

The Minister's Attitude Toward Divorce and Re-Marriage.

The moralists of the United States are very much agitated at the present time concerning a member elect of Congress from Utah, named Roberts. He is lowered in the estimation of the good people of the east in being weighted down by three wives, whom he acquired under the laws of Utah before it became a state of the Union. This is contrary to the laws of the United States, and petitions are coming to Congress from all quarters of the republic pleading with that body for a law to prevent Mr. Roberts from taking his seat. Without discussing the merits of this matter, attention might well be called to the many persons remembered with two or three wives or husbands acquired under laws of different states of the Union, but directly opposed to the laws of God as set forth in the New Testament.

Cases of divorce are uncommon in the Dominion compared with the prevalence on this side of the line, but the question is none the less important, for the proper time to exterminate an evil is not when it has grown well established, common, and fashionable, but rather in its infancy, when sentiment is against it, and our knowledge of the injury which it does is not covered by its connection with so many prominent families.

The social aspect of the subject is important, but does not interest us on this occasion so much as the religious. Suffice it to say that a considerable percentage of the children now in reformatory institutions are the offspring of divorced parents: and when we remember that all social evils may directly or indirectly be traced to the family relations, we can perhaps appreciate the injury done by the social system which tolerates divorce.

In looking at the religious aspect of the subject, the first question for Baptists who take the Bible as the rule for faith and practice is, "What does the Bible say?" Let us look at six references to the subject in the New Testament.

Matt. 5:31, 32. This, and following passages, exclude the need of any reference to the Old Testament. Here Jesus gives the statement of his view of the subject as follows: "Every one that putteth away his wife saving for the cause of fornication maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." The evident meaning of this passage is,—Every one who puts away his wife, except on the ground of fornication when she would already be an adulteress, exposes her to the crime of adultery by the accorded privilege of re-marriage. Here, without doubt, divorce and re-marriage are both out of the question, for the divorced person who re-marries commits sin, and the husband who puts her away causes her to sin.

Matt. 19:3-12. Here Jesus, after speaking of the relation of the sexes through creation, says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication and shall marry another committeth adultery." The marginal reading, as taken from some ancient authorities, puts instead of "committeth adultery" the words "maketh her an adulteress." If we use the margin we have a passage analogous in meaning to the above, Matt. 5:32; but taking the common reading, the phrase "except for fornication" is a condition of and qualifies "put away," and thus, although giving no authority whatever for re-marriage, is the one implication in the New Testament concerning the admission of divorce.

Mark 10:2-12, is in many respects identical with Matt. 19:3-12, but its conclusion leaves no doubt concerning Jesus' teaching against divorce and re-marriage when he says, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her, and if she herself shall put away her husband and marry another, she committeth adultery."

Luke 16:18. Re-marriage, regardless of which is the guilty party, is criminal, for he says, "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marieth another committeth adultery: and he that marieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery." So much for the gospels; let us now turn to the teachings of the apostle Paul.

Rom. 7:1-3. "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by the law to the husband while he liveth: but if the husband die she is discharged from the law of her husband. So then if while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man." Here death alone is given as a dissolution of marriage, and re-marriage is spoken of as a breaking of the law.

1 Cor. 7:10-16. "But unto the married I give charge, ye not I but the Lord. That the wife depart not from her husband (but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband) and that the husband leave not his wife." In this passage re-marriage is unmistakably prohibited, and the apostle charges the husband and wife not to separate. If they do separate they are either to remain unmarried or be reconciled to one another again.

What is the conclusion from the above passages? All, without exception, show that re-marriage is not contem-

plated under any considerations; and all with one exception show that divorce from any cause whatever is discountenanced and forbidden; this one exception, Matt. 19:9, being a passage of doubtful rendering, whose parallel, Mark 10:11, 12, gives no ground at all for divorce.

The Bible is far more explicit on this subject than on many others, some of which we hold as our most cherished doctrines; and with this word before us, two things seem necessary for the ministers:

1. To refrain from marrying any couples either one of whom is a divorced person. Let the courts which separate a couple join again the one or the other; at least let the minister of the gospel keep his hands clean.

