28. Cf. S. Lyonnet, "Unius uxoris, (I Tim 3, 2, 12; Titus 1,6)," VerDom 45 (1967) p. 4f.

Some scholars²⁹ have given a variation to the traditional Protestant interpretation, which retains the idea that the authors of I Timothy and Titus were fighting against the polygamy that was prevalent among the Greeks and Jews, but in addition were guarding the Church against successive polygamy which was a result of the easy divorce laws of the period. Therefore they understand the passage to mean that a cleric who has divorced his wife should not marry again as long as she is living.

From these examples from early Christian and Patristic literature we can appreciate the divergence of opinion extant in the early Church on these texts from the Pastoral Epistles. The question of remarriage generally in the early Church was by no means a clear-cut issue for the early Church Fathers, and one only has to read the very interesting debate between Henri Crousel,³⁰ and Victor J. Pospishil³¹ on the question of remarriage and divorce, to appreciate the divergence of

29. Among those who hold this view are J. Jeremias, Pastoralbriefe, Göttingen, 1949, pp. 18, 57ff.; F. Godet, Introduction au NT, vol. I, 1893, p. 644f; A. Cepke, TWNT, Vol. I, p. 364.

30. Cf. "Remarriage after Divorce in the Primitive Church: A Propos of a recent Book," IrThQ. 38 (1971) pp. 21-41. This article highlights the differences of opinion and interpretation concerning the question of 'remarriage and divorce' among Patristic exegeses.

31. "Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church", IrThQ 38 (1971) pp. 338-347. Cf. José Montserrat-Torrents, The Abandoned Spouse, Bruce, Milwaukee, 1968.

opinion that existed among the early Church Fathers, and, for that matter, the divergence of opinion among their interpreters.

In the light of the circumstances in which the authors of the Pastorals were writing it seems unlikely that the burning issue here is the concern of a Church member taking a second wife after the death of the first. If Paul's illustration in Romans 7:1-6 is any indication of the practice among Christians, then the Christian community understood the marriage bond to be broken on the death of a spouse, with the surviving spouse free to contract a new marriage. There is no reason to believe that this basic understanding of marriage had changed, especially since the author of I Timothy recommends remarriage (I Timothy 5:14). The positiveness of the author's attitude toward marriage may be seen in the practical reasons he gives for the permission to remarry; it is to avoid the pitfalls of a passionate nature, and the idleness that a young woman has to contend with when she has no family responsibilities.³²

P.C. Lattey,³³ points out that there has been insufficient attention given to the conditions in which, at the time of the Pastoral Epistles, the Christian communities were living. R. Schnackenburg, gives

32. Cf. I Tim. 5:9-15.

33. "Unius uxoris vir (Titus 1,6)", VerDom. 28 (1950), 228-9.

something of a description of these conditions when he states:

"In the time of the Emperors (at the turn of 1st Century) the Old Roman strictness had given way to frightful licentiousness which spread throughout society, especially in the cities, and led to an increasing decline in social life. Consorting with courtesans and prostitutes was hardly thought of as vice any longer; adultery and divorce were commonplace and the reform laws of Caesar Augustus were evaded by sham marriages."³⁴

It was this appalling situation, aggravated by the practice of polygamy and concubinage among the Greeks and Jews,³⁵ which gave the young Church, who had by now become aware of its new role in human society, cause for concern.

The Church's reaction to these appalling conditions in society had two important effects upon the life and future of the Christian community; first, it demanded that the Church define for its membership what a Christian marriage ought to be. This it did by recalling the community to the origin, meaning and purpose of marriage as revealed in the teaching of the Old Testament (Gen. 1:27, 2:24), the preaching of the prophets, and the early Church tradition (Mk. 10:1-10, Mt. 5:32ff; 19:3-12). To convey this concept of marriage it 'christianized' the existing moral codes,

34. The Moral Teaching of the New Testament, London, 1962, p. 248, 9.

35. W.A. Schulze, op. cit. 287-300.

thus giving marriage a deeper meaning and larger purpose than mere social obligation.³⁶ Secondly, the Church realized that in order to change the decadent moral situation the Christian concept of marriage had to be put forward in a positive way, therefore the Christian community presented the marriage relationship as a means of cleansing society of its moral aberrations.³⁷

While we cannot be certain as to the exact purpose and meaning of the regulation in I Tim. 3.2, 12; Titus 1.6, the most acceptable explanation is that this regulation is, in essence, both a prohibition against polygamy and the easy divorces of the period. If we accept the variation of the classical Protestant interpretation made by a number of notable exegetes,³⁸ then what is meant by 'the husband of one wife' is not only that Christian marriage is to be monogamous, but that a Church official who is divorced is not permitted to remarry while his first wife is still alive. This makes the simple regulation a potent weapon against both

36. Cf. Chapter V, which deals with the Christian motives given to the moral codes, also the concept of 'subordination' in the Christian ethic.

37. According to Lightfoot, the early Church Fathers saw "compulsory celibacy at once caused the immeasurable scandal of the 'subintroductii' and a state of things denounced by Father after Father as nothing better than a secret and criminal concubinage which had to be coped with - and that in vain - even by imperial laws."

38. See note 29 above. p. 375.

polygamy and divorce. This interpretation also makes sense of the regulation regarding widows that they be the 'wife of one husband'. Widows, in the Church's estimation, are women who have had only 'one husband' at any one time, and that before contracting a second marriage the first husband had died and had not been divorced. Therefore, 'a real widow' (I Tim. 5:3ff) is one who is made so by death and not divorce.

In this passage regarding widows (I Tim 5:3-15) an interesting insight is thrown on the social status of women at this time. The question undoubtedly comes to mind as to why widows are mentioned as full participants in the Christian community, while no such mention is made of 'virgins', that is, young unmarried women? The simple answer is that a widow, by virtue of her widowhood, has been emancipated from the authority of both father and husband. The father transfers the rights of his daughter to the husband on the completion of the marriage, and the husband relinquishes his rights over the wife upon his death (cf. Rom 7:1-6). The young unmarried woman or the married woman has no such independence, and remains under the authority of father and husband respectively, this is why we hear nothing of the young unmarried woman or the wife in the affairs of the Church.

Hebrews 13:4

This positive approach to marriage is also expressed in another piece of contemporary writing, the Epistle to

the Hebrews,³⁹ which states:

"Marriage is honourable; let us all keep it so, and the marriage bond inviolate; for God's judgement will fall on fornicators and adulterers." Heb. 13:4

Summed up in this cogent statement are the three basic characteristics of Christian marriage, first, that marriage is an honourable state, and therefore to be enjoyed by the elect of God's people; secondly marriage for the Christian is to be indissoluble, a union of 'one flesh' implying life long togetherness; and thirdly, and probably the most radical change demanded by the Christian community, is that marriage excludes all extra-marital relationships on the part of each partner. The husband is no longer permitted unlimited sexual freedom, as was the custom in earlier times, but like the wife, his sexual activity is confined to the marriage relationship, and those who violate this limitation are indeed fornicators and adulterers.

This short statement in Hebrews not only indicates that the Church was beginning to think positively about marriage, but gives us a clear idea of the new shape marriage was beginning to take in the Christian community. Apart from the insistence on indissolubility,

39. The Epistle to the Hebrews is purported to have been written around A.D. 90-95. However, some scholars for example E.T. Merrill, date the Epistle as late as 140 A.D. cf. Essays in Early Christian History, 1924, pp. 217ff. This date, however, is not usually followed. For a complete discussion on the authorship and date of this Epistle see Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, London, 3rd ed. 1970, pp. 716-718.

a traditional Christian trait,⁴⁰ the Church demanded a radical change in sexual behaviour by confining all sexual rights to the marriage relationship, which was, most likely, a reaction to the sexual aberrations of the pagan world.

Contemporary Christian Writings

The most substantial evidence in support of a shift in the Church's thinking regarding marriage comes from the contemporary non-canonical Christian writings of this period. It is highly significant to note the absence of 'consecrated virginity' as a customary way of life in the earliest Christian writings. J. Massingberd Ford, in an article entitled, St. Paul, the Philogamist (I Cor. VII in Early Patristic Exegesis), notes:

"... one is immediately struck by the dearth of references to *παρθένος* and *παρθενία* and the apparently apposite text I Cor. vii. 25, 36-8 in the earliest Christian writings ... The scanty references in the first and second centuries are more marked when they are contrasted with the many complete works devoted to the subject in the later centuries. These works begin in the mid-third century with St Cyprian's 'De Habitu Virginum' and Pseudo-Cyprian's 'De Bono Pudicitiae, De Singularitate Clericorum' and 'De Duplici Martyrio' and from that time onwards every writer of repute devotes at least one treatise to virginity, for example St Athanasius has five and St Ambrose has seven."⁴²

This silence concerning virginity by the authors of the various non-canonical writings in the latter first and

40. Cf. Chapter Three above, pp. 105 ff.

42. NTSt, 11 (1964-65) p. 326.

early second centuries, indicates the trend which we have been noting in the Pastorals and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In fact, where virginity is mentioned by the earliest Christian authors it is toned down and attributed no spiritual advantage. For example, Ignatius of Antioch in counselling virginity states:

"If anyone is able to remain continent to the honor of the Flesh of the Lord, let him persistently avoid boasting".⁴³

Clement of Alexandria, writing in the latter part of the second or early third century, gives voice to the positive attitude toward marriage:

"Therefore, we must by all means marry, both for our country's sake, for the succession of children, and as far as we are concerned for the perfection of the world; since the poets also pity a marriage half perfect and childless, but pronounce the fruitful one happy."⁴⁴

Another interesting feature of the earliest Christian writers is that they make no reference whatsoever to I Corinthians VII, which becomes for the later Second and Third century Fathers the basis for their teaching

43. Pol. 5.2, translation by Quasten J., Patrology, Spectrum Publishers, Utrecht-Antwerp, 1966, p. 68. Elchasai declares that he hates celibacy and continence and required his disciples to become married. cf. Epiphanius, Adv. Haer., XIX. 1f.

44. Paed. 2, 10, 83, 2. Cf. J. Quasten, Patrology, op. cit. p. 34, Vol. II.

on virginity.⁴⁵ The absence of this highly suggestive passage in favour of virginity, suggests that the Church at this particular time, saw virginity as a possible hindrance to the spreading of the Gospel, viewing it as a practice that required special gifts rather than an institution to be embraced by the Christian community. In the light of the abuses perpetrated by secular and cultic celibacy, the Church saw in marriage an alternative approach to the curing of society's ills, thus they played down asceticism within the Church and promoted for their own members the new ideal of marriage.

Certain second-century texts refer to married men among the ministers of the Church, among them Polycarp's letter to the Philippians (11:4) and Irenaeus' 'Against Heresies (I, 13,5).

However, toward the end of the second century the pendulum began to swing once more toward asceticism and

45. The following first and second century writers make no mention of I Cor. VII, and where they mention 'virginity' the use of the term is explained: I Clement, Barnabas, Ignatius - only one reference to virginity (Pol. 5,2). to a man remaining *ἐν ἀγνείᾳ* .; Polycarp, Didache (1st-3rd) lack of references to virginity suggests early date. Diognetus (2nd-3rd century), Hermas, one reference to I Cor 7, also mentions 'allegorical virgins'., Justin Martyr, One sentence in Apol.c.15. Some remain pure up to 70 years of age., Pseudo-Justin, One reference to male virginity 'De Resurr. c 3. Athenagoras, Makes one reference to virginity "You will find among us both men and women growing old unmarried in the hope of living in closer communion with God" Apol. 33., Theophilus, and Clement - much about chastity but not about virginity.

In contrast to this Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian and Pseudo-Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Ambrose and Jerome have numerous references to I Cor. VII and produce individual works on virginity.

virginity. The encratism of this period grew and developed hand in hand with the growth of Gnostic dualism and its repudiation of marriage. Tatian, highly influenced by Gnostic teaching, rejected marriage entirely and followed Marcion.⁴⁶ The Pythagorean philosopher Sextus is also responsible for certain 'Sayings', that is, moral sentences and rules of life which counselled against marriage.⁴⁷ However, by the turn of the third century a definite change in attitude had come about. Tertullian, Hippolytus and Origen opposed clerical marriage,⁴⁸ with Tertullian in his later, Montanist period opposing all marriages.⁴⁹

Hippolytus disagreed with Pope Callixtus in admitting not only married men, but twice married, and thrice married men to the Priesthood.⁵⁰ Origen, under this Encratite influence, departs from his predecessor in

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46. Cf. Eusebius, 4,29 quoting Adv. Haer. lib i.c. Other Fathers who refute Tatian are Hippolytus, Haeresium Refut. lib. vii 16; Clement of Rome, Strom. iii, c.13.
47. Cf. F.C. Conybeare, The Ring of Pope Xystus, London, 1910; also J. Quasten, Patrology, Vol. I, p. 170.
48. Tertullian's arguments against clerical marriage are contained in De exortatione castitatis, 13, 4, 8, 3; 7, 1; Ad uxorem, 1, 7.4., and De monogamia 8.4-7, 11, 2, 12,3. Hippolytus' objection comes in his Adversus omnes haereses, 9, 12, 12. Origen Homilies on Luke, 4.6.
49. Cf. references in note 47 from De monogamia.
50. Adver. omnes Haer. 9, 12, 12.

the Alexandrian catechetical school, Clement, by denying any fatherhood to priests of the new law but a spiritual one like St. Paul's.⁵¹ This emphasis on clerical celibacy had a negative effect on marriage generally, and during the third and fourth centuries marriage was not held in high esteem in Christian circles.⁵²

Conclusion

In this brief survey of the contemporary Post-Pauline literature we have seen how the Church reacted to the asceticism that had crept into the Church under the influence of Paul's eschatological gospel, and also its reaction to the secular asceticism which caused the major part of the moral problems in the Hellenistic and Roman world. At this stage the pendulum had swung from an emphasis on virginity in expectation of the imminent return of our Lord, to a positive attitude towards

51. Cf. reference to Origen in note 47, also Quasten, op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 46ff.

52. This trend toward encratism was opposed by a number of the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, expresses a positive attitude toward marriage in the early stages. The 'Didascalia Apostolorum' (first half of the third century) supposes that candidates for the bishopric will be married men or widowers and stresses the criteria of Timothy for a good family man (2,2,2-4). Under the persecutions of Decius, Diocletian, and Maximilian there are numerous references to married bishops and priests. Cf. Roger Gryson, Les origines du célibat ecclésiastique, Gembloux, 1968. pp. 32-36.

marriage where the Christian was called to share in those human institutions which were ordained by God for the enjoyment and well-being of man --- of which marriage was one. The Pastoral Epistles, in particular, sought to overcome the ascetic influences of secular society and Gnosticism, and in addition attempted to clarify some misunderstandings regarding the resurrection and the expected 'parousia' which had arisen in the Christian community and contributed to a negative attitude towards all social institutions, particularly marriage.

This new positive emphasis on marriage required the Christian community to define what it meant by marriage, as there were many forms of marriage practiced in the syncretistic environment of the Hellenistic world. The Church defined what it meant by marriage by elaborating on the existing 'household codes' of the Hellenistic world, injecting into these moral codes Christian motives that were inspired by revelation, scripture, and the teaching of Jesus as they understood it. Marriage was now seen in the light of Christ's relationship to His Church, and the characteristics of this Christ-Church relationship were now to be expressed in the basic human relationship --- marriage. Love, understanding, sharing, equality, responsibility and concern, became a part of the new ideal of marriage in the Christian community.

What is more, through the influence of the Prophets of the Old Testament, and the early teaching of the Synoptic tradition, which held a monogamous view of

marriage, the Church made monogamy as well as indissolubility a characteristic of Christian marriage. While it is argued that there is no explicit teaching in the New Testament in favour of monogamy or any explicit teaching against polygamy, it can be reasonably deduced from the Church regulation in the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim 3, 2, Titus 1.6), that the Church favoured monogamy, and prohibited, at the administrative level at least, persons who practiced polygamy. Protestant scholars, however, interpret these passages as a teaching against polygamy as well as against remarriage after divorce, - treating the question of remarriage after the death of a partner in the light of Paul's illustration in Romans 7:1-6 which permits remarriage after the death of a partner.

In the non-canonical Christian writings of the same period we found the same positive attitude toward marriage. Highly significant is the silence concerning virginity by the authors of the various non-canonical writings in the late first and early second centuries, and the absence of any reference to I Cor 7 which formed the basis for 'consecrated virginity' in the late second and in the third century. Furthermore, those who did speak of virginity in this period such as Ignatius of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria, did not attribute to it any superior status, but saw it as a gift, equal, but not superior to marriage.

What becomes increasingly clear in the Post-Pauline literature is that the ethical development in the New

Testament literature is not a smooth evolution of ideas based on the teaching of Jesus, but develops as the result of reactions to different trends within the Christian community itself. Different ethical principles dominate the Christian community at different periods influencing and determining the community's ethical behaviour. However, when the dominating principle subsided or a different ethical principle was given priority, the ethics of the Church changed, because of a reaction to the previous trend. In the Pauline letters the pendulum had swung, under the eschatological principle, to favour virginity. Now, in the Post-Pauline literature the pendulum had swung back, under the principle that the Church was called to be a continuing part of the present world order, to a more positive attitude towards marriage. It was to swing back again to the side of virginity in the early third and during the fourth century.

