
Harden not your Hearts
Restoring the Institution of Marriage
Adrian Ebens

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Adrian Ebens

Dedicated to the marriages of
my wife's and my parents

Alan and Jean Masters
1961-2016 – 55 years

Abel and Evelyn Ebens
1965-2023 – 58 years



Adrian Ebens, March 2024

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PREFACE

We live in a world of growing uncertainty, both politically, socially and personally. One lie chases another. As a result, faith decreases and egoism spreads more and more, because no one can rely on each other anymore. Of course, this also has an alarming impact on our relationships and our Adventist communities. But don't people long for security, truth and stability?

This valuable book shows us the way, the truth and the (eternal) life in our relationships with one another and with God. It takes us all the way back to the origins of which God said: "…and behold, it was very good. …" (Genesis 1:31). There is the source of our life, the place where we need to delve; there lay the streams of water, the gems of truth, often hidden from our human eyes. And it's time to bring them back into the light.

Reading this book has brought us a lot of clarity and joy about this important topic. But it also made us realise the influence Satan had on our previous lives. We come from divorced marriages before we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. Today we know that there is no guilty or innocent party in a divorce. This has led us to deep remorse and repentance. We are still experiencing the effects of this error to this day.

In this book we have found the rest and security our hearts have always longed for - a place of peace alongside our spouse in obedience to God's guidance. That doesn't mean that everything is going smoothly for us, but we have found a common, deep foundation that continues to bring us closer together. For us today, marriage is not just a relationship between two people, but it is a gift from our Creator and we should treat it very carefully. Through this we can appreciate why Ellen White writes that choosing a spouse is the most important decision in one's entire life.

The Sabbath and marriage are the two institutions that will endure from the Garden of Eden beyond the Fall. They both are a symbol of the relationship between father and son and therefore a divine pattern for marriage. Just as the Sabbath is a place of rest and a particularly blessed time with our Creator, our marriages should also experience this deep peace, rest and security and thus set an example to the world.

We are the chosen people preparing to meet our Lord and Savior, our Bridegroom. Do we not want to stand before Him as His pure bride, without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless, clothed in the garment of His righteousness?

In this purity, don't we want to be a light to the world here and now and thereby glorify our loving God and Father? Don't we want to set an example for our children and instill in their hearts the seriousness and thoughtful choice of a spouse that will last for eternity?

We have a high calling and need conversion on this important issue, in the churches and especially in the “Father of Love” movement.

May the Lord give us His grace to grow ever closer to Him, to understand more and more fully the beauty of His character, to know His love more and more.

Thanks to our brother Adrian, who is so blessed by God to present this message to us so clearly; for the historical connections he has shown and what we can be as a church in the end times when we return to the origins.

-From Eden to Eden-

“... let us draw near with a true heart, in perfect faith, sprinkled in our hearts and rid of an evil conscience, and washed in our bodies with pure water.” Hebrews 10:22 (KJV)

Georg and Juliane Bunkus

Germany

BEFORE WE BEGIN...

This book is an application of several principles developed over the last several years. If you are not familiar with the principles in these books:

Identity Wars

Life Matters

Divine Pattern of Life

Original Love

Comforter

Agape

Mirror Principle

Then I would encourage you to stop here and familiarise yourself with these principles first. Advanced light shined into the untrained eye can do great damage, and we would not wish any to be placed into a position of difficulty through lack of comprehension of vital principles. The above books are all available for download from maranathamedia.com or fatheroflove.info Please read these before engaging this book.

In faith, hope, and love

Adrian Ebens

CHAPTER 1

RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

The parable of the Ten Virgins gives to us a picture of God's last day people. Jesus presents this parable in response to a question from the disciples about the end of the world. The virgins are waiting for the bridegroom to come. The bridegroom is apparently delayed and the fervour of the virgins is tested. As the hours pass into the night, they finally succumb to sleep.

Five of the virgins anticipated the possibility of a delay by bringing extra oil with them. The other five seemed to have less knowledge of the possibilities of what could occur while preparing for a wedding feast, and so make no provision for the delay.

Jesus tells the disciples this story to give them an illustration of the kingdom of heaven; specifically, what would happen to the people of God in the last days before His return.

The lamps which the virgins carried represent the Word of God. Says the Psalmist, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psa 119:105, NKJV). The oil in the lamps represent the Spirit of Christ speaking to His children through the Word of God to teach them the principles of the kingdom.

> But you have received the Holy Spirit, and He lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what He teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as He has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ. 1 John 2:27

As Christ dwells within His followers, He teaches them the principles of the kingdom and prepares them for the wedding supper of the Lamb and His bride.

Christ is said to marry the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2), the capital city of the kingdom of God. The capital city is the corporate representative of the whole kingdom. Therefore, the capital city represents all of God's children as one body, meaning that Christ is not married to any one individual, but to the redeemed human race as a collective whole. Christ is the head of the church as well as the Saviour of the body, meaning the church (Eph 5:23).

The virgins are therefore preparing individually to be guests at the wedding, but collectively they prepare to be the bride.

> Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to Him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and His bride has prepared herself. Revelation 19:7

> In the Revelation **the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride.** Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;" **He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."** Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.—*The Great Controversy,* 426.2

The theme here is a process of preparation to live with the Lamb of God and His Father. God's ways are not our ways (Isa 55:8,9) and we must not only learn the principles of the kingdom of heaven, but also live and walk in them with gladness of joy.

Christ fills the lamps of His children with precious oil as they search the Scriptures with all their hearts. This searching creates a process of reform in God's people. The oil softens their hearts and if they do not resist, they experience the restoration of all things.

> …and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive **until the times of restoration of all things,** which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:20-21, NKJV

The Spirit of Prophecy expresses it this way:

> In the time of the end every divine institution is to be restored. —*Prophets and Kings*, 678

When thinking of the restoration of all things, we might consider many things, but when we go back to the garden of Eden there are two things in particular that are restored:

> **There were two institutions founded in Eden that were not lost in the fall,–the Sabbath and the marriage relation.** These were carried by man beyond the gates of paradise. He who loves and observes the Sabbath, and maintains the purity of the marriage institution, thereby proves himself the friend of man and the friend of God. He who by precept or example lessens the obligation of these sacred institutions is the enemy of both God and man, and is using his influence and his God-given talents to bring in a state of confusion and moral corruption.—*Signs of the Times*, Feb 28, 1884

If we wish to be the friend of God and man, we will honour the Sabbath and uphold the sanctity of marriage. We will not do anything to lessen their importance, otherwise we shall find ourselves as the enemy of God.

The reforms instituted by the people of God in the Advent movement of the 1840's were hard fought. Reclaiming the truth of the Second Coming, the non-immortality of the soul, and the blotting out of existence of the wicked at the end of the millennium laid the foundations for the truth of the heavenly Sanctuary and the law of God.

All of this paved the way for the beginning of the Sabbath to be restored to the people of God. Satan, working through the Roman power, had managed to almost blot Sabbath keepers from the earth. But a remnant was found who stepped forward to keep all of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12).

Embracing the Sabbath meant separation from family and friends, for the overwhelming majority of people in the United States observed Sunday as the Sabbath. Adventists had learned the bitter lessons of separation in their acceptance of the nearness of Christ's coming. Many were expelled from their churches and thus they learned to endure the suffering that comes with accepting the truth which prepared them for more reforms to come.

As the Adventist Pioneers considered the subject of the heavenly Sanctuary and discovered that the Ten Commandments were contained within the ark in heaven, in vision, Ellen White was shown:

> The four on the first table shone brighter than the other six. **But the fourth, the Sabbath commandment, shone above them all;** for the Sabbath was set apart to be kept in honor of God's holy name. The holy Sabbath looked glorious—a halo of glory was all around it. I saw that the Sabbath commandment was not nailed to the cross. If it was, the other nine commandments were; and we are at liberty to break them all, as well as to break the fourth. I saw that God had not changed the Sabbath, for He never changes. But the pope had changed it from the seventh to the first day of the week; for he was to change times and laws.—*Early Writings,* 32.3

The subject of the Sanctuary in heaven in which a judgment took place from October 22, 1844, enabled Seventh-day Adventists to unwittingly climb over the high prison wall erected by Babylon and her daughters on the subject of the covenants, of old and new dispensations. This wall had prevented Seventh-day Adventists from seeing the light in the Sabbath and statutes found in the law of Moses.

It would take forty years from the time they discovered the Sabbath before they would become significantly aware of the problem with the covenants. They would first have to grapple with the law in their experience before they realized the underlying issue they had in their understanding of the covenants.

As God's people continued to study the Scriptures, they learned the timing of the Sabbath was from sunset Friday evening until sunset Sabbath evening according to the location you are living in. This reform took from 1846 until the late 1850's when Adventist accepted the correct time to observe the Sabbath.[1]

Learning what day is the correct day for Sabbath was one thing, but understanding its true meaning and blessing was an entirely a different matter. Ellen White wrote testimony after testimony explaining to the people about how to keep the Sabbath and how they should approach it. Yet the people fell into a very rigid expression of Sabbath keeping. Without a correct understanding of righteousness by faith, the truth of God's character, or the Divine Pattern[2] meaning of the Father and Son relationship, Sabbath observance was framed in the context of the fear of death.

The Sabbath institution grew in its significance when it was placed within the Third Angel's Message. On the subject of the Mark of the

[1] See the booklet *Time to Commence the Sabbath* available at *maranathamedia.com*

[2] Divine Pattern is a term used in the Father of Love movement for describing the relationship of the Father and Son as a pattern for all things manifested in our creation. This is covered later in the book. You can also download the books Divine Pattern of Life and The Divine Pattern from maranathamedia.com

Beast, it was realised that enforced Sunday observance in the final days of earth's history would set the backdrop to the importance of Sabbath keeping.

In the minds of Seventh-day Adventists, this attached to the Sabbath a fearful future. In order to keep the Sabbath, you would have to stand against the threat of persecution from Rome and its apostate Sunday keeping daughters.

Adventists could out-debate their Sunday keeping neighbours on the subject of the Sabbath but the whole framework of their presentation was still in old wine skins (Matt 9:17).

Onto the stage stepped E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones. Right at the time that a movement had gained momentum in America for a Sunday Law, Waggoner and Jones appeared, to the church leaders, to be dismantling core elements of the Adventist landmarks regarding the law of God.

The Sabbath commandment could not be grasped for the true blessing it is until it was realized that the same gospel that was preached to Christians today was preached to the Israelites in the time of Moses. Mainstream Christians understood the law, including the Sabbath as works-based bondage in order to please God; they didn't see the gospel being presented in it to Ancient Israel.

Although the Sabbath had been revealed to Adventists in the ark in the heavenly Sanctuary, the subject of the covenants held them in a legal framework of observance. They tried to extract the Sabbath from the other laws of Moses but this only compounded the feeling that those who did not observe the Sabbath would be "stoned to death."

> You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy day dedicated to the LORD. Anyone who works on the Sabbath must be put to death. Exodus 31:15

Adding to this problem, the context of the Mark of the Beast and the seal of God, further impressed on Adventists that failure to keep the Sabbath would cause God to pour His fury upon those resisting it, burning them up with the Beast and its image.

> Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name." This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying His commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus. Revelation 14:9-12

When Jones and Waggoner began to preach the subject of the Two Covenants as two heart experiences that were the same through all human history, it placed the Sabbath and the law of Moses into a different framework.

The subject of the covenants is quite a technical discussion, and it is not our purpose to explore this subject in depth but our point here is simply to say that Waggoner and Jones made the gospel of Jesus Christ into the everlasting gospel. It revealed to Adventists that Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses are saved in the same way that we are saved today.

> Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; [Ancient Israel] but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it.* Hebrews 4:1-2, NKJV

What is the point of all we have said? Simply this; In order for the Sabbath to be fully restored to its Edenic glory, God's people must have their lamps filled with 1888 oil, meaning the message brought

by Jones and Waggoner would change how the Sabbath was understood.

After the 1888 message came, Ellen White attempted to explain this principle of the Sabbath in the book *The Desire of Ages*.

> Those who hold that Christ abolished the law teach that He broke the Sabbath and justified His disciples in doing the same. Thus they are really taking the same ground as did the caviling Jews. In this they contradict the testimony of Christ Himself, who declared, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10. Neither the Saviour nor His followers broke the law of the Sabbath. Christ was a living representative of the law. No violation of its holy precepts was found in His life. Looking upon a nation of witnesses who were seeking occasion to condemn Him, He could say unchallenged, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" John 8:46, R.V.
>
> The Saviour had not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. All the truths of God's word came from Him. **But these priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth. This work only a divine hand could accomplish. By its connection with error, the truth had been serving the cause of the enemy of God and man. Christ had come to place it where it would glorify God, and work the salvation of humanity.**
>
> **"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," Jesus said. The institutions that God has established are for the benefit of mankind.** "All things are for your sakes." "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 2 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 3:22, 23. **The law of Ten Commandments, of which the Sabbath forms a part, God**

> **gave to His people as a blessing.** "The Lord commanded us," said Moses, "to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive." Deuteronomy 6:24. And through the psalmist the message was given to Israel, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." Psalm 100:2-4. **And of all who keep "the Sabbath from polluting it," the Lord declares, "Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer."** Isaiah 56:6, 7.—*The Desire of Ages*, 287-288

The 1888 message placed the Sabbath into a new setting. It revealed the desire of our heavenly Father to bless His children through the Sabbath. A.T. Jones summed up the truth of this blessing in 1893 when he said:

> **Then as each Sabbath day came, it would bring to him additional knowledge and presence of God.** But who is this? [Congregation: "Christ."] Additional knowledge and presence of Christ in himself. Then if he had remained faithful, he would still have grown in the knowledge of God, in himself, in his own experience, growing more and more in all that the nature of God is.—A.T. Jones, *The Spirit of Christ Through the Sabbath*, March 2, 1893

Through the 1888 message, the Ten Commandments were transformed from ten rules to ten promises. Christ as Lord of the Sabbath brings us Sabbath rest when we receive Him. Remembering the Sabbath to keep it holy becomes the fruit of receiving Christ into your life. If we come back to the book of Acts and read again the text which spoke of restoring all things, we see something fascinating:

> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that **times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ,** who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive **until the times of**

> **restoration of all things,** which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:19-21, NKJV

It is the Spirit of Jesus given to us at the *times of refreshing* that will lead to the restoration of all things. In the 1888 message, the Sabbath was transformed from a command that must be obeyed on pain of death to a promise of the gift of the Spirit of Jesus which will restore us to completeness in Christ.

> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Ephesians 4:11-13, NKJV

If Adventists of the day had accepted the 1888 message, the Sabbath would have been restored to its correct framework and the way then would have been opened to understand all of the Sabbaths as promised times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

But the message was rejected. A.T. Jones lays out the case as follows:

> Well then, the latter rain—the loud cry—according to the testimony and according to the Scripture, is "the teaching of righteousness," and "according to righteousness," too. Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: "Three or four years ago."] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: "Four."] Yes, four. Where was it? [Congregation: "Minneapolis."] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the Congregation: "The loud cry."] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry—the latter rain. **Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain--the loud cry of the third angel's message.**—A.T. Jones, *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Feb 7, 1893

The rejection of the Loud Cry message halted the restoration of the Sabbath institution. The gains made by Jones on the Sabbath were clouded and essentially lost. The ability to see the Sabbath in a new setting was taken away.

This is why most Adventists today see the feasts as legalism and bondage. It suggests the Sabbath is not being seen in an 1888 framework.

If only they had accepted the message, they would have discovered that the times of refreshing mentioned in Acts 3:19 connects directly to the times God gave to Israel three times a year.

> Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the **times** [G2540] of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:19, KJV

> Three **times** [G2540] you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the **time** [G2540] appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of* your labors from the field. Three **times** [G2540] in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD. Exodus 23:14-17, NKJV

Reading the LXX, the Greek Old Testament, we find the same word that is used in Acts 3:19 for times of refreshing refers to the three feast periods that God gave to Israel. When you connect what A.T. Jones said about the extra presence of God that comes in the Sabbath, we see that this same principle applies to the feasts as well.

In the correct framework, the Sabbath becomes so precious and the feasts given to Israel are not ceremonial exactions placed upon Israel to command them to obey, but they are times of refreshing where the Spirit of Jesus is poured out on God's people. The Sabbath

becomes an expression of freedom in the Spirit rather than legalistic exactions.

A wonderful opportunity to embrace this truth was lost. The Sabbath institution would have been completely restored and preached more fully (EW 33.2) as it was intended. But God has not forsaken His church. This light is beginning to shine and we earnestly pray that our brethren will rejoice in this light.

This history of the restoration of the Sabbath over the past 180 years becomes instructive as we look at the other divine institution given in Eden. Has the institution of marriage been elevated into an 1888 context? What advancements have been made in this institution to bring greater freedom, love and harmony over the past 500 years since the time of Luther?

As we look at the institution of the Sabbath, many have claimed freedom by nailing it to the cross, claiming it to be a legalistic burden from which Christ has set us free. The natural inclination of men is to destroy the institutions God has established for their blessing, claiming that Christ has freed them from the law.

The true beauty of the Sabbath is found in restoring it to its original design. The same is the case for the institution of marriage. What does Jesus tell us was its original design?

> **and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.** Mark 10:8-9, KJV

The original marriage institution was never intended to include divorce and remarriage. If the marriage institution is to be completely restored, then it must come back to God's original design.

> The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be - an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven. *Mount of Blessing* 65.1

We can choose to look at this subject in terms of bondage, thinking of it in an old covenant framework as something we must do for God to approve of us having sense. Marriage in this mindset is not seen in its full blessing; it remains insecure and not founded in the fullness of the gospel and thus needs a "just in case things don't work out" divorce clause.

But our aim is to place the marriage relationship on a firm foundation in the context of the 1888 message, seeking to understand God's perfect will on this question.

> 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**. *Mount of Blessing* 64.1

The true understanding of the Sabbath brings greater outpourings of the Spirit through resting in the love of the Father and Son. The rest found in the Sabbath is the rest which Christ receives in the bosom of His Father. Therefore the rest experience of the Sabbath only comes when we correctly understand the true identity and relationship of the Father and the Son.

Since man was made in the image of God, the marriage institution points us to the correct relationship of Father and Son. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath *because* He rests in the love of His Father who is in headship over Him (1 Cor 11:3). Therefore the rest of the Sabbath is deepened in the marriage relationship, where the wife rests in the bosom of her husband who is in headship over her. The true rest of the Sabbath will be grasped and experienced when marriage relationships reflect the Father and Son relationship.

Does divorce and remarriage distort this image? What implications could it have for us? Let us consider the New Testament evidence on this question followed by how Christianity has responded to the testimony of Scripture.

CHAPTER 2

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS AND PAUL

> Some Pharisees came and tried to trap Him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?" Jesus answered them with a question: **"What did Moses say in the law about divorce?"** "Well, he permitted it," they replied. "He said a man can give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away." But Jesus responded, **"He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your hard hearts**. But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together." Later, when He was alone with His disciples in the house, they brought up the subject again. He told them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery." Mark 10:2-12

The ability for a man to divorce his wife and marry another was provided in the law of Moses. Jesus frames the words of Moses in an astonishing way. He said that the law on divorce was given by

means of a concession to their hard hearts. This raises many questions about how to understand the law of Moses. Why would God place things in the law that were concessions to the hard hearts of men? We will expand this thought process later in the book, but let us stay with the theme of divorce for the present.

The New Testament Greek word for *hard hearts* is sklērokardia which means *dry heart*. The Strong's Concordance adds this thought:

> that is, (specifically) destitution of (spiritual) perception: - hardness of heart.

The implication here is that divorce takes place when a heart resists the Spirit of God. The spirit is symbolised by water and the water of the Spirit prevents the heart from becoming hard. Therefore, divorce reveals evidence that one or both parties in a marriage have obstructed the appeals of God through His Spirit.

In answering the Pharisees, Jesus indicates that divorce was not part of God's plan. When a man and woman marry, they become one flesh. Jesus then states that what God has put together, let no man split apart. Simply put, God never splits marriages. Later on, Jesus explains further to the disciples:

> Later, when He was alone with His disciples in the house, they brought up the subject again. He told them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery." Mark 10:10-12

Jesus states here that no one can divorce their spouse and marry someone else. But what about the one who is divorced?

> "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery." Luke 16:18, NKJV

This places the wife in a very tough position. If a man divorces his wife and marries someone else, whoever would marry her would commit adultery, making such a transaction impossible.

Does that seem fair? Why would Jesus say this? Is there more to the principles of marriage that would place these statements in a more compassionate context?

Turning to other places in Scripture, the apostle Paul appears to amplify the words of Jesus when he says:

> For example, when a woman marries, **the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive.** But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. Romans 7:2

> A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. **If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes,** but only if he loves the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:39

According to these Scriptures, when two people marry, they vow to remain together until death. Marriage is a life long journey and as long as your spouse is alive, you are considered by heaven to be married to them regardless of the circumstances. God has made you one flesh, and what God puts together, let no one tear it apart.

One very reasonable question that is asked is "what if the life of a spouse is in danger from the other spouse?" The words of Paul might be applicable here.

> But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. **But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him.** And the husband must not leave his wife. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Paul interprets the words of the Lord, meaning Christ, to say that a wife must not leave her husband and a husband must not leave his wife. But if they do separate, they should remain single. How then should we interpret Paul's words a few verses later?

> (But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you to live in peace.) 1 Corinthians 7:15 NLT

Some interpret these words to mean that as a spouse is no longer bound, and therefore they are free to remarry. But this understanding contradicts what Paul says a few verses earlier as well as later in verse 39. To be consistent, Paul is simply saying that a believer should not force an unbelieving spouse to live with them. The text says nothing about remarriage.

Is this the final word on this subject? No. Matthew records the words of Jesus regarding marriage with a footnote not found anywhere else in the New Testament.

> "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." Matthew 5:32, KJV

> "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 19:9, KJV

We will examine these passages more closely in the next chapter. For now, we can say that the majority of Christianity in the last 500 years have used these two texts to make the case that the victim of a spouse who commits adultery is free to divorce and marry another person.

Is Jesus offering an exception to the principle of life long union? Did Paul forget to mention this exception? Is a woman bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives, except if he commits adultery? Paul does not indicate this. If this is an omission on his part, should it be considered human oversight? For those of us who consider the Bible to be the inspired word of God, this is impossible. We dare not guess on this question for eternal consequences are involved.

