

order changed, Paul directed the slaves to be obedient ~~and~~ to and ; subject to their masters, and he directed the master, who were Christians, to take a kindly attitude to their slaves. A slave ran away from his master, and came to Rome and was there converted. And Paul sent him back to his master, with a letter, that wonderful Book of Philemon. And in this ~~letter~~ letter, he did not ask the master to set Philemon free. Though, he did direct him to receive him as a Christian brother.

It is rather strange for many today, as they reflect upon it, do you understand what might seem to them almost a callous attitude for this terrible institution of slavery, as it was so widespread in the days of the apostles. Even polygamy, we find, not denounced in the ~~Acts~~ Acts or in the ~~epistles~~ epistles. It is a social ~~situation~~ situation, a situation which as Jesus pointed out in the Gospels, is contrary to the whole ~~spirit~~ spirit and purpose of marriage, is not in line with God's will, it was common among the Jews, but far more common in the Roman world. As the disciples went out and preached they must have had many converts who were polygamists. But we do not find once in the epistles an exhortation to the Christians to put away the ~~additional~~ additional wives, nor do we find any exhortation to stress this and to see to this that monogamy is observed within the church. We do not find the ~~disciples~~ disciples going about ~~and~~ and holding meetings and preaching against ~~polygamy~~ polygamy in the Roman world where it was so common. The only reference, so far as I know, which we find to it at all, are in I Tim. and Titus, where he is speaking of the requisites of a bishop, or of a leader in the church, and he says that a leader in the church must not be a polygamist. One who is in polygamy must not be a leader, must not be a bishop. How different from the attitude of ~~so many~~ so many today who become so stirred over social wrongs or error or moral questions, some of them far less important and far less contrary than this matter of polygamy, that they talk about them so ~~constantly~~ constantly that little time is left for witnessing to the Gospel of Christ. ~~Now~~ Now, this is our second point, then, the attitude of the apostolic church as shown in the New Testament.