However, it was at this positive stage, --- the Haustafeln period --- that the Church laid the foundation for its new ideal of marriage. Stemming the cultural and ascetic tide of the Hellenistic world, the Church fashioned from the natural 'moral codes' and the teaching of the Gospel a concept of marriage that has best been described, by some, as a sacrament.

CHAPTER VII

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

To suggest a theology of marriage presupposes that we are prepared to think of the institution of marriage in a "religious-ethical" framework.¹ For the essential thing about theology is that it has to do with God; therefore, if we propose a theology of marriage, or morals, it simply means that God is involved in some way. However, such a theology is not about God alone, because all we know about God, by revelation or reason, comes to us through human experience, especially human relationships, including our relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.² It is in the context and meaning of our human relationships that we catch a glimpse of God's creative activity and purpose in our lives. This is why theologians, of all shades of opinion, can see in

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1. It is difficult to think in religious-ethical terms about marriage even when we are prepared to do so, because ethical norms in our society have become separated from the community of faith. Therefore, when we combine the religious and the ethical for the sake of theologizing, we are, in fact, speaking of a relationship that holds true only for a minority who still believe that ethical norms are grounded in the community of faith, and derive their validity and authority from the fact that they are God-given. *Supra*, Chapter 1, p. 5.
 2. Rosemary Haughton, The Theology of Marriage, The Mercier Press, Cork, 1971, p. 10.

Ephesians 5:21-33 a two way illumination³ --- a teaching that heightens the basic secular reality, perfecting it in some respects, while at the same time expressing in this secular reality profound spiritual realities. We see the human relationship of husband and wife, parent and child, as mirroring the relationship between God and man, and because we do this we have a tendency to speak idealistically of what the secular reality of marriage ought to be. Marriage theology in this respect helps to set high ideals for the basic human relationship, because it chooses to assess marital relationships on the basis of God's relationship with man --- a relationship of perfection. However, a theology of marriage that is relevant and meaningful does not demand perfection in our human relationships, as fallen man is incapable of such perfection; instead it points out how we might overcome our imperfections by exercising in our human relationships those redeeming qualities that we discern in God's relationship with us --- forgiveness, love, compassion, and fidelity. These are the qualities that perfect the marriage relationship because they diminish our imperfections, raising us and our relationships to a new level of awareness. It is at this level that marriage becomes more than a secular reality, it becomes for the partners involved "a means of grace" in

3. Helen Oppenheimer, "Marriage and Grace", Theology 72 (1969) p. 536.

that it exercises within the secular reality qualities of redemption.

In the following pages we shall outline the three fundamental approaches that have been employed in arriving at a theology of marriage, and shall, on the basis of the exegesis arrived at in this thesis, show the weaknesses of a textual approach to marriage theology and the possibilities for a theology of marriage on the broader basis of the Gospel. However, before moving on to this stage there is a matter arising out of our basic exegesis that needs clarification.

Jesus' Concept of Eschatology

In an earlier Chapter⁴ we outlined a three-stage development in New Testament ethics, the apocalyptic outlook of Jesus' teaching, the eschatological ethic of Paul, and the Post-Pauline 'Haustafeln' teaching. What is in need of clarification here is the sense in which the teaching of Jesus is understood as "apocalyptic". This clarification will, I believe, accentuate the differences within this three-stage development of New Testament ethics, and at the same time point out the uniqueness of Jesus' teaching.

The dominant concept of Jesus' message is "the Kingdom of God". This message as Bultmann notes:

4. Cf. Chapter 5, pp. 354ff.

"is connected with the hope of other circles which is primarily documented by the apocalyptic literature, a hope which awaits salvation not from a miraculous change in historical (i.e. political and social) conditions, but from a cosmic catastrophe which will do away with all conditions of the present world as it is. The presupposition of this hope is the pessimistic-dualistic view of the Satanic corruption of the total world-complex, which is expressed in the special doctrine of the two aeons into which the world's career is divided: The old aeon is approaching its end, and the new aeon will dawn with terror and tribulation." 5

However, Jesus does not share the fanciful speculations of the end which are found in other apocalyptic writings.

As R. Bultmann remarks:

"he completely refrains from painting in the details of the judgement, the resurrection, and the glory to come." 6

Now, while Jesus takes over the apocalyptic idea of the future with a significant reduction in detail, He adds a totally new dimension which focuses the apocalyptic hope not on the future, but on the present. Jesus places the emphasis on the 'Now' of the Kingdom. "Now the time is come! The Kingdom of God is breaking in! The end is here!" Thus for Jesus, the Kingdom of God is not a historical condition that will be realized by some future catastrophic event, rather the Kingdom of God is,

"a power which, although it is entirely future, wholly determines the present. It determines the present because it compels man to decision; he is determined thereby either in this direction or in that, as chosen or as rejected, in his entire present existence." 7

5. Theology of the New Testament, I, London, 3rd Ed., 1959, p. 4.

6. Ibid. p. 5.

7. R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, London, 1958, p. 44.

Jesus rejects the demand for a more rigorous adherence to Mosaic law⁸ as a means of bringing about, or ensuring one's place in the Apocalyptic Kingdom; instead he contrasts Mosaic law with the actual intention of God, and calls for absolute obedience to the will of God rather than to an external formal authority. "Moses", says Jesus, "permitted divorce by making a concession for "your hardness of heart", but the actual intention of God was that marriage was to be ^{indissoluble} ~~inseparable~~" (Mk 10:2-9). For Jesus the absolute authority is no longer the external authority, but complete obedience to the will of God.

"Radical obedience exists only when a man inwardly assents to what is required of him, when the thing commanded is seen as intrinsically God's command; when the whole man stands behind what he does; or better, when the whole man is in what he does, when he is not doing something obediently, but is essentially obedient."⁹

This essential obedience to God's will is something which, according to Jesus, ought to take place now -- in man's present situation, because it is 'now' that man is called to decide for the Kingdom, and this decision must not be relative but absolute.

What is understood as the will of God in the teaching of Jesus is the demand to love. However, Jesus did not make this love-commandment an ethic of world-reform. It is not a social ethic, but rather an

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8. The Sectaries of Qumran called for, and demanded, a rigorous adherence to Mosaic law.
9. R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, London, 1958, p.52.

eschatological one, in that it does not envisage a future to be moulded within this world by plans and sketches for the ordering of human life. Jesus, too, believed that marriage belonged to that 'form of this world which is passing away'. Yet he saw the demand of love as directing man into the 'now' of his meeting with his neighbour. It is an ethic that, by demanding more than the law that regulates human society does and requiring of the individual the waiver of his own rights, makes the individual immediately responsible to God.¹⁰ Therefore Jesus made plain that God does not lay claim to man's obedience only in so far as conduct can be determined by formulated laws, which would leave man's own will free from that point on. What God forbids is not simply the overt acts of murder, adultery, and perjury, with which law can deal, but their antecedents; anger and name-calling, evil desire and insincerity (Mt 5:21f, 27f., 33-37).¹¹ Therefore, the demand to love claims man totally.

Thus the fundamental and radical difference of Jesus' teaching compared with that of Jewish apocalypticism and Pauline eschatology,^{12a} is that, he conceived the

10. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, p. 19

11. Ibid p. 13.

12a. The difference between the Pauline emphasis on 'now' and Jesus' preaching may be explained by noting that the 'now' of Paul's preaching is best understood as a time of preparation for the Kingdom, whereas Jesus refers to the Kingdom as already 'realized' in the here and now.

Kingdom of God not as a historical reality that will come in the future, nor as a state of life which man may, by precept and denial, bring into existence, but as man's complete commitment to the will of God in the present moment of his existence.

This amplification of what is meant by Jesus' 'apocalyptic outlook' should not only help to clarify any misunderstanding that may have arisen earlier, but should also help in our efforts to arrive at a meaningful and revelant theology of marriage.

Developments in Marriage Theology

There are three distinct levels to the discussion of marriage in the present literature. The first is the development of marriage theologies, which have been inspired by a variety of new approaches to the foundations of the Christian faith. The second, is the lively discussion, especially in Catholic circles, of Canonical practice which has come under critical review since Vatican II shifted the emphasis from the idea of marriage as a contract to that of 'community of love'.¹² The third, concerns pastoral attitudes, which attempts to take into consideration individuals in particular circumstances. However, all three levels of the discussion are inter-related, with marriage theologies forming the basis for canonical and pastoral practice,

12. Cf. Mgr. Alan Clark, "What the Council says about Marriage," London, Catholic Truth Society, July 1967, pp. 6-7.

and pastoral attitudes seeking support in both marriage theology and canonical practice. Because of this interdependence it is difficult to differentiate between the three levels of discussion. However, it is possible to arrive at a theology of marriage without having to indulge in long discussions of canon law or present day marriage problems, even though they will determine to a large extent the outcome of our theology, for the essential purpose of a marriage theology is to try to find out what God purposes "marriage" to be for human society, regardless of legal, social and historical circumstances. This search for the divine purpose for marriage has itself taken three different approaches which we shall outline and illustrate briefly: the textual approach, the natural law approach, and the philosophical or conceptual approach.

The Textual Approach

The textual approach is by far the oldest and most familiar approach to formulating a Christian theology of marriage. It can be argued that all marriage theology is textually based, in that scriptural texts are utilized to illustrate in various ways the authenticity of the theology expounded. However, as we shall see, all marriage theology does not begin with a textual approach to the problem; some begin on the basis of natural law, while others choose to frame their theological formulations in the context of a philosophical or theological proposition.

One could not attempt to outline here the many uses and abuses of this approach to marriage theology. At best we may attempt to show some of the developments in this more fundamental approach, and how it has affected, and is affecting, marriage theology in the current literature.

The most serious criticism regarding the textual approach to marriage theology has been the tendency on the part of earlier exegetes, and some modern ones as well, to express a theology of marriage solely on the basis of the half dozen or so emphatic statements on the subject found in the Old and New Testaments. Exegetes, of all shades of opinion, have expended much energy in trying to co-ordinate these biblical texts into a coherent doctrine of Christian marriage. This exercise always left much to be desired both in the field of doctrine and exegesis, and, in the light of recent exegetical developments,¹³ several factors have come to light which demonstrate the futility of this earlier approach to marriage theology.

The most obvious difficulty in combining biblical texts stems from the fact that the different statements in the Old and New Testaments on marriage are drawn from widely divergent historical and cultural situations which makes factual historical coherence on the basis of form, laws, and practice, virtually impossible. A second

13. Cf. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis,

difficult arising out of this historical divergence is the fact that many of the statements concerning marriage, in the New Testament at least, may best be described as pastoral instruction addressed to a particular social or religious condition in the believing community that has no relevance once the social or religious climate changes. For example, Paul's teaching of marriage and virginity under the eschatological crisis is a case in point.¹⁴ However, not only are the Biblical texts dissimilar regarding historical and social context, but are in some instances diametrically opposed to each other, in that while some texts treat marriage positively¹⁵ other texts treat it negatively.¹⁶

Now when someone attempts to arrange these texts into a doctrine of Christian marriage systematically, he is faced with the perplexing situation that the biblical evidence upon which his doctrine stands is at best ambiguous. This ambiguity, as W.J. O'Shea notes,

"is confirmed: by the lack of unanimity on the question among the Fathers ...; by the wide variation found in the practice of the Christian Churches; and by the maze of interpretations proposed by biblical scholars ..."¹⁷

This ambiguity often sends the exegete off into the labyrinth of subsequent theories to explain the

14. Cf. I Cor. 7., Also Chapter 4 above. pp. 273 ff

15. Compare I Cor. 7, Rev. 14:4; Luke 20:34-35; 17:27 among others, See also Chapter 3 above pp 194 ff.

16. Cf. Mk. 10:2-10; Also Chapter 5 & 6 above.

17. "Marriage and Divorce: The Biblical Evidence", AusCathRec 167 (1970) pp. 89-109.

ambiguity, and so we get a plethora of explanations and counter-explanations. In more recent literature, however, this problem is being approached hermeneutically, that is, an attempt is made to understand the troublesome texts in their own historical environment, for example, the Matthean clauses (5:32, 19:9) are interpreted within the context of Matthew's own Judaeo-Christian community.¹⁸

Another problem with this approach is that it tended to revert to 'legalism'. In Chapter 1 we discussed the problem of legalism in Protestant exegesis.¹⁹ However, legalism was not merely a problem in Protestantism, it was a problem before Protestantism came into being, as the early Catholic Church had long since translated into absolute juridical laws the moral imperatives of the New Testament teaching. The 'ought not' preached by Jesus had become in early Catholic exegesis a definite juridical prohibition.²⁰ Therefore, while early Protestantism interpreted biblical ethics as fixed and stereotyped ways of looking at ethical behaviour, Roman Catholic exegetes were already burdened with a long-standing canonical tradition that had hardened itself into a dogma.

18. Cf. For example, the work of Baltensweiler, Bonsirven, and others, summarized in Chapter Three.

19. Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 24ff.

20. Cf. F. Bockle, 'Morale Fondamentale', Recherche de sciences religieuses, 1959 (1971) p. 353.

Now while the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, were content with a kind of legalistic interpretation of the biblical teaching, little theological development occurred, apart from the discussions stimulated by the differences of opinion within the Church, which resulted from the more obvious ambiguities of the biblical evidence.²¹ However, under the stimulus of a new hermeneutics,²² the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, began to reassess the biblical evidence upon which its canonical and dogmatic teaching stood, and came to the realization that the teaching of the New Testament concerning marriage and divorce has little or nothing to do with the legal order, but rather pronounces a judgement of a religious and ethical nature. Once this discovery was made,²³ some serious theological development began to emerge and continues to do so in the present literature.

Once having freed themselves from the more pronounced brand of legalism, Exegetes began to interpret the

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21. Cf. W.J. O'Shea, op. cit. pp. 89-107. The commentary of the early Church Fathers on the various biblical texts illustrates the divergence of opinion and the focus of attention (indissolubility) in early marriage theology.
22. See Chapter 1, page 2, note 4.
23. In Protestant theology the discovery was made with the discussion of 'Gospel and Law', stimulated by form-criticism and other hermeneutical developments. In Catholic circles it arose out of pastoral problems created by its view of indissolubility, and came into its own in the Second Vatican Council.

biblical evidence in ethical and religious terms. Jesus' prohibition of divorce is no longer a legal ruling that can in some way be judicially accounted for in our own situation, but, is seen as a moral imperative that pronounces the sovereign will of God. To some,²⁴ this meant that Jesus' pronouncements on marriage and divorce constituted an ideal to be followed --- a kind of "purposive precept" similar to his sayings concerning anger, swearing, self-defence and the hatred of one's enemies. To others,²⁵ Jesus' teaching was not an ideal that men might strive after, but was an evangelical challenge to the Christian to obey the original intention of the Creator. This second development found expression in Protestant theology where the difference between 'ideal' and 'divine intention' was laboriously worked out.²⁶

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24. Cf. V. Steininger, Divorce, Arguments for a change in the Church's discipline, Trans. E. Quinn, Sheed & Ward, London, 1969; W. Harrington, "Jesus' Attitude towards Divorce", 37 (1970) pp. 206. Among others. Tr. Th. Q.
25. Cf. P. Hoffman, "Jesus' Saying about divorce and Its Interpretation in the New Testament Tradition", Conc Vol. 5, No. 6, (May 1970), p. 51-66, See also A.R. Winnett, The Church and Divorce, London, 1968, pp. 18ff. Among others.
26. Geoffrey Fisher, Problems of Marriage and Divorce, London, 1955, p. 8. Archbishop Fisher sets the tone for subsequent Anglican interpretation of Jesus' teaching when he stated that our Lord, in declaring marriage to be a lifelong union, was not setting forth an 'ideal' but stating what marriage essentially is in the divine intention. Ibid. p. 8. Cf also A.R. Winnett, The Church and Divorce, London, 1968, 18f; Gordon Dunstan, "Development of the Theology of Marriage in the Churches of the Anglican Communion", Conc. Vol. 5, No. 6, May 1970, 133ff.

It is in the area of interpreting 'divine intention' or what is more commonly called the 'divine will of the Creator',²⁷ that a difficulty, akin to legalism, creeps back into this theological development. Let us take, for example, the theory of J.C. Margot²⁸ on the exceptive clauses of Matthew. Margot makes it quite clear that these sayings of Jesus are not to be taken as the laws of a new legal code, but must be seen in the context of Jesus' polemics against the casuistry of the Pharisaic interpretation of God's laws. What Jesus does, according to Margot's view, is to reject human tradition which seek to find a loophole in the system of divine laws, and pronounces the "divine will of the Creator" as an absolute command (Gebot) of indissolubility. Now while we have escaped the casuistry of the law on the human plane, we are still confronted with having to distinguish between the casuistry of the law and divine command (Gebot). Very often divine command (Gebot) and God given law (Gesetz) are not so easily distinguishable. And probably what creates the most difficulty is that very often the 'divine intention' is interpreted as a part of a legal code to which we are called to follow,

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27. In Protestant theology 'divine intention' or 'divine will of the Creator' is understood as the 'demand of God'. Cf. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, I, London, 1959, pp. 5ff.
28. Cf. J.C. Margot in Wie unauflöslich ist die Ehe, edited J. David, F. Schmalz, Pattlock, Aschaffenburg, 1969, pp. 223-37.

and not, as it is surely meant to be, an evangelical challenge which can only be taken up by trust and obedience to the promises of God.