The question we need to ask is can these two texts in Matthew nullify the principle of life long commitment until death? If we wish to be honest with Scripture, then how can we harmonise all the texts together?

Within the context of the Adventist movement, we have an added layer of information to consider from Ellen White. Notice what she wrote in 1863.

> I saw that Sister Johnson as yet **has no right to marry another man,** but if she or any other woman **should obtain a divorce legally on the ground that her husband was guilty of adultery, then she is free to be married** to whom she chooses.
>
> I saw that **Sister Johnson was not free to marry again.** —*Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17,* 156.2-3, June 6, 1863

Here, Ellen White, supports "innocent party" remarriage. In 1895 she offers her thoughts on another case.

> J did not put his wife away. She left him, and put him away, and married another man**. I see nothing in the Scripture that forbids him to marry again in the Lord.** He has a right to the affection of a woman....
>
> I cannot see that this new union should be disturbed. It is a serious matter to part a man and his wife. There is no scriptural ground upon which to take such a step in this case. He did not leave her, she left him. He did not marry again until she had obtained a divorce. When K divorced herself from J he suffered most keenly, and it was not until K had married another man that J married again. The one he has chosen I feel certain will be a help to him, and he can be a help to her....**I see nothing in the Word of God that would require her to separate from him. As you have asked my advice I will freely give it to you.**—Letter 50, 1895. *Selected Messages, Book 2,* 340.1-2

It is upon statements like this from Ellen White that many Adventists have gone forward with a clear conscience and married again after their partner committed adultery and divorced them.

Is this the complete restoration of the marriage institution to God's design? Could it be like Moses, a concession to hard hearts? We need to dig deeper into Scripture because the remarriage exception clause spoken by Jesus in Matthew seems to be at variance with the words of Jesus in Mark and Luke, as well as the words of Paul in Romans, and 1 Corinthians.

CHAPTER 3

EXCEPT FOR FORNICATION

How shall we harmonise this apparent contradiction?

> "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality,** [G4202] and marries another, commits adultery; [G3429] and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." Matthew 19:9, NKJV

Compared with:

> "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery." Luke 16:18, NKJV

> **For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to** *her* **husband as long as he lives.** But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. Romans 7:2, NKJV

If a woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive then how can it be true at the same time that a person can be unbound from their living spouse to remarry, if that spouse commits adultery? They can't both be true. Either you are bound to your marriage vows as long as both spouses have breath or you can exit the marriage if

your spouse commits adultery. Clearly there is a contradiction here. We must continue searching until we can discover how to bring these two apparent opposing texts together in harmony.

The first question then is, what does Jesus mean by *sexual immorality* in the exception clause of Matthew 19:9? The Greek word here is *porneia*, [G4202] while the Greek word for adultery is *moichaō* [G3429]

It's correct to say that both adultery and fornication are sexual immorality, but does this make them the same thing? Let's look at how the New Testament writers use these two words and see if they are used interchangeably or whether they mean different things.

> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries (*moicheia*), fornications (*porneia*), thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:19, NKJV

> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries (*moicheia*), fornications (*porneia*), murders, Mark 7:21, NKJV

> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery (*moicheia*), fornication (*porneia*), uncleanness, lewdness, Galatians 5:19, NKJV

From these texts, it appears that the Bible writers saw fornication and adultery as distinctly different sins otherwise they would only have needed to mention one of the two words in these lists. This principle is compounded in the following verse. The Greek words in this text use the noun referring to the person rather than the act itself; meaning fornicator rather than fornication.

> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 1 Corinthians 6:9, NKJV

We see here again that fornicators and adulterers are described separately. What is also interesting here is the use of the word *nor*. Look at this verse again in the New Living Translation.

> Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, 1 Corinthians 6:9

Fornication here is translated "sexual sin." It seems strange to say sexual sin **or** adultery because adultery ***is*** a sexual sin. It is like saying "I am sick and I have an illness." But because in this list it says sexual sin (fornication) *or* adultery, it means *this or that*; meaning *this is not that*; meaning fornication is not adultery. The logic is simple.

Once again, we see the same distinction made in the book of Hebrews:

> Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators (*pornos*) and adulterers (*moichos*) God will judge. Hebrews 13:4, NKJV

Why doesn't Paul say *fornicating adulterers* to show these terms overlap? Why are the New Testament writers making this distinction? To answer this we need to examine how Greeks used the word *porneia* before and after the New Testament period.

> While it is rare in pre-New Testament literature one thing that did stick out to me about its [porneia] usage in those writings was that it was generally used to refer to *sexual behaviour by single people* who were committing fornication either for pleasure or for pay (prostitution).[3]

Bible Commentator Adam Clarke agrees with this evaluation when commenting on Matthew 5:32 relating to fornication:

[3] Daniel R. Jennings, *Except for Fornication,* (Sean Multimedia, 2011) p.4.

> **Saving for the cause of fornication**—Λογου πορνειας, on account of whoredom. As fornication signifies no more than the unlawful connection of unmarried persons, it cannot be used here with propriety, when speaking of those who are married. I have therefore translated λογου πορνειας, on account of whoredom. It does not appear that there is any other case in which Jesus Christ admits of divorce. A real Christian ought rather to beg of God the grace to bear patiently and quietly the imperfections of his wife, than to think of the means of being parted from her.—Adam Clarke Commentary on Matthew 5:32

But Adam Clarke is not the only one to come to this conclusion.

> Fornication: sexual intercourse between two people who are not married to each other—*Merriam Webster Dictionary*
>
> Fornication: Sexual intercourse between people who are not married to each other, especially when considered as a sin.—*TheFreeDictionary.com*
>
> Fornication: Illicit sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person.—*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*
>
> Fornication: Sexual intercourse between unmarried persons or between a married and an unmarried person.—*The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*

According to these definitions of fornication, it is impossible for someone who is married to commit fornication. All married persons who have sexual relations outside of their marriage, commit adultery, not fornication.

Let's consider some dictionary definitions of the term adultery.

> Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse or partner.—*Merriam Webster Dictionary*
>
> Adultery: Consensual sexual intercourse between a married person and a person other than the spouse.—*TheFreeDictionary.com*

> Adultery: Generally speaking, [adultery is] voluntary sexual intercourse between two people, one or both of whom is married to someone else. Ordinarily, the crime of the married person is adultery, of the other, [the unmarried person] fornication.—*The National Encyclopedia*

> Adultery: Sexual intercourse of a married person with other than the marriage partner.... Adultery is technically distinguished from fornication, which is intercourse between unmarried persons.—*Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*

Despite these observations, it is evident that a large portion of the Christian world consider that fornication can apply to both married and unmarried persons. As we shall explore in chapter 16, Luther and Calvin played a vital role in setting the Protestant Churches in this direction.

One of the passages that suggests possible proof that fornication can include adultery is this one.

> It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 1 Corinthians 5:1 KJV

The Adventist Bible commentary states:

> ***Fornication.*** Gr. *porneia*. This word, appearing twice in this verse, is a general term describing illicit sexual relationships **whether between married or unmarried persons** (see Mat 5:32; Act 15:20).

The details of this case are limited. If this man has married his father's wife then do we conclude that this woman is not his mother, as it does not say that he had his mother? If it was not his mother, then it might be considered that the father had remarried to a different woman than the woman that bore the son. Was the father dead or alive in this case? Did the man in question marry this woman or not. None of these details are provided.

If we conclude that Paul here uses the word *porneia* to mean both married and unmarried relationships, then we run into a problem two chapters later:

> Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 1 Corinthians 7:2 KJV

The King James version indicates that being married is the process to avoid fornication. Other translations state, "because of fornincation, let every man have his own wife." Either way, Paul lays down a distinction between fornication and adultery.

In the case of 1 Corinthians 5:1, if an unmarried man has sexual relations with a woman who married a divorced man, then this relationship would not constitute a biblical marriage and would indeed be fornication. Whatever the case, 1 Corinthians 5:1 must harmonise with 1 Corinthians 7:2.

Taking all these things into consideration, as Adam Clarke stated, it is impossible to apply the term fornication to a married couple who have consummated the marriage. What then did Jesus mean with regard to the *except for fornication* clause found in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9?

In Jewish society, it was the duty and prerogative of the father to secure wives for his sons. When the marriage agreement was made with the family of the intended bride, the damsel was brought into the presence of her suitor, and both simply acquiesced to the arrangements made. This was called espousing or betrothing.[4]

> There was generally an interval of ten or twelve months, and sometimes considerably more, between the time of making the marriage contract, or the day of espousals, and the marriage itself.... During all this interval, however, while the bride continued still in her father's house, she was considered and spoken of as the lawful

[4] Is Marriage a Contract for Life, https://sdarm.org/publications/good-way-series/is-marriage-a-contract-for-life

> wife of the man to whom she was betrothed; so that the bridegroom could not destroy their engagement, if he became unwilling to marry her, without giving her a bill of a divorcement, in the same manner as if she had been fully wedded; and so, on the other hand, if she proved unfaithful to her espoused husband [during the betrothal period], she was punished [in the same way] as an adulteress.—*John W. Nevin, A Summary of Biblical Antiquities, pp. 123-124*

The law of Moses stipulates that if a betrothed woman, who is already called a wife, is claimed by her husband not to be a virgin[5] after their first sexual encounter, then she was to be punished.

> If any man takes a **wife**, and goes in to her, and detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a **virgin**,' Deuteronomy 22:13-14, NKJV

We see in the verses above that the words *wife* and *virgin* are used together to cover the period of betrothal. We note carefully the words to describe the case if she were to engage in immoral sexual activity.

> …then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play

[5] The process of proving a woman to be a virgin, in the light of modern scientific empirical data, appears very concerning. The parents of the woman were to keep the bed sheet from the first sexual encounter which was to contain blood from the breaking of the woman's hymen during intercourse. The problem with this, at least in the modern world, is that many women don't bleed on their first sexual encounter. It is also possible to break the hymen in other ways than sex. It is also not proven that breaking the hymen will cause bleeding every time. All of these things suggest an accommodation in the law to men's hard hearts as Jesus indicated regarding divorce. There was no virginity test for men, and it appears the hymen test was far from fool proof, placing the woman in a very difficult situation if her husband turned against her. What man would expose his wife to being stoned to death for unfaithfulness except a man with a hardened heart.

> the **harlot** in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 22:21, NKJV

The Greek Old Testament translates this word *harlot* with a derivative of *porneia*. The Apostolic Polyglot translates the word as *fornicate*. Both in Greek and in English, we have direct connections to Matthew's exception clause.

One of the reasons why Matthew probably included the phrase *except for fornication* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is because of the story of Joseph and Mary which found them in the situation of explaining Mary's pregnancy before Joseph and Mary had slept together.

> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away [divorce her] secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 1:18-20, NKJV

During the ministry of Jesus, His enemies tried to frame Christ's birth outside the possibility that Christ was conceived by the Spirit of God.

> "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of **fornication**; we have one Father—God." John 8:41, NKJV

> In mockery they [the Jews] answered, 'We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.' These words, in allusion to the circumstances of His birth, were intended as a thrust against Christ in the presence of those who were beginning to believe on Him.—*The Desire of Ages*, 467

As Mary was betrothed to Joseph, she was his lawful wife. The Jews being aware of the story accused Jesus' mother of fornication, not adultery.

Therefore, the inclusion of the term *except for fornication* was included in the book of Matthew for the purpose of teaching that a man may reject a woman to whom he is betrothed, called his wife, if she is found to be unfaithful, in order to marry someone else. This would happen *before* the two of them had ever consummated the marriage.

With this understanding, we can find complete harmony in Scripture between the expressions of Matthew and those found in Mark, Luke, Romans and 1 Corinthians. The conclusion from Scripture is that the principles of God's kingdom do not provide for divorce after a marriage is consummated under any circumstances and therefore there is no case for remarriage while a spouse is still alive.

For many people there will come a strong aversion to this conclusion. What about what Ellen White said about the ability of the innocent party to remarry? Does it seem fair that if my partner runs off with someone else that I am sentenced to remain alone for the rest of my life? If I have remarried, does this mean I am condemned by God and the church? These questions stir up a lot of feelings for many of us.

We need to step through this as gently as possible, seeking to understand the Father's character in marriage. As man and woman are made in the image of God and His Son (1 Cor 11:3), there are things in the marriage relation which will teach us more about God's relationship with His Son. As Christ is the bridegroom to the church, the marriage institution will also teach us about the true love of the Saviour for His church. We will cover this in depth in a later chapter but we simply ask at this point, has the human race been faithful to Christ and loved Him as a bride should love her husband? Has Christ done anything to warrant the church being unfaithful to Him? Has Christ ever come to the point where He decided He had had

enough of the horrific treatment He has received from humanity, and then decided to walk away? This never has nor ever will be part of Christ's character. Listen to Jesus in the garden as He considered whether He could go through with the torture and shame of the cross to save humanity.

> He went on a little farther and bowed with His face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from Me. Yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine." Matthew 26:39

> Three times has He uttered that prayer. Three times has humanity shrunk from the last, crowning sacrifice. But now the history of the human race comes up before the world's Redeemer. He sees that the transgressors of the law, if left to themselves, must perish. He sees the helplessness of man. He sees the power of sin. The woes and lamentations of a doomed world rise before Him. He beholds its impending fate, and His decision is made. **He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life.** He has left the courts of heaven, where all is purity, happiness, and glory, to save the one lost sheep, the one world that has fallen by transgression. And He will not turn from His mission. He will become the propitiation of a race that has willed to sin. His prayer now breathes only submission: "If this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done."—*The Desire of Ages,* 690.3

Christ has not only endured the dreadful behaviour of one person over a life time, He has endured the most evil manifestations of the billions of humans for over 6000 years. This level of self-sacrifice none of us will ever be called upon to endure. But if we can't endure the potential difficulties of marriage to one person in one life time, then how will we stand in the presence of one that is infinitely self-sacrificing. The mere look of His loving eyes upon our unforgiving selfishness will be like stones of conviction crushing our soul.

The 1888 view of the cross invites us into the fellowship of Christ's suffering in a way not previously understood by the human race. The principles taught about the atonement by E.J. Waggoner open for us a door that can enable us to see the marriage relation framed into a new wine skin and restored to its Edenic glory.

As we discussed previously about the Sabbath, the natural human heart finds the Sabbath command a restriction of freedom, something arbitrary backed up with a death penalty for non-compliance. This is also how the natural heart sees marriage. In the light of the 1888 message, we are being offered old light in new settings. We must embrace this light in order to learn the deeper lessons of the marriage union which God intended.

What do you hear when reading the following text?

> "For I hate divorce!" says the LORD, the God of Israel. "To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife." Malachi 2:16

Do we hear the rumblings of an angry violent God willing to condemn or do we hear the anguished cry of our Father in heaven for His children? Do we see tears in His eyes as He says that divorce overwhelms the heart of the victim and turns the heart of the perpetrator to brittle iron?

For those of us who have discovered the truth of our Father's character, who have begun to comprehend the amount of suffering our Father is willing to endure, then maybe we are ready to listen to our Father's reasons for why He hates divorce, and why the New Testament makes no provision for it.

For many of us, this takes special courage. For those who have been divorced and remarried, this conclusion can feel like complete condemnation. But our Father tells us that He condemns no one, but calls all of us to repentance. It does not matter where we have been or what we have done, God does not tell us these things to shame

and condemn us, but rather He shows us these things to save us from having our hearts hardened, and losing our grip on our Father's relational kingdom.

Within the context of the 1888 message, it is our privilege to place the marriage institution in its original design. Within the Old Covenant, marriage for life is frightening, but in the New Covenant it is transformed into a precious revelation of the Father's love for us through His Son.

At this point, it is a moment for me as the author to ask our Father in heaven for forgiveness for wrongly presenting the subject of marriage and divorce. I was taught and had accepted that an innocent party could remarry someone. Over my years in ministry, I have discovered that often there is difficulty in determining who is guilty and who is innocent in such matters. People have called upon me to bless their remarriage and I have been faced with the difficult task of seeking to know if I can dispense such a blessing or not.

When people are desperate for love, they can frame words in the light that suits their desires. Information can be left out or stated in such a way that makes their case solid and acceptable. When I as a minister do not come to the conclusions that those seeking my blessing desire, I have sometimes been rebuffed for my "harsh, un-Christlike character" and rejected as a leader and friend.

I have asked the Lord in the past why these things happen? Why am I placed in this position? The answer now becomes clear, these are all the fruit of not coming into the fullness of the marriage institution as God designed it. I am not called to be a judge of any man or woman's marital situation because it is ordained for life. God's design makes the issue far simpler and easier to implement, while giving a clear path for married couples to take hold of the character of Christ to live as He lives, and to endure with Him the cross of self-denial.

If you have been studying the principles of the Father of Love movement, you should come to the place where you can trust our

Father knows what is best for us and that His love and care is sufficient for all situations.

Dear Father in heaven, I come to you with a broken heart. I confess to you my false understanding of what the Scriptures teach. I didn't truly realise that innocent party remarriage is a concession made for hard hearts, not the true intent of marriage. I am sorry for not studying this subject out sooner and preventing myself from giving people incorrect advice. I trust in your forgiveness and I pray for strength to stand on these principles.

I pray those who read this book will discern my motivation and not cut off their friendship from me. I choose to follow your truth Father wherever it leads me and I trust that you will help me to live and teach the truth always. I pray for all of your dear children who consider this subject, that they will be open to what the Scriptures teach and see the true blessing in marriage. You have restored to us the true joy of the Sabbath and expanded them into the feasts. Now in this restored Sabbath understanding, may we now have the other Edenic institution restored to its glory, so that the family unit can be elevated into the blessing fountain it was truly designed to be. Thank you, Father, for revealing these truths to me, in Jesus' beautiful name, I pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

SEARCH WITH ALL YOUR HEART

> Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? Mark 8:18, NKJV

We can feel the sadness in the words of Jesus as He tries earnestly to explain the kingdom of heaven to those around Him. In our sinful depravity, our eyes are naturally blinded to the principles of Christ's government. One of the foundational texts of the Father of Love movement which was quoted when beginning the Identity Wars Revival series in 2006 is this:

> "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9, NKJV

This is why we are told:

> And you will seek Me and find *Me,* when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13, NKJV

This is not a simple task, for the Bible also tells us that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Ellen White expressed it this way:

> Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human mind, ingenious in evading truth, many read and understand the Bible to please themselves... —*Selected Messages, Book 1*, 19

It is only in the light of the truth of our heavenly Father's great love for us, and what it cost Him to give us His Son, that we can be brought to the place where we are willing to seek for truth no matter the cost. Only in the joy of salvation and the assurance of sins forgiven can we be placed in a frame of mind to search for the Father with all our hearts.

In the study of any subject we must see each facet of truth in relation to all the other parts so that it forms a rational whole. I like the words of seventeenth century Bible scholar John Flavel where he states:

> A young ungrounded Christian, when he sees all the fundamental truths, and sees good evidence and reasons of them, perhaps may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. It is a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically: and this is a very great defect: **for a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consisteth in the respect they have to one another.** This therefore will be a very considerable part of your confirmation, and growth in your understandings, to see the body of the Christian doctrine, as it were, at one view, **as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point has upon another, and which are their due places.** There is a great difference betwixt the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed and scattered abroad, and the seeing of them conjointed, and in use and motion. To see here a pin and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and **every part should be discerned as it has its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts. Just as a builder needs to follow a systematic plan to build a house, so a Bible teacher needs a systematic plan to teach**

> **his or her students.** By this means only can the true nature of Theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth be clearly understood.—John Flavel, *The Fountain of Life Opened Up*

Ellen White writes along exactly the same lines.

> The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come. And these principles may be understood by all. No one with a spirit to appreciate its teaching can read a single passage from the Bible without gaining from it some helpful thought. But the most valuable teaching of the Bible is not to be gained by occasional or disconnected study**. Its great system of truth is not so presented as to be discerned by the hasty or careless reader. Many of its treasures lie far beneath the surface, and can be obtained only by diligent research and continuous effort. The truths that go to make up the great whole must be searched out and gathered up,** "here a little, and there a little." Isaiah 28:10.
>
> **When thus searched out and brought together, they will be found to be perfectly fitted to one another.** Each Gospel is a supplement to the others, every prophecy an explanation of another, every truth a development of some other truth. The types of the Jewish economy are made plain by the gospel. Every principle in the word of God has its place, every fact its bearing. And the complete structure, in design and execution, bears testimony to its Author. Such a structure no mind but that of the Infinite could conceive or fashion.—*Education,* 123.3

In studying the subject of marriage, we must see its connection to the subject of God and who He is, and what His character is like. We must also see its connection to the war between Christ and Satan in the Great Controversy. We must see marriage in its relation to salvation and the Atonement, for the church is the bride of Christ. We must see marriage in its relation to the Second Coming, for Christ has told us the story of the 10 virgins preparing for the wedding as an example of the Second Coming. We must see how marriage

affects prophecy and the beasts of Daniel and Revelation. All this is necessary to see why marriage is so important to a healthy family, church and society. And these are but the beginning of the connections we should be able to make for there are many more.

When we place the subject of marriage in the broader framework of truth, then the reasons for the commands of God in Scripture will start to become clear.

> Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. 1 Corinthians 7:10, NKJV

Why does the Lord command this? We will find answers in the Great Controversy, the Divine Pattern and the truth about God. But we must be willing to search, to be patient, and to accept that our natural perceptions are not God's reality and we should humbly plead for light.

We will consider aspects of the war in heaven and the causes of the Great Controversy. We will examine God's estimation of the family unit and what were some of the reasons God made male and female in the image of Himself and His Son.

We will also delve into the war Satan has waged against the institution of marriage, for the conjugal union is at the heart of his jealousy of Christ. In Paganism marriage was driven far from the original ideal in Eden, and Christianity tried to restore it. We will see how Satan worked through the system of Greek Neoplatonic thought in the centuries immediately after Christ to drive men away from the material world to asceticism, while framing the sexual union as a causal factor in the fall of man. Giant chains were placed upon the human soul in the writings of Augustine, amongst others, who out of their own inner conflicts created a system which would make marriage a necessary evil for second-class Christians.

