

MARRIAGE, SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Greetings brethren. For not a few months I have been disturbed by the issue of divorce and remarriage that I decided to seek the Lord in prayer and even counsel with our ministry leader. Not only for me and us as a ministry, but for the whole world. We as a ministry would like to have a concise stand on this matter because it seems there is a case for us to answer. A case may be brought to us that “now I have heard a message by you guys but my wife or husband do not accept it, what should I do with my husband and even children in this case; do I divorce or separate from him?” There is extremities and fanaticism people engage in which after emotions have ceased, the whole blame comes to the people who advised them and bring a disrepute to the whole ministry and their families. This we would wish to avoid as leprosy. I would like to approach this matter solely based on the Bible and Ellen White and not mix up my own views, in this, I shall be blameless for am advising myself and others who are contemplating such moves or have already done so. It is not too late to make wrong right when you come into truth. It is not a shame to repent, it is a shame to die a sinner.

I hope everyone will lay down their prejudice and customs of their nations if they go with the name “Christians”. I hear a lot of people say that, God is reasonable and he has called us into peace hence we can’t risk our lives to stay in an abusive marriage and because you never know if the person will change or not, yet you want to live a happy life and serve God, divorce is the best solution for you and get another partner that is like-minded. I say tread carefully with such sentiments as a Christian. Indeed there is nothing domestic about domestic violence and every cruelty which tendeth to death should lead a person to seek safety, but this is not the ground for divorce and remarriage.

It is true in Old Testament times divorce and remarriage on grounds other than adultery was permitted. We read this in Deuteronomy. 24:1, 2.

- ***“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s [wife].”***

This was pleasing to the carnal nature of man, and the Pharisees of Jesus’ day were opposed to any light that might jeopardize its status. Jesus did not enhance his popularity with the Pharisees when He told them that it was never God’s plan that the oneness of the marriage relationship should be broken by divorce. He pointed out that Moses permitted it because of the low moral concepts of the Israelites at that time after 400 years of slavery and pagan influence. Notice His words in Matthew 19:8, 9.

- ***“He saith unto them, Moses because of the **hardness of your hearts** suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for **fornication**, and shall marry another, **committeth adultery**: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth **commit adultery**.”***

It is difficult to imagine how any Christian would want to reject the teachings of Jesus to live by Deuteronomy. 24. It would surely be the result of a hard and stubborn heart. Notice how this matter is described:

- *“When the Pharisees afterward questioned Him concerning the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed His hearers **back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation**. He said, ‘Moses suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.’” Matthew 19:8. **He referred them to the blessed days of Eden**, when God pronounced all things “very good.” Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. **Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock**, saying, A man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one.” (Genesis 2:24) He **enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time**. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was for the highest blessing and development for man. {TSB 79.3}, {MB 63.2}, {AH 340.4}*

A church in apostasy

The children of Israel were camped by the Jordan River ready to cross over into the Promised Land. Moses, working on the final plans of the occupation of the land, was unaware of a problem that was developing. Balaam, a one-time prophet of God, had been employed by the Moabites to curse Israel. Being prevented by God from cursing Israel, Balaam had now counseled the Moabites on a course of action that would bring God’s curse upon Israel. The plan was to lead the children of Israel into adultery and idolatry. The Midianites joined the Moabites in the scheme. Women from these two nations began to slip into the camp of Israel and entice the men into acts of licentiousness and adultery. It was the object of these women to seduce the Hebrews into transgression of God’s law, to draw their attention to heathen rites and customs and, through the influence of sex, lead them into idolatry. Before Moses realized what was going on, Israel was deep into apostasy. God’s judgments began to fall upon His people. Moses was instructed to destroy those who had led out in the apostasy. Thousands were now dying as a result of the plague that God sent upon the people. The chief offenders were killed and their bodies hung up in the sight of all Israel. A deep repentance swept over Israel. The people hastened to the tabernacle and with tears and deep humiliation they confessed their sins. 23,000 men died in the plague that stopped only when the priest, Phinehas, killed a man of Israel and a Midianitish woman who were openly defying God and mocking the judges of Israel. Paul recounts this story to the church living in the last days

- *1Corinthians 10:1: Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the **cloud**, and all passed through the sea; 2: And were all **baptized** unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3: And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5: But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6: Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7: Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8: Neither let us commit **fornication**, as*

some of them committed, and fell in one day **three and twenty thousand**. 11: Now all these things happened unto them for **ensamples**: and they are written for our admonition, **upon whom the ends of the world are come**.

Were it not for the swift action of Moses and the judges of Israel in slaying the leaders in the apostasy and the deep repentance manifested by the people, Israel would have turned back into the wilderness to wait for another generation to die. This experience is discussed in chapter 41 of the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*. In that chapter on pages 457, 458 we find this startling comment:

- “As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, **redouble** his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul.... And he employs the **same agents** now as he employed three thousand years ago. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure-seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine-cup, **he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment**.”

From our vantage point we can see that Israel’s many sins resulted from being influenced by the philosophy of the pagan nations around them. We are in danger of the same thing happening to the Seventh-day Adventist church today,—wife swapping, divorce, and remarriage have been so glamorized by movies and television and are so widely practiced that they have become socially acceptable. In fact many of the divorce and remarriage in Christendom is wife-swapping unbeknown to many who are daily reading the Bible and professing deep piety. People play as characters as in a movie in real life blindly. Laodicean condition prevail everywhere. While such activities may not violate any laws of the land, they certainly violate the laws of God.

In Exodus 20:14 the seventh commandment says, “Thou shall not commit adultery.” In Matthew 5:31, 32 Jesus refers to divorce and remarriage: “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” A little later Paul gives the same instruction in Romans 7:2, 3. “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” Again 1Corinthians 7:39, 40 “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord: But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”

Like Israel of old, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is torn between the philosophy of the people around us and the commandments of God. As a result, there is inconsistency between churches and between different pastors. It doesn’t take much study, however, to convince us that this inconsistency is not the result of inconsistency or ambiguity in the Scriptures. Rather, it’s the result of the desire to be like the nations around us. It’s the result of being influenced by the philosophy of the world.

- **Jeremiah 5:29: Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? 30: A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; 31: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?**

God's plan for marriage is found in Genesis 2:22-24.

- *“And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”*

In Matthew 19:6 Jesus makes it very clear that this unity or oneness is not to be broken:

- *“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**”*

Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. We don't even have to leave the Old Testament to learn how God really feels about divorce. Notice Malachi 2:13-17 RSV:

- *“And this again you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. You ask, ‘Why does he not?’ Because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? **Godly offspring.** So take heed to yourselves, and let none **be faithless to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.**”*

We know that John the Baptist lost his life because of preaching that divorce and remarriage was sin. John was a fearless man. He was the herald of Christ. He called for repentance, a forsaking of sin in no uncertain terms. Position or wealth of the sinner did not cause John to change or soften his rebuke of sin. In Matthew 14:3, 4 we read:

- *“**For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, ‘It is not lawful for thee to have her.’**”*

Herod and Herodias didn't like having their marriage called adultery. People still don't. The truth isn't any more popular today than in the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. The attitude of many in the church today is described in *Prophets and Kings*, pages 140, 141:

- *“There are many professed Christians who, if they should express their real feelings, would say, What need is there of speaking so plainly? They might as well ask, Why need John the Baptist have said to the Pharisees, ‘O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ **Why need he have provoked the anger of Herodias by telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother’s wife? The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking. Why could he not have moved along without incurring the displeasure of those who were living in sin?**”*

Jesus well knew how people in general felt about divorce and remarriage but He, like John the Baptist, clearly and forcibly defined it as adultery and sin. Notice Matthew 5:32.

