

# Adultery, Divorce, and Remarriage

**“Divorce and remarriage is the most perplexing and bewildering problem facing the church today.”—R.R. Bietz, *Ministry magazine*, September 1954.**

**That is a fitting introduction to a difficult subject. Yet the solutions to the problem are to be found in our historic beliefs. And where are our historic beliefs to be found? How can we know what is right, since there are so many conflicting voices speaking today? Fortunately, we have an excellent normative standard. It is the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. There is where we find our historic beliefs.**

**Because the statements are so clear-cut, little comment will be needed. We will begin by noting the pre- and post-1950 changeover in the *Church Manual*.**

**This study should have been entitled, “Adultery, Divorce, Remarriage, and Church Membership,” because that is a significant aspect of the problem. When a husband or wife leaves the spouse, it is devastating to the family unit, especially the children. But when the erring party(s) are accepted back into the church as members, the devastation extends to the church.**

**This is an important study. You will want to read it carefully. Added italics are ours.**

## THE CHANGE IN THE CHURCH MANUAL

“4. That a church member who is the guilty party to the divorce forfeits the right to marry another, and . . . that should such a person marry another, he be not readmitted to church membership so long as the unscriptural relationship continues.”—*Church Manual*, 1942 edition.

“Is there danger that the standards of the church will be lowered

to the level of the usages of the world around us? We believe this danger exists, and that the church should be warned of it . . .”

“Has the church any responsibility or duty to take account of the experience of a member who has secured a divorce on other than the conditions stated by Christ, and then formed a new marriage relation? Indeed the church has a bounded and solemn duty to fully follow the actions that have passed in regard to such a situation . . .”

“Here is a sister in the church who secures a divorce on other than Bible grounds. She then proceeds to marry another man. The church to which she belongs then withdraws from her the status of fellowship. After this, she with this man move to another church and upon baptism unite with that church. But the baptism does not absolve her from her state of adultery. She is continuing in this state as long as she lives with her second so-called husband, and the church in receiving her and this husband into membership is condoning her state of adultery.”—F.M. Wilcox, “*The Question of Divorce*,” *Review*, January 15, 1948.

Elder Wilcox may have been aware of a move on foot to change the *Church Manual*. In 1950, at the San Francisco General Conference Session,

“To Whom It May Concern:

“The undersigned was present at the General Conference held in San Francisco in the year 1950.

“I was seated as a delegate because of my position at that time of Secretary of the Publishing Department of the General Conference.

“I was on the committee and present when X read his proposed change of the *Church Manual* that permits a Conference Committee to judge repentance and accept back

into church membership those who had been disfellowshipped because of divorce not having Bible grounds, and remarriage, on baptism.

“The Committee voted overwhelmingly to reject his proposal.

“But Elder X was not to be so rebuffed. I was not present at the final business session of the Convention when he had the chair and had one of his friends read what he had read before us in Committee, and obtained its passage without due deliberation.

“But I heard from others what happened. They were ashamed of the way it was done. It was not on the agenda, and it was a question if there even was a quorum at that time, as the meeting had started to break up. People were leaving for home. But, even then, it was opposed strenuously from the floor.

“These are the facts as I know them.”—Harold Blunden, *letter dated July 8, 1974, quoted in God’s Seventh Commandment*, 7.

“This letter was solicited from Elder Blunden shortly before his death, July 25, 1974. His hand was too unsteady to sign, and his wife signed for him. But his mind was clear and sharp to the last. He had told the authors, all this, years before. Also, a minister who was a delegate at this 1950 General Conference and was present when the vote was taken, confirms what Elder Blunden has written. He is an active Conference administrator. He said that he was ashamed of the way it was done, and his faith was shaken the way protests from the floor were brushed aside and the vote quickly taken.”—*Ibid.*

“This is the change in the *Church Manual*, hurriedly pushed through at the 1950 General Conference Session, which permitted readmittance into the church of those who had

left their husbands or wives and remarried:

"8. The marriage contract is not only more sacred but also infinitely more complex than ordinary contracts in its possible involvements; for example, in the factor of children who may be born. Hence, in a case where any endeavor by a genuinely repentant offender to bring his marital status in line with the divine ideal, presents apparently insuperable problems; his [or her] plea for readmittance shall before final action is taken be brought by the church through the pastor or district leader to the conference committee for counsel and recommendation as to any possible steps that the repentant one, or ones, may take to secure such readmittance. 9. Readmittance to membership of those who have been disfellowshipped for reasons given in the foregoing sections, shall be on the basis of rebaptism."—*Church Manual, 1976 edition, 268-269.*

#### **THE BLUEPRINT ON ADULTERY, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE**

"Jesus Himself never purchased peace by compromise. His heart overflowed with love for the whole human race, but He was never indulgent to their sins. He was too much their friend to remain silent while they were pursuing a course that would ruin their souls,—the souls He had purchased with His own blood. He labored that man should be true to himself, true to his higher and eternal interest. The servants of Christ are called to the same work, and they should beware lest, in seeking to prevent discord, they surrender the truth. They are to "follow after the things which make for peace" (Rom 14:19); but real peace can never be secured by compromising principle. And no man can be true to principle without exciting opposition."—*Desire of Ages, 356.*

"Let every controversy or dispute be settled by "Thus saith the

Lord."—*Review Reprints, 526.*

"If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works."—*5 Testimonies, 696.*

"Nothing that man can do has power to sanctify an unrighteous act."—*Testimonies, Series B, Number 2, 21.*

"Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 578.*

"It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people. 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths.'"—*Great Controversy, 478.*

"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress."—*Romans 7:3, KJV.*

"Accordingly, she shall be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive."—*Romans 7:3, RSV.*

"This means that, if she should give herself to another man while her husband is alive, she incurs the stigma of adultery."—*Romans 7:3, Phillips.*

"If therefore, in her husband's lifetime she consorts with another man, she will incur the charge of adultery."—*Romans 7:3, NEB.*

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."—*Matthew 19:9.*

"You drench the Eternal's altar with your tears, sobbing and groaning because He never heeds your offerings, because He will accept no gift

from you. You ask, Why? It is because the Eternal was a witness at your marriage in youth to the wife with whom you have now broken faith—though she is your mate and lawful wife. Not one of you has any moral sense. Not one desires to have children from God. Take heed to yourselves, and let none prove unfaithful to the wife of his youth, for I detest divorce and cruelty to a wife, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, declares."—*Malachi 2:13-17, Moffatt.*

"And God spake all these words, saying . . . Thou shalt not commit adultery."—*Exodus 20:1, 14.*

"As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan . . . tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment."—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 457-458.*

"Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with."—*Testimonies to Ministers, 427.*

"If breaking the 4th Commandment is a test of fellowship, why should not breaking the 7th Commandment in an adulterous marriage be also a test a fellowship?"

"If adulterous marriages are no longer adultery after so many years, then is Sabbath breaking no longer Sabbath breaking after so many years?"—*God's Seventh Commandment, 9.*

Some refuse to believe there is such a thing as "living in sin," the sin of an adulterous marriage. Yet Mrs. White uses these very words.

"The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking."—*Prophets and Kings, 141.*

"In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist."—*1 Testimonies, 321.*

—Continued on page four

The following data has been excerpted from a doctoral dissertation by John W. Thoburn, in the Graduate School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary (July 1991). The name of the thesis was "Predictive Factors Regarding Extra-marital Sexual Activity Among Male Protestant Clergy."

Here is the statistical information which he gathered from four research studies in the 1980s (Blackmon, Somers, Muck, and Steinke):

A recent study by Blackmon (1984) covered a range of topics regarding pastors' sexual behavior and attitudes. Blackmon polled male and female pastors from four denominations—Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, and Assemblies of God. He had 300 respondents in his survey, which covered seven areas of ministry, of which sexuality was one. He found that out of a sample of 287, 37.15% felt they had engaged in sexual behavior inappropriate for a minister."—page 10.

That question was followed by the query as to whether a pastor had ever had sexual intercourse with anyone other than a spouse. Of 284 respondents, 32.04% answered in the affirmative."—page 10.

He [Blackmon] asked whether pastors had ever had sexual intercourse with members of their congregations. Twelve and six-tenths percent answered in the affirmative. Sixteen of the 300 respondents refused to answer that question, so Blackmon conjectures that the percentage may be even higher.