In the Roman system, we see the genius of Satan manifested. It feigns to honour marriage all the while ensuring its destruction. As Ellen White wrote about Rome:

> A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. **What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these.** It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power.—*The Great Controversy*, 572.2

Rome has devised a system which passes as upholding and honouring marriage while ultimately leading to a place of forgetting marriage. And this is what we see in the world today. Marriage is being cast aside as a relic of scorn. The events which played out in the French Revolution are a taste of what is to come on a greater scale in the near future.

Let us now turn to the beginning to examine some of the foundational principles of the Great Controversy in our quest to understand the importance of the indissoluble union of marriage.

CHAPTER 5

MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Man and woman were made in the image of God, not simply as individuals, but their *relationship* is a reflection of the relationship between the Father and Son in heaven. This has been covered in detail in chapter 31 of the book *The Return of Elijah* as well as the book *Divine Pattern of Life.* I recommend reading these to give a more complete picture of this subject, as we will only give a brief summary here.

> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Genesis 1:26, NKJV

The vital question here is what did God mean by *Us*; the Us determines what the image will be. God created all things through Jesus Christ (Eph 3:9). The headship that exists between God and His Son was to be reflected in husband and wife (1 Cor 11:3). Inspiration therefore confirms who the *Us* of Genesis 1:26 is as follows:

> After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, **the Father and Son carried out their purpose,** which was designed before the fall

> of Satan, **to make man in their own image.** They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God says to his Son, "Let us make man in our image."** —*The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 1,* 24.2

God spoke to His Son – there was two of them; there was no one else spoken to when God said "let us make man in our image." This made Adam and Eve an illustration of the family structure of heaven. The marriage of the man and woman were to reveal deeper truths of the relationship of God and His Son.

> Adam had themes for contemplation in the works of God in **Eden,** which **was heaven in miniature.**—*Confrontation,* 11.2

In the Father of Love movement, we refer to this as the *Divine Pattern*.[6] The relationship of Father and Son is the foundation of all relationships and holds the key to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2-3). The Divine Pattern is defined in 1 Corinthians 8:6.

> …yet to us there is one God, the Father**, out from whom as a source are all things** and we for Him, **and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whose intermediate agency all things exist** and we through Him. 1 Corinthians 8:6, WET (Wuest Expanded Translation)[7]

It is through the intermediary agency of Christ that all things have life. This life is not merely physical. It is the submissive agency of Christ to the Father, resting in the Father's bosom, that enables us to receive God's life-giving spirit. As we behold and believe in the Son of God, we are able to submit ourselves to the Father as Christ submits to the Father, and thus we remain connected to the Father

[6] See the books *Divine Pattern* and *Divine Pattern of Life* available for download at *maranathamedia.com*

[7] Wuest is a literal New Testament translation that follows the word order in the Greek quite strictly. Published in 1961. Kenneth Wuest (1893-1961) was an Evangelical Biblical Greek New Testament scholar. Wuest was one of the translators of the New American Standard Bible (NASB). In his own translation he attempted to make the original Greek more accessible.

as Christ is connected to the Father.[8] Remaining in this connection is how we take part in eternal life.

Therefore, in Christ alone is life. He that has the Son has life. He that has not the Son has not life. The Son of God dwells in the bosom of the Father and as He has received all things from the Father, He looks to His Father for everything. He does nothing of His own but only what the Father tells Him.

> So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, **the Son can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He sees the Father doing.** Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. **For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing."** John 5:19-20a

All of this pattern was to be reflected in the marriage relationship. The woman, taken from the man's rib was to dwell in his bosom. It was the man's delight to bless his wife and do all things through her. He creates all his family through her. He tells her everything he is doing and hides nothing from her.

In response to this, having the security of such a loving relationship, the wife does nothing of herself but what her husband shows her.

> As the living Father sent Me, and **I live because of the Father,** so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. John 6:57, NKJV

As Christ lives by the Father, so the wife is to live by her husband. The rib of Adam that was taken to make Eve, is a constant reminder that her life came from him and that she can only live by him. Adam was to always remember that part of him was in his wife. She was part of himself and he was to nourish and care for her as he would for himself. In fact, he would give himself completely to her to love, provide and protect her always. This symbolized how Christ gave himself for the church, and how God does everything for Christ.

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[8] For more on this see the booklet *Wisdom of God* as well as *My Beloved,* chapter 19 Altogether Lovely. Available for download at *maranathamedia.com*

Women may rightly point out that it was only Eve whose life came from her husband; my life did not come from my husband but from my father and mother. How can it be said that my life comes from my husband?

The Bible tells us that God brought the woman to the man. When a young man seeks the hand of a young lady in marriage, the woman's father or guardian will bring her to the man. The young man enters into covenant with the woman's father to care for her and nurture her in the father's stead. Thus, he acts in the place of the father to be the representative man by which the woman will live.

We note the primary covenant is made between the two men. The young man does not simply take the woman to himself, he must take her in the context of a father's love for his daughter which is a much broader context for the relationship. Without this covenant between father and suitor, this principle of life source transfer is neutered and headship muddled.

Resting in the bosom of the Father, Christ always obeyed his Father. He trusted Him completely and honoured Him always. In like manner the Bible informs us that the wife is to obey her husband and call him her master.

> **Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord**: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Peter 3:6 KJV

> …to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Titus 2:5, NKJV

The concept of the obedience of the wife to her husband in this age is ridiculed as utter nonsense. But as we learned in chapter one, God is going to restore every divine institution to its original state. We do note though that a man's headship over his wife must be in harmony with the Father's headship over Christ. A true husband will act towards his wife as the Father does towards Christ. If he acts

independent of God, he teaches and encourages his wife to be independent from him.

If the Father loves and blesses His Son with everything and if Christ lives by His Father and obeys Him in everything then these are the parameters for the restitution of the marriage institution.

It should become evident to us that the Father and Son relationship never ends, it lasts forever. The marriage relation is to reflect this truth by remaining unbroken while both husband and wife are alive.

As no one can come to the Father except through the Son, so children can't truly come to their father except through their mother. If a wife acts independently of her husband, she teaches her children to act independently of their father. This will prevent the children from truly honouring, respecting and knowing their father. This brings a spiritual death followed by a physical one to the child for we read:

> If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. **Every child lives by the life of his father.** If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. —*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, 77.4

Oh, that we could truly comprehend the meaning of these words. Every child lives by the life of his earthly father. In order to have full access to his father he needs to be submissive and respectful. This spirit only comes from Christ through his mother. This proves true that as the government of the Father rests on the shoulders of His Son (Isa 9:6), so the government of the earthly father rests upon his wife.

He that has the submissive obedient Son of God has life (1 John 5:12). He that has a submissive obedient mother has life.

This is why the fifth commandment is the first that comes with a promise of long life.

> Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12
>
> "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth." Ephesians 6:2-3

When a man puts away his wife with whom he has had children, he sends a message to his children, that the woman that brought them into life is worthless to him. In effect and probably without words, he trains his sons to treat women as expendable in relationships and teaches his daughters that women are worthless.

If a woman puts away her husband, she unwittingly teaches her children the falsehood that they are emotionally immortal, and that the source of their earthly life is not relevant, even if she says that he is relevant. It reduces the appointed avenue of blessing by diminishing emotional access to their father. It completely changes the father and child relationship.

This does not at all mean that men and women who pass through these sorrows intend any of this. Most parents desire the best for their children, but most are unaware of the full implications of divorce on their family members. We will come back to some of these implications in a later chapter.

All of these things speak to us of how vital the Father and Son relationship is to all of us. For as we were made in the image of God and His Son, every divorce damages this image and every remarriage destroys this image.

This is why the Spirit of Prophecy places such strong emphasis on the family unit.

> **The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home.** The work of parents underlies every other. Society is composed of families, and is what the heads of families make it. Out of the heart are "the issues of life"; and the heart of the community, of the church, and of the nation is the household. **The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences.**—*The Ministry of Healing*, 349.1

If we wish to see a restoration of humanity, we must begin with the home environment. The restoration of the family unit is a restoration to a worship of the true God, because the family on earth is an image of the one in heaven. The destruction of marriage only comes through idolatry which will always lead to death if it is not confessed and forsaken.

> **Blessed is the family where father and mother have surrendered themselves to God** to do his will! One well-ordered, well-disciplined family **tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached.** Such a family gives evidence that the parents have been successful in following God's directions, and that their children will serve him in the church. Their influence grows; for as they impart, they receive to impart again. The father and mother find helpers in their children, who give to others the instruction received in the home. The neighborhood in which they live is helped, for in it they have become enriched for time and for eternity. The whole family is engaged in the service of the Master; and by their godly example, others are inspired to be faithful and true to God in dealing with his flock, his beautiful flock.—*Review and Herald,* June 6, 1899, Art. A, par. 14

In these thoughts we see the intimate connection between the doctrine of God, the doctrine of marriage, and the principles by which a family ought to be constructed. A marriage rightly ordered gives the most powerful witness to the truth of who God is and how He conducts relationships. A broken marriage leading to remarriage, obscures this image, hardens the heart, and leads it more easily into idolatry.

In the next chapter we will connect the doctrine of marriage to the origins of the Great Controversy in heaven to see further why God tells us that a marriage can't be annulled in this life.

CHAPTER 6

ORIGINS OF THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

Satan, who was once Lucifer the light bearer, was the most honoured of all the angels. To him was granted the position next to Christ.

> Among the inhabitants of heaven, **Satan, next to Christ, was at one time most honored of God, and highest in power and glory.** Before his fall, Lucifer, "son of the morning," was first of the covering cherubs, holy and undefiled. He stood in the presence of the great Creator, and the ceaseless beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God rested upon him.—*Signs of the Times,* July 23, 1902, par.2

The Son of God lived in a constant state of gratitude to His Father, for He always remembered that all that He had came from His Father. Though already highly honored, Lucifer began to covet the position of God's Son. This is not the spirit of Christ, because Christ never covets the higher position of His Father. If Lucifer had continued to live in the channel of Christ, he would have remained

at peace with God for what he had, and would feel no ambition for more than God created him to have.

In order to be exalted, Lucifer wanted to be perceived as being equal with Christ, and thus make the case that it was unfair and arbitrary for Christ to be worshipped and not him. To do this Lucifer had to hide the fact that Christ was begotten of the Father and that Christ was the channel through whom God did everything. Christ's character, His gratitude and love for His Father, was essential to all created beings, and that character grew in the soil of Christ being begotten and having received all things from His Father. Satan rejected the character of Christ because the humility of the Son of God was at odds with Satan's desire to rule, so to justify himself he obscured the fact that Christ was begotten when communicating with the other angels.

> Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. **This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God,** and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ.—*This Day With God,* 128.2

In making man and woman in the image of God, clarity would come to the angels about the true position of Christ to the Father, and the closeness they sustained to each other.

> It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, **because [for the sake of] of the angels.** 1 Corinthians 11:10, NIV

As Adam was the head of Eve, so God is the head of Christ. As the glory of Adam encircled both he and his wife, so the glory of the self-existent Father encircled both He and His Son.

> The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both.—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 36.2

As Christ was a part of God, so the wife is a part of her husband.

> Only let a woman realize that she is appreciated by her husband and is precious to him, not merely because she is useful and convenient in his house, but **because she is a part of himself,** and she will respond to his affection and reflect the love bestowed upon her.—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 2*, 416.3

> Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, a divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. **And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father's glory** came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body, bridged the gulf....—*Our High Calling*, 12.2

In these and several other statements, we see that the marriage union in the flesh is a reflection of the Father and Son relationship in the Spirit.

The relationship between God and His Son is the key to life; it isn't an arbitrary system that can be changed. What Lucifer demanded was not something God and His Son could give him, for it would destroy Satan and the whole universe. They tried to convince Satan of this, but he couldn't see it; Satan's pride caused him to perceive God's reasoning not as loving and true, but as dictatorial and flawed.

As Lucifer ventured further down the path of self-glory, he purposely forgot the blessings given to him through Christ, and began to see himself as equal to or greater than Him. Lucifer came to think he knew better than God how the universe should and could be governed. He was transforming himself into Satan, the opposer.

> Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation. The Scripture says, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy

> brightness." Ezekiel 28:17. "Thou hast said in thine heart, ...I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.... I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:13, 14. **Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself.** Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. **And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.**—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 35.2

Christ and the Father could read Satan's thoughts and saw the path which he was treading. Satan blurred the lines between himself and Christ in the minds of the angels. To meet the consequent confusion, God and His Son, planned this world to reveal to the angels the distinction between the first two beings and the rest of creation. When the plans for creating a new world were brought into the heavenly assembly, Lucifer asserted his desire to be the master of this world.

> The creation of our world was brought into the councils of heaven. **There the covering cherub prepared his request that he should be made prince to govern the world then in prospect. This was not accorded him. Jesus Christ was to rule the earthly kingdom; under God** He engaged to take the world with all its probabilities. The law of heaven should be the standard law for this new world, for human intelligences.—*Manuscript 43b*—1891.3

When God said that He and His Son would make man in Their image, Satan understood the implication; this human reflection excluded Lucifer from the ultimate rulership of heaven.

> **But when God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus.** He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and because he was not, he was filled with

> envy, jealousy, and hatred. He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God.—*Early Writings,* 145.1

Satan's rebellion, which had been building for some time, was ignited by the creation of man and woman in the image of God and His Son. Thus, the institution of marriage, rightly understood, plays a critical role in revealing the truth of who rules the universe and exposing the rebellion of Satan against God.

In seeking to take the place of Christ, Satan was, in effect, seeking to cause a divorce between God and His Son in the family government. Then Satan wanted God to install himself as a co-equal of God, thus establishing a new government or remarriage in heaven.

Satan used all of his cunning to talk Christ out of His relationship, or as we could say, His governmental marriage with His Father.

> **Jesus, the Son of God, was not deceived by Lucifer's sophistry.** He stood true to principle and resisted every line of reasoning of Lucifer and all the angels who had taken sides with him, thus evidencing that **as He stood, every angel might have stood.** — *Manuscript 43b*—1891.3

Satan came to believe that his power came from himself. Christ had received all that He had from His Father and knew this was even more true for the created beings, and so held firm to the truth of His identity. Satan tried to convince Christ of what he was seeking to convince all the angels – that their life was inherent, not received; that their glory came from themselves, not from God. We know this because Ellen White says that every angel might have stood where Christ stood. Christ held firm His inheritance from His Father; Satan could not induce Him to leave the bosom of the Father and assert His independence by attributing all His power as originating in Himself.

We take the principle that ideas spoken are spiritual seed. Satan was seeking to impregnate the mind of Christ with his bad seed. Christ refused his advances and remained loyal to His Father, trusting the

words His Father had spoken and that He had received all things from Him. Satan could not flatter and seduce Christ.

When Satan could not convince Christ of his ideas, he changed direction and then accused Christ of taking his position.

> By sly insinuations, by which he made it appear that Christ had assumed the place that belonged to himself, Lucifer sowed the seeds of doubt in the minds of many of the angels.—*Review and Herald*, Feb 4, 1909, par. 1

God designed the human race to reflect core principles of His relationship with His Son. This is why we were made in Their image. Every time Satan sees two people in a loving marriage relationship, he is reminded of the Father and the Son and his exclusion from this vital sacred circle. Every time he is able to break a marriage apart and induce a couple to remarry, he satisfies himself that he is reinforcing his original plan to destroy the original marriage of God and institute in its place a remarriage with Lucifer.

The relationship of the man and woman was intended to last in the same way in which the Father and Son relationship lasts; forever. The indissoluble union of husband and wife reflects the indissoluble union of Father and Son.

In this context we see why it is so important that when God created the human race, He made two people who then together produced offspring. God did not create three people to commence the human race.

The doctrine of the Trinity, which speaks of three individuals in the beginning who are equal by their individual power, makes God in the image that Satan desired, and it obliterates the truth of the humble submissive Son of God who honoured and worshipped His Father as His God. We will delve more deeply into the problems the Trinity creates in understanding both God and marriage.

When a child is faced with the situation of one of his parents leaving the other and marrying someone else, they then are faced with three parent figures rather than two. This was never God's design.

In considering the origins of the Great Controversy, I hope it becomes apparent that every marriage has the opportunity to reflect God's government or Satan's government. Divorce and remarriage help to reflect Satan's plan to take over the universe.

We remind ourselves that God does not condemn any of His children who have suffered through a painful divorce. Our focus here is to comprehend marriage as God designed it in order that this precious institution can be restored to its rightful place.

As we said earlier, marriage was designed in part to teach the universe about God and His Son. To make this lesson effective, a marriage must never be broken while both are alive, or else it breaks the reflection of Father and Son who are always together.

Secondly, it hardens the hearts of the ones who decide they no longer want to be married. When two people get married, they become one flesh, and God makes them one. To tear apart what God has joined together requires the soul to harden itself to endure the pain of being torn apart. This hardening of heart damages the soul to such an extent that its ability to remain committed to relationships greatly reduces.

When two people divorce, they often not only cut themselves off from the one they were married to, but they must distance themselves from those who pleaded with them not to take this step. All relationships which stand in the way of securing the object of one's desire become expendable. Agape is swallowed up by Eros.

The lack of faith in the endurance of relationships makes it hard to believe in the fundamental faith principle of eternal life – that God loves us with an everlasting love and will never leave us or forsake us, no matter what.

It is at this point we need to connect the marriage relationship to the cross. The cross is the ultimate symbol of self-denial and self-denial is a vital ingredient in marriage. Therefore, true marriage offers us the opportunity to understand the cross and enter into the fellowship of Christ's suffering.

CHAPTER 7

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW ME

Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. Genesis 2:7

Again He said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you." Then He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:21-22

We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ."—Ellen G. White, Letter 66, 1894 to E. W. Prescott, April 10th 1894

The One who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. John 1:9

This One who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen Him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that He is the One who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then He was revealed to us. 1 John 1:2

Every person living on this planet receives life through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is the Spirit of Jesus that upholds us moment by moment. The life given to Him by His Father is freely bestowed upon us because of His Agape love, which He also received from His Father.

> But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. **In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give.** So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings**: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.** And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.—*The Desire of Ages,* 21.2

This makes the Son of God the friend who sticks closer to us than a brother (Prov 18:24). This beautiful truth is what inspired the Psalmist to write:

> You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD. You go before me and follow me. You place Your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from Your Spirit! I can never get away from Your presence! If I go up to heaven, You are there; if I go down to the grave, You are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there Your hand will guide me, and Your strength will support me. Psalms 139:2-10

In order for us to have life, Christ must live with us, by His Spirit, every moment of every day. It is a marriage contract for life. Our beloved Saviour experiences with us everything we experience because He is with us in every moment and we are completely dependent upon Him for life. As Jesus says:

> Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. **For apart from Me you can do nothing.** John 15:5

What a joy it is for Jesus when we talk to Him, share with Him the thoughts of our hearts and sing to Him of our love. Conversely, if we sin, break the commandments, and hurt those around us, Christ is made to suffer the whole process with us. He can't unhear the things we say. He can't hide from the evil we do. If He were to leave us, we would die. That is reality.

Every evil film we watch, Christ must be present. In every murder, Christ experiences both the terror of the victim and the murderer's horrible state of mind. He then afterwards feels the anguish and guilt of the perpetrator or worse, the horror of the soul who feels nothing but joy in the death of another. He feels the shock, sorrow, and rage of those who knew the victim and the culprit.

In every human soul, the principles of what Satan desired in heaven are played out. Christ as our life giver and Saviour has infinite compassion and love for us. We belong to Him. But his enemy, Satan, draws the soul into sin and steals the affections of the soul, and forces Christ to sit in the basement of the soul, handcuffed, with tape around His mouth to prevent Him from speaking or calling out to the soul.

Why would Christ stay in a relationship like this? Why does He allow Himself to be treated this way? Because He loves us, and if He left, we would die. Christ carries His cross in every human soul for every day of our lives.

> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:9, NKJV

> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 2 Corinthians 4:10, NKJV

> and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing Him to the cross once again and holding Him up to public shame. Hebrews 6:6

This is the point at which the true cross of Christ intersects the principles of marriage. Christ never gives up on us, He is with us to the end of our days. He suffers terribly from the sins we commit, but His love for us holds His resolve firm to never let us go.

But the cross goes deeper than this. The Bible describes the corporate principle of marriage to the Jewish nation.

> Yes, you are an adulterous wife who takes in strangers instead of her own husband. Ezekiel 16:32

> "When that day comes," says the LORD, "you will call Me 'my husband' instead of 'my master.'" Hosea 2:16

The corporate principle of marriage is manifested in the detail of Christ living day to day with every person, but in the corporate setting Christ is not merely married to the Jewish nation for a single life time, He has been married to them from the time of Abraham until the stoning of Stephen in AD 34. For 2000 years, Christ was abused, pierced, made to shed tears in the abominations that Israel practiced. Who can comprehend this type of love? What words can even express it?

Finally, the descendants of Abraham cut Christ off completely. They absolutely refused to be His wife. How Jesus wept for His beloved spouse of 2000 years!

> Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God. The woes of a fallen race, pressing upon His soul, forced from His lips that exceeding bitter cry. He saw the record of sin traced in human misery, tears, and blood; His heart was moved with infinite pity for the afflicted and suffering ones of earth; He yearned to relieve them all. But even His hand might not turn back the tide of human woe; few would seek their only Source of help. He was willing to pour out His soul unto death, to bring salvation within their reach; but few would come to Him that they might have life.
>
> The Majesty of heaven in tears! the Son of the infinite God troubled in spirit, bowed down with anguish! The scene filled all heaven with wonder. That scene reveals to us the exceeding sinfulness of sin; it shows how hard a task it is, even for Infinite Power, to save the guilty from the consequences of transgressing the law of God. —*The Great Controversy*, 22

Notice the character displayed here! What devotion, what love, what astonishing grace is manifested in the patience of the Lord Jesus! How is it possible to connect this character with a person who is willing to divorce their wife of a number of years because of "incompatibility issues"? Jesus poured out His soul unto death so as to overcome the deepest, most difficult incompatibility issue there is – how does that compare to the man who decides to end their marriage? How can the difference between these two characters ever be reconciled? When these two characters meet face to face, will not the soul feel overwhelmed by the contrast? The look of those loving eyes would feel like stones crashing down on their bodies. We will address this principle in detail later in regard to the punishments for adultery in the law of Moses, and the spiritual implications of these laws.