- ***“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”***

A case of adultery but still no divorce:

- *2Samuel 16:21 And Ahithophel said unto **Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines**, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong. 22 **So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.***

When David heard of this, his next step is so intriguing when he returned:

- *2Samuel 20:3 **And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.***

First of all, Ahithophel is nothing but a son of Belial no wonder his end was suicide [2Samuel 17:23]. David tells us that whoso devices evil, evil shall return on his head [Psalms 7:16]. Jewish writers say that the widowed queens of Hebrew monarchs were not allowed to marry again but were obliged to pass the rest of their lives in strict seclusion. David treated his concubines in the same manner after the outrage committed on them by Absalom. They were not divorced, for they were “guiltless;” but they were no longer publicly recognized as his wives; nor was their confinement to a sequestered life a very heavy doom, in a region where women have never been accustomed to go much abroad. He could not well divorce them; he could not punish them, as they were “not” in the transgression; he could no more be familiar with them, because they had been defiled by his son 2Samuel 20:3; and to have married them to other men might have been dangerous to the state: therefore he shut them up and fed them; made them quite comfortable, and they continued as widows to their death. Their imprisonment was for life, and he himself was forced to put them under a confinement, because of the defilement. David had multiplied wives, contrary to the law and they proved a grief and shame to him. Those whom he had sinfully taken pleasure in he was now: -

1. *Obliged, in duty, to put away, they being rendered unclean to him by the vile uncleanness his son had committed with them. Those whom he had loved must now be loathed.*
2. *Obliged, in prudence, to shut up in privacy, not to be seen abroad for shame, lest the sight of them should give occasion to people to speak of what Absalom had done to them, which ought not to be so much as named, 1Corinthians 5:1. That that villany might be buried in oblivion, they must be buried in obscurity.*
3. *Obliged, in justice to shut up in prison, to “punish them for their easy submission” to Absalom's lust, despairing perhaps of David's return, and giving him up for gone. Let none expect to do ill and fare well.*

The reason to be put away also was because they had not “vigorously” opposed Absalom's lustful desire, as they should have done, even with the hazard of their lives; and partly, lest the sight of them should renew the memory of Absalom's filthiness, and of their own and David's reproach, which it was fit to bury in-perpetual oblivion; and partly, because it might appear incestuous to have to do with those who had been defiled by his own son; and partly, because as David would not, so it was not now convenient that any other man should have any conjugal conversation with them. The confinement and retired maintenance of these women was the only measure which could be adopted, in justice or prudence, unless they had been found deserving of severer punishment. The less they were seen or heard of the better; and perhaps their seclusion might be a benefit to their souls. If this case of Absalom could have been followed to the letter, the following would have been inevitable:

- *Leviticus 18:8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.*
- *Leviticus 20:11 **And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.***
- *Deuteronomy 27:20 **Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.***

Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can break or annul the marriage vow. Divorce laws of our society are so liberal today that a man can divorce his wife for over-serving food, and a woman can divorce her husband because he doesn't answer or reply her calls immediately. But notice what the servant of the Lord has said in Adventist Home, page 344:

- ***“A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and according to the higher law. There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God. Although the laws of the land may grant a divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God.”***

Also we are admonished

- **Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven. {AH 106.1}**
- **Do not dwell on the imperfections or the mistakes of the past. Press forward, looking to the glorious things that are before. Let your conversation be in heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Put away all discontent, all murmuring, all disagreeable words. We do not honor Christ when we dispute and quarrel one with another. No one will enter heaven with a spirit of fault-finding, and we desire to have a foretaste of the principles of heaven manifested here below. {7MR 49.3}**

Incompatibility and Separation

Incompatibility in marriage is nothing new. It was a problem in Christ's time too. The disciples asked Jesus about it, and He gave them an answer. We find this in Matthew 19:10-12.

- **"His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, all men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."**

Just what do these words of Jesus mean? A literal interpretation would make them contradict the whole tenor of Scripture. The idea of bodily mutilation or as to be a eunuch is abhorrent. Jesus seems to be simply saying, if you cannot get along with your mate, you may separate, but you must live alone the rest of your life. Note also that Jesus said that all men could not receive his words. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Just who are those able to receive it? Are they not those who claim to be His followers? Therefore, these words were spoken to His church, to be received by His church.

In *Adventist Home* page 345 we find counsel given to a couple who wanted to dissolve their marriage because of incompatibility:

- **"I have received a letter from your husband. I would say that there is only one thing for which a husband may lawfully separate from his wife or a wife from her husband, and that is adultery. "If your dispositions are not**

congenial, would it not be for the glory of God for you to change these dispositions?”

Paul’s counsel is the same as Christ’s on the problem of incompatibility, 1 Corinthians. 7:10, 11:

- **“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”**

He has the same counsel where the incompatibility is produced when one is an unbeliever. Notice 1 Corinthians 7:12, 13.

- **“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.”**

Paul goes on to say in verse 15 that, if the unbelieving mate wants a divorce, the Christian is not to resist it. In such a case the counsel of verse 11 would still apply. The Christian would have to remain unmarried until such a time that his ex-mate committed adultery.

Similar counsel concerning unwise marriages has been given to the church by the servant of the Lord:

- **“There are many unhappy marriages because of so much haste. Two unite their interest at the marriage altar, by most solemn vows before God, without previously weighing the matter, and devoting time to sober reflection and earnest prayer. Many move from impulse. They have no thorough acquaintance with the dispositions of each other.... **If they move wrong in this matter, and their marriage life proves unhappy, it cannot be taken back. If they find they are not calculated to make each other happy, they must endure it the best they can.**”** *Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 3, Page 120.*

And there are husbands and wives who have taken advantage to do evil to their partners [I know many of them] because their partners are “overly” Christians; humble, they can’t do them evil, remonstrate, beat them, divorce them or separate with them because they are respected and it will seem a shame to them or the ministry they are in if such thing would be done and heard of. My brother and sister if such be your case and you have become the servant of Satan in your marriage to beset your partner because their kindness is their weakness, this is all heaven that you will ever have. Enjoy it to the best if you see seeking the Lord to change your heart is not the best thing for you.

- **“Is it the will of the Lord that this sister should be in this state and God be robbed of her service? No. Her marriage was a deception of the devil. Yet now she should make the best of it, treat her husband with tenderness, and make him as happy as she can without violating her conscience; for if he**

remains in his rebellion, THIS WORLD IS ALL THE HEAVEN HE WILL HAVE.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 2, Page 100.