Nine and four-tenths percent of the respondents reported homosexual attraction; 26 males and 1 female."—pages 11.

Blackmon found that nearly 36% of pastors found themselves attracted to members of the opposite sex on a daily or weekly ba-

sis, with 1.08% attracted to the point of arousal.—page 11.

Finally, Blackmon found that 12.94% of pastors consumed pornographic literature or movies frequently.—page 11.

Blackmon's study briefly examined three possible predictive factors. The first factor had to do with a pastor's theological orientation. Blackmon found, for example, that pastors with a middle of the road theological orientation were far more likely (14.4%) to be attracted to the members of their own sex than pastors with a conservative (2%) or liberal (6%) theological orientation. He also found that conservatives reported far less physical contact with parishioners (21.43%), while 44.17% middle of the road, and 50.72% of the liberal theologians answered yes.—pages 11-12.

Somers (1986) replicated Blackmon's study, although he confined himself to pastors belonging to the Free Methodist Church, with a total N of 118. The numbers generated by his study were usually lower than those Blackmon found, which Somers attributed to the conservative stance of the denomination. Sixteen and two-tenths percent responded that they had intercourse with someone other than a spouse, while 5.88% indicated having had intercourse with a member of their congregation. Fourteen and six-tenths percent indicated having had physical contact, excluding intercourse with a church member other than a spouse, and 3.54% indicated homosexual attraction. Less than 3% of Free Methodist pastors read or viewed pornographic literature or movies.—pages 12-13.

Muck (1988), conducting a survey of pastors for Leadership magazine, with nearly 300 respondents, found that 12% had sexual intercourse with someone other than a spouse since being in a local church ministry. Eighteen percent of the pastors indicated that they had engaged in other forms of sexual con-

tact with other than a spouse since being in local ministry. Pastors were asked with whom they had sexual intercourse or sexual contact. Seventeen percent indicated a counselee; 13%, church staff; 39%, church members; and 31%, someone outside the church.—page 13.

Steinke (1989) listed seven characteristics that profiled clergy affairs. Steinke's study was based on a review of 350 clinical cases, 65 of whom had acted out before or during the time that he had seen them. First, the pastors underestimated the power of attachment needs, and overestimated their power to disentangle themselves from relationships. Second, in most cases, the sexual affair was preceded by an emotional affair of three to six months duration. Third, the targets of the affairs were people with whom the pastor was in close contact. Fourth, the majority of the pastors were between the ages of 35 and 50.—page 14.

**In summary of the above data, two facts are to be noted:**

(1) A much larger proportion of Protestant ministers, than we would expect, have been involved in some type of extra-marital activity.

(2) Ministers of churches, with higher doctrinal standards, had better morality records. In other words, those ministers who believed that God required higher standards, tended to have higher standards.

From this, we can conclude, first, that, as our own denomination continues to lower its doctrinal standards, its ministers will continue to decline in moral self-control. Effect follows cause.

Second, perhaps the quickest and most effective way to destroy a church is for the leadership to lower its official standards, and to publish books and magazine articles saying it is all right to sin.

“To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment . . . There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also a danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof.”—*Conflict and Courage*, 347.

“It is true that open sin excludes the guilty. This the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Cor 5:11).”—*Desire of Ages*, 656.

“The instructions given to Moses for ancient Israel, with their sharp, rigid outlines, are to be studied and obeyed by the people of God today.”—*1 Bible Commentary* 1103.

“Polygamy had been early introduced, contrary to the divine arrangement at the beginning. The Lord gave to Adam one wife, showing His order in this respect. But after the Fall, men chose to follow their own sinful desires; and as the result, crime and wretchedness rapidly increased. Neither the marriage relation nor the rights of property were respected. Whoever coveted the wives or the possessions of his neighbor, took them by force, and men exulted in their deeds of violence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 90-91.

“In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife, thus showing His order. He never designed that man should have a plurality of wives . . . This was one of the great sins of the inhabitants of the old world, which brought the wrath of God upon them. This custom was practiced after the Flood, and became so common that even righteous men fell into the practice, and had a plurality of wives. Yet it was no less sin because they became corrupted, and departed in this thing from God’s order . . . God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It was contrary to his will. He knew that the happiness of man would be destroyed by it.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, 99-100.