2. To teach the people, who perhaps have never given the matter a thought, but have taken for granted what the law allows must be morally right.

In justice to himself a minister should never officiate at the marriage of a divorced person, no matter what the circumstances may be. It seems from the standpoint of sentiment that divorce should be at times allowed. "What!" we say, "has that woman to remain bound all her life to a brute of a husband?" Yes, the individual must suffer for the good of society. If liberty were given one person to break the marriage vow on great provocation, it would become license for others to break it with little or no provocation, which is at present the case in some places. We should be very careful in speaking of breaking the marriage tie, when we see divorce granted on such trivial charges as the following:

"The defendant does not wash himself."
"The defendant uses tobacco."
"The defendant is a bore in telling stories, for he puts in so many details."

"The defendant cut off my bangs by force," etc., etc. A divorced man went to a Connecticut pastor wishing to have a marriage performed. The minister asked him why he had not gone to the courts which granted the divorce, to which he replied, "The woman wanted to be married by a minister." "Didn't the minister who married you the last time pronounce you man and wife until death separated you?" inquired the pastor. "Yes," was the reply. "Well," said the minister, "if you want someone to lie for you, you'll have to go somewhere else." A man or woman who once breaks the solemn vow cannot be trusted to keep it a second time.

Very few evils have their reform so completely in the hands of the clergymen of today as does this; for marriage by the courts cannot become popular. The Roman Catholic church does not recognize divorce on any grounds. The Episcopal church recognizes divorce only on what it calls Scriptural grounds, viz., adultery. Now what will the evangelical clergy do when the opportunity is presented to them in the infancy of the evil? Shall this evil be crushed? or shall we say, "Oh, that is not our affair, we'll leave it to the courts"? It is our affair, for it is our Father's business, and the social and religious results of this evil for generations to come rest with the attitude taken now by the ministers of the gospel.

GEORGE B. CUTTEN.

Montwese, Conn., January 23.

A Crisis.

Are We to Go on or Stop for Lack of Funds?

There is no object in disguising the fact that matters financial have reached a very acute stage. The report of the treasurer at the last meeting of the Board showed that there was a liability of \$3000. As a result the Board was forced, much against the wish of every member, to reduce grants right and left. There is no doubt but that every church in the Convention that has been affected will feel this very keenly. It may be that the pastors will feel it even more keenly, though this should not be the case. But the Board has no alternative. There could be no purpose gained by promising aid if it were next to certain that this aid would not be forthcoming. Further than this, it was felt that superhuman effort must be put forth in order that the amounts now promised may be paid. We have no time for comparisons now between churches, as to the amount each is giving. We are convinced that each is giving all that it feels it can, but there is perhaps a bare possibility that every church, rather every member of every church, may feel that he can give a little bit more. This feeling that one can give depends upon another feeling—the feeling of what God has given for us. And now we appeal to the brethren throughout all the churches of the Convention to remember again the tender mercies of God, and the love of His Son, how "for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." We cannot afford to close the fields now open, and there are scores of fields ready to be opened that we dare not enter because of lack of funds. As stated in the circular sent to the various churches, we want \$2,500 at once. What shall we be able to report from your church in our next issue? Will you direct us to keep our missionaries in the field, or shall we recall them, saying that we cannot guarantee their support?

Knowing as I do something of the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts put forth by the noble band of missionaries, as well as the consecration of the Mission Board which meets in Winnipeg, and the wonderful blessing with which the Lord is crowning these efforts, I would most earnestly request the members of our churches and congregations in these provinces to give prayerful attention to the above clipping from the North West Baptist of Feb. 1st. Is there not something that we can do, and at once, to encourage the hearts and strengthen the hands of our dear brethren to help them not only to avert the failure that they fear, but on the other hand to help them to extend the work of the Lord in this most hopeful and perhaps the most needy and important department of our denominational work. Send your contribution to any one of the denominational treasurers either of whom will doubtless see that these amounts are forwarded at once.