The Jewish nation divorced Christ even as the ten northern tribes of Israel had divorced Him seven centuries earlier. The Bible portrays

the divorce as coming from God, but God had to tearfully allow Israel to have what they wanted.

> She [Judah] saw that I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left Me and given herself to prostitution. Jeremiah 3:8

> Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. So should the LORD feed her like a lamb in a lush pasture? Leave Israel alone, because she is married to idolatry. Hosea 4:16-17

God had to allow the divorce to occur because Israel married someone else. God through Christ was the innocent party. He held onto the remnant of Israel to the very end. But when they refused, Christ had to go into all the paths of the earth to find the blind, the lame, the deaf and anyone who would hear to invite them to the confirmation of His wedding to the human race.

> When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come! So he sent other servants to tell them, "The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!" But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them…. "Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see." So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. Matthew 22:3-6,9-10

Now Christianity as an extension of the invitation to the wedding given to Israel, has had 2000 years to respond with very limited results.

> Jesus, looking down to the last generation, saw the world involved in a deception similar to that which caused the destruction of Jerusalem. The great sin of the Jews was their rejection of Christ; the great sin of the Christian world would be their rejection of the law of God, the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. The

> precepts of Jehovah would be despised and set at nought. Millions in bondage to sin, slaves of Satan, doomed to suffer the second death, would refuse to listen to the words of truth in their day of visitation. Terrible blindness! strange infatuation!—*The Great Controversy,* 22.2

The Christian world rejects the commandments of God primarily in the acceptance of the Trinity, Sunday, Christmas, Easter, and a God who uses force to kill His enemies. The churches have utterly refused to repent of these sins, but Christ has given to Christianity the same time that He gave to Israel, and the same time He gave to the antediluvians. Each one approximately 2000 years, each refusing to come to Christ and be His bride, yet Christ has remained faithful through all this time. These 2000-year time frames are not limiting the love of God, they merely represent an era of time for a corporate entity. Any person within Israel may freely join Christ and be part of His bride now, but not in the entity of the Jewish nation, but under the banner of Christ in the preaching of the gospel.

If the Spirit of Christ is willing to endure such hardship in dealing with each of us and for nations and churches for 2000 years, then can't we receive of this Spirit to act in love towards a spouse who walks contrary to us?

It is true that some marriages are so horrendous that a person needs to step back to regain their balance, but this would only be for the purpose of praying earnestly for their spouse. As Paul says,

> But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. 1 Corinthians 7:10

Through the principles of the cross of Christ, we see that Christ never ever gives up on a person through their whole life. Christ binds Himself to this person "as long as they live." This is the principle of marriage. The principle of remarriage after divorce is diametrically opposed to the cross of Christ. It is a fundamentally different character.

But what if I did not know these things and I find myself in a remarried position? We will address as many of these questions as we can in coming chapters. But let us rest in the assurance that God does not condemn any of us at any time. But God wants to save us from destroying ourselves. There are principles involved in committing adultery which can prevent the human heart from reaching forth to take the grace of God offered. The hardening that results from such actions can be fatal. As we read:

> Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in **sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery,** or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Let us heed the warning written here. This is not a statement about the hardness of God, it is a statement about the hardness of heart that takes place in the lives of those who do these things. God does not judge or condemn any person; He warns us of these things because He knows what effect it has on us, how it warps and distorts our minds and bodies. When we all stand before Christ, seeing and feeling the love He has for us and how much He has endured for the human race, those who have indulged in the sins listed above will not be able to forgive themselves for living in rebellion to the Spirit of Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, please listen to the Spirit of Christ in these things. Satan may tempt some of you to feel angry towards the message contained in this book. I plead with you to listen and open your heart to what the Bible teaches. You can see the astounding love of Christ in holding onto billions of human souls through their entire lives, enduring so much trauma and distress. I tell you the truth, if you do not repent of the adultery which comes from remarriage, your heart will not endure the loving gaze of the person of Christ. Please consider this carefully. God loves you and doesn't want you to lose your salvation.

That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear His voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested Me in the wilderness." Hebrews 3:7-8

CHAPTER 8

THE GLORY OF CHILDREN IS THEIR FATHER

The core principle contained in the book *Identity Wars* which laid the foundations for the Father of Love movement over 20 years ago is the truth that our value as individuals is defined by our Father in heaven, not by our personal achievements or assets.

In 2006, I was invited to do a series of presentations based on the principles of Identity Wars. My third presentation in that series was called *The Glory of Children*, based on Proverbs 17:6. In one of the slides in that presentation, I said this:

> Break or diminish a child's connection to their father
> and you break or diminish their value

As part of that presentation, I made reference to the fact that Sarah called her husband her master as a sign of respect, and that her example of respecting her husband would help the children to also respect their father. The mother plays a vital role in keeping the children connected to their father, because the father defines the value of the children by how he treats them and speaks to them.

These principles are completely different to the principles I was raised in. While I did enjoy a stable childhood, the community I lived in focused on value through achievement rather than value through the family structure. The relational principles in this series were revolutionary in nature, because though they seem simple and clear, they are at odds with how our world is organized. These principles, if followed, would cause Babylon to fall.

I did not realise it at the time, but the night after I did those presentations was a new moon, and it was early the next morning during the new moon that I awoke to a deep sense of my heavenly Father's love for me. Within the joy of that sense of love, I heard in my mind a distinct statement: *This message you must take to the world*. The message related to the glory of children and how our value comes from our father and the thing that keeps a child connected to their father is the mother's vital ingredient of submissive respect and love towards her husband to keep the connection to him.

It was a year later that I realised that as the husband and wife are a reflection of God and His Son, the ability to grasp my value as a son of God must come through Christ, the Son of God. It is His submissive respect and love for His Father that enables me to connect to my value in my heavenly Father.

The realisation of this truth completely exposed the Trinity as a destroyer of heaven's value system. The relational structure of the Trinity which determines equality by inherent power is at war with God's true blessing system for the family. The Trinity has its emphasis on the co-equality of the Son to God through inherent power; the Son receives nothing and learned nothing from His Father, so why the Father has headship over Him isn't clear. In contrast, the Bible presents the loving Father blessing His Son with all things and the loving submission and obedience of the Son, who lives in gratitude to His Father who gave Him all things.

The Son of God's recognition of His inheritance from the Father is the fuel for His gratitude. The inheritance given to the Son is the evidence of the Father's Agape who gave Him all things.

These principles were designed to be reflected in the husband-and-wife relationship. Eve received all she had from her husband. The rib taken from his side was formed into the woman. As the man remembers that the woman came from him, he is encouraged to continually pour blessing upon her and take care of her. As the wife remembers her inheritance from the man, she lives in gratitude to him, receiving his blessing, and living in loving submission and obedience to him. To clearly establish this point, I want to quote from the book *Life Matters* which presents this in much greater detail.

> When Adam was created he was given an inheritance from his heavenly Father. He had extensive real estate, a beautiful home, an excellent job and career prospects. He was very intelligent, very strong and of course extremely handsome. When Eve was created she inherited all of this when she became his wife and took on his name.
>
> > Genesis 5:2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.
>
> It says that God called their name Adam. She took on his name, and all the wealth, assets and things that Adam possessed became hers through the relationship. She did not earn it; she did not prove that she was worthy of being equal with him by her own abilities – everything she had came from Adam, so it is completely senseless to think in this way. By allowing ourselves to see Eve as coming forth from Adam and being given everything he possessed, and being given a mind that can appreciate and understand him, we find the true basis of how to conduct relationships and how to see them as equal.
>
> **Equality in relationships is not about power, control and assets, it is about the ability to understand and know someone. The**

perception of female identity in this way is the only way we can define relational equality. The woman is the key to a relational kingdom.

Therefore recognition of this male seeding/headship identity and a female nurture/submission identity reflecting the image of the heavenly Father and Son is the vital key to build a stable and sustainable life upon a strong and harmonious relational system. —*Life Matters,* 49

This blessed union made in the image of Father and Son, is the union from which children are procreated. The identity of the child comes forth from this loving union. The channel of blessing that the child lives within is completely dependent upon the parents maintaining the principles of blessing and submission.

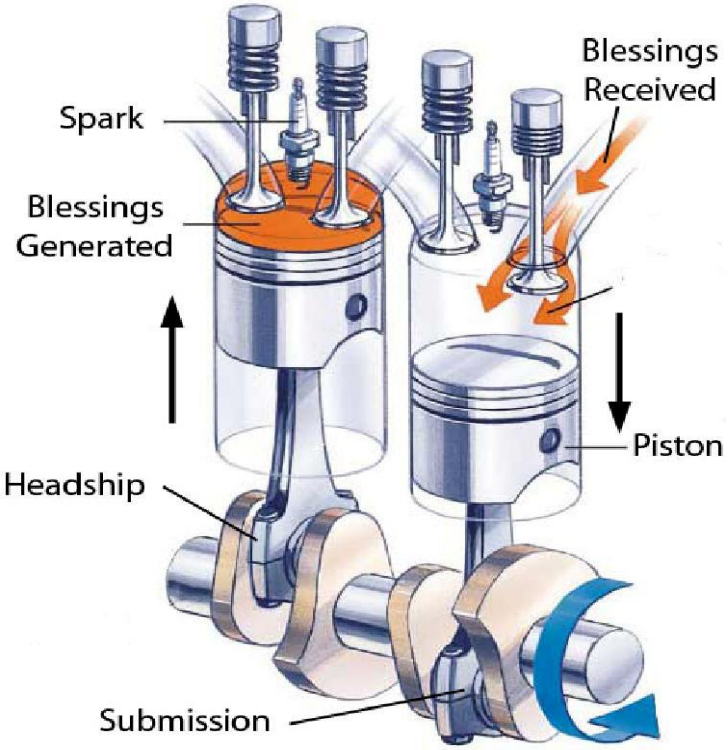
The ability of the child to remain connected to their father, from which they receive their glory, depends upon the submissive, respectful attitude of the wife. The attitude of the wife depends upon the blessing of the husband. This *Blessing Motor* is finely tuned, and if it is broken, the blessing stops: the value system is destroyed and the children will experience loss of value resulting in depression, anxiety, and self-destructive behaviours.

The principles of the Blessing Motor are described in the book *Original Love*. I will provide the relevant section of this Blessing Motor here:

This transaction between the man and woman could be sustained in an eternal motion of love that would overflow like a fountain and that would never be ashamed. The secret, the key, the hub, the pivot, the core, the heart of this wonderful motion of love resides in the simple fact of knowing and remembering your origin and how you came to be. As long as Adam remembered that he was created and placed in the garden as leader and sovereign to care for, protect, and be a faithful steward of all that was given him, then he would pour all the blessing given him upon that for which he was made sovereign. As the woman receives the fullness of blessing

from her husband and looks to him in loving respect, joyful submission and trusting obedience, as she reveals her confidence in his leadership and as she honours his headship, like a woman standing at a well, she draws out of his heart far greater blessing than was previously exhibited.

We might illustrate this love motion through the action of a two-piston motor. The first piston is Adam, in his joy at being introduced to a true companion that came from him, ignites and releases a wave of blessing that sends joyful ignition fuel into the



second piston cavity and at the same time turning the crankshaft which then raises the second piston towards the ceiling which then ignites a loving response The response from the second piston exalts the first piston and fills that cavity with joyful submission, honour and respect. This then propels more blessing, and the cycle

> of blessing generation and reception flows ever continuously. What a wonderful design! What a wonderful illustration of how the universe works, for we were made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27.—*Original Love,* 10-11

The prosperity of the human race depends upon this Blessing Motor continuing to function correctly. The cornerstone of operating this motor depends upon the husband and wife worshipping the true God and His Son, for this is the Divine Pattern of life. By beholding the true God, you hold in your hand the key which will ignite the Blessing Motor. The true union of Father and Son is the bond from which the entire universe came into being. The worship of the Father and Son is therefore essential to the prosperity of the universe.

If this union is broken or destroyed, death and destruction are the sure result. When this union is broken in the husband and his wife, death and destruction are also the sure result. Each family unit represents heaven in miniature, as Ellen White stated.

In this light it should be abundantly clear that when a husband and/or wife loses the bond of love, their children will lose the vital connection to their father. If a husband abuses his wife, she will be severely tempted to disconnect from him to stop the abuse. When a disconnection takes place, the union from which their children were born is destroyed. Without that union, their children become disoriented emotionally.

If the woman ceases to respect her husband, the children who are in her channel will be influenced to also cease to respect their father. If the children do this, then the probability of their receiving a blessing from their father is greatly diminished.

If the wife should be remarried, it takes things to a vastly different level. The children are introduced to a third person who takes on the name of father but is not the child's father. Conversely, if the father takes another wife, the children are introduced to a new mother who is not their mother, for the children did not come from the union of the new marriage.

Such a situation is a disaster for the children, because they become confused in regard to their highest allegiance. The door from which the blessing comes is obscured and hard to find. But the key point here is the loss of the Blessing Motor from which the children were birthed. The whole identity and value of the child is torn apart.

Dear reader, I pray you can see the gravity of this issue. This is part of the key for why the Bible does not consent to remarriage while both partners are still alive. The ripple effect does great damage to the community.

But what if a couple divorce and remarry after not having any children? The wife's value system is also connected to her husband. As God speaks value to His Son when He says "You are my beloved Son," so the husband speaks value to his wife when he uplifts her with his kind words, affection, and blessing.

If a wife becomes disconnected from her husband, she is emotionally damaged in the encounter. Her need for love and affection intensifies, but the worst place to go is into the arms of another man because God made her one flesh with her first husband. In this damaged frame of mind, she becomes vulnerable to male predatory behaviour and can end up in a much worse situation than previously.

As God has instructed us through the Bible not to remarry, those who take this step, do so without the blessing and guidance of heaven. Again, we stress that this does not mean that God will leave his wounded child, but it means that they will face a multitude of hardships which they might have avoided.

The tender heart of a woman was obviously not made for abuse. If she has suffered years of abuse without the aid of the Spirit of God to uphold her, she has to harden herself to survive. She had to constantly adjust to the "new normal." Abuse of this nature can take a long time to recover from. Therefore, the wisest thing to do is find comfort in Christ, live with family or a sister in Christ where possible but do not seek comfort in the arms of another man.

Women who have been abused typically radiate a distress signal that attracts abusive men, without them realising it. It can take a number of years to recover from such abuse, but with the assurance that they are a daughter of God, they can regain their equilibrium.

A man who faces the loss of his wife after being disrespected by her and feeling her lack of gratitude, passes through a similar experience. He must harden himself to survive unless he has a deep measure of the grace of God. Only Christ, the Son of God, can fill the tragic void of a partner leaving them.

In the case where a spouse dies, God is the one that joins a new couple together as one flesh. This fact keeps the channel of blessing open from the new spouse. But when couples remarry after divorce, God is not the one putting the new couple together, and the Blessing Motor will not work as it was designed.

But the primary point of this chapter is the destruction of God's blessing system when people remarry while their spouse is alive. It causes terrible damage to children, even when they are adults. The destabilisation it causes is at the heart of why God hates divorce.

The most powerful preaching of the gospel is a father telling his children how much he loves them through the channel of a wife who respects and trusts her husband's leadership into the hands of God. This is the glory of children (Prov 17:6) and this is why in the last days God will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Mal 4:6) in order to overcome the curse of shattered families.

CHAPTER 9

DIVORCE IN THE LAW OF MOSES

In chapter two we indicated that the interpretation that Jesus placed upon the law of Moses raised many questions. Let us return to this story recorded in the book of Mark and work through the implications.

> Some Pharisees came and tried to trap Him with this question: "Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?" Jesus answered them with a question: **"What did Moses say in the law about divorce?"** "Well, he permitted it," they replied. "He said a man can give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away." But Jesus responded, **"He wrote this commandment only as a concession to your hard hearts.** But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together." Later, when He was alone with His disciples in the house, they brought up the subject again. He told them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. And if a woman

> divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery." Mark 10:2-12

The Pharisees adopted the stance that whatever Moses wrote in the law was the perfect will of God; a reflection of His character. But Jesus reveals to us that the part of the law of Moses concerning divorce was an adaption to the hardened hearts of men or more specifically, a reflection of man's character. This is a big deal because it raises the question, "Are there other parts of the law of Moses which could be concessions to the hard hearts of men?"

The story of Pharaoh reveals to us the principle that causes hard hearts: a refusal to listen or believe what God says.

> And **Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them,** as the LORD had said. Exodus 7:13, NKJV

> Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said. Exodus 8:19, NKJV

This principle also applies when His people lack faith in response to the promises God makes, require a sign, or simply refuse to believe. When God promised Abraham a child, Abraham at first doubted but then believed God, and his belief was counted to him for righteousness. But right after when God promises him the land, Abraham asked for a sign. The commandment of God to bring the animals for sacrifice was not God's will but an accommodation to Abraham's lack of faith, and therefore a reflection of Abraham's character.

> Still the patriarch begged for some visible token as a confirmation of his faith and as an evidence to after-generations that God's gracious purposes toward them would be accomplished. **The Lord condescended to enter into a covenant with His servant, employing such forms as were customary among men for the ratification of a solemn engagement.** By divine direction, Abraham sacrificed a heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, each three years

> old, dividing the bodies and laying the pieces a little distance apart. To these he added a turtledove and a young pigeon, which, however, were not divided. This being done, he reverently passed between the parts of the sacrifice, making a solemn vow to God of perpetual obedience.—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 137.1

God condescended to employ means that Abraham understood. When there was a delay in the birth of the promised son, Abraham struggled in his faith. After the failure of faith in producing Ishmael through Hagar, God once again promised Abraham a son.

> "I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants." At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, "This is My covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!" Genesis 17:2-6

But because of Abraham's unbelief, he once again had to accommodate to the customs and practices of men in that time. God gave to Abraham the sign of circumcision. I have addressed this subject in the book *Mirror Principle* and will quote from there to expand this point.

> The question we need to ask is why did God choose circumcision as a sign? Abraham's unbelief required it, therefore what God brings to Abraham is a deeper revelation of what is in Abraham's heart. When we study the origins of circumcision, we discover something very interesting.
>
> "Sixth Dynasty (2345–2181 BCE) tomb **artwork in Egypt has been thought to be the oldest documentary evidence of circumcision,** the most ancient depiction being a bas-relief from the necropolis at Saqqara (c. 2400 BCE). In the oldest written account, by an Egyptian named Uha, in the 23rd century BCE, he describes a mass circumcision and boasts of his ability to stoically endure the pain:

"When I was circumcised, together with one hundred and twenty men ... there was none thereof who hit out, there was none thereof who was hit, and there was none thereof who scratched and there was none thereof who was scratched."[9]

Circumcision is first documented in Egypt and came into practice just before the time of Abraham. Circumcision was practiced in Egypt at the time of puberty. What is fascinating is that Ishmael's mother, Hagar, was Egyptian, and when God asked Abraham to take the sign of circumcision into his family, his son Ishmael was 13 years old, being around the age of puberty. As an Egyptian, Hagar would have been very familiar with circumcision and may have requested Abraham for her son to be circumcised at puberty like it was done in Egypt.

> Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day… Genesis 17:24-26

Immediately after God gave to Abraham the sign of circumcision, He once again promises to give Abraham a son through Sarah. Abraham is now almost 100 years old and Sarah is well beyond the normal age to bear children. When God gives the promise, the unbelief in Abraham is revealed.

> Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah. And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants."
>
> Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, **but he laughed to himself in disbelief.** "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_circumcision

> have a baby when she is ninety years old?" So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under Your special blessing!" Genesis 17:15-18

> So, we see that Abraham did not believe God's word. Instead, he wanted God to accept his own works in producing Ishmael. God's commandment for circumcision appears to confirm Abraham's desire for Ishmael to be the promised seed. Ishmael had reached the age of puberty and according to Egyptian custom, he was to be prepared for manhood through this rite of passage. God speaks to Abraham the thoughts that he is thinking just like God did with Adam in saying, "the man has become as one of us to know good and evil". Circumcision comes from Abraham, possibly through Hagar. God magnifies Abraham's unbelief through a ministration of death and transforms the process into a sign of faith. What could be more aptly labelled a ministration of death than a grown man having to take a knife to his penis and cut part of it off! —*Mirror Principle,* 151-152

History reveals to us that the practise of circumcision is first recorded in Egypt. It is possible that Hagar petitioned Abraham for this to be done for Ishmael, which she had the right to do because it was her child; she would not have suggested it if it was Sarah's child. If Abraham had believed by faith that God would give him a son through the only legitimate channel of his wife, Sarah, circumcision would never have been needed to be part of the law. It was an accommodation to man's ways of thinking. Paul understood this when he wrote:

> For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments. 1 Corinthians 7:19

And Ellen White wrote:

> **If man had kept the law of God,** as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, **there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision.** And if the

> descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. **And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.** —*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 364.2

This is the problem when men of one generation don't listen to God's appeals. In choosing a path against God, they establish cultural practices which the next generation often receive as normal procedure or even the requirements of God. In this darkness, God is required to speak into their incorrect culture with symbols and principles which men understand but which do not reflect the principles or character of God.

There is obviously a risk in doing this, because you might easily be understood to be of the same character as those you are trying to reach. The only way to distinguish between when God is accomodating Himself to us and when He is speaking points which reflect His own character is the revelation given to us in the character of Jesus Christ.

We see this principle of accommodation in the story Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus.

> In this parable [of the rich man and Lazarus] **Christ was meeting the people on their own ground**. **The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God.** He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all—that no man

> is valued for his possessions; for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him. —*Christ's Object Lessons,* 263.2

Jesus did not teach the immortality of soul doctrine to His hearers, but rather told a story according to their ideas. This is what God did with Abraham in the question of circumcision. Circumcision is evidence of a hard heart, but in order to rescue the sinner, God meets him there.

This same principle can be applied to the subject of stoning. Stoning for blasphemy is first recorded in the Bible as an Egyptian practice.

> Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "All right! Go ahead and offer sacrifices to your God," he said. "But do it here in this land." But Moses replied, "That wouldn't be right. The Egyptians detest the sacrifices that we offer to the LORD our God. Look, if we offer our sacrifices here where the Egyptians can see us, they will stone us." Exodus 8:25-26

Within the period of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt, which spanned a few centuries, they had been exposed to this custom and were ready to employ it on Moses when they were not happy.