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”—*Matthew* 24:37-39.

“Polygamy had become so widespread that it had ceased to be regarded as sin, but it was no less a violation of the law of God, and was fatal to the sacredness and peace of the family relation. Abraham’s marriage with Hagar resulted in evil, not only to his own household, but to future generations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 145.

“The instruction given to Abraham touching the sacredness of the marriage relation was to be a lesson for all ages. It declares that the rights and happiness of this relation are to be carefully guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Sarah was the only true wife of Abraham. Her rights as a wife and mother no other person was entitled to share.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 147.

“[No priest shall marry] a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto God.”—*Leviticus* 21:7.

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. 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.”—*Leviticus* 20:10-12.

“For whoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were

committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God.”—*Leviticus* 18:29-30.

“We are to become familiar with the Levitical law in all its bearings; for it contains rules that must be obeyed; it contains the instruction that if studied will enable us to understand better the rule of faith and practice that we are to follow in our dealings with one another. No soul has any excuse for being in darkness. Those who receive Christ by faith will receive also power to become the sons of God.”—*1 Bible Commentary*, 1110.

“It was not long before the poison had spread, like a deadly infection, through the camp of Israel. Those who would have conquered their enemies in battle were overcome by the wiles of heathen women. The people seemed to be infatuated. The rulers and the leading men were among the first to transgress, and so many of the people were guilty that the apostasy became national . . . God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God’s abhorrence of their sin and the terror of His wrath against them. All felt that the punishment was just, and the people hastened to the tabernacle, and with tears and deep humiliation confessed their sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 454-455.

“When the people of God are faithful to His commandments, ‘there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is their any divination against Israel.’ Hence all the power and wily arts of Satan are exerted to seduce them into sin. If

# Adultery, Divorce, and Remarriage

Continued from the preceding tract in this series —

those who profess to be the depositaries of God's law be transgressors of its precepts, they separate themselves from God, and they will be unable to stand before their enemies."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 457.

"All along through the ages there are strewn wrecks of character that have been stranded upon the rocks of sensual indulgence. 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."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 457.

"Israel's sin at Beth-peor brought the judgements of God upon the nation, and though the same sins may not now be punished as speedily, they will as surely meet retribution. 'If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.' (1 Cor 3:17) . . . And beyond this life stands the tribunal of the judgment, with its reward of eternal penalties. 'They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' but with Satan and evil angels shall have their part in that 'lake of fire' which 'is the second death' (Galatians 5:21; Revelation 20:14)." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 461.

"Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem was opportune. There was great need of the influence of his presence. His coming brought courage and hope to the hearts of many who had long labored under difficulties. Since the return of the first company of exiles under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, over seventy years before, much had been accomplished. The temple had been finished, and the walls of the city had been partially repaired.

Yet much remained undone. Among those who had returned to Jerusalem in former years, there were many who had remained true to God as long as they lived; but a considerable number of the children and the children's children lost sight of the sacredness of God's law. Even some of the men entrusted with responsibilities were living in open sin. Their course was largely neutralizing the efforts made by others to advance the cause of God; for so long as flagrant violations of the law were allowed to go unrebuked, the blessing of Heaven could not rest upon the people."—*Patriarchs and Kings*, 618-619.

"And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do His pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do."—*Ezra 10:10-12*.

"And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass."—*Ezra 10:19*.

The last verse of the chapter reads: "All these had taken strange wives; and some of them had wives by whom they had children."—*Ezra 10:44*.

"This was the beginning of a wonderful reformation. With patience and tact, and with a careful consideration for the rights and welfare of every individual concerned, Ezra and his associates strove to lead the penitent of Israel into the right way."—*Prophets and Kings*, 622.

"The unlawful alliances were

causing great confusion in Israel; for some who entered into them were men in high position, rulers to whom the people had a right to look for counsel and a safe example. Foreseeing the ruin before the nation if this evil were allowed to continue, Nehemiah reasoned earnestly with the wrongdoers. Pointing to the case of Solomon, he reminded them that among all the nations there had risen no king like this man, to whom God had given great wisdom; yet idolatrous women had turned his heart from God, and his example had corrupted Israel. 'Shall we then hearken unto you,' Nehemiah sternly demanded, 'to do all this great evil?' 'Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.'