And for you whose kindness is your weakness; don't turn violent because that is what is being done to you. Overcome evil by doing good. I will remind you this:

I saw that those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the self-denying pathway with them. Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims, following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their own souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please any one. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind. {2SG 266.1}

But if your companions and children will not come, if you cannot win them to yield to the claims of truth, make their lives here as pleasant as possible; for all they will ever enjoy will be this poor world. But let not your duty to them interfere with your duty to God. Pursue a straight-forward course. Let nothing they may do or say provoke an angry word from you. You have a hope that will yield you consolation amid the disappointments and trials of life. Your companions and children who will not be induced to tread the narrow, cross-bearing pathway with you, have not this divine consolation. THEY SHOULD HAVE YOUR PITY, FOR THIS WORLD IS ALL THE HEAVEN THEY WILL HAVE. {2SG 266.2}

Some may say that there are many ways that a husband or a wife may treat each other that may be even worse than adultery. Should not these give a person the right to divorce and remarry? We can only reply that our all-wise God gave only one reason for divorce and remarriage. We may wonder why He did not give others. We may think He should have. But as good as our judgment may be, we must admit that it is human judgment. Man has not been given the privilege of making moral law or exceptions to God's laws.

Separation

God's word does permit separation or divorce in severe cases of incompatibility. But in such cases, there is no permission to remarry in the absence of adultery. In case of gross misconduct, the only hint we find is this:

1Corinthians 7:10:

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband

put away his wife.³⁹: The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

There is also an advice by Ellen White to Brother Craig in Lt 34, 1890 Chicago, Illinois March 23, 1890. This was a case of un-submissive wife who was controlled by demons and she would yield to nothing but wanted things done her way yet she was married to a servant of God. The letter may be long but I will give it in entirety so that everyone knows what was happening: -

Dear Brother Craig,

I hoped the change which seemed to take place in your wife at the meeting in Chicago would be lasting, and was so grateful to our heavenly Father when I heard her confession, for I thought that a most severe task was lifted from my shoulders; but the burden is still upon me. I know that she is not changed for the better. The dangers and difficulties which she will create if her whims are gratified are almost incredible to those who do not understand the spirit which actuates her. Her early education has been so neglected by her mother that she has no sense of the duties which devolve upon her as a wife. She feels under no obligation to love and obey her husband or to yield to the authority of God. She does not know what true love is. She has not been educated to self-control. Her life experience and education have been such as to disqualify her for the position of a wife. {Lt34-1890}

She is a terrible burden to her husband, for she does not try to make herself useful or bear her share of life's responsibilities. If she would reason, she would see how unjust it is for her to expect him to labor for her support, while she gives herself up to annoy, perplex, and harass him. She adds nothing to the family income, yet thinks it her privilege to spend as she pleases. At the same time she feels at liberty to give way to her feelings like a spoiled child, taking offense at nothing, and indulging in outbursts of passion, until life is a burden to him. When away from her husband she is cheerful, and appears to be well, as long as she can have her own way. When she wants to do a thing, she can endure what many women would think a heavy tax upon their physical powers. But when desired to do anything which is distasteful to her, she assumes the air of a martyr, and is incapable of any exertion. Much of her illness is feigned, in order to create a sensation. She is angry with her husband because she cannot make him submit to her control, because he has tried to preserve his identity and not yield up his God-given manhood. {Lt34-1890}

She thinks that every one must do as her mother and others have done—indulge her and consult her wishes; and she is determined to bring them to it. Should her husband yield to her, he would lose his manhood; and should those whom God has placed over the Chicago mission pet her and gratify her wishes, they would be unfaithful to their trust. Should her spirit be allowed to have the ascendancy in the mission, evil angels would become the ruling power. {Lt34-1890}

However earnestly her husband may endeavor to pursue a straight-forward course to serve God, she will be his evil angel, seeking to lead him away from righteousness. In her own estimation she is the idol he must worship; in fact, she is Satan's agent, seeking to occupy

the place where God should be. She has followed the impulses of her own unconsecrated heart until Satan has almost complete control of her. {Lt34-1890}

Sister Craig has never been trained to self-control. She has but very slight depth of mind and little ability to discern sacred things. She does not enjoy the self-denying, self-sacrificing part that all must learn who enter heaven. ***But she is sharp enough in carrying out her own will and in making a false impression upon her husband's mind.*** She can indeed be very courteous and pleasing if everything goes to suit her, but there is no solidity to her character. ***She has well learned the secret of acting for effect, of creating a sensation to call attention to her small self.*** I have seen but few persons so successful in making self the center of attraction when there was so little sweet, noble, genuine attractiveness in the character. ***But unless she changes her course, this acting for effect, this desperate maneuvering to force the attention of her husband and gain his sympathy, will finally be repeated once too many times, and God will give her fully into the hands of Satan. {Lt34-1890}***

Unless there is a change, a time will come soon when this lower nature in the wife, controlled by a will as strong as steel, ***will bring down the strong will of the husband to her own low level. His will would then be merged in that of the impulsive, inconsistent, insane wife. He would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also.*** His sympathies would no longer be pure and uncorrupted, like fine gold, ***but they would be deteriorated. His energies would be enfeebled, his life distorted. {Lt34-1890}***

Brother Craig has felt that it was his duty to fight her battles, become as inconsistent in her behalf as she is herself, see through her eyes, and contend for her rights; for unless he does this, she will indulge in those awful outbursts of passion. Her oft repeated assertions draw upon ***his sympathies, and a continual burden is cast upon him by her manufactured physical disabilities. In her mother's house her will was law.*** However inconsistent and perverse her course, ***it was regarded as resulting from a physical condition for which all allowance must be made.*** It was thought that her every demand must be met. ***But the folly of the mother and other relatives must not become the folly of the husband.*** Should he follow in their footsteps, his life and hers, also, would be wrecked. ***Better would it be had they never been born. As it is, she is a fit subject for the insane asylum.*** God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body, and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband. {Lt34-1890}

If she were a child, she could be treated as such; these outbursts of temper could be punished as those of a self-willed, passionate child; but she is a woman, and her husband cannot force the perverse will to be reasonable. Never will this exacting temperament be improved by yielding to it. Her tragical performances are enacted to frighten her husband into complying with her demands, and he must yield or have a scene. As Satan sees how he can work through her when she thus casts soul and body into his hands—that he can use her as he pleases—he ***will throw her into these paroxysms more and more, whenever her will is crossed. In this case it is not the woman whom Brother Craig is dealing with, but a desperate, satanic spirit. {Lt34-1890}***

The Lord has a work for Brother Craig to do; but if he is overcome by these outbursts on the part of his wife, he is a lost man, and she is not saved by the sacrifice. {Lt34-1890}

His best course with this child-wife, so over-bearing, so unyielding, and so uncontrollable, IS TO TAKE HER HOME AND LEAVE HER WITH THE MOTHER WHO HAS MADE HER WHAT SHE IS. Though it must be painful, this is the only thing for him to do, if he would not be ruined spiritually, sacrificed to the demon of hysterics and satanic imaginings. Satan takes entire control of her temper and will, and uses them like desolating hail to beat down every obstruction. Her husband can do her no good, but is doing himself incalculable harm and robbing God of the talents and influence He has given. {Lt34-1890}