A further difficulty in escaping from the legal interpretation derives from the context of certain sayings themselves. If, for example, the Pharisees were questioning Jesus about the casuistry of the law as it applied to the social situation of his day, as appears to be the case in Matthew 5:32, 19:9f, why did Jesus chose to answer on a different (ethical) level? This difficulty has helped to maintain an interest in the legal interpretation of Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce, and has, in its own right, made a considerable contribution to our understanding of particular texts. A recent article by J.D.M. Derrett²⁹ illustrates the validity of this approach (that is the analysis of a particular text or texts hermeneutically, and not an attempt to combine all relevant texts into a doctrine). Derrett's article looks at the teaching of Jesus in the context of law as understood in the New Testament, and finds that the thorny problem of the "exceptive clauses" (Matthew 5:32, 19:9), ceases to exist when interpreted in the light of Mosaic law.

Derrett's theory is based on the idea that the Jews have two sources of information, the Law of Moses, and

29. J. Duncan M. Derrett, Law in the New Testament, London, 1970, pp. 363-388.

the 'law of human nature' as expressed in Genesis.³⁰ He contends that,

"a truly legal mind, in construing the meaning of the Law of Moses, will go first to the law apparent in Genesis, and then see what, against that background, Moses had to tell the Jews."³¹

What Derrett attempts to establish is that Mosaic Law, truly understood, does not contradict 'the natural law' of Genesis, but is in harmony with it. To prove this he shows that Dt. 24:1-4, the divorce regulation in the Old Testament associated with Jesus' teaching in the New, is concerned solely with the fact that a divorced wife may not be taken back by her former husband. In fact, he argues that the written Torah has no explicit regulation for divorce.³² What it does forbid is divorce and remarriage -- a prohibition which, contrary to Moses' original intent, Jewish practice contravened. In this connection Derrett assumes that the emphasis in Jesus' teaching regarding divorce lies on the prohibition against remarriage, and on this assumption he sets out to show that Jesus does not abrogate a provision of the (written) Torah because the correct interpretation of Dt. 24:1-4 shows this text to be in perfect harmony with Jesus' own stand.

Derrett shows that the Mosaic Law does not abrogate the 'natural law' of Genesis, as it does not provide for

30. Ibid p. 366

31. Ibid p. 366

32. This view has been worked out by Abel Isaksson in his book, Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple, Lund, Gleerup, 1965, See especially p. 23ff. See Chapter 3 above, pp.

'remarriage' which would break the 'one-flesh' concept of Genesis 2:24. Thus the fundamental law laid down in Genesis which Jesus repeats verbatim to the Pharisees, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder," is not, nor can it be, contradicted by Mosaic law, because Moses while permitting divorce did not contemplate remarriage, which would violate the "one flesh" union which alone conforms to Genesis. What actually happened, according to Derrett, was that Jewish practice failed to perceive that the "one flesh" union persisted after divorce, and therefore developed theological views entitling a husband to divorce and remarry.³³

On the basis of this understanding Derrett concludes that the "incorrect (soft) interpretation"³⁴ of the exceptive clauses, which sees them as a result of change in the early Christian community - a modification of Jesus' demands in the light of experience,³⁵ can be dispensed with. Granted, Matthew is making an 'exception' but not as facile a one as would be supposed. What Matthew is actually doing is intensifying the demands of

33. Derrett, op. cit. p. 369ff.

34. Ibid. p. 369.

35. What Derrett calls the 'incorrect (soft) interpretation' is the most widely accepted interpretation in the literature, with wide support in both Protestant and Catholic exegesis. Cf. e.g., Baltensweiler, Bonsirven, Dupont, among others.

Jesus, by calling for the true interpretation of Mosaic law which states that if a man's wife commit n'f³⁶ he cannot resume sexual relations with her without himself incurring some type of n'f, nor is he allowed to remarry, for either of these relationships would break the "one flesh" union of Genesis, and also contravene the Mosaic law of Deut 24:1-4.³⁷ This tightening up of the divorce regulation, rather than the loosening of it, may well account for the disciples reaction 'If this is what it is like, then it is more expedient not to marry' (Mt. 19:10). The prohibition in Matthew 19:9 is, according to this interpretation, disjunctive: "Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, commits adultery; and whoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery". What appears here to be a simple prescription consists really of two prescriptions which are so closely related that one supports and strengthens the other. Therefore the clause means that if a man's wife commit some n'f (porneia), he cannot resume sexual relations with her without himself incurring

36. There is evidence here of Derrett's dependence on the spade work done by Isaksson (cf. Chpt. 3, p.142ff above). He argues that the Decalogue rendering of (lo tineaf) as adultery is an inaccurate rendering of the root word (n'f)(na'af) which in other contexts is associated with fornication or sexual irregularity in general. Cf. Derrett, p. 371. Therefore n'f may best be understood as 'porneia' in the sense of Deut 22:21. Cf. Isaksson pp. 105ff.

37. This interpretation is in line with that of Quentin Quesnell, who understands the saying to refer precisely to the state of a man who has put his wife away on account of 'porneia' (n'f) -- but without being able to remarry. Cf. his "Made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 19:12)" CathBibQ 30 (1968) pp. 335-358.

n'f (porneia).³⁸ This, too, is precisely the meaning of the Mosaic prescription. Moses provided a 'concession' for man's natural weakness and permitted divorce, a concession to his inability to abstain from intercourse with his adulterous wife, a means for him to avoid unchastity at home.³⁹

This interpretation, according to Derrett, takes the mystery out of the "exceptive clauses", and instead of making a concession on Jesus' absolute demand, strengthens it, in that it points out the fact that the "one flesh" concept of Genesis is upheld by Mosaic law, and must not be broken by the contracting of a second marriage, even when the first is broken by n'f (porneia). Therefore, the only case in which divorce is permitted, is in the case of n'f (porneia), and to divorce without that justification is to incur the sin of n'f (porneia).

There are two comments to be made concerning this legal interpretation of Jesus' teaching on marriage. First, this legal interpretation differs from the 'legalism' referred to earlier in that it does not attempt to make out of Jesus' sayings a legal ruling for our own situation, but instead seeks, through the exercise of sound hermeneutics, to understand the teaching in the context of Jesus' own situation. On this account one must concede that the discussion regarding divorce took

38. Cf. Deut. 22:21, 22; 24:1-4, 2 Sam 16:21-22, 20:3, Also Chapter 3, pp. 37ff above.

39. Derrett, p. 372.

place within the context of Mosaic law as the participants understood it, with Jesus, quite possibly, cutting through the casuistry of the Pharisees and referring them back to the actual meaning of the Mosaic prescription, dismissing at the same time their theological accretions that allowed remarriage. The second comment is by way of criticism which arises, not from the reasoning of Derrett's theory, but from the antithetical nature of Jesus' teaching, which sets Mosaic law over against the 'natural law' (will of God) in Genesis, and shows by this contrast that it is not the formal authority which is binding on men; but the insight to recognize what is demanded by God and to commit oneself to that demand.⁴⁰ This contrast is not always to bring out, as Derrett suggests, the actual meaning of Mosaic law against a particular scribal interpretation, but very often opposes whole groups of Old Testament laws, and the Old Testament itself as formal legal authority.⁴¹

This new approach to textual interpretation, where the texts are not lumped together into a systematic whole, or interpreted as legal prescriptions, but are analysed individually to determine their meaning in their own historical, social, and legal environment, demonstrates that the textual approach has 'come of age', and continues to contribute to our understanding of biblical truth.

40. Cf. R. Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, London, 1958, p. 60.

41. *Ibid* p. 60.

The Natural Law Approach

We have already outlined, from the Protestant viewpoint, the approach to a marriage theology along the lines of natural considerations.⁴² This approach is based on the theory of an order of creation, which is described by Brunner as,

"those existing facts of human corporate life which lie at the root of all historical life as unalterable presuppositions, which, although their historical forms may vary, are unalterable in their fundamental structure, and, at the same time, relate and unite men to one another in a definite way."⁴³

This 'order of creation' idea is not unlike the Roman Catholic idea of 'natural law' which may best be described as:

"the Eternal law as it exists in human beings, which may be blotted out from the human heart either by evil persuasions ... or by vicious customs or corrupt habits."⁴⁴

Now in the realm of sex relationships the natural factors of sex differentiation, parent-child relations, and the dissimilarity in functions⁴⁵ point to a Divine intention behind the 'existing order' which has been instituted by God. This created order of God, of which the existing order is but a form, is, essentially, the ideal to which we should strive to purify and perfect the 'existing order' in obedience to his will and purpose.

42. Cf. Chapter 1 above pp. 41ff

43. E. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, London, 1937, pp. 210.

44. Cf. Liam Ryan, "The Indissolubility of Marriage in Natural Law", IrThQ, Vol. 30, No. 4, Oct. 1963, p.299.

45. Cf. E. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, London, 1937, pp.212-19.

The idea of viewing the human institution of marriage in naturalistic terms is not altogether wrong, for a meaningful theology of marriage can only come when we can consider, in the light of all the information we can muster, what human nature truly is and therefore what kind of institutions are suitable to it. What makes the natural law approach to marriage theology suspect, as Hellen Oppenheimer notes, is when it

"is half-consciously conceived as a collection of more or less arbitrary divine fiats handed down by the Church regardless of human circumstances."⁴⁶

Oppenheimer suggests, as a corrective, that 'natural law'

"may much more constructively be understood as a naturalistic ethic in which "oughts" are derived not from obscure commands but from the "is" of human nature. Theology comes in, not in the overt promulgation of laws, but in the underlying understanding of what human nature is: to the Christian, created, fallen, and redeemed nature."⁴⁷

Therefore what seems to militate against this approach to marriage theology is that an idea like an 'order of creation' presupposes a structure of marriage that pre-exists human society itself, and is not tied to the "is" of human nature. Dennis O'Callaghan points out this flaw when he states:

"The structure of marriage is really derived from rational analysis of the over-all human values which it serves in the family and in society. It is not as if there were some pre-existing blueprint written in human nature

46. H. Oppenheimer, "Marriage and Grace", Theology, 72 (1969) p. 542.

47. *Ibid.* p. 542.

in a kind of invisible ink which the trained mind can read. Man does not discover by following hidden clues what the pattern of marriage is. He concludes to what it should be by examining the values which it serves in the person, in the family and in the community. Natural values come before structure, they determine what the structure must be." 48

Now, because personal values precede and determine human structures, it cannot be said that the structure marriage might take is solely determined by natural considerations, for as O'Callaghan notes,

"The criterion which will decide whether a given marriage structure is valid in natural law will be the extent to which it safeguards and promotes the relevant human values to the greatest extent that this is possible in a given civilization or historical situation of mankind." 49

If this is the case, polygamy, as well as monogamy, may happen to be, (as it is in some existing societies today), the marriage structure which best safeguards the basic values in human sexual relationships, and in this sense we cannot say that polygamy is contrary to natural law, or that natural law dictates that monogamy is to be the structure marriage is to take. History has confirmed that a change in the human situation comes before and conditions a change in structure. For example, the emancipation of women in early Christian society brought about changes in the actual structure of the marriage relationship.⁵⁰

48. "Theology and Divorce" IrThQ 27 (1970) p. 214

49. Ibid. p. 215.

50. Cf. Chapter 2 above.

Now, apart from this basic criticism, natural law or the natural order of things plays an important part in marriage theology, even when this theology is based on some other principle. To illustrate this we might look briefly at the theology of marriage presented by Karl Barth, who rejects the idea of 'orders of creation' on the basis that a natural theology cannot furnish a satisfactory foundation for theological ethics.

Barth defines marriage as,

"the form of the encounter of male and female in which the free, mutual, harmonious choice of love on the part of a particular man and a woman leads to a responsibility undertaken life-union which is lasting, complete, and exclusive." 51

Now, monogamy and indissolubility are essential ingredients in this definition of marriage. However, they are arrived at from a different standpoint than Brunner's idea of 'orders of creation'. Barth argues that we cannot appeal to "the way the world is" since marriage often takes different forms, polygamy, polyandry, etc., nor, can we appeal to biblical ethics, since polygamy is the rule rather than the exception in the Old Testament, and it is not expressly forbidden in the New Testament. In other words it is not natural considerations or "biblistic" ethics that determine the monogamous structure of marriage, but "God's election and covenant which gives unconditional and compelling character to the

51. Church Dogmatics, Vol. III 4 p. 140.

requirement of monogamy." Now if we were to question how the exclusiveness of monogamy can be derived from God's election and covenant, Barth would contend that on the one hand the electing God is one --- there are not many Gods, but the one Lord beside whom there can be no other; on the other hand, the human partner in the covenant is also singular --- there are not many people of the covenant, but the one people Israel, and, since the coming of Christ, not many different communities but the one Christian community, the indivisible body of Christ. Thus the uniqueness of God and the particularity of his election call for the exclusiveness of monogamy as their appropriate reflection in the relation of man and woman in marriage.

While Barth insists upon an understanding of the marriage relationship in terms of God's dealings with man in Jesus Christ, one can detect in his ethics a dependence upon the very thing which he rejects in Brunner's approach, --- 'order of creation' or the natural order of things. For example, speaking about trial marriages Barth rejects them on the basis that "it is the very nature of love and marriage which calls for permanence" and that the whole idea of a temporary union "can never do justice to this inherent feature of every such relationship."⁵² Likewise he considers birth

52. Cf. CD III/4 pp 206-7

control problematical because it goes against the nature of the sexual act.⁵³ Therefore while Barth strives after a Christological interpretation of the marriage relationship, at the same time he is compelled to draw upon the "natural" or as he himself describes it "the inherent feature" of the marriage bond.⁵⁴

Because God is not in isolation but God in relationship, so man-in-relationship reflects on the creaturely level something of the image of God. This image of God finds its clearest expression in the relation of man and woman. Therefore, in order to understand God's command as it applies to our marital relationships we must not only know God's dealing with man in Jesus Christ, but must know also the "is" of human nature, that is, the "oughts" of the human marriage relationship must be derived also from the actual human situation itself, and not from some obscure command. This is why Barth's theology of marriage, while proposing to be Christologically centered, is thrown back on naturalistic judgements which are derived not from Christology, but from his cultural understanding of the "nature" of man's human relationships. This point is sufficient to illustrate the fact that no matter what approach to marriage theology one cares to take, be it Christology or something else, one cannot escape the idiosyncratic view that is imposed upon our understanding

53. Cf. CD III/4 pp. 269-70.

54. Cf. CD III/4 p. 206.

of this relationship by our cultural outlook and our understanding of human 'nature'.

In recent literature⁵⁵ the whole idea of 'orders of creation' as understood in earlier Protestant theology has been rejected in favour of a more dynamic understanding of 'creation' itself. W. Lohff explains this new understanding of creation as follows:

"When Jesus speaks of marriage, he conceives it as a gift of creation and refers to the story of creation (Mk 10,6, Gen. 1,27, 2,24). When we think of history this statement acquires a mythical character. But in the total comprehension of what is called creation in the Bible, this is lost. Certainly the beginning of the Bible extols the prehistoric, comprehensive belief that "Everything comes from God's hands". But creation is not restricted to pre-historic times. On the contrary, creation takes place in the present. Referring to marriage that means: The marriage which Jesus' teaching has in mind is not some ideal or other, but actual marriage, concrete marriage which has its foundation in God's creative will." 56

Lohff points out that this certainty that God himself is at work in marriage is formulated in Genesis Chapter 2. For God sees that man is alone; God creates woman, brings her to man as his helpmeet, and gives both of them the command to increase and multiply. In all of these statements we can see that what God does finds meaning for man in the realm of what can be experienced, in

55. Cf. H. Baltensweiler, "Current Developments in the Theology of Marriage in the Reformed Churches", Conc. Vol. 5. No. 6, May 1970, pp. 144f Das Neue Bild Der Ehe, Chr. Kaiser Verlag Muchen, 1969, H. Harsh, ed.