> So once more the people complained against Moses. "Give us water to drink!" they demanded. "Quiet!" Moses replied. "Why are you complaining against me? And why are you testing the LORD?" But tormented by thirst, they continued to argue with Moses. "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Are you trying to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?" Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these people? **They are ready to stone me!"** Exodus 17:2-4

I have covered the subject of stoning in greater detail in chapter 33 of the book *Mirror Principle*, but to summarise this question, I will quote from the Spirit of Prophecy to explain why this death penalty was included in the law of Moses.

> **Moses wrote these judgments and statutes from the mouth of God while he was with him in the mount.** If the people of God had obeyed the principles of the ten commandments, there would have been no need of the specific directions given to Moses, which he wrote in a book, relative to their duty to God and to one another. The definite directions which the Lord gave to Moses in regard to the duty of his people to one another, and to the stranger, are the principles of the ten commandments simplified and given in a definite manner, that they need not err.
>
> The Lord said of the children of Israel, "Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols, wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." Because of continual disobedience, **the Lord annexed penalties to the transgression of his law, which were not good for the transgressor, or whereby he should not live in his rebellion.**—*The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol 1,* 265.1-2

The text which Ellen White quotes from is found in the book of Ezekiel.

> …because they did not obey My regulations. They scorned My decrees by violating My Sabbath days and longing for the idols of their ancestors. **I gave them over to worthless decrees and regulations that would not lead to life.** I let them pollute themselves with the very gifts I had given them, and I allowed them to give their firstborn children as offerings to their gods--so I might devastate them and remind them that I alone am the LORD. Ezekiel 20:24-26

What Ellen White wrote about the laws annexed to the statutes of Moses is highly significant. The context for Ezekiel 20 is that Israel had refused to listen to God and were determined to follow their own ways of thinking.

At the time of the Exodus, and the giving of the law, we see a fairly consistent theme of a refusal to listen to God.

> So Moses told the people of Israel what the LORD had said, **but they refused to listen anymore.** They had become too discouraged by the brutality of their slavery. Exodus 6:9

> The LORD asked Moses, **"How long will these people refuse to obey My commands** and instructions? Exodus 16:28

> And now, **if ye really hearken to My voice**, then ye have kept My covenant, and been to Me a peculiar treasure more than all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; Exodus 19:5, YLT

God asked them to listen to His voice and trust in His promises. But rather than do this, they told the Lord that everything He promised they would do in their own way, just like Abraham with Ishmael. Israel revealed their unwillingness to listen as follows:

> And they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!" Exodus 20:19

This means that many of the laws given in the law of Moses are an accommodation to man's thinking, because they refused to listen to God's thinking. We might easily apply this to laws like this:

> Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. The parents must say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his town must stone him to death. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid. Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Stoning your own child to death for laziness does not encourage children to serve their parents from love but from fear of death. This reflects the hardness of men, but because Israel refused to let the Spirit of God take hold of their hearts, they had to receive laws which

were not good and those in which the transgressor would not live. Let us consider one more example.

> Suppose a man has intercourse with a young woman who is a virgin but is not engaged to be married. If they are discovered, he must pay her father fifty pieces of silver. Then he must marry the young woman because he violated her, and he may never divorce her as long as he lives. Deuteronomy 22:28-29

This passage is often cited by non-believers as evidence of the barbarity of the God of the Bible. But many of these laws have come because of Israel's refusal to listen to God and let His Spirit rule their hearts. These laws made sense to them and would serve to hold back evil in a human way, as they had rejected God's Spirit to do it His way. God had to accommodate to their ways and give them laws according to their hearts.

The implication of this is vast. It means that the law of Moses acts as a mirror not only to the character of God but also to the characters of sinful men. This means that the law of Moses not only provides the remedy for sin but also gives the diagnosis of men's sinfulness. How can we tell the difference between diagnosis and remedy? The character of Christ shows us.

But how would this help people in the time of Israel? Those who personally listened to God in their hearts would have Christ directly guiding them by His Spirit (Isa 30:21), so that most of these laws written by Moses would not be needed by them.

Let's return to the Spirit of Prophecy quote which spoke of annexing penalties to the law that wouldn't have been needed if they hadn't constantly disobeyed. Ellen White directly applies this principle to the commands in the law of Moses that would execute the transgressor. This proves that the stoning commands were an accommodation to the people of Israel. It was not the will of God but rather an accommodation to the ways of men, in order to reach them where they were or, as Ellen White said about the story of the rich

man and Lazarus, it was a mirror held up before the people of their own thinking.

This is reinforced by how Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery. According to the law of Moses she was guilty of death. But the death sentence worked in her a spirit of repentance, so Christ delivered her from the punishment which was annexed to the law, and which in and of itself was not good. All of these things reveal God accomodating Himself to us for the simple reality that our ways are not God's ways.

We see then that the laws of circumcision, stoning, and many other laws were not part of God's original will, but a concession to the hard hearts of Israel. This is exactly what Jesus said of the commandment concerning divorce. Therefore, the laws in theTorah concerning divorce, stoning, and circumcision are mirrors of human thinking; they are concessions to men's hard hearts in order to reach them where they are.

These concessions are given so that humans would not give up their connection to God; the Israelites were satisfied by the laws and thus were willing to continue walking with Him. But God wants us to see them in a new light, and that is why he sent Jesus – not to cancel the punishments of the state, but that we might live and worship in a new covenant experience of spirit and truth.

God tells us what he thinks of divorce – He hates it completely. Why then would we do something that God hates?

If this principle of accommodation applies to the law of Moses, then it is evident that it could apply to the Spirit of Prophecy as well. The hardness of heart still exists today and this gives us reasons why she gave consent to divorce and innocent party remarriage.

CHAPTER 10

CONTEXT FOR ELLEN WHITE'S STATEMENTS ON REMARRIAGE

If we study carefully the progression of the Adventist movement from its inception, we see several major changes taking place. The acceptance of the Sabbath by Adventists placed a severe strain on their understanding of the two covenants. Israel's refusal to listen to the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament was matched by Christianity in its refusal to listen to His law.

The refusal to listen brought upon Christianity a strong delusion. This delusion separated the law of Moses from Christianity by means of the two covenants. All the laws given by Moses were deemed to be "only for Ancient Israel" and were called part of the Old Covenant. When Jesus came, He supposedly introduced the New Covenant which freed Christianity from the bondage of the laws of Moses.

To put it bluntly, the death of Christ on the cross, freed Christians to eat pig, octopus and every creeping thing, but more importantly, it "freed them" from the Sabbaths of the Lord. It freed us to pick and choose what we liked from the Torah.

Seventh-day Adventists came out of Protestant America which was steeped in the false view of the two covenants. This led to some interesting things being expressed in the Adventist Review in the 1850s and 1860s. I have covered this in greater detail in the booklet *Ceremonial Dividing Line*, but will summarise the principle here. In 1850, we see James White defending the use of pork in the Review.

> Some of our good brethren are troubled in regard to eating swine's flesh, and a very few abstain from it, thinking that the Bible forbids its use. We do not object to abstinence from the use of swine's flesh, if it is done on the right grounds. We think that too free and abundant use of it, and other animal food, of which many, and even some of our brethren in the present truth are not guiltless, is a sin; for it clogs and stupefies the mind, and in many cases impairs the constitution; **but we do not, by any means, believe that the Bible teaches that its proper use, in the gospel dispensation, is sinful.** —James White, *Present Truth,* Nov 4, 1850

James White follows the typical Protestant defence on pork using the vision of Peter in Acts 10.

> But the New Testament so far from teaching that the use of swine's flesh is wrong, that it affords good testimony that it is not forbidden. First, take the case of the Apostle Peter, when God was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles. **His Jewish views and feelings in relation to common and unclean beasts that did not part the hoof and chew the cud, see Lev. xi, must first be removed before he could see that God was no respecter of persons.** —*Present Truth,* Nov 4, 1850

James White followed the same line of reasoning as Christians had for centuries. The rebellion of Christianity in the second and third century on this question was no longer rebellion for James White. He

had simply inherited the principles of the hard hearts of previous generations.

For some Sabbath keepers, they began to follow the logical thought process of keeping all of God's commandments. Some of them began to advocate the removal of unclean meat. Those advocating this idea were moving in the right direction but notice how God deals with this through His prophet:

> I saw that your views concerning swine's flesh would prove no injury if you have them to yourselves; but in your judgment and opinion you have made this question a test, and your actions have plainly shown your faith in this matter. If God requires His people to abstain from swine's flesh, He will convict them on the matter. He is just as willing to show His honest children their duty, as to show their duty to individuals upon whom He has not laid the burden of His work. If it is the duty of the church to abstain from swine's flesh, God will discover it to more than two or three. He will teach His church their duty.—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1*, 206-207

The Lord counselled those following the light to not make their convictions a test for others. It was important for the church to move together on this question, and so Ellen White encouraged people not to make the use of pork a test question of fellowship.

There is a footnote attached by James White to the above statement by Ellen White. Notice the principle which James White expresses.

> This remarkable testimony was written October 21, 1858, nearly five years before the great vision of 1863, in which the light upon health reform was given**. When the right time came, the subject was given in a manner to move all our people.** How wonderful are the wisdom and goodness of God! It might be as wrong to crowd the milk, salt, and sugar question now, as the pork question in 1858.—J.W., note to second edition. Footnote on page 206 of *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1*

We need to keep this principle in mind in relation to the question of divorce and remarriage. Innocent party remarriage has not been a test question for this movement. If our Father brings conviction on this question to the community, then it will become a test question, as the Word of God tests the thoughts and intent of our hearts.

After Ellen White's great health vision of 1863, the church began to transition away from the use of swine as well as the production of tobacco and hops used for smoking and drinking. Once again notice the principle adopted here in 1868. This statement was written and signed by both James and Ellen White.

> In answer to many inquiries, we would say that we believe there is business for Seventh-day Adventists to enter upon for a livelihood, more consistent with their faith than the raising of hops, tobacco, or swine.
>
> And we would recommend that they plant no more hops, or tobacco fields, and that they reduce the number of their swine. They may yet see it duty, as most consistent believers do, to keep no more. We would not urge this opinion upon any. Much less would we take the responsibility of saying, "Plow up your hop and tobacco fields, and sacrifice your swine to the dogs."
>
> While we would say to those who are disposed to crowd hop, tobacco, and swine growers among our people, that they have no right to make these things, in any sense, a test of Christian fellowship, we would also say to those who have these miserable things on hand, "If you can get them off your hands without great loss, consistency with the faith of this people whose publications and oral teachings have so much to say on the subject of reform, more than suggests that you should get them off your hands as soon as possible." —*Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868

For those who had invested a lot of resources into producing these herds and crops, God accommodated Himself to the people to give them time to adjust their livelihoods. The human spirit is typically far more zealous once it embraces an idea, like Nebuchadnezzar

when he accepted Daniel's God – all those who did not acknowledge Daniel's God were to be cut to pieces.

I would encourage the same counsel on the subject of remarriage. No rash actions should be taken in the direction of reform. Everything needs to be prayerfully and carefully considered.

Because of this period of adjustment, we find Ellen White was still using oysters in 1882.

> Mary, if you can get me a good box of herrings, fresh ones, please do so. These last ones that Willie got are bitter and old. If you can buy cans, say a half dozen cans of good tomatoes, please do so. We shall need them. If you can get a few cans of good oysters, get them.—Letter 16, 1882, dated May 31, 1882, from Healdsburg, Calif.

It takes time for people to absorb light and bring it into their daily practice. But the issue which was holding Adventists up, was the teaching concerning the covenants. The 1888 message would bring the laws of Moses into a new framework. Without this framework, it would be dangerous to embrace all the reforms of the law of God, lest people naturally seek to do all these reforms as a matter of merit or works to please and appease God, rather than embrace them in the context of New Covenant blessing.

Coming from a seemingly unrelated angle, E.J. Waggoner began to enthusiastically proclaim in 1888 that the gospel promises made to Abraham are the same as those made to us.

> At 9 a.m. Elder Waggoner continues his lessons on the law and the gospel. The Scriptures considered were the fifteenth chapter of Acts and the second and third of Galatians, compared with Romans 4 and other passages in Romans. His purpose was to show that the point of the controversy was justification by faith in Christ, which faith is reckoned to us as to Abraham, for righteousness. **The covenant and promises to Abraham are the covenant and promises to us.**—"Third Days' Proceedings", *General Conference Daily Bulletin,* Oct 21, 1888

To suggest that the promises made to Abraham are the same as those made to us shook the foundations of the Protestant-derived Adventist thinking concerning the covenants. Instead of the Old Covenant simply being a type pointing forward to the New Covenant in the time of Christ, Waggoner was saying that the New Covenant actually existed and operated in the Old Testament. He began to teach that the Old and New Covenants were heart experiences that existed both before and after the cross.

> The old and the new covenants understood as a heart experience was a nuance that had been overlooked by the early pioneers. These two covenant experiences were two parallel dispensations which had manifested themselves concurrently both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. The old covenant and the new covenant were two separate experiences which, as it were, ran on two parallel tracks from the time of Cain and Abel until the mark of the beast and the seal of God as spoken of in the Book of Revelation.—Paul Penno, *Calvary at Sinai*, 2003, page 6

This new emphasis by Waggoner caused some Adventists to go back into the Old Testament and see there an everlasting gospel revealing God's everlasting and consistent love. This emphasis began to be reflected in the writings of Ellen White. In the new 1890 book Patriarchs and Prophets, she said the following regarding unclean meat.

> The angel's prohibition included "every unclean thing." The distinction between articles of food as clean and unclean was not a merely ceremonial and arbitrary regulation, but was based upon sanitary principles. To the observance of this distinction may be traced, in a great degree, the marvelous vitality which for thousands of years has distinguished the Jewish people. The principles of temperance must be carried further than the mere use of spirituous liquors. The use of stimulating and indigestible food is often equally injurious to health, and in many cases sows the seeds of drunkenness. True temperance teaches us to dispense

> entirely with everything hurtful and to use judiciously that which is healthful.—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 563

What Waggoner taught caused Ellen White and others to look differently at the principles that existed in the Old Testament. If the New Covenant existed and operated in the Old Testament then could it be possible that many of the principles of the law of Moses were actually in the New Covenant?

It is interesting to note that it wasn't until after the 1888 message that Ellen White finally removed all flesh food from her table.

> **Since the camp meeting at Brighton** [January, 1894] **I have absolutely banished meat from my table.** It is an understanding that whether I am at home or abroad, nothing of this kind is to be used in my family, or come upon my table. I have had much representation before my mind in the night season on this subject. —Letter 76, 1894; in *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, 488

The 1888 message brought the laws of Moses which were part of the everlasting gospel into focus. As we stated in chapter 1, the 1888 message reframed the motivation for the keeping of the Sabbath. A.T. Jones revealed that the Sabbath was an extra portion of the Holy Spirit. It was a free gift accepted by faith.

This wonderful message brought the Sabbath, tithing, and the health message into a New Covenant focus. A wonderful transformation had begun, but it was stopped short because the leadership of the church refused to accept the 1888 message.

If the leadership had continued in the light, they would have come to see the feasts of the Lord in the same light as the Sabbath, that in them is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They also would have seen the law concerning divorce and remarriage in the light that Jesus explained to the Pharisees in Mark 10. But it was not to be.

Just as Israel had refused to listen to the gentle appeals of God at Mt Sinai, so Adventists also refused to listen to the 1888 message. The following messages were released in 1889.

> The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. **Modern Israel are [sic] fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.**—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol 5*, 93.3
>
> **The same disobedience and failure which were seen in the Jewish church have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from heaven in the last messages of warning.** Shall we, like them, squander our opportunities and privileges until God shall permit oppression and persecution to come upon us? Will the work which might be performed in peace and comparative prosperity be left undone until it must be performed in days of darkness, under the pressure of trial and persecution?—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol 5*, 456.1
>
> **The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt.** Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol 5*, 217.2

The Adventist Church has been retreating to Egypt since this time. It's ability to see the institutions of the Sabbath and marriage restored to their Edenic glory cannot be realised until they repent of rejecting the message and finally accept the light that came from Waggoner and Jones with respect to the Two Covenants.

It is within this 1888 context that we can better evaluate the statements about remarriage that she wrote. During the years leading up to 1888, the church was steadily reclaiming several important teachings in regard to the timing of the Sabbath, tithing,

and the health message. But also during this time Ellen White was called upon repeatedly to respond to questions related to specific relationship cases. Without the clear understanding of the covenants, Ellen White would in some cases offer her opinion. As we will see in the next chapter, she spoke about the delineation between the sacred and the common in her writings, the distinct difference between things showed to her of God and those that were just her own thoughts.

God showed her many things, but some of her letters were written expressing her personal convictions, to which she freely admits. In the light of what we have discovered earlier about the exception clause of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, we can now examine the statements of Ellen White with more clarity.

CHAPTER 11

THE SACRED AND COMMON

In seminary, I remember well once sitting in a lecture when the lecturer presented to us a problem. Ellen White had written in her diary entry for the day the location where she was at the time in Australia. She wrote Melbourne, New South Wales. For those who know the geography of Australia, you know that Melbourne is the capital of Victoria; it is not in New South Wales. I wasn't completely sure of the lecturer's intention, but it felt like efforts were being made to cast doubt on the writings of Ellen White. At the time I saw no relevance to the point raised, as I felt this had no connection to presenting the truth of Scripture.

Although I didn't have a formal framework for this, my impression was correct, for Ellen White herself speaks about this issue.

> The information given concerning **the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion.** There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. **In**

> **my words, when speaking upon these common subjects, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I receive my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such**....
>
> **When the Holy Spirit reveals anything regarding the institutions connected with the Lord's work, or concerning the work of God upon human hearts and minds, as He has revealed these things through me in the past, the message given is to be regarded as light given of God for those who need it. But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake.** In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls.
>
> To every soul whom God has created He has given capabilities to serve Him, but **Satan** seeks to make this work of service hard by his constant temptation to mislead souls. He **works to dim the spiritual perceptions that men may not distinguish between that which is common and that which is holy. I have been made to know this distinction through a life's service for my Lord and Master.**—*Selected Messages, Book 1*, 38

We need to be careful and prayerful about how we receive this information. One solid guide for our feet can be found in the following statement:

> And now to all who have a desire for truth I would say: Do not give credence to unauthenticated reports as to what Sister White has done or said or written. **If you desire to know what the Lord has revealed through her, read her published works.**—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5*, 696

All of Ellen White's published works are given to us under the inspiration of the Lord Jesus. In her private letters and diaries there is much profitable instruction to be found, but we need to consider everything in its context and separate the sacred from the common, as Ellen White herself has done. One of the letters from Ellen White we quoted in chapter two falls into this category of the common rather than the sacred. Here is the relevant part of the letter again:

> J did not put his wife away. She left him, and put him away, and married another man. **I see nothing in the Scripture that forbids him to marry again in the Lord.** He has a right to the affection of a woman....
>
> I cannot see that this new union should be disturbed. It is a serious matter to part a man and his wife. There is no scriptural ground upon which to take such a step in this case. He did not leave her, she left him. He did not marry again until she had obtained a divorce. When K divorced herself from J he suffered most keenly, and it was not until K had married another man that J married again. The one he has chosen I feel certain will be a help to him, and he can be a help to her....**I see nothing in the Word of God that would require her to separate from him. As you have asked my advice I will freely give it to you.**—Letter 50, 1895. *Selected Messages, Book 2*, 340.1-2

Ellen White states here that she sees nothing in Scripture that forbids this man to marry again. We have shown in the beginning of the book that Scripture does indeed prevent a person from marrying again. Although Ellen White could not see it, the truth of it is there. Ellen White states at the end of her letter that she was asked for her advice, and she gave it. It was her opinion and her advice. She did not say in the letter that the Lord showed her this was the correct action to take.

As the leadership of the church had hardened their hearts to the 1888 message, it would not have the framework to bring the noble principles of marriage to their completion. If God had given light to Ellen White on this question without the support of the 1888 message, it would cause untold trauma to people locked into a marriage without the true gospel to help them live it. This thought needs pondering and prayerful consideration. For those who have ears, I pray you will hear the Spirit speaking to you on this dilemma: advancement of God's law requires advancement of the gospel to enable grace to abound.

The failure of 1888 often left Ellen White to give advice rather than revelation. In the end, she stopped giving advice altogether. We cite a situation from 1913 where two letters regarding marriage issues were placed before her.

> I do not think any such questions as that ought to be placed before me. I do not think it is my work to deal with any such things unless the case has been plainly opened before me. There should be brethren in the church who have wisdom who can speak decidedly regarding this case. I cannot understand such things. I do not believe that God wants me to take any such burden upon me. If they cannot settle such things among themselves by prayer and fasting, then let them continue [in] fasting and prayer till they can.
>
> Such things will arise. It will come—that is, they will have these difficult questions, and they have got to learn how to treat them. They have got to have an experience. They must bring these things to the Lord, and believe the Lord will hear their prayer, and give them a sound experience in all these things, but they are not to bring them to me.—*Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 234.1-2

Then the next letter was presented to her and this was her response:

> I have had no particular light in regard to his case, therefore I dare not speak positively in regard to it.
>
> He has to show the evidence that God accepts him and to give that evidence so that our brethren can have something tangible to build upon. Let them say, We will give you a chance. We will see whether God accepts your labors or not.
>
> But it is not wise for me to take the responsibility of this case. I cannot take the least responsibility. Those who see his actions day by day should know whether he has proved himself, whether God accepts him.—*Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 234.4-6

Finally Ellen White said:

> I cannot take responsibility in such matters. The burden of doing so is too great. It might cost me my life. Let those appointed of God to bear the responsibility deal with it in accordance with Christian principles.—Manuscript 2, 1913. *Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 235.1

Sixteen years after Ellen White died, her son, Willie White, penned these words dealing with subjects relating to divorce and remarriage:

> After reading the documents I today send you, you will say, 'Well, he has not given me anything authoritative from Sister White that directly answers the question.' **But I think you will see from what I am sending you that it was Sister White's intention that there should not go forth from her pen anything that could be used as a law or a rule in dealing with these questions of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and adultery.**—Willie White, *Unscriptural Divorces and Social Relationships*, 47-48 (Jan 6, 1931)

That is a sobering statement. If nothing Ellen White wrote on the subject of divorce, remarriage and adultery was to be considered a law or a rule in any of her writings, then the implication is that she was not given instructions for marriage that reflected God's law in its perfect understanding or in a restored state. Twenty years earlier, while assisting his mother in dealing with issues of divorce and remarriage, Willie White wrote the following:

> Mother has received during the last twenty years many letters making inquiry regarding the matters about which you write, and **she has many times written in reply that she had no advice to give different from that of the apostle Paul.** Recently she has refused to deal with letters of this character, and tells us not to bring them to her attention.—*Unscriptural Divorces and Social Relationships*, 47

Note carefully Ellen White's policy in these latter years, she stood with the apostle Paul and pointed people to his guidance in Scripture. The apostle Paul is the one who gives the most direct counsel and prohibits remarriage under any circumstances. This is

the position Ellen White offered to people in her later years after seeing the turmoil of cases she had previously given advice on.

