

FROM CAUSE TO PROCEDURE

by Bill Reeves

1. Matthew (in 5:32; 19:9) recorded in Greek that Jesus said APOLUO. All agree that APOLUO is not something done wholly and solely in a state of mind (mental putting away). It is a verb of action! (This is why erring brethren do not commonly speak of “mental putting-away.” They dutifully repeat the phrase “mental *divorce*.”) .

2. But Thayer (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 66) tells us that APOLUO is rightly translated in English as REPUDIATE. Repudiate, then, must be a verb of action, as it really is. To repudiate is to reject (regardless of the **procedure** employed in doing the rejection).

3. Yet, some brethren continue to misrepresent their brethren who are contending for the right of a righteous spouse to repudiate a mate that has committed adultery against him. This verb of action, repudiate (in Greek, the word that Jesus used, APOLUO) is not simply a thought of the mind, nor would any dictionary so define it! But, just because the action of rejection is not some **legal procedure in a courthouse** of our land, faithful brethren are wrongly accused of advocating what these labelers are calling “mental divorce.”

4. So, from the **cause** for repudiating, or putting away, of which Jesus spoke (Matt. 19:3 Mk. 10:2), these erring brethren switch the issue to one of a particular **procedure** of putting away, that of **courthouse action**. Even if the vow-keeping spouse has the divine cause for repudiating, if he doesn’t or can’t go through a particular procedure, which necessarily involves legal action, the spouse and those that defend him will be disfellowshipped if that spouse repudiates the fornicator-mate and remarries.

5. How sad that such brethren are dividing the body of Christ with their scruple instead of following their conscience in their personal application of the issue, and not forcing their scruple upon others.