56. "Das neue Bild der Ehe in der evangelischen Theologie", in Das Neue Bild Der Ehe, H. Harsh, ed., Muchen, 1969, p. 26. Translation mine.

concrete, actual marriage. God is acting and creating in history, and not setting forth a pre-historical ideal. This idea that God is dynamically at work in his world creating and recreating stands at the centre of the Christian doctrine of creation. As Lohff puts it,

"that man perceives creation in the images of his own concrete experience. The doctrine of creation ... declares that man, in his experiences, whether he wishes it or not, whether he knows it or not, in all his doings, even in marriage, lives from an origin that is not under his control, but from the actions of the creator, and is claimed by this origin."^{57a}

This Christian conception of creation seeks to get rid of the static idea of creation as having been a kind of pre-historic activity on the part of God, and, more importantly, it seeks to show that the will of the Creator is understood not in terms of time-transcending laws, which in some way is to be ensured legally by human means, but is in fact man's obedience to the Creator in his present experience. Therefore this understanding of creation declares that marriage is not at man's disposal, but when man enters into marriage, he is, whether he knows it or not, whether he means it or not, obeying the word of the Creator. Now it is this obedience to God's creative will that makes marriage not only a contract between the two human partners, but involves them both with a third partner --- God. God's creative activity as described in Genesis, of creating

57a. Ibid p. 26 translation mine.

man and woman for each other, of bringing them together, and of giving them the mandate to marry, makes of marriage a divine institution which is not at the disposal of the partners, but is the fulfilling of God's creative word, to which both partners are held responsible.

It is the idea of God's creative activity in the realm of what can be experienced that makes this new development in Protestant theology relevant to man's present situation, and at the same time, helps to overcome the static concept of creation which comes across in the earlier notion of 'orders of creation'. The idea that God is actively at work, that He himself is present in our human relationships, giving them meaning and purpose, makes all the difference.

The notion of 'orders of creation' or 'natural law', seen in the light of this dynamic concept of creation, cannot be rejected as a totally inadequate approach to marriage theology, as we cannot deny those ordinances of human life which have been implanted in man by the Creator through instinct and reason. However, instinct and reason alone are not adequate enough to tell us all we ought or should know about human existence and human relationships --- we need to leave ourselves open to other forms of revelation in which God speaks to us his creative word, and through which he works to redeem and perfect our human existence.

The Philosophical or Conceptual Approach

A third approach to marriage theology finds expression in the new theological orientation which is inspired by a new approach to the foundations of the Christian faith. Here the basis for understanding Christian marriage, and for determining a theology of Christian marriage, is not natural law, or specific scriptural evidence (although scriptural texts are used to illustrate the theological stance arrived at) - it is rather a principle of human existence --- love, fidelity, transcendence, the common good --- which expresses the content and purpose of the Gospel in our human relationships. Two examples from the literature will demonstrate the freshness and originality of this new approach to the problem of marriage theology.

Probably the best example of this approach to a theology of marriage is the recent work of V. Steininger.⁵⁷ Steininger's thesis that marriage is by its very nature monogamous and indissoluble is based on the theological principle of 'self-transcendence'.⁵⁸ He

57. Divorce, Argument for a Change in the Church's discipline, trans. E. Quinn from the German Auflöslichkeit unauflöslicher Ehen, Styria, Graz, 1968, London, 1969.

58. Ibid p. 9-10. This idea of 'self-transcendence' in Steininger's theory is not unlike the concept of 'immanence' postulated by Helen Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer, using the analogy of the Trinity, with its concept of 'immanence' --- unity in plurality, seeks to show a human 'immanence' in the marriage relationship where two diverse people can be united, really united and not just harmoniously allied, without losing their separate identities, just as, the persons of the Trinity, are at once, one and the same, yet individual. cf. "Marriage and Grace", Theology 72 (1969) pp. 535ff.

assumes that the encounter of man and woman in marital love is by its very nature monogamous and indissoluble. However, these characteristics of the marital relationship are not clear from any natural law, but from that self-transcendence which is implied in this encounter. Man, when he surrenders himself to the beloved spouse, transcends his own being and realizes himself again as a new person in this union.⁵⁹ The family which comes into existence is the result, and not the purpose, of this encounter. Now this self-transcendent union, in common with every love relationship with fellow humanity, is destined to lead to an encounter with God. This is why marriage can become a redeeming sacrament: it saves men and women from their self-centredness.

This theological hypothesis of Steininger is based largely on Karl Rahner's theology,⁶⁰ which sees the love of neighbour as virtually equated with the love of God, and the special relationship of love between the spouses is already a kind of monogamous Christian marriage, or, even, a sacramental marriage in desire, which is not only capable of becoming the image of the New Covenant between Christ and the Church, but also, as it constitutes the marital community itself, may become the genuine Church in miniature⁶¹ - a conclusion that can be illustrated by

59. Steininger, op. cit. pp 9-10.

60. Cf. K. Rahner, Theological Investigations, VI, pp. 231-49, "Reflections on Unity of The Love of Neighbour and the Love of God".

61. Steininger, op. cit. p. 23.

reference to Ephesians 5:22-33. This argument, from the transcendent dynamism of marriage, is another attempt to circumvent the problems which traditional approaches failed to overcome. Steininger, in illustrating the strength of his theory on the basis of scripture, follows the idea that Jesus' prohibition is an ideal to be followed --- "a purposive precept" similar to those relating to anger, swearing, self-defence, and the hatred of one's enemies. His point being that Christ, in mentioning the above five prohibitions along with the prohibition of divorce, put forward ideals where attainment is judged according to the progress an individual may have made on the way towards perfection.

Others have come forward with a theology of marriage based on other philosophical and theological hypotheses. For example, the 'new morality' school⁶² makes the 'absolute of love' the ultimate criterion for making ethical decisions, and ^{has} ~~have~~ built a new system of

62. For a discussion of the new morality see the article "The New Morality -- What, Why -- and Why Not?", Religion in Life, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 170-229. Also O.S. Barr, The Christian New Morality, New York, 1969. See Chapter 1 above, note 1, page 1.

Christian ethics on this one central absolute.⁶³

This approach to the problem of understanding marriage in the Christian community has contributed in no small way to liberating marriage theology from the traditional and juridical interpretations of earlier eras, and has done much, as can be seen from the examples quoted above, to break new ground in the search for a theology of marriage that is relevant and meaningful to the institution as we know it in our own situation. However, such approaches to marriage theology face two major disadvantages; firstly, all too often the philosophical or theological principle on which the theory is based is not universally acceptable to the Christian community as a basis for marriage theology, and as a result often raises more questions than it attempts to answer. Secondly, the acceptance of a marriage theology based on a philosophical or theological principle is often rejected, not on the basis of its inherent weaknesses, but because it fails to displace a

63. Cf. J. Duquoc, in Wie unaufloslich ist die Ehe, Pattloch, Aschaffenburg, 1969, edited J. David & F. Schmalz, pp. 1-24. Duquoc has built a theology of marriage on the phenomenology of human love. Marriage is the recognition by society of the partners' individual love, which expresses itself symbolically through sexuality, and thus demands a social dimension. Therefore, the institution of marriage is the form which the social recognition of love takes: it makes marital love visible. However, the tension between love as the basic "stuff" of marriage, and as institution is brought out by Duquoc. For example, he questions whether the Church and society sacrifice the person for an institution abstractly conceived, rather than the institution as giving a social dimension to the love of the partners.

a marriage theology that is entrenched behind the authority of a long standing tradition, and is supposedly backed up by a seemingly coherent dogmatic teaching. Nevertheless, traditional resistance and dogmatic doctrines are beginning to bend in the face of this new approach to marriage theology, as is evidenced by the move on the part of the Second Vatican Council⁶⁴ to treat marriage no longer in institutional/abstract terms, but to assert it as "a community of love". This came about according to Dennis O'Callaghan because

"The canonist provided a totally unsatisfactory and impoverished definition of the object of consent by expressing it in terms of an exchange of physical sexual rights, and his pre-occupation with the permanence of the marriage bond distracted from the far more important question of the nature and quality of the marriage relationship."⁶⁵

In another article,⁶⁶ O'Callaghan makes it quite clear why this change in emphasis was necessary if the Catholic Church was to provide a relevant theology of Christian marriage. He states:

"They (Moral theologians and Canonists) have placed emphasis on the external pattern rather than on the very meaning of marriage, on its permanence and stability rather than on its quality. Their attitude suggested that it did not matter how a marriage was lived provided that it continued to exist."

64. Mgr. Alan Clark, What the Council Says About Marriage, July, 1967, p. 6-7; Cf. Leonard F. Gerke, Christian Marriage: A Permanent Sacrament, Catholic University, Washington, 1965.

65. "Marriage as Sacrament", Conc. Vol. 5., No. 6, May 1970, pp. 101-110.

66. "Theology and Divorce", IrThQ 27 (1970) pp. 213.

Since Vatican II, however, Catholic exegetes, as well as Protestant Scholars, have been putting the emphasis on what marriage means, seeing marriage as not merely a contract but rather as an ongoing commitment of man and woman united to live a real life under many changing circumstances; and it is in the process of 'living' this reality that the problems of human existence break in and often destroy the marriage relationship.⁶⁷

It is precisely in this area of meaning that this new approach on philosophical and theological principles makes the greatest contribution, for it is largely concerned with the nature and quality of the marriage relationship, and only secondarily with the external pattern.

This new awareness regarding the nature and meaning of the marriage relationship, that is, marriage as a lived relationship rather than an institution abstractly conceived, ought to give further impetus to the development of a relevant marriage theology, and may, in the long run, prove to be the catalyst in solving the theological dilemmas that now exist in the current theological ferment.

A Theology of Marriage in terms of 'Gospel'

In the remaining pages of this thesis I shall propose, in the light of the exegesis arrived at, a basis

67. Cf. Wilfred Harrington, "Jesus' Attitude towards Divorce", IrThQ 37 (1970) pp. 199.

for a theology of marriage in terms of 'Gospel'. This does not mean that an attempt will be made to establish a theology of marriage on the basis of the half-dozen or so emphatic statements about marriage which we have in the Old and New Testaments, but rather to look at the institution of marriage in the context of the New Testament's central proclamation, and, within this broader context, to determine, as far as this is possible, what the 'gospel' has to say about our marriage relationship as we experience it. I believe it is from the vantage point of this central proclamation rather than with some peripheral concern, such as determining the exact rendering and meaning of the 'exceptive clauses', that a sound and relevant marriage theology will emerge.

Gospel

In using 'gospel' as the basis for our marriage theology we are compelled to state in what sense we understand the term, as Protestant biblical theology, since the latter part of the nineteenth century,⁶⁸ has

68. The technical difficulty with understanding the 'content' of Gospel came on the wings of the much debated problem of the historical Jesus. This difficulty increased with the emergence of an existentialist philosophy and theology, combined with the Form Criticism of the gospels, which led to the more fundamental question of faith and history. From this discussion a modern historiography emerged which was quite different from the scientific historiography of the nineteenth century. History was now viewed existentially. This meant that while history was still interested in the facts and causes and of the 'external' of events, it was more interested in the 'inside' of events. Here the

encountered technical difficulties in understanding the 'content' of Gospel or Kerygma.⁶⁹ We will not indulge ourselves in the long and voluminous debate concerning the 'content' of Gospel that has been going on in Kerygmatic

historian thinks himself into the action to discern the thought of the agent. As Bultmann put it "History gains meaning only when the historian himself stands within history and takes part in history". Cf. History and Eschatology, Edinburgh, 1957, p. 119. Thus an existential relation between the historian and the event is called for. This existential approach to history was able to view the 'gospel' (what Jesus meant to the primitive Church) and its appeal (what Jesus should mean to us) much more relevantly. Jesus emerged not as an obscure figure of history, but as a Person who confronts us and calls us to decision in the present moment of our existence. For a complete survey of this development see, Hugh Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins, New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1964; also his article, "The Historical Jesus and the Origins of Christianity," ScotJTh Vol. 13, 1960, pp. 113-136. Cf. also Carl E. Braaten and R.A. Harrisville, ed., Kerygma and History, A symposium on the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann, New York, 1962; Also Hans-Werner Bartsch, The Present Stand of the Debate, Kerygma and Myth II, tr. Reginald H. Fuller, London, 1963, pp. 47-57. In addition a more comprehensive bibliography may be found in P.J. Cahill's article, "Rudolf Bultmann and Post-Bultmann Tendencies", CathBibQ 26 (1964) pp. 153-178.

69. For the moment we are using the terms 'gospel' and 'kerygma' interchangeably. However, we are aware that the term 'kerygma' can have a special meaning, or meanings. As J.P.M. Sweet points out "Kerygma is a slippery term" and could mean either "the dynamic activity of preaching (Bultmann) or "the content of the preaching (Dodd)". Cf. "The Kerygma," Expost. Vol. 76, 1964-5, pp. 143-147. If I may suggest the term 'kerygma' is even slipperier than that, for it could mean merely the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus by the early Church, or the message 'of' Jesus as well as the message 'about' Jesus. The sense in which we use 'gospel' or 'kerygma' here is that it is the message 'of' as well as 'about' Jesus.

theology⁷⁰ but rather, state, as simply as possible, how we understand and intend to use 'gospel' in our theological formulation about marriage. It might be said that our understanding of 'gospel' is Post-Bultmannian,⁷¹ in that we understand the 'gospel' to be not merely the proclamation of the post-resurrection Church

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70. For a summary of the direction which Kerygmatic theology has taken Cf. James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, London: 1959; also "The Formal Structure of Jesus' Message" in Current Issues in N.T. Interpretation, Ed. Wm. Klassen and G.F. Snyder, New York, 1962, pp. 91-110; F. Herzog "Possibilities and Limits of the New Quest", JRel. 43 (1963) pp. 218-233. Also H. Anderson, Jesus and Christian Origins, *op. cit.* loc.
71. The Post-Bultmannians have attempted to establish a unity between the Christ of the Kerygma and the Jesus of History --- that the Kerygmatic portrait is a faithful representation of the historical Jesus. Therefore, they see in both the message and action of Jesus an eschatological understanding of his Person. Bornkamm, Conzelmann, Käsemann, Fuchs, and Ebeling are among the Post-Bultmannians who have attempted to show that the kerygma is faithful to Jesus. For example, Bornkamm in his book Jesus of Nazareth, puts stress on Jesus' ministry as a sign calling for decision; in his ministry the crucial hour was already present. Among the impressions of the ministry which must be considered authentic are Jesus' submission to God, his authority, his acceptance of sinners. Ebeling ("Jesus and Faith" in Word and Faith, London, 1963, pp. 236-238) stresses Jesus teaching about faith, and considers the following teachings of Jesus as historical: the imminent kingdom of God, charity, obedience to the will of God liberating men from causistry, and call to discipleship. Ebeling further stresses that the person and preaching of Jesus cannot be separated from his teaching (p. 236ff). Robinson sums up the Post-Bultmannian position as establishing "... that Jesus intended to confront the hearer inescapably with the God who is near when he proclaimed 'Repent, for God's reign is near', i.e., that he intended an historical encounter with himself to be an eschatological encounter with God, and that he consequently understood his existence as that of bringer of eschatological salvation." Cf. A New Quest of the Historical Jesus, London, 1959, p. 77.

about the death and resurrection of Jesus,⁷² but to contain within it the message, words and deeds of Jesus himself. That in the 'gospel' we meet Jesus of Nazareth, who through his teaching and example, gives us the clue to the deepest meaning of life and the resources for fulfilling that meaning, in that for the Christian, Jesus provides both true knowledge of God and saving power. He is the norm as well as the source of authentic existence. To say this is the same as saying that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, which in turn means that one accepts as normative the New Testament witness to Jesus. Thus the heart of the New Testament is 'gospel', the proclamation that God was in Christ

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72. The 'kerygma' in Bultmannian terms seems to refer solely to the death and resurrection of Jesus as preached by the primitive Church. This concept of 'kerygma' stems from the fact that Bultmann contends that we know nothing of the life and teaching of Jesus, merely the "Dass" -- the fact that he lived, taught and died. Yet, it can be argued that Bultmann's concept of 'kerygma' (that is its content, rather than the activity of proclaiming it) involves not merely the acknowledgement of a historical fact, but the "Dass" includes a knowledge of Jesus' teaching in which His person is disclosed. Therefore, the "Dass" to which Bultmann refers involves more than the mere fact that Jesus lived, but the fact that he taught, and that His Word placed men in the crisis of decision. That in His Word the will of God meets man and compels him to decision. His Word becomes event, the event of the power and the will of God. Therefore what the Post-Bultmannians seek to show is that the 'kerygma' is faithful to the Jesus of history, as far as we can know him, and in fact expresses in its 'content' the words, deeds, teachings and activity of the earthly Jesus. Cf. G.E. Ladd, "The Role of Jesus in Bultmann's Theology", ScottJTh. Vol. 18 (1965) pp. 57-68; Also Raymond E. Brown, "After Bultmann, What? --- An introduction to the Post-Bultmannians", CathBibQ 26 (1964) pp. 1-30; Shubert M. Ogden, Christ Without Myth, New York, 1961. (Among others.)

reconciling the world to himself in a decisive revelatory and redemptive act. Hence, the New Testament itself finds in Jesus, in his Person, message, and deeds, the clue to the meaning of life and the resources for fulfilling that meaning. Therefore, while Jesus became, as Bultmann puts it "the content of the Church's kerygma"⁷³, this content did not involve just the 'Easter-event' --- a preaching about Jesus' death and resurrection, but reveals something of His self-understanding, His intention, His meaning.⁷⁴ The humble Jesus comes through in the Church's proclamation of the "exalted Christ". To quote Professor Anderson,

"His Selfhood has creative and constitutive significance for Christian faith, for the Kerygma, identifying the humiliated with the exalted Lord, confronts us with the existential decision about a Person."⁷⁵

The significance of this existential approach⁷⁶ to 'Gospel' is that it challenges us to see its message and meaning not only in terms of what it meant to the primitive Church, but what it means to us. It calls us

73. Theology of the New Testament I. London, 1959, p.33.

74. H. Anderson, "The Historical Jesus and the Origins of Christianity", ScotJTh 13 (1960) p. 135.

75. Ibid. p. 135.

76. This emphasizes the 'new hermeneutic' which involves the whole process of God's speaking to us: God's Word, its expression in Scripture, its interpretation through the ages, its significance for our present situation.

to confrontation, to participation with the Person and with the Word. Therefore, the term 'gospel' as used here may best be understood as the presentation of God's activity in Christ, as discerned in the message and conduct⁷⁷ of the earthly Jesus and the Church's kerygmatic Christ.