There is another case which Ellen White addresses in the year 1863. In this case, Ellen White was shown some things in regard to a particular situation. She was shown clearly that a couple was not free to remarry. But in the midst of this counsel, Ellen White expresses the innocent party divorce and remarriage principle.

> I saw that Sister Johnson as yet **has no right to marry another man,** but if she or any other woman **should obtain a divorce legally on the ground that her husband was guilty of adultery, then she is free to be married** to whom she chooses.
>
> I saw that **Sister Johnson was not free to marry again.** —*Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17,* 156.2-3, June 6, 1863

What Ellen White was shown is that this couple was not free to remarry. But Ellen White then expressed the currently held view of the denomination that an innocent party could remarry. The question here is what exactly did God show Ellen White? Was it just the first part?

> [A] I saw that Sister Johnson as yet has no right to marry another man,

Or was she also shown the second part?

> I saw that [A] Sister Johnson as yet has no right to marry another man, but [B] if she or any other woman should obtain a divorce legally on the ground that her husband was guilty of adultery, then she is free to be married to whom she chooses.

If Ellen White was shown part B, then what James and Ellen White wrote on the subject five years later would not have been stated in a tentative manner but as fact:

> 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. —*Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868

In this quote, James and Ellen speak of the moral right to depart a marriage after it is found that the guilty party has committed adultery. If God has shown Ellen White that innocent party divorce allowing for remarriage was correct, then there would be nothing questionable about it. The context of this testimony is to support a person who wishes to remain with a spouse who has committed adultery. James and Ellen White defended such a case, but the principle of the innocent party having the moral right to obtain a divorce to remarry was also supported.

The manner in which the information is presented, suggests James and Ellen White are giving their carefully considered opinion. This would confirm that what Ellen White was shown in regard to the case in 1863 was only that sister Johnson was not free to remarry. This conclusion is also borne out by the statement given by Willie White that we quoted earlier that no counsel given by Ellen White on the subject of divorce and remarriage should be considered a law or a rule to follow.

It would be helpful to examine the views of the pioneers on the subject of remarriage and where the idea of innocent party remarriage came into the movement.

CHAPTER 12

VIEWS OF THE ADVENTIST PIONEERS

The earliest pioneer view that I found in the pages of the Review and Herald comes from Joseph Bates. I would like to quote his entire article from 1857 because it lays out some important principles.

> Unlawful Marriages
>
> The following testimony respecting this matter should be carefully examined and weighed by all who may cherish any wish or desire to marry again, while they have a wife or husband living, lest they fall into a snare which may eventually prove their destruction.
>
> "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark 10:11,12.
>
> "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." Luke 16:18.

The apostle Paul illustrates the above as follows:

"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." Romans 7:2,3.

Again he shows what the Lord commands:

"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. 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." 1 Cor.7:10,11,39.

The Saviour's testimony on this subject, recorded by Mark and Luke, varies a little from the same recorded by Matthew; viz.:

"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." Matt.5:32.

Again, "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 that is put away doth commit adultery." Chap.19:9.

But the apostle Paul's illustration of the whole subject to the Romans, and what he says the Lord commands in his letter to the Corinthians, shows very plainly that he viewed the text in Matt. the same as he did those in Mark and Luke.

All who have ignorantly entered into such unlawful covenants of marriage, and have thereby violated the commandments of God,

according to the foregoing scripture testimony, will find relief by observing the following rules, viz.:

"And if any of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, . . . and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin which he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him." Lev.4:27,28, and last clause of verse 35.

Under the gospel the offering is godly sorrow for sin. Says Paul, "Who was before a blasphemer, (violating the third commandment,) and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1Tim. 1:13.

JOSEPH BATES.

Review and Herald, March 12, 1857

Joseph Bates uses the writings of Paul in Romans and 1 Corinthians to interpret the texts in Matthew. He seems to indicate that Paul was aware of Matthew's writings on the matter, although the book of Matthew is thought to be written quite some time after the writings of Paul. In any case, Bates makes the case that remarriage is not permissible in Scripture. In dealing with those who had no knowledge of what the Bible taught, Bates indicates that such persons can find forgiveness in the mercy of God, for it is a sin of ignorance. He does not say that the married persons should separate.

Bates gives no guidance on those who were aware of the Bible teaching on marriage, and how this should be handled if they were remarried. But the clear thought expressed here is that what is written in Paul's writings, Mark, and Luke defines the meaning of the phrases in Matthew. This means Bates did not understand the exception clause allowed for remarriage.

As the denomination grew, the complexities of human life began to press Adventist leaders on how to deal with individual cases. Four years later, M.E. Cornell presented a different perspective.

> **The Scriptures warrant a divorce for one cause only, and to marry one that had become separated for another cause would be unlawful.** Christ, when interrogated upon this subject gave the following rule:
>
> "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."—M.E. Cornell, "Unlawful Marriages", *Review and Herald,* Nov 19, 1861

M.E. Cornell did address 1 Corinthians 7:39 but only in the context of someone marrying in the Lord.

> "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." 1 Cor 7:39. **From this testimony we conclude that a believer is not at liberty to marry one that is not in Christ.**—*Review and Herald,* Nov 19, 1861

Five months later Uriah Smith wrote a short but pivotal response to a question in the Review and Herald. The question reveals the unresolved sense in the movement about the subject of divorce and remarriage. Uriah Smith's response appears to have influenced the movement further towards innocent party divorce.

> Divorce.-A correspondent sends to the Office the following request: "Will you give your opinion in regard to divorces, **as there are some that do not feel satisfied on this subject?"**
>
> Answer.-We think that for one cause, that mentioned by our Lord as recorded in Matt. 19:9, **divorce may be lawfully obtained, and that the parties divorced are as free as if the marriage contract**

> **never existed between them. Some have drawn what are evidently extreme views from Paul's language in Rom. 7:1-3.** But **Paul is there only giving us an illustration, and not laying down rules in regard to the marriage relation.** To enforce his illustration, he takes the general rule; and it would be by no means proper for him in that connection to go out of his way to state exceptions.—Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald,* April 15, 1862, p.8

This short paragraph is fascinating. Smith uses Matt 19:9 to suggest that it provides an annulment to the level that the marriage contract never existed. Does this suggest that even the guilty party is free to remarry? I am uncertain if this was Smith's intention. In later years, he presents the case more clearly in favour of the innocent party being free to remarry.

Smith speaks of Paul's language in Romans 7:2 as being an illustration of a theological point regarding the law and its function, and that's why he didn't mention the exception clause. But Smith fails to address how Paul uses the same expression in 1 Cor 7:39, not as an illustration, but directly addressing the subject of marriage. He speaks about those holding extreme positions using Rom 7:1-3. The only one in print to this date was Joseph Bates. Was Smith seeking to counteract what Joseph Bates had previously stated, thus causing him to unwittingly fall into an extreme position? Of course, we can't be certain, but we can be certain that his argumentation against Romans 7:2 falls short because of the context Paul expresses it in 1 Cor 7:39.

In a 1975 article on the history of divorce and remarriage in the Adventist Church, Gerald Winslow makes this observation about Smith's 1862 comments in the Review.

> Long before the publication of any official guidelines on divorce and remarriage, church leaders were expressing their viewpoints. As with many other issues, **Uriah Smith was one of the most influential.** Early in his career, Smith spoke out against "extreme views" based on Romans 7: 2, 3. Smith argued that Paul was "only

> giving us an illustration, and not laying down rules in regard to the marriage relation."—Gerald Winslow, "Divorce, Remarriage and Adultery", *Spectrum Magazine,* Nov 24, 1975

In the same year that Uriah Smith presented his position, the Michigan State Conference considered the question of how to deal with divorced marriages. The members of the committee considering this question were: James White, Joseph Bates, J.H. Waggoner, J.B. Frisbie, John Byington, J.N. Loughborough, Moses Hull, M.E. Cornell and R.J Lawrence.

The members of the committee were not able to come to a conclusion and so:

> 1. Resolved, That the matter of divorced marriages be referred to the conference committee.—*Review and Herald*, Oct 14, 1862

But nothing further came from this recommendation. In the following years, the church appeared to move towards a default position in accordance with M.E. Cornell and Uriah Smith, rather than Joseph Bates. Bates had only drawn the inference that Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 must agree with what is stated in Mark, Luke, Romans and 1 Corinthians, but no complete study appears to have been done on this question.

It is a lesson we should note well for our progress in the Father of Love movement. It is an issue that needs a clear position to be articulated according to the principles of Miller's rules.

The following year, James White appears to follow the same line of thought as M.E. Cornell and Uriah Smith.

> Only in the Lord.
>
> "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." 1 Cor.7:39.
>
> Although these words refer to marriage under peculiar circumstances, yet when considered in the light of those scriptures

> which declare that the Christian should do all to the glory of God, **they may be regarded as applicable to marriage under all circumstances.** And we fail to see why the injunction, **"only in the Lord," is not as necessary, and as applicable to a first marriage, as to a second.**—James White, *Review and Herald*, Aug 4, 1863

It would appear that the understanding of the exception clause in Matt 5:32 and 19:9 obscured for M.E. Cornell and James White the part concerning "bound by the law as long as her husband lives." In Rom 7:2 and 1 Cor 7:39. As we just saw, Smith framed Romans as only illustrative to neutralise its conflict with his interpretation of Matthew 5 and 19, but as to why no one could see the conflict with 1 Cor 7 is not clear.

The statement by James White comes just two months after Ellen White's response to the case of Sister Johnson.

> I saw that Sister Johnson as yet **has no right to marry another man,** but if she or any other woman **should obtain a divorce legally on the ground that her husband was guilty of adultery, then she is free to be married** to whom she chooses.
>
> I saw that **Sister Johnson was not free to marry again.** —*Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17,* 156.2-3, June 6, 1863

It is interesting to note the use of the word *free* by Ellen White. This is the word that Uriah Smith uses in dealing with the exception clause in Matthew 5 and 19. Five years later, James and Ellen White wrote a piece dealing with those overtaken in the sin of adultery. Once again the word *free* expresses the position of the innocent party.

> 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.**—James and Ellen White, "Dealing with those Overtaken in the Sin of Adultery", *Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868

It should be pointed out that these articles by the Pioneers are focused on upholding the principles of lifelong marriage between two people. Strong statements are made along these lines, but with the understanding of the exception clause in Matt 5 and 19 as adultery rather than fornication, the force of their words is reduced considerably. We feel the sense of urgency in the words of James and Ellen White a little further down in the same article:

> 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? —James and Ellen White, "Dealing with those Overtaken in the Sin of Adultery", *Review and Herald*, March 24, 1868

We find a similar situation in an article on this question penned by George Butler fifteen years later. He compares divorce and remarriage to be exactly the same as polygamy, making very strong statements such as these:

> We notice polygamy in this article because the principles bearing upon it are precisely the same as those connected with divorce….
>
> **Polygamy, and re-marriage while morally bound to a living wife, are wrong, because both are violations of God's original design of marriage- a life union** between one man and one woman,-and hence are violations of the true spiritual intent of the seventh commandment, which was given to guard the sacredness of that marriage institution.

After making these very strong statements based on his understanding of Scripture, Butler turns to the perplexities of what the leaders are dealing with and in this context the tone changes somewhat.

> But these are some very perplexing questions arising in a modern society, because of the prevalence of divorces when persons embrace religion who have been divorced in the past and have remarried and perhaps had children under this new marriage while the former companion still lives who was divorced for some other cause than the one the Saviour gives. What shall such persons do when they start out to serve God? And what shall the church do when they are found in it in this condition? **We shall not attempt to answer these questions in this article. It would perhaps be impossible to meet every point which might arise in such cases in any article.** Each case must be considered on its own merits. We can safely say this, however each person should be careful to fulfill the solemn and holy vows taken upon him when he entered the marriage relation and realize that God hates divorces. All should realise that **marrying a divorced person is a transgression of the law of God, unless the person had been the innocent party in a previous marriage,** whose companion had broken his marriage vow by transgression of the seventh commandment. We should be careful lest the church be brought into disrepute by taking into its membership those who have obtained divorces for other causes than that which the Saviour allows. This is a lax age in matters of this sort. Let us maintain purity in all the relations of life.—George Butler, "Marriage and Divorce", *Review and Herald*, December 18, 1883

You can feel the wistfulness in the tone here. How do you deal with people coming into the church who have been divorced and remarried? Especially if they have had children. Doesn't the gospel have power to forgive, heal, and restore people in this situation?

And here is the conflict between dealing with past human cases and how to move forward with biblical ideals. How is this transition made? As long as people come into the community of faith who have divorced and remarried, it seems the ideal cannot be reached. Of course we are reminded of the oft repeated phrase: the church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints. The challenge to this

analogy is that if all the doctors, nurses and hospital staff are also patients in the hospital, then how can the hospital actually run?

One thing we are learning for sure in the Father of Love movement is that the principles of God's law can't be legislated. We need to receive the power of these principles through Christ to be able to live them effectively. We do need to seek the truth of what the Scripture teaches and ask our Father in heaven to make these things a reality in our lives.

In conclusion, we see that the pioneer Adventist movement was continually perplexed by the subject of divorce and remarriage. The leaders came to a consensus of innocent party remarriage, but as we saw in the latter years of Ellen White, the burden and the perplexity of questions became too much for her. She abandoned all efforts to judge such cases.

This brings us to one of the core problems of taking an innocent party remarriage position: the church leaders must decide if a person is indeed innocent before they can conduct a remarriage. How successfully will they be able to do this when Ellen White herself eventually refused to do so? She felt that to judge on this question would actually cause her to die early. She wrote that in 1913 – could it be that it actually was partly to blame for her death that happened soon after? And if Ellen White couldn't bear that burden, can we bear it? Does God want us to bear it?

CHAPTER 13

DETERMINING THE INNOCENT PARTY

The Adventist pioneers believed the Bible taught that if a spouse commits adultery, the so called "innocent party" is free to remarry if they can obtain a divorce.

In reality, the complexity of human nature had General Conference President George Butler confessing that the cases they were dealing with were too complex to apply general rules, and that each case had to be taken on its merits.

How do you determine who is innocent? A man runs off and starts a relationship with another woman. He is the guilty party, right? Well what if the wife has been subtly undermining him, or depriving him in the bedroom, or somehow pushed him to breaking point so he felt he needed comfort elsewhere? It doesn't justify what he did, but in such a scenario she isn't innocent also, and all this can be hard to quantify.

Again, what if a woman runs off with a man after more than a decade of marriage? She is the guilty party, right? Well what if the husband controlled every cent she spent, or secretly watched porn,

or never told her he loved her, nor gave her any affection, except when he wanted marital privileges? Who is the guilty party then?

> "For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual **immorality**, theft, murder, **adultery**, greed, **wickedness**, **deceit**, lustful desires, envy, **slander**, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you." Mark 7:21-23

The Bible says the human heart is desperately wicked. In the list above, with sexual immorality and adultery, is also deceit; that principle of satanic skill which transforms a vile sinner into an angel of light before his fellow church members.

Some men use their intelligence to plan devious things over years. He may have planned to get rid of his wife, but he arranges things in such a way that she is the one who looks unstable, can't take it anymore, and finally then leaves in an emotional mess looking for comfort from someone else. He plants subtle messages over several years to get her to think that being with someone else would be better. The man claims innocent party status and remarries in good and regular standing in the church.

It is possible that a spouse did absolutely nothing to provoke their partner to run off with someone else, but how can you tell and be sure?

Speaking of Christ, the Bible says:

> He will delight in obeying the LORD. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay. Isaiah 11:3

How do fallible men judge the complexity of a broken marriage case, except they judge by appearance or hearsay? Certainly, we pray and ask God for guidance, but when the human heart becomes broken by abuse, it becomes really hard to be self-aware and very easy to paint lovely pictures of oneself and the opposite of the spouse.

In most cases within a church community, the spouses in a difficult marriage seek to gain as many allies as they can to side with them

against the other. This invites the whole community to judge the case. If the elders of a community do decide an outcome, one or both of the couple will run to their supporters and cry on their shoulder and urge them to judge the elders for coming to the "wrong" decision.

In this way these poor souls not only divide their marriage, but they also sometimes divide the entire community. Both often want a new marriage, and due to the trauma caused by the brokenness of the relationship they are almost completely blind to their selfish desires.

Every time a couple within a community fail in their marriage, or a person seeks a relationship with someone outside of the principles of marriage, the community structure is tested. Does the community have confidence in its elders? Do they pray for them? What are the words of a meek man against another man's marital or sexual desires? When, in the realities of life, does true Christian principle overrule the raw desire for intimacy or even sexual fantasy?

The innocent party remarriage clause embraced by the Christian world, and specifically God's remnant church, is a trojan horse in the camp of the saints. It has done untold damage to God's people. It allows the human heart to foster the desire to have someone else than their partner, when no such desire should exist. It causes us to consider marrying people that we should never consider marrying, as they are still bound to someone else.

In its simplicity, the principles of the Bible tell us that a woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive. If people held to this, there would be no seeking to determine who is innocent. There would be no diabolical genius seeking to subvert their partner so they can have someone more suited to their liking. All of this would be removed from the church.

It would also spare the church leadership from having to understand all the complexities of "he said, she said" and endless hours of moaning and complaining about their "evil spouse." The urge to use

church leaders as a club to beat their partner into submission would be subdued and much evil would be spared God's people.

I do not suggest that a person should stay in a relationship that poses serious danger to their mental or physical wellbeing. Paul offers counsel on this. "Let them remain single."

From my research on this topic of remarriage, I find no warrant for it in the Bible while both parties are still alive from the original marriage. Therefore, in this context I offer to everyone the counsel that Willie White summarised from his mother's words to him towards the end of her life.

> Mother has received during the last twenty years many letters making inquiry regarding the matters about which you write, and **she has many times written in reply that she had no advice to give different from that of the apostle Paul. Recently she has refused to deal with letters of this character, and tells us not to bring them to her attention.**—*Unscriptural Divorces and Social Relationships*, 47

I will always do my best to help someone in their relationship with God, but I will not listen to the condemnation and slander of one spouse against another, even if it is said ever so nicely. I have found it doesn't help to offer counsel to someone who is struggling with their spouse and wanting them to change their behaviour.

Also, elders don't need to hear every juicy detail of marital unfaithfulness and be made to be moral policemen for other people's indiscretions. It doesn't help the situation.

But as elders, let us encourage people to let self die on the cross with Christ and to carry our cross daily. Elders are to point every person to make God, "the man of their counsel" on such personal matters. People's personal relationships with God through Christ must be nourished so they can lay hold on the particular wisdom they need for their personal case.

In elevating the marriage union to be indissoluble as Paul and Christ stated, many problems could be removed, if and only if God's people embrace the Spirit of Christ and trust Him to help them live Christ-like lives. There could be no more cunning plans to get through the innocent party loop-hole to get someone deemed better suited to ones desires and tastes.

In these last days, determining the innocent is almost impossible. But as we have learned, the Bible already had accounted for this a long time ago, it does not provide for remarriage while both spouses are still alive. If God's people faithfully teach this principle in the context of the wonderful Agape based, self-sacrificing love of God, it will elevate the marriage institution.

In the Old Covenant, this will feel terrible, it will actually cause sin to abound. It will feel like bondage and seem very harsh, just like the Sabbath and the feasts do in the Old Covenant. But in the New Covenant, it is a call to follow Christ, who never leaves anyone of us through our whole lives. This is what we are called to follow, and to trust that Christ will help us and bless us through these tests and trials.

If the community of faith begins to comprehend marriage in the light of the Father and Son relationship, which never ends, combined with Satan's desire to force the Father to divorce His Son, and choose him instead; and if the community can embrace the cross that Christ carries, then marriage will be placed in a much firmer position.

> The most careful cultivation of the outward proprieties of life is not sufficient to shut out all fretfulness, harsh judgment, and unbecoming speech. True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered as the supreme object. Love must dwell in the heart. **A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart-love for his Master.** Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren.—*The Ministry of Healing,* 490

I am familiar with a number of cases of Christians who have borne decades of difficulty with their spouse. At times they have felt crushed and defeated, but the love of Christ sustained them to hold fast to their marriage vows. Others have been forced to separate but they remained true to their vows, praying from a safe distance for their spouse, even as Christ does for those who reject Him. He walks as close to them as He can, and never gives up to the last breath.

For those who are confident in their eternal life in Christ, they will have courage to hold on to the promises of God. For those who are uncertain and are fearful that this is the only life they have, they will be tempted to seek for as much pleasure and self-interest as they can find.

When you feel pushed to the limit, and you feel there is no hope in your marriage situation, remember these words:

> At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. —*The Desire of Ages,* 669.4

There is plenty to ponder here. May we pray on these things and listen to what the Spirit is now saying to the church.

In the next few chapters I would like to explore the history of marriage over the past 2000 years, and consider some of the influences which are warring against this precious institution. We recall that when God said "Let us make man in our image" that this was the catalyst that enraged Satan. His hatred for holy marriage should cause us to think of how much effort Satan has put into destroying it.

CHAPTER 14

DIVINE PATTERN VERSUS NEOPLATONISM

Coded into the prophecy of the seven churches of Revelation is a description of what happened to the church just after Christ ascended back to heaven.