*God has placed the husband at the head of the family; and until Sister Craig shall learn her place and duties as a wife, **IT WILL BE BEST FOR HIM NOT TO BE CONNECTED WITH HER IN ANY WAY.** The wife is to respect and obey; but if she utterly refuses to keep the marriage vow, she will be more and more the sport of Satan's temptations; and if her husband consents to keep her by his side, to wear out his life, he will become discouraged and unfitted for the Lord's service. **HE IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO KEEP ONE BY HIS SIDE WHO WILL ONLY TORTURE HIS SOUL.** I was shown that he has already been losing his manhood, and has been influenced and molded by his wife. **Their marriage was a snare of Satan.** {Lt34-1890}*

*Sister Craig is determined to rule or ruin. I was shown that she has so thoroughly yielded herself into Satan's hands that her husband fears for her reason, **but he will make one of the gravest mistakes of his life if he permits himself to be controlled by Satan through the device of his wife.** I tell you plainly, **SHE IS CONTROLLED BY DEMONS,** and if these evil spirits have their way, your liberty, Brother Craig, your manhood is gone; you are a slave to her caprices. If you yield to her sway, she will surely be an instrument in the hands of Satan to separate you from God. She will suggest evil surmisings and suspicions that will break up the harmony and confidence between you and those in the mission with whom you should be in perfect union. **The fact that persons have been called of God to fill positions of trust in the mission awakens no respect for them in her heart if they interfere with her likes and dislikes.** {Lt34-1890}*

*Distrust, unjust criticism, and insubordination will be the fruit of the satanic spirit that dwells in this child, for she is nothing but a child—indulged, petted, and determined to control every one in the household. But this must not be allowed in the mission. **The Lord would have Brother Craig be His faithful servant, a steward in the mission, a growing man, strengthening in intellect, becoming better and better qualified to do the work of the Master.** {Lt34-1890}*

*Sister Craig must have a thorough transformation of character or she will never enter heaven. She now studies herself, pleases herself. She will pursue any course to secure admiration of self. If her wishes are not gratified, she works herself up into a perfect fury. If she continues in this way, Satan will so work through her that even the life of her husband will be unsafe. **SHE CARES NOT FOR GOD, HEAVEN, OR HELL.** Jesus looks upon her with sorrow—that one for whom He has sacrificed His own life should value her soul so lightly as to give it into the hands of Satan. {Lt34-1890}*

If, through the grace of Christ, Sister Craig would bend her determined will to the work of putting away the wicked spirit which controls her, and would use the knowledge she has to good purpose, **then she might be a blessing rather than a curse to her husband. But if she will not heed the counsels of God, I HAVE BEEN SHOWN THAT THE ONLY COURSE FOR HER HUSBAND TO PURSUE IS TO LEAVE HER WITH HER PARENTS THAT HER MOTHER MAY BEAR THE AFFLICTION WHICH HER OWN MISMANAGEMENT HAS CAUSED. Had she in her youth been made to feel the rod of correction instead of receiving unwise sympathy and indulgence, her husband would not now be placed in so great peril as he is.** {Lt34-1890}

Whatever course Brother Craig takes now, he will be censured. If he continues to live with her, she will make their married life a reign of terror. Unless he permits her to pervert his senses, to poison his mind against his brethren, he will have to maintain constant warfare. Not only will his manhood be sacrificed, but he will lose his integrity, and **all to please a woman who is so determined to rule her husband, both mind and body, that she will give to Satan her soul, body, and spirit, in order for him to accomplish the work she would see done. SHE IS JUST AS MUCH POSSESSED BY A DEMON AS WAS THE MAN WHO TORE AND CUT HIMSELF WHEN JESUS CAST OUT THE DEVILS.** {Lt34-1890}

Brother Craig is sorely afflicted by these exhibitions on the part of his wife; **but never, never must the power of Satan exercised through her, or through him on her account, be allowed to control the mission. BETTER BY FAR LET HER STAY IN HER MOTHER'S HOME TILL HER CHARACTER IS TRANSFORMED AND THE DEMON IS DISPOSSESSED, until she shall be willing to receive counsel and help, sitting meekly at the feet of Jesus, learning precious lessons in the school of Christ.** {Lt34-1890}

I was shown that we must do all that is in our power to open Sister Craig's eyes to her wrong course; and if this fails, we must try to open the eyes of Brother Craig that he may not be betrayed into error, through her perverted vision, and the wisdom of God be taken from him. {Lt34-1890}

If Sister Craig continues her present course, the time is not far distant when it will be impossible for her to break this power at will. Already Satan holds almost complete control of her will, her mind, and her judgment. **No one through whom he works in such a manifest manner should be connected with God's work.** {Lt34-1890}

There are but few men strong enough to resist, day after day, week after week, such a will as that of Sister Craig. **She can create a scene whenever her will is crossed, or whenever the wicked one will play upon her, which is coming to be a common occurrence. But in this BROTHER CRAIG MUST LET SATAN RAGE, AND NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE CUT OFF FROM RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES BECAUSE HIS WIFE DESIRES IT. IF SHE RUNS AWAY, LET HER GO. EVEN IF SHE THREATENS TO TAKE HER OWN LIFE, DO NOT YIELD TO HER WICKED DEMANDS. EVEN IF SHE SHOULD CARRY OUT HER THREAT, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO LOOK UPON HER SILENT IN DEATH THAN TO ALLOW HER TO MURDER NOT ONLY HER OWN SOUL BUT THAT OF HER HUSBAND, AND BE THE MEANS OF DESTROYING MANY OTHERS.** {Lt34-1890}

Brother Craig, you have been terrified by the violence of your wife, but the course for you to pursue is the straightforward path of truth, righteousness, and wisdom, having the fear of God always before you. Satan is already exulting over his success. {Lt34-1890}

Sister Craig, I would not present this matter as I do were there not another life so closely bound up with yours, and that the life of one whom God has chosen to be His servant. This marriage ought not to have been, but the step has been taken, and for your husband the work of overcoming is now tenfold more severe than if he had never seen you. Will you think seriously over this question, whether his usefulness shall be destroyed and his life become a failure because of your course? I warn him that if he praises or pets you, it will only increase your self-satisfaction. You are seeking to bend his will and conscience to your pleasure; and the more you are indulged, the stronger and more determined your self-will becomes. What do you propose to do? What course will you pursue? {Lt34-1890}

I was presented with a view of the errors of your past life, and was brought down to the present time. All along are seen the sure results of the injudicious training of your unwise mother who was not a practical doer of the Word. The discipline of children is a very nice work, one freighted with eternal responsibilities. Your mother's religious life has been marred by her worldly spirit and worldly associations. She has had a knowledge of the truth, but how little influence have Bible principles had upon her life and character! The mother's characteristics have been transmitted to you, who have less experience and less power to control them than she had. With a will like granite, you are a bundle of false ideas—false views of life, false views of your husband, of yourself, of every one whose will you cannot bend to your own. Instead of being a modest, God-fearing, humble woman, you are bold, exacting, tyrannical. THANK GOD, YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN TO REPRODUCE YOUR CHARACTERISTICS. {Lt34-1890}