Now while we can speak of a three stage development in early Christian ethics, for example, the apocalyptic outlook of Jesus, the eschatological preaching of Paul, and the accommodation ethic of the Post-Pauline Church,⁷⁸ we find that each stage has as its norm and source the Person and message of Jesus; that at the heart and centre of each development stands a 'core of tradition', that can be traced back to the person, words, and deeds of Jesus. Therefore the 'sayings', statements, teachings, etc., that are repeated, emphasized and held up as the norm and standard of Christian behaviour are those that were believed to have passed through the prism of Jesus' ministry, thus making them the foundation of Christian ethical teaching.⁷⁹ We can illustrate this continuity in the ethics of the New Testament with reference to the subject under discussion -- marriage. Jesus, as we have

77. Cf. Ernst Fuchs "Die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus", Frage nach dem historischen Jesus, Gesammelte Aufsätze II (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1959. pp. 143-167.

78. Supra Chapter V above pp. 358ff.

79. Supra Chapter IV above pp. 215ff.

seen,⁸⁰ made the ethical interpretation of the Old Testament Creation myths the foundation of His teaching on marriage, and in turn Paul not only repeats this teaching,⁸¹ but includes in his instruction on marriage a teaching which he claims came from the lips of Jesus (I Cor. 7:10ff). What is interesting here is that Paul distinguished between his words and those of the Lord, and asserted the identity of the Lord who spoke and the Jesus who lived. The Post-Pauline Church likewise bases its ethical teaching not so much on the pagan 'Haustafeln' but on the 'core of Jesus tradition' that has been passed down in the Church's Catechetical codes and her teaching ministry (Cf. e.g. Ephesians 5:22-33 and its use of Genesis 2:24). The early Church was not only concerned with Jesus' teaching as a basis for ethical instruction, but also exhorted its members to imitate Christ, which would indicate that they had some knowledge of the conduct and activity of the earthly Jesus. Thus the ethical continuity of the New Testament lies in the fact that the ethical demands preached by the early Church were grounded in the message, deeds and example of Jesus, who laid the foundation and set the standard for Christian ethical teaching.

In the light of this understanding of 'gospel' how are we to interpret the New Testament teaching about

80. A large part of Chapter 3 above is devoted to the question of the origin of the New Testament (Synoptic) teaching regarding marriage.

81. Cf. Chapter IV above -- "Letter A" I Cor. 6.12-20, pp. 243ff.

marriage, and in what sense can it serve as a basis for a theology of marriage? We must begin with Jesus' radical demand for absolute obedience to the will of God, which involves not just obedience to an external formal authority, but requires of the individual the waiver of his own rights which, in turn, makes him immediately responsible to God.⁸² The preaching of the 'will of God' by Jesus is not a juridical activity either in terms of human law (Gesetz) or in terms of divine law (Gebot), but is a redemptive activity of God in his Son Jesus Christ, who through grace, calls ^{man} ~~men~~ to a decision which requires his total commitment --- a radical obedience that frees him from his own self-will and reconciles him with God and his neighbour. However, in obeying the 'gospel' he is not only reconciled to God and his neighbour, but is, in fact, brought to a realization of the deepest meaning of life and the resources for fulfilling that meaning.

Creation on the Eighth Day

Last Autumn (1972) New College students held a retreat whose theme, "Creation on the Eighth Day", emphasized God's continuous creative activity in His world. It is with such a dynamic concept of 'Creation' that we must begin in laying the foundation for a relevant marriage theology, for it is on this idea of Creation that Jesus bases his teaching about marriage.

82. Cf. R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament I, op cit. p. 11f.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus found it expedient to include in his teaching concerning man's essential obedience to the will of the Creator, a teaching about marriage, and considered this human institution as not merely a social arrangement that man determines on the basis of human values, but a gift of Creation. Now, while Jesus may have shared in the mythical world view of creation as a pre-historic activity on the part of God, His reference to creation in the marriage 'logia' is not restricted to this pre-historic conception. On the contrary, he sees creation as taking place in the present. Thus the marriage of which Jesus speaks is not an ideal -- a pre-historic blueprint set up for our guidance by God, but marriage as we experience it 'now' in its concrete reality. He is speaking of a human reality that was made possible and continues to be possible because it has its foundation in God's creative will.

Now the idea that God is creatively involved in marriage as we experience it is brought out by the very example that Jesus himself uses (cf Mk. 10:6f; Mt. 19:5f regarding Gen. 2:24), for God chose to act, not outside history, but within history. God sees that man is alone, God creates woman, God brings her to man as man's bride, and even when man recognizes and acknowledges his spouse, yet, it is God who brings them together. It is God acting and creating within the realm of human experience -- bringing into existence for man the institution of marriage. Thus marriage becomes a

'Divine Institution' in the sense that God's Word, creativity, and action, brought it into being -- made it a reality for man. Therefore, when man participates in marriage, he is, in a real sense, whether he realizes it or not, or, whether he acknowledges it or not, sharing in an institution that is not of man's origin but of God's, and man by participating in marriage is by virtue of his actions, obeying the will of God.⁸³ It is precisely because marriage has its origins in God's creative activity that it involves not just the human partners but God Himself. Therefore the reference "what God has joined together, let not man put asunder", is not to be viewed pre-historically, as applying to some 'ideal' or other, but refers to marriage in the here and now, and implies that whoever contracts a marriage is complying with the 'will of the Creator', and is therefore held responsible to that will. In this way indissolubility is a part of the "essential intention", which places marriage not at man's disposal but God's.⁸⁴

In turning to the idea of 'gospel' with its demand for radical obedience to the 'divine will' we are seeking in Scripture, guidance for our own human condition. This does not mean, however, that the

83. Cf. W. Lohff, "Das neue Bild der Ehe in der evangelischen Theologie", in Das Neue Bild Der Ehe, Chr. Kaiser Verlag Munchen, 1969, p. 25ff.

84. Cf. H. Baltensweiler, "Current Developments in the Theology of Marriage in the Reformed Churches", Conc. Vol. 5 No. 6, May 1970, p. 146ff.

biblical utterances we consider are to be taken as time-transcending laws which can in some way be implemented legally for our own situation. As we have already noted, and demonstrated by our exegesis,⁸⁵ it is practically impossible to convert biblical utterances about marriage directly into legal rulings for today. This, in fact, would lead us back once again to 'legalism'. The biblical concepts and practices of marriage, which are in themselves varied and diverse, must be seen as a part of social history. While the Christian 'gospel' speaks to us from the context of specific social-historical situations, it does not refer us to particular conceptions of marriage, still less to an understanding of marriage in a social-historical context, especially bygone ones, but refers us to the Creator. Creation is what happens here and now. Thus, it is in the context of our experience -- the social, cultural and legal situation in which we are now placed, that we are called to interpret and understand the divine will for us. We cannot return to the conceptions of marriage of a primitive culture, or to the bygone patriarchal form of marriage which existed in the time of Christ. We have to cut through that which is historically and sociologically conditioned, and determine in the light of God's speaking to us what God requires of us now in our human relationships.

85. The biblical statements are addressed to specific historical, cultural, and social situations, which give them relevancy only within these historical-social contexts.

The Purpose of Marriage

Throughout the long history of ^{the} marriage institution there have been many answers given to the question, what is the purpose of marriage? Most of these answers were derived from the sociological conditions pertaining at a given period. For example, the begetting of children was considered the essential purpose of marriage in early Hebrew society, as great importance was attached to offspring for ensuring the continuance of the family, tribe, and nation, and, the handing on of inheritance.⁸⁶ Therefore, if a wife was found to be barren, it was sufficient grounds for the husband to break off the marriage, or to take a second wife.⁸⁷ In this situation no consideration was given to the 'meaning' of the relationship for the partners themselves, marriage was merely a means to an end -- for the sole purpose of procreation. Now this highly sociological precedent, which comes to us in the recorded history of Israel as contained in the Old Testament, conditioned and influenced Christian thinking about marriage up to very recent times. This influence is reflected in the Church's earliest marriage formularies which speak of the three causes for which marriage was ordained -- namely the procreation of children, the avoidance of fornication and the mutual society, help and comfort that one ought to

86. Cf. Chapter 2 above, pp 66ff, which deals with the development of marriage in Hebrew society.

87. Cf. Chapter 2 above pp. 56ff.

have for the other. Early Christian thinkers did not attempt to get behind the sociological and historical circumstances, which gave rise to this purpose for marriage, but were content to accept the scriptural statements regarding procreation as God's Word for them, as a time-transcending regulation for all men. However, Protestant theology, with the impetus of Higher Criticism and new Heremeneutical techniques, has liberated Christian thinking from this earlier social and historical conception of marriage,⁸⁸ putting the emphasis on what marriage means for the contracting partners;— the result being a shift from seeing marriage as a means to an end, to viewing it as an end in itself. This new approach to marriage is best summed up in a statement by the Anglican Church of Canada which says:

"The purposes of marriage are mutual fellowship, support and comfort, the procreation (if it may be) and nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfilment in a community of faithful love."⁸⁹

Sufficient time has not yet passed for a great deal of theological reflection on this 'new' priority in the purpose of Christian marriage. However, little reflection is needed to discover that 'mutual fellowship'

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88. What helped Protestant theology, and Christian thinking in general to reassess its thinking about the purpose of marriage was the threat of 'over-population' and world food shortages, a sociological condition that demanded a reassessment.
89. Canon 27: On Marriage in the Church; enacted by the Twenty-Third session of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 22 August to 31 August, 1967, p. 1.

is, in fact, more true to biblical teaching than the almost pagan idea that marriage is designed for the sole purpose of procreation. Once we break through the plane of history and search out the divine will of the Creator for ourselves, we find that the idea of 'mutual fellowship' is not 'new' but at the very heart of God's creative act in bringing together man and woman.

Vincent Taylor sees Jesus' teaching regarding the mutual relationship of husband and wife as 'a decisive positive attitude which has influenced the teaching of the whole New Testament on marriage', and which constitutes 'His gift to the Church and the world' regarding marriage.⁹⁰ The idea of 'mutual fellowship' is, when one looks closely at the creation story in Genesis 2:24f, a central feature of God's creative activity. For in God's act of creating marriage man receives woman as a 'helpmeet'. This 'helpmeet' is to enjoy a partnership with man, which is irreplaceable by any other creature, and is to be life-long. It is a partnership of sex, possessions, position and habitation. Jesus in his teaching about marriage underlines this 'mutual fellowship' by way of reference to the creation narrative, thus making it a central feature of Christian teaching, which is repeated throughout the New Testament. For example, in Paul's letters, where marriage is viewed negatively in the light of the impending 'eschaton',

90. V. Taylor, The Gospel According to St. Mark, London, 1953, p. 421f.

mutual fellowship is the essence of true marriage: "The wife has not power over her own body, but the husband, likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (I Cor. 7:4ff). It is even more evident in the Post-Pauline literature, for example, "each of you must love his wife as his very self; and the woman must see to it that she pays her husband all respect" (Eph. 5:33).

Now we need to look more closely at this central feature of biblical teaching --- mutual fellowship. For it is this feature that constitutes the very meaning of the marriage relationship, and determines whether a particular marriage is, in fact, the kind of relationship that God called into being and continues to enrich. It, too, will help us determine the degree to which the marriage partners have complied with the demands of the 'gospel' for total obedience to the 'will of the Creator'.

It might be said that 'mutual fellowship' is a lawful process, not, however, in the sense that there are specific legal regulations, but where a union occurs 'love'⁹¹ can only be effective in acts of acceptance and recognition of the other partner. It is through these acts of acceptance and recognition that love creates a 'law' between two partners. Such a law is, of course, characteristically different from the normal law of legislation; it goes beyond the outward formal authority, and demands of each partner the waiver of his and her

own rights. It calls for total commitment, a total giving of oneself to the other, which is expressed not by adherence to secular or ecclesiastic legislation, but in acts of freedom as love, surrender, forgiveness, compassion, and fidelity. The degree of commitment by the partners to this 'inner law of love' and not to outward formal authority will determine the authenticity of the relationship. Once this 'inner law of love' is broken by the assertion of one's own selfish will then the 'mutualness' of the relationship which is the very essence of marriage is lost. The marriage may continue in its outward form, but once it fails to maintain or achieve this 'inner mutualness' which comes with a total commitment of the self in acts of acceptance and recognition, then it can no longer be considered marriage as it was called into being by God in his creative activity with man. It is here that the difference between covenant and law (legislation) is accentuated. For as C. Jaime Snoek reminds us:

"What comes to us from God, as a free gift of the Covenant, as grace, is love, the capacity to love, to take the existence of our brother on ourselves before God, as Jesus took the existence of all of us on himself. As a gift of the Covenant, this love can only be accepted in the freedom of faith, can only be celebrated in the action of grace."⁹²

It is not to any practical legal principle that Jesus is calling us in his teaching on marriage in the New

92. C.J. Snoek, "Marriage And the Institutionalization of Sexual Relations", Conc. Vol. V. No. 6, May, 1970, p. 113.

Testament, but to the possibility of taking account of the existence of our partner before God, and of committing ourselves to the will of God so that we are able to find the deepest meaning to life, and to human relationships.

However, it will be noted that this evangelical challenge of Jesus to obey the 'will of the Creator' is spoken in the context of a legal debate, where divorce is acknowledged as an actual practice. However, what Jesus has to say does not allude to legal procedure, but is, essentially, a testimony of God's will and man's obedience. We do not accept the reasoning that Jesus represents the legal ruling of the Pentateuch,⁹³ which allows divorce as a human legislative act, as opposed to the divine will of the Creator. The indissolubility of marriage, according to Jesus, is rather a constituent part of life which is realized in the obedient man. The man for whom the law of Moses is given is not the obedient man, but the hard-hearted, the man who, for selfish motives, wishes to exercise his own self-will and thus disobeys the 'will of the Creator'. Thus the legal ruling on divorce concerns the man who disobeys the will of God, and expresses in its very ruling the 'hard-heartedness' of man.

93. Cf. J.D.M. Derrett, Law in the New Testament, 1970, pp. 363-388.

Up to now we have been talking about two different aspects of marriage. The 'inward structure' of the lived law of marriage can only be realized when both spouses are prepared to commit themselves totally in a relationship that finds its expression in acts of love, submission, forgiveness, and fidelity. The second aspect of marriage is the 'outward legislative law' that gives the inward structure of the love relationship public recognition. Now the question has been raised as to the necessity and validity of this second 'outward legislative' nature of marriage. Is it necessary to institutionalize the authentic inward structure of marriage? Some current developments in marriage forms have rejected the institutionalization of marriage on the basis that it turns marriage into an abstract concept rather than a lived relationship, and that 'outward legislation' often demands the continuance of a relationship even when the 'inward structure' has been destroyed by the selfishness of the partners.⁹⁴

There is, as C. Dubquoc notes,⁹⁵ a tension between this 'inward structure' and 'institution'. And the

94. Current trends such as trial marriages, communal living, etc., are efforts to have marriage without a legal 'contract', that is, an outward legal form. A good summary of these new developments is contained in an article entitled "New Marriage Life Styles", by J.D. Diamond and Michele Landsberg, in Chatelaine, Toronto, Canada, Nov. 1972. Also 'New Marriage Contracts' by Marjorie Harris, in Chatelaine, Dec. 1972.

95. Cf. C. Dubquoc, op. cit. p. 1-24.

question to be asked here is whether the Church and the State have been correct in exercising legislative power over marriage, to the extent that marriage, which was meant to be grace for the individual, has become an impersonal law -- which sacrifices the person for the sake of an institution abstractly conceived on the lines of an objective legalism.⁹⁶ Does 'Christian marriage' demand both inward structure and outward legislative law, and if so, does a marriage still exist if the 'inward structure' is destroyed by a lack of recognition and acceptance by one or both partners? Traditional Christianity has no doubt laid the emphasis on the 'outward legislative form' of marriage, and has insisted that marriage exists only when the partners comply with the legislative laws laid down by the Church and Community. Let us turn for the moment to this important question of public recognition.