"As he set before them God's commandments and threatenings, and the fearful judgments visited on Israel in the past for this very sin, their consciences were aroused, and a work of reformation was begun that turned away God's threatened anger and brought His approval and blessing.

"There were some in sacred office who pleaded for their heathen wives, declaring that they could not bring themselves to separate from them. But no distinction was made; no respect was shown for rank or position. Whoever among the priests or rulers refused to sever his connection with idolaters was immediately separated from the service of the Lord. A grandson of the high priest, having married a daughter of the notorious Sanballat, was not only removed from office, but promptly banished from Israel. 'Remember them, O my God,' Nehemiah prayed, 'because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.' How much anguish of soul

this needed severity costs the faithful worker for God the judgment alone will reveal. There was a constant struggle with opposing elements, and only by fasting, humiliation, and prayer was advancement made.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 673-674.

“Many who had married idolaters chose to go with them into exile, and these, with those who had been expelled from the congregation, joined the Samaritans. Hither some who had occupied high positions in the work of God found their way and after a time cast in their lot fully with them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 674.

“Herod himself had listened to the preaching of the Baptist. The dissolute king had trembled under the call to repentance. ‘Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy; . . . and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.’ John dealt with him faithfully, denouncing his iniquitous alliance with Herodias, his brother’s wife. For a time Herod feebly sought to break the chain of lust that bound him; but Herodias fastened him the more firmly in her toils, and found revenge upon the Baptist by inducing Herod to cast him into prison.”—*Desire of Ages*, 214.

“In his mission the Baptist had stood as a fearless reprover of iniquity, both in high places and in low. He had dared to face King Herod with the plain rebuke of sin.”—*Desire of Ages*, 215.

“Multitudes left the busy cities and villages and flocked to the wilderness to hear the words of the wonderful prophet. John laid the ax to the root of the tree. He reproved sin, fearless of consequences, and prepared the way for the Lamb of God.”—*Early Writing*, 154.

“Herod was affected as he listened to the powerful, pointed testimonies of John, and with deep interest he inquired what he must do to become his disciple. John was

acquainted with the fact that he was about to marry his brother’s wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful. Herod was unwilling to make any sacrifice. He married his brother’s wife and through her influence, seized John and put him in prison, intending to release him . . . Soon John was beheaded through the influence of Herod’s wife.”—*Early Writings*, 154.

“So men have argued, till policy has taken the place of faithfulness. Sin is allowed to go unrebuked. When will be heard once more in the church the voice of faithful rebuke, ‘Thou art the man’? (2 Sam 12:17). If these words were not so rare, we should see more of the power of God. The Lord’s messengers should not complain of their efforts being fruitless until they repent of their love of approbation, their desire to please men, which leads them to suppress truth, and to cry, Peace, when God has not spoken peace . . . God calls for men who, like Nathan, Elijah, and John, will bear His message with fearlessness, regardless of consequences; who will speak the truth, though to do this calls for the sacrifice of all they have.”—*Gospel Workers*, 150.

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”—*Leviticus 20:10*.

“The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto

Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 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.”—*Matthew 19:3-9*.

“Your ideas in regard to the marriage relation have been erroneous. Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can either break or annul the marriage vow.”—*Adventist Home*, 341.

“You reasoned incorrectly in regard to the matter of divorce. Your views cannot be sustained on the ground from which you reason. Men are not at liberty to make a standard of law for themselves, to avoid God’s law and please their own inclination. They must come to God’s great moral standard of righteous . . . God gave only one cause why a wife should leave her husband, or the husband leave his wife, which was adultery. Let this ground be powerfully considered.”—*Adventist Home*, 342.

“Jesus answered him, ‘If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.’”—*John 14:23-24*, RSV.

“*To a Deserted Husband—‘Shoulder Your Cross.’*—I cannot see what more can be done in this case, and I think that the only thing that you can do is to give up your wife. If she is thus determined not to live with you, both she and you would be most miserable to attempt it. And as she has fully determinedly set her stakes, you can only shoulder your cross and show yourself a man.”—*Adventist Home*, 344.

“A Wife Urged to Change Disposition, Not the Marriage Status.—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.”—*Adventist Home*, 345.