> I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that **you have left your first love.** Revelation 2:2-4, NKJV

In an effort to keep the church pure, the first leaders of the church were drawn into condemning false teaching. The casualty of this was the loss of the Agape love of Christ. The Bible tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 13:8) and the law is our hedge of protection (Eze 22:25-31) from Satan the destroyer.

The apostle Paul warned the church that the mystery of iniquity was already at work in their day (2 Thess 2:7), and one of the key

ingredients of this inquity was the integrating of Greek philosophical ideas into Christianity. The development of Gnosticism in the first century was one of the ideas that began to affect the church. The church's loss of its first love would create a breach which would ultimately allow pagan principles to come into the church.

> Gnosticism (from Ancient Greek: γνωστικός, romanized: gnōstikós, Koine Greek: [ɣnosti'kos], 'having knowledge') is **a collection of religious ideas and systems that coalesced in the late 1st century AD among Jewish and early Christian sects.** These various groups emphasized personal spiritual knowledge (gnosis) above the proto-orthodox teachings, traditions, and authority of religious institutions. Gnostic cosmogony generally presents a distinction between a supreme, hidden God and a malevolent lesser divinity (sometimes associated with the biblical deity Yahweh) who is responsible for creating the material universe. Consequently, **Gnostics considered material existence flawed or evil,** and held the principal element of salvation to be direct knowledge of the hidden divinity, attained via mystical or esoteric insight. Many Gnostic texts deal not in concepts of sin and repentance, but with illusion and enlightenment.[10]

The principles of Gnosticism destroyed the Divine Pattern of the invisible and the visible.[11] Taking the visible world to be evil, early Gnostic principles denied that Christ actually took a human body. The apostle John warned against this saying:

> …and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. 1 John 4:3, NKJV

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism

[11] For more on the Divine Pattern, see the book *The Divine Pattern* and *Divine Pattern of Life* both available from *maranathamedia.com*

And the apostle Paul, in combating these ideas, declared:

> Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; Colossians 2:8-9 NKJV

As matter was considered evil, those influenced by Gnosticism, largely tended towards asceticism, although a smaller section of Gnostic followers took the opposite approach.

> Since Gnostics held matter to be corrupt, they considered the body to be corrupt, too. The trend of some Gnostics was to teach that there is no harm in indulging fleshly desires since the body is utterly corrupt and beyond redemption anyhow. Other Gnostics, perhaps the majority, held that the body must be kept in check by strict asceticism. Whether one chooses plan A or plan B, the underlying doctrine makes it impossible to understand how God could become a true man with a fleshly body in Christ Jesus. —*Christianity.com*

This teaching had a terrible effect on the institutions of the Sabbath and marriage. God designed the Sabbath to be a celebration of joy and blessing, kept with feasting. Many Christians, influenced by Gnosticism, began to believe that material food and drink was evil, and that Christians should fast and focus only on spiritual things.[12] Paul combated this idea by telling the faithful not to let those holding these false philosophies of men judge you when you gather on Sabbath and feasts to break bread, celebrate the communion or enjoy the fruits of harvest (Colossians 2:16).

The principles of Gnosticism needed refinement to truly penetrate Christianity. This was provided in the form of Neoplatonism.

[12] For more on this see the booklet Showing Respect for Colossians 2:14-17 available at maranathamedia.com

> Among the many influences on Christianity almost from its inception, one of the most pernicious—and arguably the most destructive from a philosophical view—is neoplatonism. Neoplatonism is simply 'new' (neo) 'Plato-(n)ism.' **It is a dialectical dualism which pits spirit against flesh, body against soul, mind against matter,** etc**. It crept into the church in the second century AD through the route of gnosticism.** Now the gnostics were an early Christian heretical group, quite popular in Egypt, which viewed spirit as good and matter as evil. They found a difficulty accepting the biblical teaching of creation: "God created the heavens and the earth. . . and it was good." So they posited a series of semi-creators between God and the earth. That is to say, God created the next being who was not, like God, pure spirit, but was instead an amalgam of spirit and matter (though mostly spirit). He then created the next being who had a bit more matter to his make-up. And so on down the line: the last creator created the earth, pure matter. Jesus Christ was considered very high up on the ladder—hence, the gnostics did not view him as real man.
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> The result of all this was that by mixing the Bible with ancient Greek philosophy, **Christians began to see a dichotomy, a dialectical struggle within man, between body and soul, between emotion and reason.** In reality, such a view of life was merely neoplatonism in Christian garb. Unfortunately, it has plagued Christians—as well as all of western civilization—for nearly twenty centuries.[13]

If we want to understand the forces at play within our society today, we need to understand the power of this metaphysical system which places the mind against the body and the body against the mind. This is a core part of the symbolism found in Revelation 13 concerning the Beast which arose out of the sea.

> Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. **Now the beast**

[13] https://bible.org/article/rushdoony-neoplatonism-and-biblical-view-sex

> **which I saw was like a leopard,** his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. Revelation 13:1-2, NKJV

This reference to the leopard connects to the description of the leopard in Daniel 7, which is a symbol of Greece and its dominion over the world. Part of the Satanic genius of the Greek system was a metaphysical conflict between mind and body.

It is important to mention here how the principles of the Divine Pattern destroy this dualistic system which is a core element of the wine of Babylon. I will quote from chapter 7 of the book *Divine Pattern of Life* to make this contrast clear.

> If you could walk into the houses of government of most democratically controlled nations you would find a collection of representatives who align themselves with the government and at the same time a collection of representatives who would be classed as the opposition. Day in and day out these opposing forces debate the pressing issues of the nation. Each speaker seeks to persuade the chamber of the virtues of his argument. The discussion is often sharp and cutting, with a high level of tension. The process is a method designed for resolving disagreement that has been central to European and Indian philosophy since antiquity. Known as *Dialectic* in the Greek, it was made popular by Plato in the Socratic dialogues and is a dominant form of thinking in the world today.[14] Although these forces are visibly opposed to one another, they are actually understood to be complimentary, and the synthesis that emerges from the conflict is understood to produce a higher quality of truth and excellence for those involved and those they represent.
>
> If we consider this principle from an eastern perspective, we find the Chinese philosophy of Yin and Yang, where perceived opposites such as light and dark, fire and water, and male and female are actually complimentary and work to create harmony

[14] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic

and balance.[15] These principles have been made popular through the *Star Wars* film series that displayed light and dark forces working against each other but ultimately bringing balance to the *force*.

How do we account for this apparent world of opposites; a world of tension that evidently exists within and all around us? If we should allow our senses alone to guide us, there appears to be much supportive evidence for such a view. To borrow the opening words from the series of *Star Wars* we might say, "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away."

If we turn again to the ancient prophets, we can discover the genesis of this oppositional system.

> How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Isaiah 14:12-14, NKJV

Lucifer was created a beautiful angelic being and was first among the angels. He was brought into a universe that operated according to the principle of ἐκ → δια = ζωη, source-channel-life as defined in 1 Corinthians 8:6. There was perfect harmony as each created being approached the great Source of all through the example of the great δια – the Son of the Father. The sweet harmony that existed between Father and Son was shared by all the inhabitants of the universe as long as they held the example of the Son of God as the cornerstone of their own personal identity. There can only be one true ἐκ→, one ultimate Source of all things, and this is the Father. The harmony of

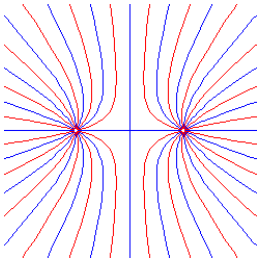
[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang

the universe depended on a constant recognition of this fact. "The Lord our God, the Lord is One." Deuteronomy 6:4.

Lucifer came to believe that all that he had been given was his by divine right and that he himself was his own God. This lie led him to express that he himself was like the Most High – the Father. Lucifer did not seek to eliminate the Father but rather to present himself as His inherently equal counterpart. He no longer wished to behold the Father through the δια lens of the Son of God. He envisioned a completely egalitarian model for the universe where all could identify themselves as their own source or ἐκ →. So Lucifer envisioned the ruling of the universe as:

ἐκ→ and ἐκ→
(source) and (source)

This formula that he proposed caused the natural flow of the ἐκ → δια = ζωη source-channel-life relationship to cease. The forces of two absolute ἐκ → sources would lead to a natural tension that requires a synthesis or balance to regain oneness again.



As a formula we might state this as:

ἐκ→ ζωη(life)← ἐκ
(source) ↓ (source)
ἐκ (source)

The collision of two ἐκ → forces results in a unification or synthesis of the two into a mystical one. The individual identities are sacrificed by compromise of personal conviction for the common good, and harmony or balance is seemingly restored. This new formula is noted for its elimination of the δια–channel principle. Thus, in order to maintain harmony in the universe there must be continual conflict and resolution as each individual finds a personal

identity based on being an ἐκ→ source. Lucifer has promised all who will listen to him:

> …God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God,** knowing good and evil. Genesis 3:5

So from the beginning it was the design of Lucifer to eliminate the great δια – the Son of God.[16] With the Son out of the way (divorced) Lucifer would invite everyone to be part of the universal source through whatever philosophical method one desired (remarried). Whether by pantheism[17] or by worshipping a god of co-equality and becoming like it, it does not matter as long as no δια channel principle actually exists in reality.

This is the origin of the great war of the universe. It is a war between two understandings of the fundamental relationship of its first two celestial beings.

Divine Pattern of Scripture Father and Son	God of this World's Pattern Neoplatonism→ Trinity
ἐκ → δια = ζωη source → channel = life	1. ἐκ → ζωη← ἐκ (source) ↓ (source) 2. ἐκ (source)

The pattern of the god of this world was inherited by the founders of our race when they accepted the lie, "You shall not surely die…you will be like God." Gen 3:4-5. This is when we traded the harmonious position of δια for the constant conflict between ourselves and with God to become our own ἐκ → source. How our

[16] John 8:44 … He was a murderer from the beginning…

[17] Pantheism is any religious belief or philosophical doctrine that identifies God with the universe or that God is the universe.

race treated the great δια when He came to this world is proof that this lie now exists naturally within humanity. He was hung on a cross and murdered. The meek and mild character of the Son of God, who was obedient to His Father in all things was not in harmony with the fallen mind we had inherited. Our first parents received this blasphemous pattern directly from its originator Lucifer.

It is interesting to note that the concept of "the dialectic" existed in the philosophy of Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BCE), who proposed that everything is in constant change as a result of inner strife and opposition.[18] The Scriptures expose the source of this inner strife by revealing Satan's false concept of God that destroys the δια identity. This is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

> But even if our gospel [good news] is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

It is impossible to understand the Divine Pattern and find true harmony when our minds are blinded by the god of this world. Our minds need to be reset or reborn into a correct understanding of the Divine Pattern.

In other words, repent of our idolatry of false ideas. This process is likened to death in the Bible because it is a complete surrender and rejection of everything that seems logical and reasonable when viewed through the lens of the god of this world. The only way to return to the δια principle is to ask Him, the Son of God, to teach you and help you. By ourselves this is impossible because our minds are set in the other direction under the influence of Luciferian teaching.

[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic#Principles

As an introduction to the many problems the "god of this world pattern" causes, let us consider the very perception of truth itself. Within the Divine Pattern "all things" proceed from the One ἐκ → Source which means there is one absolute truth or one source for truth. In the first stage of the "god of this world pattern" or creature-pattern there are at least two sources of truth if we replicate the pattern of elevating all persons to godhood or an ἐκ → source. Therefore you have many versions of "truth" and this logically leads to the maxim of the Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) that "subjectivity is truth and truth is subjectivity." Different truths are in competition with each other or mystically combined through force – either way this multi-source pattern is highly unstable, being built on sand. Truth is torn down from its objectivity, and it falls upon people to use whatever things they have at their disposal to convince others of their "truth."

The tools available include manipulation, deceit, and eventually physical force to establish one's own "truth", as there is no absolute truth in the "god of this world pattern." History reveals that the dominant players in this method have been those most capable of displaying several "truths" to different groups, even when such ideas conflict. Expressing several conflicting "truths" at once renders useless one's core identity, causing cognitive dissonance that traps the individual in a cage of powerlessness. Increased contradiction within the system thus requires the rise of 'spin doctors' to massage these "truths" to pacify the masses; and to give us a sense that many leaders only stand for what will advance their causes for domination. The individuals who are able to convince the majority of their "truths," however conflicting, can secure the votes needed for their "truths" to dominate the group. The political processes of all the nations of the world are thus fed by this twisting and massaging of the truth, leaving the members of each nation feeling deceived and frustrated. These feelings may eventually lead to revolution and a repositioning of power. While the leadership changes, the problems eventually reappear because it is built on the same concept of truth.

The only way to escape this oppositional system is through the worship of the Father and His Son. In the next chapter we will explore how this oppositional system devastated the institution of marriage through the early church and middle ages.

CHAPTER 15

IMPACT OF NEOPLATONISM ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The development of Neoplatonism within Christianity would have a disastrous impact on marriage. J.D. Unwin, who did extensive research on the relationship between the energy and progress of a culture and its attitude towards sex, made this penetrating point:

> In the fourth century the Christian Fathers began to compel the acceptance of the doctrine **that marriage was a compromise with sin and that those who married fell from an immaculate ideal.** As Jerome put it, 'Nuptiae terram replent, virginitas Paradisum.' (Marriage fills the earth, Virginity Paradise) It then became the fashion for new converts to found religious houses which were quickly filled by male and female votaries of celibacy. By their voluntary acceptance of compulsory continence the women who first entered these houses prove themselves to have been the very ones who, being fruitful, would have bred a generation of energetic sons; and if we examine the records of the events which took place

> in western Europe between the seventh and thirteenth centuries we find that after accepting and practising this type of Christianity a society soon ceased to manifest the same energy as before.[19]

By loss of energy, Unwin indicates a loss of capacity for deep intellectual attainments in the sciences, the arts, agriculture, and industry. This is what we see in the middle or dark ages: regression in a range of fields. If celibacy is the ideal, it wasn't reflected in culture and society.

One person reflecting on the impact of the church fathers, made this interesting observation.

> But Plato's story can also be, depending on how much Neoplatonism one swallows with it, a pernicious bit of hokum. **The problem with it is that it designates human sexuality as a consequence of a fall, or of the Fall. It suggests that human sexuality is evidence that the world is not how it ought to be.**
>
> Origen bought into this idea of human sexuality and that didn't end well.
>
> Poor Origen was probably the greatest theologian of the early centuries of the Christian church. Then he kinda sorta went nuts. His problem was that he had a physical body, which his Neoplatonic idealism told him must be bad. His body was also, as bodies tend to be, equipped with genitalia, and he figured that was really bad. Mix in a zealously literal reading of Matthew 5:29-30 and, like I said, that didn't end well.
>
> St. Augustine came to Christianity carrying the same Neoplatonic baggage that had led to Origen's troubles. On his good days, he knew better, **but on his bad days he couldn't seem to help reading St. Paul through the eyes of Plotinus.** And since Augustine is the inescapable, insurmountable, Most Important Christian Theologian

[19] J.D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture*, (Oxford University Press, 1934) p. 377

> Ever, he managed to imprint a good bit of this Neoplatonism on the church he helped to shape.
>
> That hasn't ended well either.
>
> People come with physical bodies and those physical bodies come with genitalia and it's neither helpful nor healthy to start thinking that these things are, in and of themselves, evil.[20]

If you study the lives of many who are commonly known as the church fathers of Christianity, you see this war between mind and body playing out; this drive towards asceticism combined with a need to punish the body in order to save the soul.

Now if we look at what the leaders of the early church said about marriage, they consistently present marriage as an indissoluble union for life. Divorce was not known amongst early Christianity. This tells us how they understood the words of Christ and the apostles.

> For both Romans and Christians, "love and affection between spouses was common and the procreation of children was a central expectation" of marriage. However, the Christian view of marriage was distinct in two significant ways. First, in Christian marriage, the spouses were moral equals and held to a single standard of fidelity (unlike the double standard in Roman marriage where adultery was permissible for the husband but not for the wife), **and marriage represented a lifelong, indissoluble bond (i.e., divorce was not permitted).**[21]

Here is a summary of the views of the early church fathers of the Roman Church:

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[20] https://www.patheos.com/blogs/slacktivist/2006/05/10/origen-of-love/

[21] https://issues.cune.edu/the-lgbt-disputes-teaching-and-practice-in-the-church-2/the-reformation-and-the-reform-of-marriage-historical-views-and-background-for-todays-disputes/

If a spouse persists in adulterous behavior and there is no other alternative, the marriage relationship can be terminated by the innocent party (Hermes, Clement, Jerome, Augustine).

Spouses that are divorced for any reason must remain celibate and single as long as both spouses live. Remarriage is expressly prohibited (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).

Whoever marries a divorced person commits adultery (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).

Whoever contracts a second marriage, whether a Christian or not, while a former spouse lives is sinning against God (Justin Martyr, Ambrose).

God does not, and the Church must not, take into account human law when it is in violation of God's law (Justin Martyr, Origen, Ambrose).

The marriage covenant between a man and a woman is permanent, as long as both husband and wife are alive (Clement, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).

It is a serious offence against God to take another person's spouse (Basil).

The Church must charge all persons who are in possession of another living person's former husband or wife with adultery (Basil).

Marriage and affection with a remarried spouse while a former spouse lives is the sin of adultery (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).

It is a serious mistake to believe that it is simply one's right to divorce a spouse and take another. Even though human law may permit such a thing, God strictly forbids it, and cannot, and will not honor it (Clement, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).

> Christians are to stop making excuses and trying to find justification for divorce and remarriage. There are no valid reasons acceptable to God (Jerome, Augustine).
>
> Marriage is a lifelong covenant that will never be invalidated by God while both parties live (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Augustine).[22]

All these men upheld the Bible truth of marriage for the entire life. The problem is that many of these men, influenced by Neoplatonism, manifested behaviours completely against the principles of biblical marriage.

Driven by the desire to control their "evil" bodies, many of the fathers became celibate. Some of them felt, like Augustine, who raged at his misfortune of having an erection at the sight of a pretty woman.[23] If Eusebius' account of Origen is to be believed, in his desperation to gain control of his body, he castrated himself! The fruits of Neoplatonism drove them to such extremes. Yet these are the men who held strictly to the biblical principle of no remarriage.

How could most of these men have any right conception of the blessings of marriage, and what it means to be a good husband and father? How do these men come to be revered as the great Christian lights of the world for that time?

To put it bluntly: These men placed the beautiful truth of marriage within the stinking corpse of Neoplatonism. In following the principles of these men, a man would have a constant sense of guilt for desires that God created as normal within a marriage. It would drive men to blame their wives for being agents of Satan to tempt them.

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[22] http://www.ephrataministries.org/remnant-2008-3Q-divorce-remarriage-early-church.

[23] https://www.nypress.com/news/why-did-augustine-really-hate-sex-MFNP10199901931019998 7

> This belief that the male sex drive was an obstacle to perfection lead pious Christian men into dreadful guilt complexes - and in turn they tried to shift the blame for this onto the influence of women. Tertullian, another major Christian authority, expressed his fear of female power in a letter to women that read in part: "even the grace and beauty you naturally enjoy must be obliterated by concealment and negligence.... it is to be feared, because of the injury and violence it inflicts on the men who admire you." St. Augustine likewise wrote in a letter: "What is the difference whether it is in a wife or mother, it is still Eve the temptress that we must beware of in any woman."[24]

These men saw marriage as an impediment to devotion. The Venerable Bede (AD 673-735), an English monk, once wrote that he was not able to pray during sexual intercourse, and because Paul tells Christians to pray without ceasing, it was best for him to abstain from sex and be celibate.

How can any man with this type of mind ever be a blessing to a wife? Augustine presents to us the idea that a man's wife or even his mother is a temptress to seduce a man. If only this man knew the gospel! But his Neoplatonic framework hid from him the joy of the New Covenant in Christ where there is true Divine Pattern harmony between mind and body, allowing marriage to be a fountain of blessings of sex and love.

The fruit of these early church fathers has assisted Satan in his goal to destroy marriage. In describing the Roman System, the Spirit of Prophecy made this poignant observation:

> A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are

[24] http://www.witch.plus.com/7day-extracts/St.-Augustine-and-his-peni.html

> ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. **What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him.** The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power.—*The Great Controversy*, 572.2

Taking this principle into marriage, what we have in the Roman system is a method of destroying marriage which passes as a method to uphold and bless marriage. The natural fruit of mind against body was to ensure that all the leaders of the Catholic Church would be celibate along with all of its nuns; what would any of these people know about marriage? Sex was something to be denied to gain merit, and there was no merit in marriage. But did all these attempts at working for salvation through celibacy bring peace? Is it a surprise to find all the terrible abuse of children in the Catholic Church, isn't this the fruit of trying to have your mind war against your body?

In the rise of Roman Catholicism, we see in the person of Constantine the manifestation of a direct attack on the two institutions from Eden: marriage and the Sabbath.

> It has ever been the object of Satan to either abolish altogether, or to pervert the institutions of the Sabbath and Marriage. The emperor Constantine was an efficient agent of Satan to corrupt and change them both. How he figured in regard to marriage is well described by Bishop Newton. He says:
>
> "Forbidding to Marry. Not regarding the desire of women, neglecting and discouraging marriage; as both the Latin and Greeks did to the great detriment of human society, and to the great discredit of the Christian religion. The Julian and Papian laws which were enacted in the most flourishing times of the Romans, for the favor and encouragement of those who were married and

had children, Constantine himself repealed, and allowed equal or greater privileges and immunities to those who were unmarried and had no children. Nay, he held in the highest veneration those men who had devoted themselves to the divine philosophy, i.e., to a monastic life; and almost adored the most holy company of perpetual virgins, being convinced that the God to whom they had consecrated themselves, did dwell in their minds.

His example was followed by his successors; and the married clergy were discountenanced and depressed; the monks were honored and advanced, and in the fourth century like a torrent overran the eastern church, and soon after, the western too.

This was evidently not regarding the desire of wives, or conjugal affection. At first only second marriages were prohibited, but in time the clergy were absolutely restrained from marrying at all. So much did the power here described, 'Magnify himself above all,' over God himself, by contradicting the primary law of God and nature; and making that dishonorable which the scripture (Heb. xiii, 4,) hath pronounced 'honorable in all.'"-Bp. Newton's Work, p. 303.