Your mother needs to repent before God of her disregard of His Word in the education and training she has given you. Did she not know that the mold of character she was giving you, one of the younger members of the Lord's family, was disqualifying you to become a member of the Lord's family in heaven? Did she not know that by her indulgence she was encouraging a will that would attempt to rule or ruin all who came in contact with it? Did she not know that the character forming under her hands was preparing her daughter to disregard the wishes of others and to dishonor God, to follow the impulse of her own unsanctified will? {Lt34-1890}

In the fear of God I would address a few words to the mother. TAKE TO YOUR OWN HOME THE WAYWARD CHILD YOU HAVE PETTED AND INDULGED. I CAN NEVER DESCRIBE TO YOU HOW OFFENSIVE TO GOD IS YOUR WORK IN THE FORMATION IN YOUR CHILD OF A CHARACTER THAT WILL RUIN THE LIFE OF A MAN WHOM GOD LOVES, WHOM GOD CLAIMS AS HIS STEWARD. You have made a great mistake in dealing with her, AND YOU SHOULD BE THE ONE TO CARRY THE BURDEN OF HER DISTORTED CHARACTER. All your neglected duty God has recorded in His book, and YOU MUST MEET IT AGAIN. YOUR DAUGHTER IS AN OFFENSE TO GOD, FOR SHE IS INSULTING HIM BY A COURSE OF ACTION THAT, IF CONTINUED, MUST RUIN HER OWN SOUL, AND THAT TENDS TO

DRAG HER HUSBAND DOWN TO HER LOW LEVEL. Her influence tends to hinder the spiritual advancement of all with whom she comes in contact. {Lt34-1890}

Parents should be impressed with their solemn obligation to do God's will in the education and training of their children. How important that they lay aside their own will and inclination and take hold of their work in the fear of God! {Lt34-1890}

Sister Craig, what did you expect of your husband when you married him? Did you expect to take the reins of government in your own hands and bring his will into harmony with that perverse, stubborn will of yours? How much rest, contentment, peace, and joy has your husband realized in his married life? But very little. Married life is not all romance; it has its real difficulties and its homely details. The wife must not consider herself a doll to be tended, but a woman, one to put her shoulder under the real, not imaginary burdens, and live an understanding, thoughtful life, considering that there are other things to be thought of than herself. Do you think it is no disappointment to your husband that he find you what God has shown me you are? Did he marry you with the expectation that you would bear no burdens, share no perplexities, exercise no self-denial? Did he think that you would feel under no obligation to control self, to be cheerful, kind, and forbearing, and to exercise common sense? {Lt34-1890}

Real life has its shadows and its sorrows. To every soul troubles must come. Satan is constantly working to unsettle the faith and destroy the courage and hope of every one. **Your husband has had a horrible awakening as he has seen what is the nature of her whom he has vowed to love and cherish till death do you part. He sees himself fastened to one who cares for no one but herself. YOUR IMAGINARY TRIALS, YOUR MANUFACTURED PHYSICAL DISABILITIES, make the outlook most discouraging.** You have scarcely any knowledge of practical life and duty. A life of principle is almost unknown to you. Self-pleasing bounds your world. {Lt34-1890}

When the grace of Christ dwells in the heart it will make the manners gentle and subdued. There will be no deception, no pretense, no self-admiration, no reckless association with worldlings. There will be a far greater sense of pain at praise than at censure. The thought that Christ has died for sinners should be ever present, for it will have a tendency to subdue and expel every vestige of self-love, of self-seeking, of idolatry of self. On the part of every soul that loves God there will be earnest, continuous study of His word, and earnest prayer. **Instead of being earthly and carnally minded, the trembling believer will turn to the Stronghold as a prisoner of hope. {Lt34-1890}**

I entreat you, my poor, weak, erring sister, to accept the strength that is waiting your demand upon it. Though you have felt the movings of the Spirit of God on your heart, you know nothing, as yet, of practical religion. The life of the soul, like that of the body, is affected to a great degree by the food which sustains it. The soul that finds in Christ and His matchless love the Head of life will have a sound, solid experience; but he who is satisfied with this world, its customs, its sayings, and its doings, will be worthless in this life, and will fail of gaining the future life. **Your mind is almost wholly absorbed in those things that are of no value—those things that amuse the mind but give it no spiritual strength. Before Christ, who paid the redemption money for your soul, you show yourself unworthy to have**

your name retained in the book of life; for you set your heart upon earthly things and that earthly wisdom which is foolishness with God. {Lt34-1890}

*Will you, my sister, look well to your worthless life and not think it sufficient, when you do get a glance at it, to mourn over it and then forget all about it and go on doing worse than ever? Will you see the false gods at whose shrine you worship? “The prayer of the upright is his delight,” but the unstable shall not receive anything from the Lord. Will you, dear child, separate yourself from the world and cease to love its society? **Bring Christ into all your associations; then the dark, sinful soul will have chapters of the love of Jesus open to its contemplation. When you partake of Christ, His goodness, His way, become yours; His will subdues your will. The words that come from your lips now you think to be smart; but, Oh, how painful they are to the heart that loves Jesus! If they were written out as you speak them you would see a medley of nonsense, of foolishness, of bitterness, wrath, envy, malice. Festivals, lectures, concerts, are the food you relish, with a little so-called religion mixed in as flavor. {Lt34-1890}***

Whom has your life blessed? What kind of worker are you in your Master’s vineyard? What fruit are you bearing to the glory of God? {Lt34-1890}

*There will necessarily be many who want to receive, in the mission, an education for the work of God. **Your husband’s position leads the new ones in the faith, and those who are connected with him in the mission, to suppose you to be a Christian and not the frivolous-minded, irreligious person you are.** Your influence is such as will lead souls away from Jesus. Therefore, your example is a detriment to the mission. **If there is not a decided change in you, the sooner you are separated from the mission the better, for the Lord is not pleased with you. {Lt34-1890}***

***Your husband should not merge his identity in you. THE MARRIAGE VOW THAT BINDS THE HUSBAND TO THE WIFE MUST REMAIN UNBROKEN, but he has vows to his Lord—to love Him with the whole heart, the undivided affection. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; ... This do, and thou shalt live.” It is his duty to place himself where he can honor God with mind, soul, body, and spirit, EVEN IF HE NEVER LOOKS UPON YOUR FACE AGAIN.** By your endless talk of cheap, earthly, carnal things, and your outbursts of passion, you are constantly creating a condition of things that tends to absorb his thoughts, to divert his mind from God, and to disqualify him for his work. He has one duty before him—to preserve himself from being compelled to come to your level by giving himself to some branch of the work of God. He belongs to the Creator in the highest sense; Jesus has bought him with His own blood, and requires him to be wholly united with Him in the work He has for him to do. {Lt34-1890}*