Yours cordially,
J. A. GORDON.

The Teacher of a Bible Class.

In all our Sunday Schools there is a Bible Class. The teacher of that class is filling one of the most responsible positions in the church. What qualifications does he need to make his work successful? What and how should he teach? These are important questions and require a wiser head than mine to give the proper answer. It is well, however, for us to have some conception of our work, and so I will set down what seems to me some of the necessary qualifications of the teacher, leaving the second question for further consideration.

I. He must live in conscious communion with Christ. This means more than being a member of a church—more than living a moral life. I would make it mean more than the life of the ordinary Christian. I wish to emphasize this point as essential to the necessary preparation of the teacher for his work. The teacher must have daily communion with Christ. He must live in touch with Christ, and this fellowship must be conscious. He will then have the experience referred to by Paul, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," Rom. 8:16. This communion will help him in his work in the following ways:

1. He will have a strong and continuous desire for the salvation of those committed to his care. In communion with the Great Heart, which yearns over men and longs for their salvation, he will catch the same earnest, intense desire for the conversion of others.

2. He will have an ever deepening desire to bring God's Word to his class so as to help their spiritual lives. He will thus have a definite aim, and will seek to bring out such help from the lesson in hand that will tend toward the subject in view.

3. He will have an increasing sense of his responsibilities and seek to prepare himself for the proper discharge of these duties. And finally,

4. This communion will give him a grander conception of the truth of God. His daily intercourse with Jesus is absolutely necessary for the best service. Without it the teacher's work will be perfunctory, unsatisfactory and barren of spiritual results.

II. He must have a good working knowledge of the Bible.

A teacher of a Bible Class should have at least a general idea of the whole Bible. He should have in memory an outline of the Bible history. He should be able to trace God's dealings with the race from Adam to the flood; God's choice of Abraham and his dealings with Israel; their wanderings in the wilderness and final settlement in Canaan. The period of the Judges; the rise of monarchy and its decline; the captivity and the return of the exiles. He should make a study of the sacrifices of the Old Testament so as to understand the mission of Christ into the world. In brief, he should be familiar with the Old Testament history and have a good knowledge of the leading characters in the different periods of those times. With Dr. Hurlbert's Normal Lessons or the People's Bible History what is to hinder any man or woman of becoming familiar with the Old Testament history and prominent characters? He should have some knowledge of the Messianic promises of the Old Testament. If these are committed to memory they will be exceedingly helpful in explaining many a Sunday School lesson. Then he should have even a better acquaintance with the New Testament. He should know the books of the New Testament, and at least have a fair conception of their teachings. He should know the gospels—able to give the chapters and state some great fact taught in each chapter. The miracles and the parables of our Lord should be studied. The three years ministry of Christ should be mastered and the principal events of these years properly located. In addition, the teacher should know something of the history of Palestine at the time of Christ, as well as of the Roman Empire. He should study the character and belief of the different sects among the Jews such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, etc. It is unnecessary to state that a knowledge of the history of the nations of the world at the time of Christ, will assist the teacher in unfolding the truth from Sabbath to Sabbath. But what I wish especially to emphasize here is the importance of a knowledge of God's word. It is one thing to read God's word for spiritual comfort and help; it is another thing to master the great facts and history of the Bible. This may seem to be holding the ideal too high; but all that I have mentioned may be learned in a few years by simply using a few of our spare minutes a day in this study. Thousands of Christians spend more time over the daily papers than they do over the Bible. Is it right? Does it pay? Nothing we read gives us so much help, comfort and inspiration as reading God's word. If hundreds of Christians can bear testimony to the power and blessing received from the simple reading of God's word, many are prepared to affirm that the mastery of these things here stated, have brought even greater blessings to those who have entered upon this study. Can the teacher of a Bible class neglect his Bible?

III. He should know thoroughly the lesson he is about to teach.

To accomplish this end he should consult every help within his reach. But at last he should be able to hold