It is an observable fact that sexuality is regulated in every culture.⁹⁷ This appears to be a requirement for the survival of society and of the individual. This universal fact stems from what may best be described as the radically social nature of human existence. The construction of laws and institutions to regulate social behaviour is natural to man, and is, as Brunner and others have demonstrated,⁹⁸ especially true of human

96. Ibid. p. 16.

97. Cf. E. Westermarck, The History of Human Marriage; London, 1894, also his Marriage, New York, 1929.

98. Cf. E. Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit. pp. 212ff.

relationships having to do with sexuality.

One must appreciate that a multiplicity of cultures will lead to a multiplicity of customs and institutions designed to socialize and institutionalize sexuality. These different forms will be valid to the extent that, within their cultural context, they serve to promote and actualize the ideal of humanity in general. For the Christian, however, the institutionalization of sexuality with its origins in the Creation and the Covenant is constituted by the initiative of God, and finds its definitive realization in the message of Jesus. Thus the fidelity of God and the relationship of Christ and His Church is reflected in the man and woman who, in their total and irrevocable gift of themselves, the fruit of grace, reproduce the love and fidelity of the God of the Covenant.

Now while the biblical evidence regarding the statements about marriage is, as we have seen,⁹⁹ uncertain and inconclusive with regard to the kind of institution or form marriage ought to take, the Christian, partly on natural considerations, and partly on Jesus' demand for total commitment to the will of the Creator, has come to a definite decision as to what the outward form of marriage ought to be. The 'mutual fellowship' that makes up the very essence of marriage can only be

99. Cf. *Supra* above pp. 398ff.

maintained when the partners seek public recognition of this fact in their lives through the framework of the community's legal system. For the nature of marriage is both personal and institutional. Therefore recognition on the part of both partners and community is necessary to bring it into existence. F. Böckle¹⁰⁰ shows that this is so by confirming the biblical evidence on the basis of contemporary anthropology. His approach is summed up in the following syllogism:

"The sex act as a total gift of love requires the guarantee of the marriage bond to attain its full meaning. Now the Christian, in response to God's will, should always aim at attaining the fullest meaning of love. Therefore his sexual relations have to be confined to the married state."

Thus the Christian concept of marriage, like the institutionalization of sexuality universally, seeks recognition from the community. Therefore marriage according to Christian interpretation cannot exist as an inner structure that expresses itself in attestations of sentiments and feelings, but must also be publicly recognized and incorporated into the legal form of the community. Any other form of relationship, however sincere, however genuine, is not considered to be marriage --- marriage in Christian terms, is measured, rightly or wrongly, not only by the 'inward structure' but also by the outward legal form. Thus any form of

100. Cf. F. Böckle and J. Kohne, Geschlechtliche Beziehungen vor der Ehe, Mainz, 1967. cited in C.J. Snoek, op. cit. p. 120.

marriage that fails to measure up to the formal authority of the community is considered by traditional Christianity to be less than what God had intended marriage to be. However, this position is already raising serious questions in the current literature regarding the institutionalization of sexuality. If the emphasis is placed on the 'inward structure' --- on the total commitment of the partners in acts of acceptance and recognition, then what are we to say to the 'new' forms of marriage that are appearing on the scene? Can they be an authentic expression of the divine will, even when they fail to comply with the formal authority of the society? The recognition of marriage as a personal relationship that exists for the partners and not necessarily for society opens up the possibility of new forms for marriage, which might more adequately express what God intended the marriage relationship to be.

Indissolubility

In the light of what we have been saying about marriage in terms of gospel, what about the question of indissolubility? This question is the pivot around which all marriage theology and discussion turns, and has determined to a greater or lesser extent the outcome of Christian thinking about marriage. No theologian or exegete of any significance leaves this question aside, nor can he, for the idea of indissolubility is in essence a constituent part of marriage itself. The conclusion of most scholars is best put in the words of H. Baltensweiler who states:

"The Christian Church must emphasize and affirm the indissolubility of marriage as the essential intention, even if in certain concrete cases a divorce has to be permitted." 101

Now, as we have noted before,¹⁰² indissolubility as the essential intention goes back to the teaching of Jesus regarding man's total obedience to the will of the Creator. Jesus did not preach a new law of marriage in the Sermon on the Mount, and his statements regarding indissolubility are not to be taken as a binding declaration about marriage itself, in the sense that he actually said that marriage 'could' not be dissolved. Jesus' demand regarding marriage must be seen in the context of all the demands in the Sermon on the Mount, equal to and not more important than those regarding swearing, anger, self-defence, and the hatred of one's enemies, which are not 'laws' in the juridical sense, but are evangelical challenges aimed at moving the hearts of men to recognize and obey the will of the Creator, and not merely to seek after what was permissible or possible within the law. Jesus' insistence on the indissolubility of marriage was aimed precisely at emphasizing the magnitude and beauty of the institution as God intended it, as something that once taken up became a valuable and indispensable part of one's human existence.

What gives the question of indissolubility such a prominent place in marriage theology is the fact that the

101. "Current Developments in the Theology of Marriage in the Reformed Churches", Cone Vol. 5, No. 6, May 1970, p. 150.

102. *Supra* p.432f.

biblical evidence regarding indissolubility is not altogether clear.¹⁰³ The 'exceptive clauses' in Matthew have introduced a certain ambiguity in both the teaching and practice of the Christian Church, which demanded explanation. This ambiguity raised a question of authenticity¹⁰⁴ regarding the teachings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels; thus the answer to the whole question was sought by attempting to find out what Jesus, and not the early Church, had to say to this question. Therefore, the answer lay not in the fact that divorce according to the exceptive clauses was permissible or possible, but what was the essential intention for marriage in the 'divine will' as preached by Jesus.

Jesus, contrary to the Mosaic law, establishes the indissolubility of marriage as the original intention of the Creator. Therefore, the only argument which supports this indissolubility is that the state of marriage itself is not at man's disposal; 'What God has joined together shall no man put asunder.' The spouses who embrace marriage are seeking permanency in their relationship, for the idea of marriage incorporates with it the idea of permanency. Thus the couple are, as Lohff points out, whether they realize it or not, obeying the will of the Creator, and are partaking in an institution that is

103. Cf. W.J. O'Shea, "Marriage and Divorce; The Biblical Evidence", AusCathRec, 1967 (1970) pp. 89-109.

104. Cf. Supra Chapter 3 which deals with the question of authenticity which is basic to any clarification of biblical ambiguity.

not of their own making nor of their own disposal, but God's. Therefore in accepting the institution of marriage from God's gracious hands they must also accept the permanency of marriage. This is where the dynamic idea of creation comes into play, that God who instituted marriage for the benefit of man, will also help him to accomplish it in reality. Marriage belongs in this respect not only to the order of creation but also to the order of redemption. God is prepared to share the relationship with the couple, helping them, teaching them, supporting them in the total process of the lived relationship. Therefore for the couple who leave their lives open to this creative activity of God, who through commitment to one another are essentially obedient to his will, indissolubility becomes a constituent part of marriage itself.

Let us underline again the fact that Jesus in his teaching about marriage does not represent the legal ruling of the Pentateuch, which allowed divorce as a legal act as opposed to the divine will. The indissolubility of marriage, as far as Jesus was concerned, was a constituent part of life which is realized in the obedient man. The man for whom the law of Moses is given, is not the obedient man, but the hard-hearted, who exercises his own will as opposed to the will of the Creator.

Finally we must view the question of indissolubility in the light of what we have been saying about the 'inner

structure' of marriage. The 'inner structure' is, as we have described, the unwritten law between the spouses of free acceptance and recognition, which makes up the very essence of marriage. However, this freedom also includes the possibility of such a law being broken, of the state of marriage at its 'inner level' being relinquished. For as soon as one or both of the partners in the relationship no longer recognize the law of free acceptance and recognition, which involves submission, obedience, fidelity and forgiveness, the marriage has already broken down at its 'inner core'. What remains has been described by some sociologists as an "empty shell" marriage, a marriage that is held together not by the 'inner' essential structure, but by the outer formal authority of the community. Thus marriage becomes something less than what God had intended, it is no longer a meaningful, life-fulfilling, enriching experience, but a formality that has its existence not as a means of grace for the partners, but as a false symbol of the divine institution in the community. It is somewhat unfortunate that traditional Christian teaching has made indissolubility into a rigid formal law which it insists upon regardless of what has happened or is happening within the marriage relationship. In many instances it has failed to recognize the essential feature of the 'gospel' which insists that true marriage, purposefully and meaningfully lived, does not exist apart from the obedience and fidelity of man. While we

can assert that God does not intend marriage to be broken, yet at the same time we must face the realities of human existence, and acknowledge the fact that individuals often exercise the liberty that Creation grants by actively and persistently resisting the divine will.

No formal laws, whether of Church or State, can prevent marriage from breaking up, as 'outward formal laws' have no jurisdiction over the 'inner structure', which is essential to meaningful marriage. However, outward formal law, while it cannot prevent marriage breakup, can contribute to the restoration of the broken 'inner structure'. This is the real value of the institutionalization of sexuality; it holds together, for a time, the couple who have broken the essential nature of the marriage bond, and enables them to reassess their relationship, not only in terms of formal authority but in terms of Jesus' demand for total obedience to God's will. It enables the estranged couple to exercise those redemptive qualities that can restore and re-create new meaning and purpose to the relationship. The message of the gospel which calls for man's total obedience to God's will, enables the couple to submerge their own self-will, and to exercise a love and forgiveness, that will make possible renewed fidelity, submission and understanding. The 'gospel' teaches them that

"Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance. Love will never come to an end". (I Cor. 13:4-8).

God does not only hold out the hope of indissolubility, but makes it possible through man's obedience to the gospel.

However, because the individual can resist the 'will of the Creator' indefinitely, asserting his own self-will --- alienating himself in his human relationships and in his relationship with God, the ruling which permits divorce in the formal legal sense is justified, and must be allowed when the marriage is so irretrievably broken that the continuation of the marriage bond will cause more harm than separation.

True indissolubility is possible only through the message of Christ, who declares to us the 'divine will' which undergirds the whole of authentic human existence and which is at work in human history for the redemption of man. Jesus makes possible human fulfilment of God's divine will by opening up the way of salvation by directing men to the divine will which gives life and which strives to bring it to its fullest possible realization in the midst of all that would frustrate and destroy it. Thus redemption is possible even in the broken relationship of marriage, because the 'will of God' to which the gospel points is an operative reality here and now, in every event of nature, history, and

personal experience. Indissolubility, therefore, becomes a constituent part of marriage when man becomes essentially obedient to the 'will of the Creator' who created and sustains marriage for man's self-fulfilment.

Marriage as Sacrament

On the basis of the New Testament evidence it is difficult to claim that marriage is a sacrament. First, it stands outside the traditional definition of sacrament as understood in Protestant theology as "a holy ordinance instituted by Christ";¹⁰⁵ secondly, there is no evidence that there was any sort of nuptial blessing presided over by the Ministers of the Church, either in the literature of the New Testament or the earliest patristic literature;¹⁰⁶ and thirdly, marriage as such, does not conform to the typical sacramental structure. It needed no minister to officiate (practice made it clear that nuptial blessing was optional¹⁰⁷), and there was no 'visible sign', such as water in baptism, and the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper; -- Nothing

105. Cf. L. Berkhof, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, London, 1968, p. 154.

106. Willy Rordorf, "Marriage in the New Testament and Early Church", JEccLH Vol. 20 (1969) p. 204.

107. Ibid p. 208 Here Rordorf remarks "The tradition of a nuptial blessing develops late; in fact, even in the middle ages it retains an optional character, and it is still later that we find an ontological interpretation of the indissolubility of marriage."

except the actual coming together in marriage of Christian man and woman.

However, despite these obstacles in claiming marriage to be a sacrament, Roman Catholicism affirms it to be a sacrament, and lists it among the seven sacraments of the Church. Yet, despite their insistence upon marriage as a sacrament, Catholic marriage theology has been divided on the identity of the sacrament, some believing it to be a transient sacrament verified in the consent, with others believing it to be a permanent sacrament subsisting in the marital bond, expressing itself in the life of the husband and wife, and including their whole experience of marriage from the exchange of marriage vows until death.¹⁰⁸

Within the Canonical sphere of Roman Catholicism the notion of 'contract' dominated the Church's thinking about marriage, and early theologians followed the Canonists in saying that the 'marriage contract' was the sacrament. The moment of consent was, in fact, the crucial moment, even though Ephesians 5:21-33 had discovered the mystery of marriage in the continuing relationship of husband and wife, a relationship that reflected that between Christ and the Church.

However, this narrow Canonists' view eventually proved to be totally unsatisfactory in defining marriage

108. Leonard F. Gerke, Christian Marriage: A Permanent Sacrament, Catholic University, Washington, 1968.

as sacrament. Its impoverished definition of the object of consent in terms of an exchange of physical sexual rights, and its preoccupation with the permanence of the marriage bond distracted from the far more important question of the nature and quality of the marriage relationship.¹⁰⁹ This narrow conception of marriage brought a reaction from the more progressive Catholic theologians.

To overcome the difficulties arising from the Canonists' narrow view and the earlier view of marriage as non-Sacramental, Catholic theologians began to look for the sacramental nature of marriage within the relationship itself. Thus Catholic thinking began to shift its emphasis from marriage contract to marriage institution.¹¹⁰ Thus the secular reality of marriage was seen to be a sacrament in that the Christian gospel transfuses and transforms the human and natural institution of marriage. This new thinking is put by Dennis O'Callaghan as follows:

"As a human institution marriage associates man and woman in a family unit in which they achieve their identity and fulfilment and rear new life to responsible adulthood in an atmosphere of loving communion. As a Christian institution marriage is a sacramental and consecrated state in which the various elements of natural wedlock are given a redeeming force and are directed towards the realization of the Kingdom of God. Against this background marriage consent is the dedication of man and woman in partnership to a Christian mission in Church and world." 111

110. Mgr. Alan Clark, What the Council says about Marriage, Catholic Truth Society, London, July, 1967.

111. Dennis O'Callaghan, op. cit. p. 103.

* 109. Cf. above pp. 422.

When Vatican II defined marriage as a 'community of love' it endorsed the view that is current in Protestant theology¹¹² that 'love' (mutual fellowship) is not a secondary priority of marriage, but the very essence of marriage itself. This is what marriage is in its own right --- a community of love. And it exists for this before it exists for anything else. Therefore for the modern Catholic theologian it is this relationship which Christ grasps and sanctifies in the sacrament of marriage. Therefore, marriage becomes a permanent sacrament not in the sense that the married relationship continues and perpetuates the sacramental force of the consent, but in the sense that this relationship is the sacrament first and foremost and in its own right. Bellarmine was the first to define marriage in this way when he stated that marriage is

"a sacrament like the Eucharist, which is a sacrament not only as it comes into being, but also while it lasts; for as long as husband and wife live, their community of life is always a sacrament of Christ and the Church."¹¹³

This ontological interpretation of marriage was founded on the teaching which we have in Ephesians 5:21-33, with special reference to the passage "This is a great mystery (sacrament), and I take it to refer to Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32). What is understood from this teaching in Ephesians is that the secular reality

112. Supra pp. 436 ff.

113. Bellarmine, De controversiis, III (De matrimonio) cont. 2, c. 6. A.A.S., 22 (1930) p. 583, quoted from L. Gerke, Christian Marriage: A Permanent Sacrament, Washington, 1968.

of earthly marriage as a lived relationship has been 'elevated to the rank of a sign which is a cause of grace.'¹¹⁴ Therefore Christian marriage becomes a real expression in the world of the unity of Christ and the Church, and is indissoluble¹¹⁵ because the bond between Christ and the Church is indissoluble.

Catholic theology differs in several respects from Protestant theology regarding marriage. While current Catholic thinking emphasizes the reality of the relationship as the basis for a sacrament of marriage, it returns in its thinking to the earlier Canonist conception of marriage as 'contract', for it believes that a relationship that has degenerated and has ceased to be meaningful, is still sacramental because the sacrament is not just the relationship as it appears here and now but the relationship as sealed in the formal marriage contract. This thinking stems, of course, from the Roman Catholic understanding of grace in its theology of the sacraments. The Roman Catholics regard the sacraments as themselves the channels (means) of sanctifying grace. Once the marriage bond between two baptized persons is initiated this 'grace' is given to the partners and makes of their union a sacrament. However, if there is guilt or failure on either side, the sacrament becomes an ineffective or dormant sacrament, nevertheless it still remains, and offers the couple the

114. Cf. Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI 'Casti Connubii', 1930, translated 'Christian Marriage,' London, 1965, p. 17, Par. 31, 32.

115. Ibid., p. 18, par. 33.

possibility of reactualization. On the other hand Protestant theology does not understand grace after the analogy of a medicine, so that it can be spoken of as infused if the requisite conditions are objectively present. Grace, in Protestant thought, is the divine favour which can only be received by active faith.¹¹⁶ This means, in effect, that while the sacraments may embody the 'grace' of God, this grace is not restricted to the sacraments, and is not effective even in the sacraments if faith is not present.