If your influence interposes between him and the Lord, he could place you in a position where you will be as little hindrance to him as possible. He must not allow you to spoil his usefulness by mingling your carnal, earthly foolishness with all his experience. You can, my sister, be made better by your husband’s influence; but if you are not, he will most assuredly be hindered by the atmosphere that surrounds your life. How difficult for him to perfect a religious character while constantly breathing this atmosphere! How hard for him when in your company to elevate his soul to pure, spiritual thoughts! How difficult to

keep in mind fruitful subjects of meditation! How often he is perplexed to know just what course he should pursue toward you! YOU ARE A STUMBLING BLOCK TO HIM, WHETHER HE SEES IT OR NOT. {Lt34-1890}

God, who searches the heart, takes notice of its desires. He will forgive your past life of frivolity, your pretense, your deception, if you will now repent and seek His grace, that you may live unto Him, and Him alone. “The Lord looketh upon the heart.” “He remembereth that we are dust.” “I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their own thoughts, because they have not harkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” This need not be your case, but it will be unless you turn square about. You cannot make this change yourself, but Jesus can and will do this, if you ask Him and submit yourself wholly to Him, not seeking your own will but God’s will, no longer trying to please self but educating yourself to be useful. Your time is golden and should be spent in seeking to lay up a treasure in the heavens. You must forget your darling self; live no longer to please yourself, but to please God. {Lt34-1890}

But if you will not do this, then your husband must remember that he is God’s property, the purchase of the blood of Christ. The Lord has a work for him to do, and if the enemy works through you to thwart His purpose, there is but one course for him to take—TO GO FORTH TO HIS WORK INDEPENDENT OF YOUR INFLUENCE, AND GIVE HIMSELF WHOLLY TO GOD. If he does this he will, through the grace of Christ, save his own soul, and THROUGH THIS COURSE MAY BE THE MEANS OF SAVING YOUR SOUL. But he is not now doing the work which God requires him to do. He is not to indulge your unconsecrated desires by his means or consent, but should restrain them. {Lt34-1890}

My sister, is eternal life of any value to you? If so, you should make this manifest. Where is the humility you should feel because of your deficiencies? The only real, unequivocal proof that we are true Christians is that, being branches of the Living Vine and deriving our nutriment from Jesus, we bear fruit, fragrant fruit, of which the Spirit is the source. Then we shall have a beautiful character, a good, unselfish heart. Our words, our actions, our very thoughts will bear a continual testimony that we are branches of the true and Living Vine. There is not conjecture; the divine credentials are manifest, testifying that we are in Christ and Christ in us. {Lt34-1890}

If your spirit, my sister, were in harmony with that of Christ you would not suggest one word of envy or suspicion to your husband’s mind. No thought of evil would germinate and spring up to bear fruit, and result in separating you and him from the work. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” **Seek the Lord with all your heart before it shall be too late. {Lt34-1890}**

I don’t know if you shed tears as you read the letter! You can feel the anguish, tenseness, hurt and compassion in the heart of Ellen White and she struggles with the pen and paper to deliver what the Lord had shown her about this marriage. She is not just writing as a messenger, that aside neither is she writing this letter as someone’s wife. No her husband had died in 1881. This letter is written by a mother who has a burden for a wild way-world

daughter. It is not a confrontation with flesh, but a war with a demon wanting not just to control a wife, but a minister of God. Also: -

- **When I have heard a wife mourning that her husband did not show her all the affection that she thought he should, I have sent a silent petition to God, that this soul might be refreshed with the Word. From the light that God has given me, I knew that she needed to drink the deep, cool waters of Lebanon, instead of the turbid streams of the valley. When women will feed upon the Water of Life, they will have far less sentimentalism, and far greater spirituality. They will purify their souls by obeying the truth. If a woman's life is connected with one whom God has chosen, to be a laborer together with God, LET HER CONSIDER THAT SHE CAN MAKE HIS HEART TIRED, AND HIS SOUL SAD, BY HER UNCONSECRATED COURSE OF ACTION. If self clamors for attention, and unless great devotion is shown her, she becomes unhappy, and she may greatly hinder him in his work. She needs to learn of Christ, who lived not to please himself. He is our example in all things. {SpM 115.2}**

In principle, return her to her people or leave him to his people. This is not a movie script you are reading to be acted in some entertainment theatre, it is issues to do with life and death. The case of Sister Craig and ministers wives above does not happen in marriage alone but also in women and men allied to ministries. The best thing is to give them leave back to their parents to learn the ABC of being Christian workers if they wouldn't hear admonitions from the brethren and older folks.

Polygamy, the case of Jacob with Laban and his daughters [Adam Clarke's Commentary on Genesis 20:15-28]

Herodotus mentions a very singular custom among the Babylonians, which may serve to throw light on Laban's conduct towards Jacob. "In every district they annually assemble all the marriageable virgins on a certain day; and when the men are come together and stand round the place, the crier rising up sells one after another, always bringing forward the most beautiful first; and having sold her for a great sum of gold, he puts up her who is esteemed second in beauty. On this occasion the richest of the Babylonians used to contend for the fairest wife, and to outbid one another. But the vulgar are content to take the ugly and lame with money; for when all the beautiful virgins are sold, the crier orders the most deformed to stand up; and after he has openly demanded who will marry her with a small sum, she is at length given to the man that is contented to marry her with the least. And in this manner the money arising from the sale of the handsome served for a portion to those whose look was disagreeable, or who had any bodily imperfection. A father was not permitted to indulge his own fancy in the choice of a husband for his daughter; neither might the purchaser carry off the woman which he had bought without giving sufficient security that he would live with her as his own wife. Those also who received a sum of money with such as could bring no price in this market, were obliged also to give sufficient security that they would live with them, and if they did not they were obliged to refund the money." Thus Laban made use of

the beauty of Rachel to dispose of his daughter Leah, in the spirit of the Babylonian custom, though not in the letter.

*At the expiry of the stipulated term the marriage festivities were held. **But an infamous fraud was practised on Jacob, and on his showing a righteous indignation, the usage of the country was pleaded in excuse.** No plea of kindred should ever be allowed to come in opposition to the claim of justice. But this is often overlooked by the selfish mind of man, and fashion or custom rules instead of the will of God. This was what Laban did, as he said, **"It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born."** But, then, if that were the prevailing custom of society at Haran, he should have apprized his nephew of it at an early period in an honorable manner. This, however, is too much the way with the people of the East still. The duty of marrying an elder daughter before a younger, the tricks which parents take to get off an elder daughter that is plain or deformed and in which they are favored by the long bridal veil that entirely conceals her features all the wedding day, and the prolongation for a week of the marriage festivities among the greater sheiks, are accordant with the habits of the people in Arabia and Armenia in the present day.*

As marriage was a very solemn contract, there is much reason to believe that sacrifices were offered on the occasion, and libations poured out; and we know that on festival occasions a cup of wine was offered to every guest; and as this was drunk with particular ceremonies, the feast might derive its name from this circumstance, which was the most prominent and observable on such occasions.