“There is no such thing as weakening or strengthening the law of Jehovah. As it has been, so it is. It always has been, and always will be, holy, just, and good, complete in itself. It cannot be repealed or changed. To ‘honor’ or ‘dishonor’ it is but the speech of men.”—*Prophecies and Kings*, 625.

“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 the husband put away his wife.”—*1 Corinthians 7:10-11*.

“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.”—*Romans 7:2-3*.

“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 Lord.”—*1 Corinthians 7:39*.

“Never should God’s people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 500.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, not abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”—*1 Corinthians 6:9-11*.

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is

subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”—*Titus 3:9-11*.

“After a first and second warning have no more to do with a factious person; you may be sure a man like that is perverted, he is sinning and he knows it.”—*Titus 3:9-11*, *Moffatt’s translation*.

“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 (1 Cor 5:11). But beyond this none are to pass judgment.”—*Desire of Ages* 656.

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”—*1 Corinthians 5:9-13*.

“Men are to beware how they, in their human blindness, judge and condemn their fellow man; but when God commands them to execute His sentence upon iniquity, He is to be obeyed.”—*Patriarch’s and Prophet’s*, 324.

“Thus poor, blind mortals finally adopt the maxim, ‘Whatever is, is right.’ They acknowledge no rule to measure their course.”—*1 Testimonies*, 295.

“He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him.”—*Proverbs 24:24*.

“An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, but he whose way is straight is an abomination to the wicked.”—*Proverbs 29:27*, RSV.

“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. It is not probed to the bottom, and is not healed, and they again fall into the same wrong, because they were not left to feel the extent of their wrong, and humble themselves before God, and let Him build them up. False sympathizers have worked in direct opposition to the mind of Christ and ministering angels. Ministers of Christ should arise and engage in the work of God with all their energies. God’s servants are not excused if they shun pointed testimony. They should reprove and rebuke wrong, and not suffer sin upon a brother.”—*1 Testimonies*, 213-214.

“Instead of watching for their danger, and warning them of it, you have cast your influence against those who have followed the convictions of duty, and reprovved and warned the erring. These are perilous times for the church of God, and the greatest danger now is that of self-deception. Individuals professing to believe the truth are blind to their own danger and wrongs. They reach the standard of piety which has been set up by their friends and themselves, they are fellowshipped by their brethren, and are satisfied, while they entirely fail to reach the gospel standard set up by our divine Lord. If they regard iniquity in their hearts, the Lord will not hear them. But with many it is not only regarded in the heart, but openly carried out in the life; yet in many cases the wrongdoers receive no rebuke.”—*1 Testimonies*, 214.

“I was shown that you had been wrong in sympathizing with

E. The course you have taken in regard to him has injured your influence, and has greatly injured the cause of God. It is impossible for E to be fellowshipped by the church. He has placed himself where he cannot be helped by the church, where he can have no communication 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. The Lord is displeased with your course of things.”—*1 Testimonies*, 215.

“God has given men no liberty to depart from His requirements. The Lord had declared to Israel, ‘Ye shall not do . . . every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes’; but ye shall ‘observe and hear all these words which I command thee.’ (Deut 12:8, 28). In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God. ‘There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.’ (Prov 14:12).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 634.

“Yet with the sin of Saul and its results before us, how many are pursuing a similar course. While they refuse to believe and obey some requirement of the Lord, they persevere in offering up to God their formal services of religion. There is no response of the Spirit of God to such service. No matter how zealous men may be in their observance of religious ceremonies, the Lord cannot accept them if they persist in will-

ful violation of one of His commands.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 634.

“But to the wicked God says: ‘What right have you to recite My statutes, or take My covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. If you see a thief, you are a friend of his; and you keep company with adulterers. You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you.’”—*Psalms 51:16-21*, RSV.

“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not associate with them. Take no part in the unfruitful words of darkness, but instead expose them.”—*Ephesians 5:6-7, 11*, RSV.

“We are authorized to hold in the same estimation as did the beloved disciple those who claim to abide in Christ while living in transgression of God’s law. There exist in these last days evils similar to those that threatened the prosperity of the early church; and the teachings of the apostle John on these points should be carefully heeded. ‘Ye 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. God requires His people in this age of the world to stand for the right as unflinchingly as did John in opposition to soul-destroying errors.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 554-555.

