OUTLINE — DISCUSSION CLASS 3

CHRISTIANITY (CONT’D)

The logia on divorce

Mark 10:9: “What God has united, man must not divide.”

Mark 10:11–12: “The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.”

Luke 16:18: “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery, and the man who marries a woman divorced by her husband commits adultery.”

Matthew 5:32: “Everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Matthew 19:6: “What God has united, man must not divide.”

Matthew 19:9: “The man who divorces his wife—I am not speaking of fornication—and marries another, is guilty of adultery.”

1 Corinthians 7:10–12: “A wife must not leave her husband—or if she does leave him, she must either remain unmarried or else make it up with her husband—or nor must a husband send his wife away.”

Hypothetical reconstruction of the earliest form of the more common logion: “The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery.”

Matthew 19:3–12. Some Pharisees approached him, and to test him they said, “Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?” He answered, “Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female [Gn 1:27] and that he said: This is why a man must leave his father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? [Gn 2:24] They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.”

They said to him, “Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?” “It was because you were so unteachable” he said “that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. Now I say this to you: the man who divorces his wife—I am not speaking of fornication—and marries another, is guilty of adultery.”

The disciples said to him, “If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is not advisable to marry.” But he replied, “It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born that way from their mother’s womb, there are eunuchs made so by men and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way for the sake of the kingdom. Let anyone accept this who can.”

Mishna Gitin 9:10, as reported in the Babylonian Talmud Gitin 90a (Soncino trans. modified by CD): “The school of Shammai say: a man should not divorce his wife unless he has found her guilty of some unseemly conduct, as it says, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her. [See Deutonomy 24:1]. The school of Hillel, however, say [that he may divorce her] even if she has merely spoilt his food, since it says, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her. R. Akiba says, [he may divorce her] even if he finds another woman more beautiful than she is, as it says, it comes to pass, if she find no favour in his eyes. [Again, a reference to Dt 24:1.]” Dt 24:1 reads in the NRSV: “Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house ….” The Hebrew is more ambiguous.

Marriage as a “mystery”

Ephesians 5:25–33: “Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrifice himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a
form of words so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or 
wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their 
wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man 
ever hates his body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the 
Church, for it is his body—and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave 
his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. [Gn 2:24] 
This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church. 
To sum up; you too, each one of you, must love his wife as he loves himself; and let every wife 
respect her husband.”

Two witnesses

Dt. 19:15: in ore duorum vel trium testium stabit omne verbum. “In the mouth of two or three 
witnesses every word shall stand.”

Mt. 18:16: in ore duorum testium vel trium stet omne verbum. “In the mouth of two witnesses or 
three let every word stand.”

1 Cor. 13:1: in ore duorum vel trium testium stabit omne verbum. As in Dt. 19:15.

Dn. 13

[To these should be added Daniel 13 (in Greek only), the story of Susannah and the elders, too long to quote here in full, but a 
wonderful law story about how to examine witnesses.

[In Babylon, Susannah, the daughter of Hilkiah and the wife of Joachim, was the object of the lust of two elders of the 
people. They trapped her in her garden where she was taking a bath alone and told her that they would accuse her of being with a 
young man if she did not have sexual relations with them. She screamed, and the elders appeared before the people and accused 
er of committing adultery with the (fictitious) young man. As we pick up the story, Susannah, being led to execution, cries out 
to God for help:]

44The Lord heard her cry and, as she was being led away to die, he roused the holy spirit residing in a 
young man named Daniel who began to shout: “I am innocent of this woman’s death!” 45At this all the 
people turned to him and asked, “What do you mean by that?” 46Standing in the middle of the crowd he 
replied, “Are you so stupid, children of Israel, as to condemn a daughter of Israel unheard, and without 
troubling to find out the truth? Go back to the scene of the trial: these men have given false evidence 
against her.”

50All the people hurried back, and the elders said to Daniel, “Come and sit with us and tell us what you 
mean, since God has given you the gifts the elders have.” 51Daniel said, “Keep the men well apart 
from each other, for I want to question them.” 52When the men had been separated, Daniel had one of 
them brought to him. “You have grown old in wickedness,” he said, “and now the sins of earlier days 
have overtaken you, you with your unjust judgments, your condemnation of the innocent, your acquittal 
of the guilty, although the lord has said “You must not put the innocent and upright to death.” 54Now then, 
since you saw her so clearly, tell me under what sort of tree you saw them lying under.” He replied, 
“Under an acacia tree.” 55Daniel said, “Indeed, your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God has 
already received from him your sentence and will cut you in half.” 56He dismissed the man, ordered the 
other to be brought and said to him, “Son of Canaan, not of Judah, beauty has seduced you, lust has led 
your heart astray! This is how you have been behaving with the daughters of Israel, and they have been 
too frightened to resist; but here is a daughter of Judah who could not stomach your wickedness! 58Now 
then, tell me what sort of tree you surprised them under.” He replied, “Under an aspen tree.” 59Daniel 
said, “Indeed! Your lie recoils on your own head: the angel of God is waiting with a sword to rend you in 
half, and destroy the pair of you.”

60Then the whole assembly shouted, blessing God, the Saviour of those who trust in him. 61They turned on 
the two elders whom Daniel had convicted of false evidence out of their own mouths. 62As the law of 
Moses prescribes, they were given the same punishment as they had schemed to inflict on their 
neighbour. They were put to death. And, thus, that day an innocent life was saved.