*In the evening-he took Leah his daughter] As the bride was always veiled, and the bride chamber generally dark, or nearly so, and as Leah was brought to Jacob in the evening, **the imposition here practised might easily pass undetected by Jacob, till the ensuing day discovered the fraud.***

*It was an early custom to give daughters in marriage according to their seniority; and it is worthy of remark that the oldest people now existing, next to the Jews, I mean the Hindoos, have this **not merely as a custom, but as a positive law; and they deem it criminal to give a younger daughter in marriage while an elder daughter remains unmarried. Among them it is a high offence, equal to adultery, "for a man to marry while his elder brother remains unmarried, or for a man to give his daughter to such a person, or to give his youngest daughter in marriage while the eldest sister remains unmarried."**-Code of Gentoo Laws, chap. xv., sec. 1, p. 204. This was a custom at Mesopotamia; **but Laban took care to conceal it from Jacob till after he had given him Leah. The words of Laban are literally what a Hindoo would say on such a subject.***

If you sense you have such cunning in-laws to be, instead of hurrying to sign marriage certificate with their veiled daughter and end up in sin of polygamy like Jacob, I advise you, if they can't allow you to see your veiled bride, cancel the marriage right there on the pulpit

before you make a vow. What happened later in the life of Jacob and Leah? Ellen White sheds some light: -

*Seven years of faithful service Jacob gave for Rachel, and the years that he served "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." But the selfish and grasping Laban, desiring to retain so valuable a helper, practiced a cruel deception in substituting Leah for Rachel. **The fact that Leah herself was a party to the cheat, caused Jacob to feel that he could not love her.** His indignant rebuke to Laban was met with the offer of Rachel for another seven years' service. **But the father insisted that Leah should not be discarded, since this would bring disgrace upon the family. Jacob was thus placed in a most painful and trying position; he finally decided to retain Leah and marry Rachel. Rachel was ever the one best loved; but his preference for her excited envy and jealousy, and his life was embittered by the rivalry between the sister-wives.** {PP 189.2}*

***Laban understood the wrong of polygamy, although it was alone through his artifice that Jacob had taken two wives. HE WELL KNEW THAT IT WAS THE JEALOUSY OF LEAH AND RACHEL THAT LED THEM TO GIVE THEIR MAIDS TO JACOB, which confused the family relation, and increased the unhappiness of his daughters. And now as his daughters are journeying at a great distance from him, and their interest is to be entirely separate from his own, he would guard, as far as possible, their happiness. Laban would not have Jacob bring still greater unhappiness upon himself, and upon Leah and Rachel, by taking other wives. And Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters; or if thou shalt take other wives besides my daughters; no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee."** {1SP 116.3}*

Thus Jacob ended up with four wives. What a misery! Another case which may be cited about polygamy is the case of Abraham. Did God sanction it?

- ***If God had sanctioned polygamy, he would not have thus directed Abraham to send away Hagar and her son.** He would teach all a lesson in this, that the rights and happiness of the marriage relation are to be ever respected and guarded, even at a great sacrifice. **Sarah was the first and only true wife of Abraham.** She was entitled to rights, as a wife and mother, **which no other could have in the family.** She revered her husband, calling him lord; but she was jealous lest his affections should be divided with Hagar. **God did not rebuke Sarah for the course she pursued. Abraham was reprovved by the angels for distrusting God's power, which had led him to take Hagar as his wife, and to think that through her the promise would be fulfilled.** {1SP 98.2}*

The role of the church

Let's notice now the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:19:

- “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and **whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**”

In Matthew 18:17, 18, Jesus makes clear that this authority is given to the church and not just to one or two individuals. The Greek of both Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 reads literally:

- “Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” The meaning is evident: **Christ's representatives on earth have the right and the responsibility to bind whatever has been bound in heaven and to loose whatever has been loosed in heaven. The church is to teach what Christ has commanded. It is to require or prohibit whatever Inspiration clearly reveals. In Matthew 18, the church membership is connected with this binding and loosing.**

Since Jesus plainly states that anyone who divorces and remarries for any other reason than fornication is guilty of living in adultery, the church has no alternative but to act in harmony with the decree of heaven. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 the Apostle Paul points out adultery as one of the sins that will keep a person out of heaven and in 1 Corinthians 5:5-13 he ordered a man put out of the church because of such a sin:

- “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.... But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

The Seventh-day Adventist church has been given the following counsel:

- “This statement (Matthew 18:18) holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. **To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their unchristlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in God's word, will be ratified in heaven.**” Gospel Workers, Pages 501, 502.
- “He shows us that when His people are found in sin they should at once take decided measures to put that sin from them, that His frown may not rest upon them all. But if the sins of the people are passed over by those in responsible positions, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for those sins. **In His dealings with His people in the past the Lord shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs. One sinner may diffuse darkness that**

will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation.” *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, Page 265.*

The purpose of such church action of course is two-fold. It keeps the church pure and it makes the sinner realize his peril. In the case of the man in 1 Corinthians 5, it had both; the man did repent and turn from his sin results [2Corinthians 2:5-11]. But too often today the discipline of the church is negated by unwise sympathizers in the church: -

- ***“Private members and even preachers have sympathized with disaffected ones who have been reproved for their wrongs, and division of feeling has been the result.... Those who so readily sympathize with the wrong consider it a virtue; but they realize not that they are exerting a scattering influence, and that they themselves help to carry out Satan’s plans. “I saw that many souls have been destroyed by their brethren unwisely sympathizing with them, when their only hope was to be left to see and realize the full extent of their wrongs. But as they eagerly accept the sympathy of unwise brethren, they receive the idea that they are abused; and if they attempt to retrace their steps, they make halfhearted work. They divide the matter to suit their natural feelings, lay blame upon the reprover, and so patch up the matter.... False sympathizers have worked in direct opposition to the mind of Christ and ministering angels.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, Page 213.***

She adds too:

And if there are those who sympathize with him, who will not discern the right from the wrong, who, after patient instruction has been given them, choose to keep on the wrong side, let them also be suspended. *God's name must not be dishonored by murmurers, faultfinders, and those who are continually sowing seeds of disaffection. {15MR 163.3}*

Paul was careful to make sure this didn’t happen with the man in Corinth:

- ***“In my letter I wrote that you were not to associate with the immoral. I did not mean you were literally to **avoid contact with the immoral in this world**, with the lustful and the thievish, or with idolaters; in the case you would have to leave the world altogether. What I now write is that you are not to associate with **any so-called brother who is immoral or lustful or idolatrous or given to abuse or drink or robbery**. Associate with him? Do not even eat with him. Outsiders it is no business of mine to judge. **No, you must judge those who are inside the church, for yourselves; as for outsiders, God will judge them. Expel the wicked from your company.**”* 1 Corinthians. 5:9-13, Moffatt.**

Whether this eating refers to communion or social eating we don't know. Very likely it refers to both:

- **“Christ’s example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord’s supper. It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit plainly teaches. But beyond this none are to pass judgment.”** *The Desire of Ages*, Page 656.
- **“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house. Neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”** 2 John 9-11.
- **“God's people are rising,” said the angel, “never to fall again.” “Be careful,” said the angel, “lest the branches be cut off and others are raised up in their stead.” I saw [that] some would bear fruit, and work to the glory of God. I saw we must keep close to Jesus, and fast and pray, if we could not get the victory over the powers of darkness. I then saw that Brother Gorsline had wounded and torn the hearts of God's people. I saw he had been stubborn and rebellious, and unless he changed his course entirely, the church should disfellowship him, for he has been a dead weight to the church. {18MR 11.3}**

These forbidden social contacts are to be distinguished from efforts to get him to see his wrong course and to save his soul. Such efforts certainly should be made by those who have any reason to feel that they might have some chance or success and have the burden to labor for him.