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man,

and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”—*2 Thessalonians 3:14-15*.

“It has been truly said, ‘Show me your company, and I will show you your character.’”—*Counsels to Teachers*, 221.

“These young men should choose for their associates those who love the purity of truth, whose morals are untainted, and whose habits are pure.”—*3 Testimonies*, 126.

“If choice is made of companions who fear the Lord, the influence will lead to truth, to duty, and to holiness. A truly Christian life is a power for good. But, on the other hand, those who associate with men and women of questionable morals, of bad principles and practices, will soon be walking the same path. The tendencies of the natural heart are downward.”—*4 Testimonies*, 587.

“Little do parents consider that injurious impressions are far more readily received by the young than are divine impressions; therefore their associations should be the most favorable for the growth of grace and for the truth revealed in the Word of God to be established in the heart.”—*5 Testimonies*, 544-545.

“In order to form correct habits, we should seek the company of persons of sound moral and religious influence.”—*4 Testimonies*, 655.

“The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God. While we pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation,’ we are to shun temptation, so far as possible.”—*Pa-*

# Adultery, Divorce, and Remarriage

Continued from the preceding tract in this series —

*triarchs and Prophets* 459.

“Corrupt men think it easier to misinterpret the Scriptures to sustain them in their iniquity than to yield up their corruption and sin and be pure in heart and life.”—*5 Testimonies*, 141.

“After the moral standard has been lowered in the minds of men, their judgement becomes perverted, and they look upon sin as righteousness, and righteousness as sin. By associating with these, whose inclinations and habits are not elevated and pure, others become like them. Their tastes and principles are almost unconsciously adopted.”—*5 Testimonies*, 143.

“And what strong delusion could come upon them than that there is nothing displeasing to God in licentiousness and adultery? The Bible contains warnings against these sins.”—*5 Testimonies*, 145.

“Under any and every circumstance, transgression is a dishonor to God and a curse to man. We must regard it thus, however fair its guise, and by whomsoever committed. As Christ’s ambassador, I entreat you who profess present truth to promptly resent any approach to impurity and forsake the society of those who breathe an impure suggestion. Loathe these defiling sins with the most intense hatred. Flee from those who would, even in conversation, let the mind run in such a channel; ‘for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’”—*5 Testimonies*, 146.

“Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans.”—*5 Testimonies*, 147.

“No stronger delusion can de-

ceive the human mind than that which makes them believe that they are right, and that God accepts their works, when they are sinning against Him.”—*1 Testimonies*, 407.

It is a perilous step to slight the reproofs and warnings of God’s Word or of His Spirit. Many, like Saul, yield to temptation until they become blind to the true character of sin. They flatter themselves that they have had some good object in view, and have done no wrong in departing from the Lord’s requirements. Thus they do despite to the Spirit of Grace, until its voice is no longer heard, and they are left to the delusions which they have chosen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 635.

“Many at first appeared to receive the warning; yet they did not turn to God with true repentance. They were unwilling to renounce their sins.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 95.

“The people mourned because their sins had brought suffering upon themselves, but not because they had dishonored God by transgression of His holy law. True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 557.

“When His people put away the sins that had shut out His presence, He heard their prayers and at once began to work for them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 558.

“That repentance which is produced by the influence of divine grace upon the heart will lead to confession and forsaking of sin.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 324.

“Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin.”—*5 Testimo-*

*nies*, 640.

“Sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God.”—*Great Controversy*, 486.

“The wisdom which God gives will lead men to self-examination. The truth will convict them of their errors and existing wrongs. The heart must be open to see, realize, and acknowledge these wrongs, and then, through the help of Jesus, each must earnestly engage in the work of overcoming them.”—*4 Testimonies*, 361.

“There are those who profess holiness who declare that they are wholly the Lord’s, who claim a right to the promises of God, while refusing to render obedience to His commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God; but this is presumption on their part, for John tell us that true love for God will be revealed in obedience to all His commandments.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 562-563.