The Roman Catholic conception of marriage as sacrament believes that the secular reality assumes a supernatural dimension. The characteristics that pertain in the secular reality become something more; love becomes not just 'eros' but 'agape', a love so deep, so strong, so forgiving that it reflects in its expression the love which Christ has for His Church. Thus the secular reality becomes a supernatural sacrament raised to a higher level of reality because it now reflects the sacrificial love of the Redeemer and intensifies the partners' life of grace. Therefore, every aspect of the human institution preserves its full meaning and takes on a new dimension in the Christian institution of marriage - love, sex, conjugal and parental responsibility are to be described in both

116. Cf. Van A. Harvey, A Handbook of Theological Terms, New York, 1966, p. 212f, Also L. Berkoff, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, London, 1968, 3rd ed., p.152f

secular and sacramental terms. The secular reality itself is the sacrament for Christian partners.

However, for the Catholic, not all secular marriages are sacraments, for the key to the sacrament of matrimony is baptism. Thus the sacrament of marriage appears to depend upon the more primary sacrament of Baptism. This is in line with the Roman Catholic thinking regarding sacraments as a channel of sanctifying grace. Therefore, if two unbaptized persons enter into marriage, or for that matter if a baptized Catholic enters upon a mixed marriage, the marriage is not a sacrament. Christian marriage, for the Catholic, becomes a sacrament — a channel (means) of sanctifying grace, only when both partners are members of Christ's body, the Church, through baptism. Thus for the Catholic baptism makes marriage a sacrament.¹¹⁷

However, sacrament, that is, sanctifying grace, can be absent from marriage even when the two partners are baptized. Constant guilt, infidelity, and failure of the partners can submerge or make ineffective or dormant the sacramental grace of marriage. Thus marriage can fall outside the channel of sanctifying grace not only through lack of baptism, but also through lack of commitment.¹¹⁸

117. Cf. On the relationship of Baptism and marriage, O. Casel, "Die Taufe als Brautbad der Kirche" in Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft, 5 (1925), pp. 144-7. Also Leonard Gerke, op. cit., who contends that Baptism is the key to marriage as a sacrament.

118. Cf. Dennis O'Callaghan, op. cit. p. 103.

Let us look for a moment at the biblical evidence on which this Catholic interpretation of marriage is based, and try and determine in what sense it supports this concept of marriage as sacrament.

We have already indicated that there is no biblical evidence to support marriage as a sacrament, and that in the patristic period Ephesians 5, which is now used as the basis of the Catholic understanding of marriage as sacrament, was never used to interpret marriage, either as a secular reality or a sacramental institution.¹¹⁹ The reason for this lack of interest in Ephesians by the Church Fathers in interpreting marriage appears to stem from the fact that they viewed Ephesians 5:21-33 primarily in a Christological context,¹²⁰ making no attempt to draw ethical conclusions. However, later exegetical research had shown that the author of Ephesians, or, more correctly, the author of the 'Haustafel' section¹²¹ (Eph. 5:21-33), had drawn together typologies from both the Old Testament and early Christian tradition weaving them into a mosaic which he uses for a double purpose, to illustrate the relation between Christ and his church and to draw the Christian's attention to the practical applications of the Gospel to the married life of Christian couples. On the basis of the 'Haustafel' framework in which the author has arranged his material, it appears that Ephesians

119. Willy Rordorf, *op. cit.* p. 208.

120. *Supra* Chapter IV, pp

121. *Supra* Chapter III, pp.

5:21-33 is meant to be an ethical teaching that deals with the realities of living the Christian life in the secular world. Thus the primary motive of the author is not, as the early patristics thought, to emphasize the relationship of Christ and the Church, although this figures into the teaching, but the couple's relationship to each other. However, because the early patristic writers viewed Ephesians 5:21-33 in a totally Christological context, they did not use it to interpret marriage either as a sacrament or as a secular reality. W. Rordorf, in an article quoted earlier, may well have touched on the reasons why these early patristic writers failed to give an ontological interpretation to marriage on the basis of Ephesians 5:21-33 by pointing out the following incongruities in the analogy:

"the union of the couple does not last beyond death, while the love of Christ for the Church continues throughout eternity. Secondly, that which is true of Christ is not necessarily true of husbands, who, even if they are baptized, remain sinners. We have seen that Jesus does not quote the passage in Genesis in order to show that marriage creates an ontological bond between husband and wife, but rather to say that God wishes that the married couple form one flesh for as long a time as they live." 122

Now, apart from Rordorf's observations, we might ask how and when marriage came to be considered a sacrament by the Roman Catholic communion, and in what sense does this interpretation differ from the Protestant understanding of marriage?

122. "Marriage in the New Testament and Early Church", JEclH Vol. 20, 1969, p. 201.

Marriage was first spoken of as a sacrament in Augustine's De bono Conjugali.¹²³ However, it is to be noted here that Augustine makes no direct reference to the 'mystery' of Ephesians 5:32, but instead uses the term 'sacramentum' in its classical Latin sense. The basic meaning of this word in secular Latin usage was "religious commitment" or "engagement".¹²⁴ We can better appreciate the meaning of 'sacramentum' in the works of Augustine,¹²⁵ if we consider, first of all, the conception of marriage given in Roman civil law during the late Roman Empire: 'Nuptias non concubitus, sed consensus facit.'¹²⁶ That is, it is the mutual consent of the couple which makes the marriage valid.¹²⁷ Therefore, what Augustine does is to render the idea of consent by the word 'sacramentum', which had, in secular Latin, this idea among other meanings.¹²⁸ Thus the consent, which makes the marriage according to civil law, is placed by Augustine in a Christian context; and in this context receives a meaning which is quite profound. For Augustine, then, the idea of consent (sacramentum) has the unmistakable meaning of 'indissolubility'. Marriage was a 'sacramentum' because it was indissoluble and inviolable, and therefore holy.¹²⁹

123. De bono conjugali, 32 (PL 40,394), Cf also, E. Schillebeeckx, Marriage: Secular Reality and Saving Mystery, London, 1965, part II, p. 72ff.

124. Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *ibid*, Part II, pp. 72.

125. W. Rordorf, *op. cit.* p. 210.

126. Codex Justiniani, Dig. xvii. 30

127. Cf. E. Schillebeeckx, pp. 73ff.

128. *Ibid* p. 71f.

129. Cf. Marie-Francois Berrouard, "Augustin et L'Indissolubilité du Mariage", in Recherches Augustiniennes, Vol. 5 (1968) pp. 139-155.

Thus for Augustine the sacrament of marriage is basically the ethical imperative of perpetual fidelity, which is derived from the commandments of love preached by Jesus. In this regard Augustine is a faithful witness to the teaching on marriage in the New Testament, and in the whole of the early Church, for what becomes the heart and soul of marriage is the 'mutual fellowship' of the couple which craves public recognition through consent. Marriage becomes a 'religious commitment' that both make in response to the 'gospel' preached by Christ.

However, this idea of 'sacramentum' was not applied to the Christian understanding of marriage in the following centuries, and when the theologians and Canonists of the eleventh and twelfth centuries began to devote some time to the question of marriage, the idea of 'sacramentum' which they arrived at was somewhat different than what Augustine had in mind.¹³⁰ It was at

130. Sacrament is used in the twelfth century in the sense in which the scholastics understood it (1140-1150) -- namely a rite which both symbolizes and effects grace, of which they listed seven instances. The sacredness of Christian marriage was of course recognized from earliest times (Pope Pius XI 'Casti Connubii' op. cit. p. 18) but no one dreamt of translating the 'mysterion' referred to in the Epistle to the Ephesians (5:32) by 'sacrament' in the scholastic and Tridentine sense. What is there described as mysterious, and what was understood by the early Fathers, is the mystical bond between Christ and the Church. The mystery 'par excellence', is God's plan to save all men by identifying them with his Son. Now while the carnal union between man and woman also implies total dedication, a definitive choice, nobody in the early Church dreamt of going beyond comparisons or moral duties. Cf. P. Delhaye, "The Development of the Medieval Church's Teaching on Marriage", Conc Vol. 5, No. 6, 1970, pp. 85f.

this point that the theologians began to look to Scripture and to various patristic texts for guidance in determining what was meant by sacrament in marriage,¹³¹ and it was from this point onwards that marriage began to be interpreted as an ontological union which unites husband and wife in a sacrament which cannot be broken, and which refers to the mystery of Christ and His Church.

Ephesians 5:21-33 became the basis for this theological view, with the key text being "This is a great mystery (mystery interpreted in the West by the word sacrament), and I take it to refer to Christ and the Church". (Eph. 5:32). The Ephesians passage now took on a two way illumination, it reflected Christ's relationship with His Church, and man's relationship with his wife. However, while Catholic exegetes interpreted this passage (Eph. 5: 21-33) in the sense of an ontological union between man and woman, they still held to the earlier Christological interpretation and treated it as a 'sign' or 'symbol' for the Christian couple to follow in their own relationship.

Protestant thinking on marriage differs radically from this conception, especially regarding the idea of sacrament. What marks and accentuates the difference between Catholic and Protestant understanding of marriage is, as we have noted earlier, the different understanding

¹³¹. Ephesians 5:32 was seen now not only as the mystery of Christ and the Church, but as signifying the union between man and wife --- a rite which both symbolizes and effects grace.

of grace. Protestant thought does not confine 'grace' to the sacraments, but believes that God's grace is operative in response to faith. Therefore, Protestant exegetes interpret Ephesians 5:21-32 not as a 'description' of the essence of marriage in the ontological sense, but as a 'representation' in the functional sense of marriage actually lived.¹³²

In Ephesians 5 marriage is bound up with the Christ-event, thus revealing its true essence as something intended even at the creation. The word of God on the union of man and woman as ordained by Creation (Gen 1:27, 2:24) is seen as a prophetic allusion to Christ and the Church, which enjoys the dimension of salvation history. However, it is evident that the above mentioned passage in Genesis refers essentially to marriage, that is, to man and woman. If it is then applied to Christ and the Church it not only has allegorical overtones but ultimately returns from its applied to its original sense --- the relationship between man and woman. This relationship is fore-shadowed in Christ and his relationship to the Church, as a new relationship basically intended in Creation.¹³³

Thus the fundamental difference between Catholic and Protestant thinking on marriage is that Protestants view marriage not so much as a channel (means) of sanctifying

132. H. Baltensweiler, Die Ehe im Neuen Testament, Zurich und Stuttgart, 1967, p. 233f.

133. Supra p.432f.

grace which is made possible through Baptism, but that marriage itself is 'grace' --- grace for the individuals, because from its institution as a reality in the realm of human experience God is at work in marriage, creating, redeeming, and bringing to the fulfilment a new relationship that finds its meaning and purpose in the 'Gospel' of Christ.

Therefore the pattern of 'prototype' or 'copy' as used to elicit the real meaning of Ephesians 5 is inadequate; it is more appropriate to use the terms 'realization' or 'representation'. For in the same way that the Church as such represents Christ in this world, Christian marriage realizes the presence of Christ in us.¹³⁴ Thus marriage is not only a part of creation but also of redemption, for it can transmit from the believing partner those qualities of redemption that are able to sanctify and redeem the unbelieving partner (I Cor 7:14).

To the Protestant mind marriage is not merely a channel (means) of sanctifying grace, that is activated by the partners' Baptism, but is of its very nature a 'means of grace' that becomes possible for each partner through faith. Marriage, as created and sustained by the Creator, is, as Helen Oppenheimer puts it, "a natural sacrament"¹³⁵ in itself. This is the essential point:

134. H. Baltensweiler, "Current Developments in the Theology of Marriage in the Reformed Churches", Conc Vol. 5, No. 6, 1970, p. 147.

"Marriage does not belong to redemption or to fall but to creation. Surely this is what Christ was stressing in his quotation of Genesis? If one can thus understand the anthropological fact of human marriage as God-given in the sense that it arises out of human nature as created by God, it may even follow that one need not reserve to Church marriage the honour of signifying to us the mystical union which is between Christ and his Church."¹³⁶

Christian marriage is therefore not to be understood as merely an additional element to ordinary marriage, the latter is not intensified by Christianity. There is only one form of Christian marriage, which, while lived like any ordinary marriage, allows the couple, by virtue of their Christianity, to view their marriage as something new. Christ is present not only in the Church, but in marriage, and thus transforms it into a means of salvation. Therefore, if Jesus in his relationship to the Christian community becomes the symbol of Christ's love, then it is to be taken more as an exhortation, as a call to married couples to imitate that example.

The question may, of course, be asked: Is there a difference at all between natural and Christian love and marriage? The answer, for Protestants at least, is this: If there is such a difference it is only in the fact that the natural love, in which we find ourselves, is always selfishly broken and denied by man to his fellow-man. Christian love, is no different from 'natural' love in its substance, but only in the way it is shown. Christian

135. "Marriage and Grace", Theology 72 (1969) p. 543.

136. *Ibid* p. 543.

love comes to man even when he refuses it; it is a one-sided love (as implied in the Sermon on the Mount,) - a love which has forgiving power, which enables, heals and founds new and lasting partnerships. It is only in this sense that we can speak of the sacramental nature of marriage.

The analogy of Christ and the Church is not a heightening of the secular reality of man and wife, but indicates a new possibility which becomes effective and is realized when man is essentially obedient to the preaching of the 'gospel' --- when he is satisfied to forego his own egotism, self-will, and submit himself totally to the will of the Creator in every aspect of his existence, including marriage.

Therefore, the one who interprets his marriage in a Christian sense is referred anew to grace. He has accepted the challenge of Christ to accept God's will as the governing principle in his life, and therefore he sees his marriage as something he himself did not initiate, nor is he entirely responsible for its preservation -- for it is not merely a human, moral and personal task, but owes its origin and existence to God's reconciling and re-creating action.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages three things were attempted: first, to show what is meant by a theology of marriage; secondly, to point out the different approaches in the literature in developing such a theology; and thirdly,

a basis was suggested for a theology of marriage in terms of 'gospel'.

It was seen that a theology of marriage is only possible when we are prepared to acknowledge the fact that God is, in some way or other, involved in the marriage relationship. This acknowledgement does not mean that one assents to the static idea of the early Prayer Books which viewed marriage as 'an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency' -- an idea which conveys the impression that God was only active at the instituting of marriage, but demands the acknowledgement of a more dynamic idea of God creatively involved in marriage as a new and lived relationship. God is present and active in marriage, in both creative and redemptive ways, because He not only instituted marriage for man but helps him to bring it to fulfilment. The literature approaches the question of developments in marriage theology from three different angles. The textual approach, which began with the earliest Christian writers, is the oldest and most fundamental approach to marriage theology. In its earliest development all relevant texts were collected and co-ordinated into a doctrine of Christian marriage. However, this procedure had several inherent weaknesses, among them the tendency to take the New Testament passages as legal rulings for all time, thus making the teaching of Jesus into a kind of legalism. A second weakness was the tendency to combine together all texts

referring to marriage, however inconsistent, to formulate a doctrine of Christian marriage. This combination was made, innocently enough, because little or no consideration was given to the historical, social and legal environment of particular texts. However, this problem has been largely overcome in recent exegesis because of the new hermeneutical advances which attempt to understand each individual text in its own historical, social and religious environment. This new approach to textual analysis has demonstrated the validity of a textual approach to our understanding of biblical truth.

The second approach to marriage theology that we considered in this chapter was that based on the 'orders of creation' or natural law. In earlier Protestant theology 'orders of creation' were considered as those existing facts of human corporate life which lie at the root of all historical life as unalterable pre-suppositions. However, the idea of 'orders of creation' and indeed natural law, especially as it applies to human corporate life, has undergone a considerable change in recent theological thought. An 'order of creation' is no longer conceived as a pre-historic presupposition which is handed down by the Church as an arbitrary divine fiat, but is viewed in terms of God's dynamic activity in history. Regarding marriage, this means that God did not set up an ideal behind history, but that He established within history, and continues to sustain, an institution that is possible for man within the sphere of human existence.

The danger of this natural law approach is, in fact, the old problem of legalism, where the laws of nature regarding corporate life are conceived as arbitrary divine laws and thus translated into legal rulings regardless of human circumstances. This legal conception of natural law has lost its appeal in recent theology and is now more constructively understood as a naturalistic ethic in which 'oughts' are derived not from obscure commands but from the 'is' of human nature, which for the Christian is created, fallen, and redeemed nature.

The third approach to marriage theology considered in this chapter is, in fact, the newest, and in many ways the most promising. The philosophical or conceptual approach attempts on the basis of one or more principles of human existence such as love, fidelity, etc., to show how God is at work in our human relationships, striving to redeem our fallen nature and to make meaningful all our personal relationships. It attempts to show how these higher qualities of human existence reflect, on the creaturely level, the true nature and qualities of a God, who in His never ending love and concern for humanity, continues to help, sustain and redeem fallen man. This approach, as we have noted, suffers from two major disadvantages rather than weaknesses; one is that the principle or principles on which a theology of marriage is based are not always accepted by the whole of the Christian community as a basis for marriage theology, and secondly, the acceptance of a marriage theology based

on anything other than the Scriptures, even when Scripture is used to illustrate its validity, is not always welcomed, and is quite often rejected on this very basis. However these faults do not invalidate the approach itself, but rather highlights the mammoth task which faces current theology in displacing older theologies of marriage that have already proved, in the light of recent exegesis, to be both pastorally inadequate and theologically misleading.