- **I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem man. He did not consider His own life too dear to sacrifice. Said Jesus: “Love one another, as I have loved you.” Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother. But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}**

On the other hand, close social relationships for the sake of sympathizing or friendship are to be avoided.

- **“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.... And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”** Ephesians 5:3-7, 11.

- **“Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.”** Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, Page 171.
- **“‘You must have charity,’ is the cry heard everywhere, especially from those who profess sanctification. But true charity is too pure to cover an unconfessed sin. While we are to love the souls for whom Christ died, we are to make no compromise with evil. We are not to unite with the rebellious and call this charity.”** The Acts of the Apostles, Pages 554, 555.
- **If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God. {3T 280.3}**

Some people get their lives so mixed up through their immoral acts that they can never be fellowshipped by the church again, and, if they are saved, they will have to be saved outside the church.

- **“It is impossible for E. to be fellowshipped by the church of God. He has placed himself where he cannot be helped by the church, where he can have no communion with nor voice in the church. He has placed himself there in the face of light and truth. He has stubbornly chosen his own course, and refused to listen to reproof. He has followed the inclinations of his corrupt heart, has violated the holy law of God, and has disgraced the cause of present truth. **If he repents ever so heartily, the church must let his case alone. If he goes to heaven, it must be alone, without the fellowship of the church.** A standing rebuke from God and the church must ever rest upon him, that the standard of morality be not lowered to the very dust.”** Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, Page 215. {TSB 250.1}
- **Those who break the seventh commandment should be suspended from the church, and not have its fellowship nor the privileges of the house of God. Said the angel, "This is not a sin of ignorance. It is a knowing sin and will receive the awful visitation of God, whether he who commits it be old or young."** {TSB 248.4}

This undoubtedly would not be true of most cases. The Bible clearly teaches that if the sin that separated us from God is confessed and forsaken, it will be forgiven, and we can again

be accepted as a part of the family of God. But, just as a person would not be readmitted into the church until he stopped stealing, breaking the Sabbath and so on, neither is it justifiable to take a person back into the church until he stops committing adultery.

A thought that is almost always presented when a case of adultery is being considered is a **“lot of other people in the church are doing things just as bad, and nobody says anything about them.”** That may be true, although I’ve never received an answer when I’ve asked for the names of those who are doing things just as bad. You see, both the Bible and Ellen White distinguish between open sin and hidden sin. We know that there are many tares in the church, individuals who are not Christians, who are living in sin. **But they are not doing it openly. Openly they try to appear to be genuine.** Jesus tells us in the parable of the tares to leave them alone until the harvest. **Many sins are also committed by good Christian people because of the weakness of the flesh. But these are not deliberate, planned rebellion against God and His word. As soon as the Christian realizes what he has done he repents, forsakes the sin and seeks forgiveness by confessing that sin to God. There is a big difference between this kind of sin and the stubborn insistence on a course that is known to be contrary to the expressed will of God.** It is these acts that the church cannot tolerate in any member.

There is also a big difference between the divorce and remarriage of a Christian who knows the truth of God’s word and a non-Christian or even a Christian who is a member of a church that does not teach the importance of keeping God’s commandments.

- *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not **to him it is sin.**” James 4:17.*
- *“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: **But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**” John 9:41.*

Dealing With Those Overtaken in the Sin of Adultery March 24, 1868

A Statement by Ellen and James White [INASMUCH AS THIS STATEMENT WAS ISSUED JOINTLY BY JAMES AND ELLEN WHITE, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HAD THE FULL SANCTION OF ELLEN WHITE.]

*In regard to the case of the injured sister A. G., we would say in reply to the questions of J. H. W., **that it is a feature in the cases of most who have been overtaken in sin, as her husband has, that they have no real sense of their villainy. Some, however, do, and are restored to the church; but not till they have merited the confidence of the people of God by unqualified confessions, and a period of sincere repentance.** This case presents difficulties not found in some, and we would add only the following: {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 1}*

- 1. In cases of the violation of the seventh commandment, where the guilty party does not manifest true repentance, if the injured party can obtain a divorce without making their own cases and that of their children, if they**

have them, worse by so doing, they should be free. {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 2}

2. If they would be liable to place themselves and their children in worse condition by a divorce, we know of no scripture that would make the innocent party guilty by remaining. {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 3}

3. Time, and labor, and prayer, and patience, and faith, and a godly life, might work a reform. To live with one who has broken the marriage vows, and is covered all over with the disgrace and shame of guilty love, realizes it not, is an eating canker to the soul; and yet, a divorce is a life-long, heart-felt sore. God pity the innocent party. Marriage should be considered well before contracted. {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 4}

4. Why! oh, why! will men and women who might be respectable, and good, and reach Heaven at last, sell themselves to the Devil so cheap, wound their bosom friends, disgrace their families, bring a reproach upon the cause, and go to hell at last? God have mercy. Why will not those who are overtaken in crime manifest repentance proportionate to the enormity of their crime, and fly to Christ for mercy, and heal, as far as possible, the wounds they have made? {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 5}

5. But, if they will not do as they should, and if the innocent have forfeited the legal right to a divorce, by living with the guilty after his guilt is known, we do not see that sin rests upon the innocent in remaining, and her moral right in departing seems questionable, if her health and life be not greatly endangered in so remaining. {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 6}

6. As in the days of Noah, one of the signs of these times is a passion for injudicious and hasty marriages. Satan is in this. If Paul could remain single, and recommend the same to others, that he and they might be wholly the Lord's, why not those who would be wholly his, and wish to make a sure thing of avoiding the cares, trials, and bitter anguish, so frequent in the experiences of those who choose the married life, remain as he was? And more, if he chose to remain so, and could recommend it to others, eighteen centuries since, would not to remain as he was, be a commendable course for those who are waiting for the coming of the Son of man, unless evidences were unquestionable that they were bettering their condition, and making Heaven more sure by so doing? When so much is at stake, why not be on the sure side every time?

*James White,
Ellen G. White.* {RH, March 24, 1868 par. 7}

It was sin in the camp that brought down the wrath of God and delayed the entrance of ancient Israel into the promised land. Today spiritual Israel is encamped on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. They are described as those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Jesus is looking for a church “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians. 5:27. It is no time to redefine the laws of marriage, separation, divorce and remarriage to please the fancy and applause of many.

- *Exodus 23:2: **Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:***

Have mercy Lord Jesus

Sami LW – Gospel Sounders Rekindling the Reformation Ministry [GSrrM]