“The reason many in this age of the world make no greater advancement in the divine life is because they interpret the will of God to be just what they will to do. While following their own desires, they flatter themselves that they are conforming to God’s will . . . The directions laid down in the Word of God leave no room for compromise with evil . . . His children must follow where He has lead the way; at whatever sacrifice of ease or selfish indulgence, at whatever cost of labor or suffering, they must maintain a constant battle with self.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 565.

“The church is in a great degree responsible for the sins of her members. She gives countenance to evil

if she fails to lift her voice against it.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 651.

“The only question asked in the judgment will be, ‘Have they been obedient to My commandments?’”—*Gospel Workers*, 315.

“There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment—those who violate God’s law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. ‘If ye love Me,’ He says, ‘Keep My commandments’ . . . ‘If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.’ (John 14:15-24; 15:10).” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 283.

“With this history before the peculiar people of God in these last days, there is no excuse for any one who will follow the example of ancient Israel in sin. But Satan will work in this special temptation to make void the law of God, and

make light of God’s special injunctions and warnings. The point to be marked is, that Moses’ prayer were not heard, neither his weeping nor the sorrow and prayers of those who had maintained their integrity, until justice was executed upon that demoralized, God defying prince . . . Something besides prayers and tears are needed in a time when reproach and peril are hanging over God’s people. The wicked works must be brought to an end. The very work of justice done by Phinechas was an anointment for Israel.”—*Review and Herald*, May 17, 1887.

“All who leave the common track of custom, and advocate reform, will be opposed, accounted mad, insane, radical, let them pursue ever so consistent a course.”—*2 Testimonies*, 377.

“It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His pro-

fessed people.”—*Great Controversy*, 478.

“When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God’s servants will speak the same things.”—*8 Testimonies*, 251.

“Will those who claim to be children of the Most High elevate the standard as long as time shall last? Will you not be on the Lord’s side and serve Him with full purpose of Heart?”—*5 Testimonies*, 541.

*Oh, my friend, let us be faithful to God and His Word to the end!*

“When it was necessary to rescind a major action of a very important board a number of years ago, we were told that a board member told the G.C. president that there would be some red faces. His answer was ‘better be red and right.’ We would like to suggest in the kindest way possible the advisability of returning to the reading of the old *Church Manual*, prior to 1950, on the subject. It gave our ministry support to call sin by its right name, and deny membership for those ‘living in sin.’

Under the old *Church Manual*, this was not a debatable question. Since 1950 and the change in the *Manual*, there is endless discussion and people are put out or retained in membership by margins of even one vote. It is not a healthy situation. This alone should tell us that our guidelines are not guiding very well. In a few of these unpublished letters, Sister White says that God may forgive and accept them IF . . . In no place does she say that the church should accept them into good and regular standing.

She indicates that if they are truly repentant we may fellowship with them and not deny them working for the Lord in a humble capacity, it is true. But this surely does not mean that we are to create an indulgence to sin, by accepting them back as is now being done in many churches. Sister White set us an example of working for the souls of all that had fallen into this sin. When they had put themselves in an impossible position where they could not extricate themselves without wronging someone else, she was most sympathetic, but she always called sin by its right name. Sin always carries a penalty. We remove that penalty entirely by accepting these people back in good and regular standing or retaining them while ‘living in sin’ as is now frequently being done in our churches. We leave the flood gates wide open to divorce. When the church forgives, God must accept them, is the reasoning of many.

We are aware that it borders on heresy to call attention to error in our *Church Manual*. Our workers dare not do it, even though we are sure that some would like to do so, in reading

between the lines in our correspondence. Our study has not weakened our faith in our Message, but has strengthened it, and in the ministry of Ellen White. We have not lost faith in our leadership. We hope we are assisting in checking the tide of liberalism that is growing in our church, that is fostering sin in the camp, and delaying the coming of Jesus. A letter just received from an influential doctor says, ‘I don’t think I am moving away from the church. I think the church is moving away from what they taught me, from what I learned in church school, at home, and in church while growing up.’ We can echo these words.

“It is only as the law of God is restored . . . ‘Thus saith the Lord . . . ask for the old paths.’ (GC 478) We are asking for the old *Church Manual* on this subject. May God bless all our dedicated workers.”—*R.O. Williams, D.D.S., and M.S. Williams, M.D., God’s Seventh Commandment, Second Edition*, pages 172-173.

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