The second half of this chapter is actually an attempt to find a basis for a theology of marriage that is acceptable to the whole of the Christian community, while at the same time true to sound exegesis and relevant to the pastoral needs of our present human condition. The conclusion reached in this regard is that a theology of marriage that speaks dynamically to our present human condition must have as its base the central proclamation of the 'gospel', which is essentially the preaching of Jesus concerning man's total obedience to the will of the Creator. Thus while it is profitable to analyse and speculate about Jesus' sayings in the context of the social-historical milieu in which they were spoken, and to determine, as far as is possible, the significance of these sayings in their historical, social and legal environment, ^{their} meaning for us comes only when the message of Jesus confronts us in our present situation, revealing the reality of our own human relationships and calling us, through them, to total obedience to the Creator. Therefore the statements

attributed to Jesus, are not to be interpreted from the perspective of law, or custom, but as laying bare the reality of marriage which, though subject to law, can never^{be} adequately protected or explained by it. Jesus words contain a challenge and a promise: He shows how great are the obligations human beings can assume with regard to each other, but also the chance of fulfilment which is offered them. The 'gospel' which speaks to us, confronts us and challenges us is not measured by law or custom but by our response in faith to God's creative will. If one is essentially obedient to God's will, as preached in the central proclamation of the Gospel, he will find the means for reconciliation in all his human relationships, including marriage, and will have come upon the clue to the deepest meaning of life, and the resources for fulfilling that meaning.

A marriage theology founded on the broader basis of 'gospel' can, as we have seen, offer adequate and relevant answers to the basic theological and pastoral questions regarding marriage as an institution. The preaching of Jesus and the early Church regarding the will of the Creator, enables us to make the following affirmations about marriage: (1) God in bringing into being marriage for man's self-realization continues in creative and redemptive ways to help man find fulfilment and meaning in his marital relationships; (2) the purpose of marriage, according to divine will, is that both partners may share in a mutual fellowship that

expresses itself in acts of total commitment, recognition and acceptance; (3) indissolubility is a constitutive part of marriage itself in that God created marriage and continues to sustain it in order to make permanent our mutual fellowship, thus indissolubility is not a matter of interpreting law, but accepting the divine intention; and (4) marriage, as understood in terms of divine will, becomes a 'means of grace' for each partner, because God is involved with them. Their love for each other is accepted in the freedom of faith, and celebrated in the action of grace.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Recent developments in New Testament exegesis have given a totally new perspective to the study of the New Testament literature. Form-criticism, and the subsequent developments in "higher" and "lower" criticism, along with the introduction of a "new Hermeneutic"¹ have made the study of the New Testament material a more exacting science. These new methods of analysis along with new knowledge gained from the many studies done in the New Testament field have helped to unravel the origin, nature, and composition of the New Testament corpus, as well as cast further light on particular New Testament problems. It is in the light of these new methods, developments and discoveries that we have carried out our investigation of the concept of marriage in the New Testament, and its possible implications for marriage today.

We shall sum up our analysis of the concept of marriage in the New Testament by noting how these new developments in recent exegesis have influenced our thinking and understanding not only of the New Testament material, but also of our understanding of Christian marriage.

1. Cf. Chapter I, pp. 2ff.

In Chapter I we saw how the introduction of the "new" hermeneutics in New Testament exegesis provided a bridge between the defenders of traditional Christian ethics and the proponents of the "new morality" school by its fresh approach to the New Testament texts. This approach seeks to understand the different texts of the New Testament in their own historical and social environment, and avoids interpreting the texts in a literal or legal way, or grouping together a number of texts on the same or similar subjects to formulate a doctrine. Its aim is to find out what the text meant to the people to whom it was spoken, and to perceive from this what it might mean for our situation today.

One of the major contributions of the new approach to textual analysis, as we have seen,² is in pointing out the weaknesses and failures of earlier exegesis. Thus exegesis done in defence of doctrinal positions, or to meet the moral needs of the period of the exegete, as well as the use of inadequate and misleading theories to explain certain texts are among some of the weaknesses pointed out by this fresh approach to New Testament exegesis.³

The 'new heremenutic' in seeking an understanding of the texts in their own historical and social environment has been able to determine, to a large extent, what in

2. Cf. Chapter I, pp. 10ff.

3. Cf. Chapter I, pp. 24ff.

these texts is historically and socially conditioned, and what, if anything, is valid even for today. Therefore the value of the text for our own time is determined not only by outdated laws, or antiquated customs, but in terms of what the 'gospel' has to say to the human condition in every age regardless of custom and law.

We began our study of the concept of marriage in the New Testament by attempting to establish what the form and nature of marriage was in the New Testament period. We sought to establish the "Sitz im Leben" of Jesus' teaching on marriage by tracing the historical and sociological development of the marriage institution in the ancient world through an examination of the ancient law codes of the Near East, and in the history and development of the institution in the Hebrew and Greco-Roman world. The results of our investigation revealed that the institution of marriage in the New Testament period, especially among the Gentile Churches, was an amalgam of social and religious customs gathered from three nations -- the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans. However, the general features of the marriage relationship in the ^{cretistic} ~~syncretistic~~ society of the Hellenistic world to which the 'gospel' came adhered very much to the general conception of marriage common in the ancient world. Thus marriage in New Testament times was considered as primarily an economic arrangement, negotiated over a period of time with each stage of the negotiation marked by appropriate ceremonies and exchanges

of gifts or property. The institution, for the most part, included the permission of polygamy, the subjection of women, and the sole right of the husband to divorce.⁴

We began our analysis of the New Testament material with the Synoptic Gospels. While the Synoptics are not the first Christian writings⁵ they are considered the first genuine attempts to record the beginnings of Christianity, especially the ministry and teaching of Jesus. Our study focused upon the marriage and divorce 'logia' which are found with modifications in all three Gospels.

We began our analysis with a survey of the exegetical literature in an attempt to determine which account of the 'logion' was nearest the original form, working on the supposition that the different accounts of the marriage and divorce 'logion' as found in the Synoptics are modifications of a single original logion, possibly spoken by Jesus.⁶ However, we found that exegetes, of all persuasions, were sorely divided as to which account of the 'logion' on marriage and divorce in the Synoptics was the original or nearest to the original.⁷ Furthermore, we noted that some recent exegetes were claiming that while the 'logia' in the Synoptics are thematically the same they are not

4. Cf. Chapter II, pp. 66ff.

5. Cf. Chapter III, Introduction, Chapter I, p. 50

6. Cf. Chapter III, p. 105ff.

7. Cf. Chapter III, p. 105 to 114.

necessarily based on the one original 'logion', but derive their origin from different sources.⁸ Later in Chapter III we explored this possibility in our reassessment of the marriage and divorce 'logia'.

Our next step was to analyse the 'exceptive clauses' in Mt 5:32, 19:9. These 'clauses' have occupied the centre of all discussion regarding the teaching on marriage in the New Testament, and as a result have given rise to a large body of interpretative literature. Along with the long standing traditional interpretations of these 'exceptive clauses' are many new theories and variations of traditional theories that attempt to account for this teaching regarding marriage and divorce in the New Testament.⁹ Early exegesis followed a definite pattern in examining these 'clauses',¹⁰ and sought an interpretation of the teaching in Matthew either by analysing the whole 'logion' and comparing it with the accounts found in Luke and Mark, [treating the 'clauses' as 'interpolations' (Protestants)¹¹ or 'pre-scissions' (Catholics),¹²] or by looking at the whole 'clause' and trying to explain its origin and reason for inclusion in the original 'logion'.

8. Cf Chapter III, p. 114, 115.

9. Cf Chapter III, pp. 126-148.

10. Cf Chapter III, pp. 116-125.

11. Cf Chapter III, pp. 116f.

12. Cf Chapter III, pp. 120f.

New developments in recent exegesis broke away from this traditional way of looking at these 'bothersome' texts, by focusing not so much on the 'logion' or 'clauses' as a whole, but on particular terms which are used in the 'clauses' themselves.¹³ This gave rise to a whole new set of explanations based on the analysis of such terms as 'porneia'.¹⁴ This shift to an analysis of the background, use and significance of a particular term, injected new interest in the problem of the "exceptive clauses", opening up new possibilities for a solution to the 'crux interpretum' of the Matthean passages.

However, not only was there a shift regarding the analysis of the 'logion' from a general consideration to particular 'words' or 'phrases', but some recent exegetes have attempted to interpret the meaning of the 'exceptive clauses' in the context of a totally new set of criteria. Abel Isaksson, for example, argues that the remarks made by Jesus were inspired by Ezekiel 44:22 rather than Genesis 1:2, and, in the context of the "New Temple" idea in the New Testament he works out a convincing interpretation of the New Testament teaching in Mt 19:3-9.¹⁵

13. Cf. Chapter III, pp. 138ff.

14. Cf. Chapter III, p. 138ff.

15. Cf. Chapter III, p. 142.

In the light of this new idea we decided to re-examine the marriage and divorce 'logia' in the Synoptics. We began our analysis of the divorce 'logia' in the Synoptics by looking at them in the context of Jesus' whole teaching on marriage and the family. What we discovered was that the 'contradictional' element in Jesus' teaching was not confined to the marriage and divorce 'logia', but was in fact a common feature of the whole teaching of the Synoptics on marriage and the family.¹⁶ This discovery aroused an interest in the origin of those sayings that were contradictory in themselves or created a contradiction by standing in opposition to what was said in some other passage of Scripture. Using Norman Perrin's criteria of authenticity¹⁷ we found that nearly all the contradictory statements on marriage and the family in the Synoptics were not original with Jesus, but were, in fact, popular 'sayings' that circulated in apocalyptic and heterodox Judaism and were attributed to Jesus by the authors, editors or redactors of the Gospels. Once we had accounted for this 'contradictional' element in the general teaching on marriage and the family we took a closer look at the marriage and divorce 'logia'.

16. Cf. Chapter III, p. 151ff.

17. Cf. Chapter III, pp. 102ff.

We began our re-examination of the marriage and divorce 'logia' with Luke 16:18 as it was the least modified of the accounts in the Synoptics, and according to available evidence appears to be closest to the original form.¹⁸ Working on the basis of recent developments in the study of Luke 16:18, we came to the conclusion that the 'logion' as recorded in Luke, and possibly also in Mark and Matthew, was not original with Jesus, but can be traced to an older stratum of teaching that found expression in some heterodox Jewish groups of the New Testament epoch, such as Qumran,¹⁹ and was transmitted to the Christian sect possibly by a disciple of the Qumran community, and later transferred to Jesus who became a kind of magnetic field for all such teachings. The evidence seems to indicate that John the Baptist may have been the possible means of transmission for this teaching. John the Baptist's close association with Jesus in the early stages of Jesus' ministry, and the circumstances of His arrest and execution, strongly indicate that his rigorist stand regarding marriage may have been taken up by Jesus.²⁰ Though it can be substantially argued that the 'logia' in the Synoptics are not original with Jesus, this does not mean that Jesus did not make this ancient teaching on marriage an authentic part of His own teaching.

18. Cf. Chapter III, pp. 163ff.

19. Cf. Chapter III, pp. 169-194.

20. Cf. Chapter III, pp. 207ff.

Indications are that this teaching did pass through the prism of Jesus' ministry becoming an authentic part of his teaching, and an important part of the 'Jesus-tradition' which formed the basis for the teaching of the Christian Church. However, what Jesus actually said in reference to this ancient teaching has been lost underneath the interpretative accretions of the early Church.²¹

It is in the area of the Pauline teaching on marriage that the new developments in recent exegesis have directly influenced our understanding of marriage in New Testament times, and have, to a large extent, altered this understanding. We have seen how recent scholarship through studies regarding place of origin, linguistic analysis, similarities of expression, subject matter, adversaries involved, and other factors, have cut the Pauline corpus down to six or at most, eight genuine Pauline letters.²² Furthermore, the work of such scholars as J. Weiss and W. Schmithals in dividing the Corinthian correspondence into six separate letters has also affected our understanding of the Pauline teaching on marriage.²³

21. Cf. Chapter III, p. 212ff.

22. Cf. Chapter IV, p. 229ff.

23. Cf. Chapter IV, p. 238ff.

The detailed analysis of the Corinthian correspondence regarding marriage revealed that Paul was faced with the task of interpreting the 'gospel' to a number of different factions in the Corinthian congregation whose ethical and theological outlook appears to have been based on teachings other than that found in the 'Jesus-tradition'.²⁴ Paul attempts to overcome the differences which arose in the Corinthian congregation on the subject of marriage by restating the teachings found in the 'Jesus-tradition'. However, he interprets the 'tradition' in the light of the eschatological principle which dominated his whole theological outlook, and, like the authors and editors of the Synoptics, interprets, modifies, and alters this tradition to meet the needs of his congregations.

In our interpretation of the Pauline teaching the strong eschatological influence in Paul's teaching on marriage was emphasized. We saw how this influence produced a negative attitude in Paul's teaching not because Paul considered marriage to be less of a virtue than celibacy, but in the light of the eschatological principle marriage belonged to the present world order which was about to pass away. Because of this it was better for one to remain unmarried in order to be ready for the imminent day of the Lord.²⁵

24. Cf. Chapter IV, p. 263ff.

25. Cf. Chapter IV, p. 273ff.

The conclusions of recent exegesis regarding the authenticity (or unauthenticity) of the Pauline correspondence have created the greatest change in our understanding of New Testament ethics. The realignment and dating of the original Pauline 'corpus' into genuine and deutero-Pauline letters have shown that New Testament ethics passed through a three stage development beginning with an apocalyptic stage which established the 'Jesus-tradition' -- consisting as we have seen,²⁶ of sayings, statements, and teachings drawn from apocalyptic and heterodox Judaism; an eschatological stage which is represented in the Pauline correspondence; and thirdly, a more positive attitude toward marriage in the post-Pauline writings which were composed, according to the most recent dating of these writings, at the turn of the first century (circa 90-110 A.D.). At this period the Church had come to realize that the expected 'parousia' may not arrive for some considerable time; therefore it began to prepare itself in a positive way for the future, adopting an ethical code to guide the behaviour of its members. The Christian community chose the Judaeo-Hellenistic 'Haustafel' as a basis for developing an ethical system, injecting Christian motives into the 'Haustafel' teaching, thus making use of the 'Jesus-tradition' in its teaching on marriage and divorce.²⁷

26. Cf. Chapter III, p. 163-194.

27. Cf. Chapter IV, p. 294ff.

The 'Haustafel', as we have seen, in its pre-Christian origins was concerned with all social relationships over which the community had jurisdiction and was aimed at defining the behaviour of one group of individuals to another. The Christian 'versions' were similar in form, but were expanded to include the Christian teachings added by the different authors, or editors of the Post-Pauline letters. What is noted in this teaching is the change in the attitude of the Church towards marriage. The negative attitude which dominated the teaching in the eschatological period was now replaced by a positive attitude toward marriage and all social institutions; the Church now realizing that, if it is to be the 'body of Christ' in the world, it must prepare itself in a positive way for the future.

This positive approach to marriage is seen, not only in the 'Haustafel' literature, but also in other passages of the Pastoral Epistles,²⁸ and in the contemporary Christian writings of this period especially in the Apostolic Fathers. The Church, faced with the decadent moral standards of the Hellenistic world, had come to realize the value of marriage as a means of ordering moral and social behaviour, and therefore found it expedient to speak in its favour.

28. Cf. Chapter VI, pp. 365ff.

Our investigation has shown that while there is no complete teaching about marriage in the New Testament, and that a Christian doctrine of marriage cannot be arrived at by combining all the New Testament statements about marriage, nevertheless a development of a 'Christian' concept of marriage did take place in the New Testament period and was based on a common 'Jesus-tradition'. This 'tradition', whether authentic or unauthentic, is seen to speak dynamically to the different social and cultural situations in the early Church, calling men in whatever circumstance to total obedience to the will of the Creator, an obedience which provides him with the means of reconciliation in all his human relationships, including marriage, and also gives him the clue to the deepest meaning of life, and the resources for fulfilling that meaning.

The task ahead, which, in effect, is a necessary development of what has been attempted here, is to develop, on the basis of the new knowledge and insights gained through a more scientific hermeneutic, a theology of marriage that will be, at the same time, true to the 'gospel', and relevant and practical in contemporary society. This task is one of the greatest challenges facing the contemporary Church, and it depends for its success on an accurate and objective interpretation of Scripture, which biblical research is called to provide. The task of biblical research must be seen to be vital to

the development of theologies and the pastoral function of the Church. It is hoped that the knowledge and insights gained in this present study will make some small contribution towards the development of such a theology of marriage.

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