What a pity that so many intelligent men, and even professed Christians will do Satan's work in opposing these divine institutions. While the spiritualists are striking against marriage, some Christian bodies are opposing the Sabbath. Each are striking against the commandments of God, and the teachings of his Son. Jesus Christ has defended the sacredness of both these institutions.—M.E. Cornell, "Ancient and Honorable", *Review and Herald*, May 23, 1865

Not only did Constantine create a Sunday law, but he caused the celibate life to flourish to the detriment of marriage, these principles being underpinned by Neoplatonism. Therefore, the Roman system undermined Sabbath and marriage through these things:

1. Sunday Observance, Christmas and Easter replacing, the Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost, Atonement and Tabernacles.

2. The Trinity which destroys the Divine Pattern of Father and Son.
3. Madonna and child inverting the Divine Pattern within humanity.
4. Celibate priesthood made superior to people who are married, once again destroying God's command to make man in the image of God and His Son.
5. The system of Neoplatonism placing all sexual relations in a context of sin and evil.

The Adventist movement understands well Rome's attack on the Sabbath, but do we see the extent of its attack on marriage?

Paul tells us plainly that an elder or bishop should be the husband of one wife. The language is plain, but it is at war with Neoplatonism, and the Roman church follows the Greek principles over the Bible.

> However, let's put the shoe on the other foot. Neoplatonism has plagued western civilization in toto. It is, in fact, at the root of much drug abuse, the hippie movement, and radical feminism—as well as chauvinism. Listen again to Rushdoony:
>
> On hippies (the book was written in 1973):
>
> "This attitude is very much like that of the modern hippy, who despises the flesh and shows contempt for the body and its dress. The hippy, in his sexuality, expresses contempt for the body, either by treating sexual acts as of no account in casual promiscuity, or by a bored denial of sex. There is far more abstention from sex among hippies than is generally recognized. Either in abstention or in casual, unemotional promiscuity, it is a contempt of the flesh which is manifested. Dirty bodies and dirty clothing are other means of manifesting the same faith." (p. 5)
>
> On radical chauvinism (p. 11):

"The gospel of Sir Thomas More was his Utopia, wherein man's mind imposed its idea on all of the world of matter. For More, wives were to be selected after being inspected naked; their minds were not important enough to count. So unimportant was matter or particularity, so little was it the world of the spirit, that wives were to be chosen without regard to the unity of mind and matter, naked on inspection like cattle."

On inverted neoplatonism (p. 12):

"Inverted neoplatonism glorified nature and therefore women. The troubadors of medieval and Renaissance Europe downgraded love in marriage, because it belonged to the world of grace, which they identified as the platonic world of spirit. Adultery, on the other hand, belonged to the world of nature. The wife was thus a low creature, and the illicit lover a queen of love. As Valency noted, in writing of such adulterous love, 'However illicit it might be from the point of view of religion and society, it had the sanction of nature; as matters stood it was grounded on firmer stuff than the marriage bond.' 'The sanction of nature,' this is the key. Two worlds exist for neoplatonism, as for all dialecticism; they are alien to one another, so that, however much they exist as one, the world of matter and spirit, nature and grace, or nature and freedom, are somehow at odds with one another. If one is favored, the other must suffer. If the sanction of nature, illicit love, is exalted, the sanction of grace, lawful marriage, must be downgraded, because it is in principle unnatural for love and marriage, nature and grace, to be compatible."[25]

Within the principles of an oppositional system, Neoplatonism could be easily inverted or switched. Through this inverted lens, we see the rush of men seeking to make themselves women. They so admire and worship the feminine entity, that they want to become what they consider the best good.

[25] https://bible.org/article/rushdoony-neoplatonism-and-biblical-view-sex

It is important to note that in AD 1184 Rome made marriage a sacrament. This means it is a means of salvation; it is something a lay person can do to be saved. This completely changes the meaning of marriage. It locks it into the Old Covenant of things you must do to be saved. The Catholic Church would argue that God grants grace through this sacrament, but the effect is that marriage is a means of salvation for the individual – it becomes a cross you must bear as it were for the good of your soul and the church.

By the time of the middle ages, the institution of marriage was very complicated. The church's focus on celibacy relegated marriage to a private affair without the need for the involvement of the church.

> It must be remembered, however, that for most of the medieval period, marriage belonged to the private sphere of the family, not the public sphere of the Church. Because marriages involved an exchange of property and a linkage of families, they were often arranged by parents or families and celebrated, not in a church, but in private homes, sometimes with, but often without, the formal blessing of the Church or presence of a priest.[26]

Rome did have some stipulations as to who could or could not marry, but most of these could be overcome through the payment of money to the church.

Marriages were often arranged with those espoused still being children; with girls being married in their teens and boys in their twenties. Marriage offered families prestige and power through the right connections. Women were treated more harshly than men for sexual misconduct.

In order to set marriage free to come into its Edenic beauty, we must discern this false oppositional system and allow the Spirit of Christ,

[26] https://issues.cune.edu/the-lgbt-disputes-teaching-and-practice-in-the-church-2/the-reformation-and-the-reform-of-marriage-historical-views-and-background-for-todays-disputes/

the only begotten Son to remove within us this tension of mind against body.

Here is a good summary of this tension and its effect on marriage in the middle ages:

> Christian teaching since the patristic period has postulated **a tension between salvation and pleasure: most influential Christian thinkers have nurtured a gloomy suspicion that one cannot be attained without renouncing the other.** Similarly the medieval church long remained suspicious, even hostile towards family ties. The church leaders suspected that conjugal affection and parental love often disguised sensual entanglements and worldly values. For this reason the theologians saw little value in family attachments…
>
> For most of the Christian era before the Reformation, marriage and family were discouraged and even denigrated. Sexual relations were condemned and associated with the evil of original sin. Singleness and celibacy were exalted as a higher and holier state of spirituality…
>
> Marriage during the time of Luther was one of the seven sacraments which was decided during the council of Verona in 1184. Although marriage was not administered within the framework of church liturgy. Although termed a sacrament, marriage was not required to take place in a church or officiated by a priest. The church viewed marriage as a gift from God and an act of consent between a man and a woman and therefore church law did very little to regulate marriage. In the early medieval age, daughters were handed over by their fathers to their husbands in a public ceremony which was then followed by the consummation of the marriage. By the late medieval period however the practice was no longer universally followed and boys and girls as young as fourteen were betrothing themselves to each other without parental consent. A problem arose when some of these young couples would

> make secret agreement to each other, promise to marry in the future and then validate this with consummation.
>
> Young men would pledge marriage, consummate the marriage and then denied having done so, sometimes leaving the girl no longer a virgin and in some case pregnant. These secret betrothals and promises of marriages resulted in thousands of "he said/she said" arguments. "The ecclesiastical courts were overrun with cases of contested betrothal: girls seduced on alleged promises of marriage, parents challenging the secret unions of their children, bigamous Casanovas accused of secretly promising marriage to two or more women, and possibly the most embarrassing of all, men and women sincerely attempting to make public their private vows, only to be challenged by someone claiming to have been secretly promised marriage by one of the partners."[27]

Having discovered the Divine Pattern through a worship of the true God and His Son, we found a door to escape this mind and body war; we see an answer to this conflict between reason and emotion. I ask the reader to consider carefully how powerful is the truth of the invisible Father manifested through His visible Son, and the complete harmony between the two, as a bulwark against Neoplatonic dualism.

The Catholic Church made celibacy the most desired life by focusing on the mind and spirit, while mortifying the flesh. The things of the flesh were seen as being at war with the spirit of a person. Marriage became a necessary evil; it was not ideal but rather a way to legally enjoy something evil (the flesh). These principles depleted the energies of the nations it conquered and brought darkness upon the world through propagating ignorance and superstition.

[27] Trevor O'Reggio, How Martin Luther Transformed Marriage (2021) Faculty Publications 2253. Https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/2253

The Reformation would overturn celibacy and place marriage on a better biblical platform, but coming out of darkness would have many challenges.

CHAPTER 16

PROTESTANT REACTIONS TO CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

Martin Luther, being one of the most influential figures of the reformation spoke of the effect of Roman Catholic teaching on his thoughts about marriage. Sexual relations were condemned and associated with the evil of original sin. Singleness and celibacy were exalted as a higher and holier state of spirituality.[28]

The year after Luther appeared before the Diet of Worms, he penned *The Estate of Marriage.* Although not everyone living today is familiar with Luther's teachings on righteousness by faith, most people have been impacted by his views on marriage and the home.

In reading Luther's *The Estate of Marriage*, there is a clear sense of freedom in his writing. He sweeps away celibacy as the highest

[28] Trevor O. Reggio, Martin Luther on Marriage and Family. (2012). Faculty Publications. Paper 20. http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/ church-history-pubs/20

spiritual place to be, but more importantly, he completely redefines sexual desire as something given by God as part of His design to be fruitful and multiply. He systematically dismantles the excessive Catholic impediments to marriage, which Rome used as a money-making venture to extract funds from the populace. The deftness of his writing, the force of his words from Scripture brought much light to the dark world of his time. The following is Luther dismantling the first impediment erected by Rome:

> The pope in his canon law has thought up eighteen distinct reasons for preventing or dissolving a marriage, nearly all of which I reject and condemn. Indeed, the pope himself does not adhere to them so strictly or firmly but what one can rescind any of them with gold and silver. Actually, they were only invented in order to be a net for gold and a noose for the soul, II Peter 2 [:14]. In order to expose their folly we will take a look at all eighteen of them in turn
>
> The first impediment is blood relationship. Here they have forbidden marriage up to the third and fourth degrees of consanguinity. If in this situation you have no money, then even though God freely permits it you must nevertheless not take in marriage your female relative within the third and fourth degrees, or you must put her away if you have already married her. But if you have the money, such a marriage is permitted. Those hucksters offer for sale women who never have been their own. So that you can defend yourself against this tyranny… .—Martin Luther, *The Estate of Marriage*

To remove the negative effect that the dominance of celibacy had in the church, Luther does not present marriage as an option but as a duty of all Christians unless one has a biological defect that prevents the raising of a family or if one has an exceptional gift to be a eunuch; meaning they are unaffected by sexual desire.

> In the second place, after God had made man and woman he blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply" [Gen. 1:28]. From this passage we may be assured that man and woman

> should and must come together in order to multiply. Now this [ordinance] is just as inflexible as the first, and no more to be despised and made fun of than the other, since God gives it his blessing and does something over and above the act of creation. Hence, as it is not within my power not to be a man, so it is not my prerogative to be without a woman. Again, as it is not in your power not to be a woman, so it is not your prerogative to be without a man. For it is not a matter of free choice or decision but a natural and necessary thing, that whatever is a man must have a woman and whatever is a woman must have a man.—Ibid

Luther then presents sexual relations between man and wife as part of nature; God designed it to be this way. He loosened the strength of the doctrine of Original Sin and the guilt of having sexual desire in marriage.

> For this word which God speaks, "Be fruitful and multiply," is not a command. It is more than a command, namely, a divine ordinance [werck] which it is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore. Rather, it is just as necessary as the fact that I am a man, and more necessary than sleeping and waking, eating and drinking, and emptying the bowels and bladder. It is a nature and disposition just as innate as the organs involved in it Therefore, just as God does not command anyone to be a man or a woman but creates them the way they have to be, so he does not command them to multiply **but creates them so that they have to multiply. And wherever men try to resist this, it remains irresistible nonetheless** and goes its way through fornication, adultery, and secret sins, **for this is a matter of nature and not of choice.**—Ibid

Upon this reasoning, Luther insists that priests and nuns must break their vows of celibacy and get married.

> For the Word of God which created you and said, "Be fruitful and multiply," abides and rules within you; you can by no means ignore it, or you will be bound to commit heinous sins without end [...].

> **From this you can now see the extent of the validity of all cloister vows. No vow of any youth or maiden is valid before God,** except that of a person in one of the three categories which God alone has himself excepted. **Therefore, priests, monks, and nuns are duty-bound to forsake their vows whenever they find that God's ordinance to produce seed and to multiply is powerful and strong within them. They have no power by any authority, law, command, or vow to hinder this which God has created within them.** If they do hinder it, however, you may be sure that they will not remain pure but inevitably besmirch themselves with secret sins or fornication. For they are simply incapable of resisting the word and ordinance of God within them. Matters will take their course as God has ordained.—Ibid

This step by Luther is important. I believe that God met the people where they were in the writings of Luther. Their views of God did not give to them a clear picture of the Agape of God, therefore Agape love could not be grasped by them. Luther therefore presents the Eros love of man as God's design in nature. Luther, schooled in the Greek principles of Neoplatonism, operates within this system to invert celibacy, but having made the Bible his rule of faith, he avoids the extremes of simply reverting to the flesh completely.

This principle is vital to grasp. God could not bring the people at this point to a higher principle, so He gives to men, principles they can work with and understand. I want to contrast what Luther is saying with the principles of the Father of Love movement. Principles based upon Jesus being the begotten Son, and the Father and Son being completely non-violent and non-condemning. In this context we present some thoughts from the book *Original Love*.[29]

> When we think about the event when Adam first saw Eve, most men imagine that Adam said WOOO! MAN! Yet this places onto Scripture the inclinations of the perverted heart. Many men can't even contemplate imagery of the garden for fear their corrupted

[29] Available for download from *maranathamedia.com*

nature will take control. To understand the love that was in the heart of Adam when he saw Eve we simply need to read the Bible.

> Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to 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." Genesis 2:22-23

Notice carefully the words of Adam as their eyes meet. "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." **The basis of this original love was not that Adam saw something beautiful which he desired to possess. He saw someone that had drawn their life from him; he saw a person that had come from next to his heart and therefore he cherished her as his second self.** As Paul clearly expressed it:

> So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Ephesians 5:28-30

So we see that just as Adam said to Eve you are of my flesh and bone, in the same manner the second Adam says to the church, you are of my flesh and bone. He loves us not because we have anything to offer him but because we came from Him. Such love!

Beyond this, if you read the story in Genesis two carefully, you will see that Adam was placed in the garden over all creation before the woman was created from his rib. When she came forth from him, all that he possessed he gave to her to be a joint steward with him. Once again, did he do this because he saw something he desired to own and control? Did he seek to buy her with his assets? No, that is not the love that was in Adam's heart for Eve. The love that was in his heart was the love that comes from God, for God is love. But what love is that? The Greek for this is *Agape* which means benevolent love; a love that does not depend on any qualities

> possessed by the receiver. The Greek word that often means love today is *Eros*, which is never endorsed in the Bible. *Eros* is a love of that which is beautiful, noble and lovely. *Eros* is the desire to possess and enjoy the things that please our eyes, appetites and bodies. See Judges 14:2,3 and 2 Samuel 11:2 as examples.
>
> When Eve came to Adam with the forbidden fruit, she came possessing something that God had not given to Adam to give to her. With this fruit Eve now possessed something that he did not have. She had come from the tree with her mind filled with a new way of thinking. Satan beguiled Eve with his subtle words. Satan spoke to her as one who possessed beauty in herself. He did not address her as one who had received her inheritance from Adam. He addressed her simply as beautiful and this flattered her and caused her to forget the source of her beauty. **The mind that looks upon a woman and thinks of her beauty in order to obtain something from her is a mind inspired by Satan.** —*Original Love*, 4-5

The God of the Catholic Church is firstly Eros. Luther was not in a position to discern this because of his commitment to the Trinity. Therefore, God could only reform the marriage institution so far. What Luther wrote was a major leap forward from Roman Catholicism, but this was not the completion of restoring the marriage institution.

The principles expressed in the books *Life Matters, Divine Pattern of Life,* and *Original Love*, are a deeper call to a concept of love which will cause marriage to operate according to its original design. To ask people to submit to life-long marriage without the true foundations of Agape available to people, will make marriage extremely hard. As such we can understand why Luther provides another concession in the context of Eros, and that is the statute of innocent party divorce. The principle he provides is important in the context of the Adventist pioneer movement which has followed Luther in his interpretation of Matt 5:32; 19:9.

> 'And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.'
>
> **Here you see that in the case of adultery Christ permits the divorce of husband and wife, so that the innocent person may remarry.** For in saying that he commits adultery who marries another after divorcing his wife, "except for unchastity," **Christ is making it quite clear that he who divorces his wife on account of unchastity and then marries another does not commit adultery.** —Martin Luther, *The Estate of Marriage*

Once Luther had opened the door for divorce due to the exception clause, he extended the principle to include other reasons for divorce besides just adultery. It is simple to show that these further arguments are also unbiblical.

Luther allowed for divorce on the principle of failing to provide a spouse with sexual privileges, or deserting them, and living elsewhere.

> The third case for divorce is that in which one of the parties deprives and avoids the other, refusing to fulfil the conjugal duty or to live with the other person.—Ibid

He then suggests following the story of the Persian King Ahasuerus, when he removed Vashti and installed Esther. Luther then continues in a very direct manner on this question.

> Here you should be guided by the words of St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 7 [:4-5], "The husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does; likewise the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does. Do not deprive each other, except by agreement," etc. Notice that St. Paul forbids either party to deprive the other, for by the marriage vow each submits his body to the other in conjugal duty. **When one resists the other and refuses the conjugal duty she is robbing the other of the body she had bestowed upon him. This is really contrary to marriage, and dissolves the marriage. For**

> **this reason the civil government must compel the wife, or put her to death. If the government fails to act, the husband must reason that his wife has been stolen away and slain by robbers; he must seek another.** We would certainly have to accept it if someone's life were taken from him. Why then should we not also accept it if a wife steals herself away from her husband, or is stolen away by others?—Ibid

This thought process from Luther does not measure up to the words of Christ and Paul and the other authors of the New Testament. But if we fail to see the weakness of Luther's position on this question, then consider another case that he addresses from his days as a priest, from which he does not appear to retract:

> I once wrote down some advice concerning such persons for those who hear confession. It related to those cases where a husband or wife comes and wants to learn what he should do: his spouse is unable to fulfil the conjugal duty, yet he cannot get along without it because he finds that God's ordinance to multiply is still in force within him. Here they have accused me of teaching that when a husband is unable to satisfy his wife's sexual desire she should run to somebody else. Let the topsy-turvy liars spread their lies. The words of Christ and his apostles were turned upside down; should they not also turn my words topsy-turvy? To whose detriment it will be they shall surely find out.
>
> What I said was this: if a woman who is fit for marriage has a husband who is not, and she is unable openly to take unto herself another and unwilling, too, to do anything dishonorable since the pope in such a case demands without cause abundant testimony and evidence, **she should say to her husband, "Look, my dear husband, you are unable to fulfil your conjugal duty toward me; you have cheated me out of my maidenhood and even imperilled my honor and my soul's salvation; in the sight of God there is no real marriage between us. Grant me the privilege of contracting a secret marriage with your brother or closest relative, and you retain the title of husband so that your property will not fall to**

> **strangers. Consent to being betrayed voluntarily by me, as you have betrayed me without my consent."**—Ibid

It is evident that due to his difficult experience as a monk under the yoke of Rome that he wanted to free men of, Luther ended up coming to some extreme conclusions. Luther's actions here are clearly outside of Scripture. If that is the case for this question, then it casts doubt upon his argumentation for innocent party remarriage in the case of adultery.

I do not say that Luther should be condemned for what he said. Luther is one of the greatest figures in human history since the apostles of Christ, and has more than any other man won for us in the modern era freedom of conscience.

In our pursuit of restoring all things to their original state, we must thank Luther for opening the door to restoration, but in like manner to his work, we must continue the work of reformation.

Luther rescued marriage from celibacy and made it honourable. He brought the wedding ceremony into the church to be conducted through due process. He protected the young by requiring marriages of younger people to be provided with parental consent. These were wonderful reforms. But we must remember that the underpinning principles of Neoplatonism and/or Eros love remained within the Protestant religion. Notice how Luther concludes his work on the *Estate of Marriage*:

> With all this extolling of married life, however, I have not meant to ascribe to nature a condition of sinlessness. On the contrary, I say that flesh and blood, corrupted through Adam, is conceived and born in sin, as Psalm 51 [:5] says. **Intercourse is never without Sin; but God excuses it by his grace because the estate of marriage is his work,** and he preserves in and through the sin all that good which he has implanted and blessed in marriage.—Ibid

Since Luther framed marriage in the context of Eros, he is correct in what he says, in Eros there is always lust. But for those responding

to the Third Angel's Message which calls God's children to perfection of character, it cannot be that the sexual experience is always considered to be sinful.

We might pause briefly to consider John Calvin's writing on marriage. Looking through his lens of the sovereignty of God and His everlasting punishment of the wicked, Calvin is obsessed with rules, restrictions, and punishment of evildoers. Calvin understandably condemned all forms of fornication, but appears to have been the harshest upon adultery.

> Calvin saved his greatest thunder for the sin of adultery, which he saw as the most fundamental violation of the created structure of the marital covenant. He read the Commandment against adultery expansively to outlaw various illicit alliances and actions, within and without the marital estate. Within marriage, the obvious case of adultery was sexual intercourse or any other form of lewd sexual act with a party not one's spouse. Calvin regarded this form of adultery as "the worst abomination," for in one act the adulterer violates his or her covenant bonds with spouse, God, and broader community. "It is not without cause that marriage is called a covenant with God," Calvin thundered from his Geneva pulpit. "[W]henever a husband breaks his promise which he has made to his wife, he has not only perjured himself with respect to her, but also with respect to God. The same is true of the wife. She not only wrongs her husband, but the living God." "She sets herself against His majesty." **Calvin advocated harsh punishment for adulterers, even execution in notorious cases,** but also sought to balance any punishment with the ongoing needs of the innocent spouse and children if the parties were later divorced.[30]

We might suppose that as the guilty party was to be executed, the innocent party was clearly free to remarry! But apart from this,

[30] John Witte, John Calvin on Marriage and Family. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335638773

Calvin joined Luther in proclaiming innocent party divorce and remarriage along with divorce and remarriage for desertion.

Calvin also joined Luther in rejecting the notion that marriage was a sacrament, arguing instead that it was a civil ordinance overseen by the state.

While many question the state's involvement in marriage, the state during the reformation was usually superior to the church in discipline and morals.

The principles established by reformers such as Luther and Calvin have provided stability to society for the past 500 years. But underlying principles within the reformation would ultimately assist in the current gender confusion, and the general demise of the marriage institution.

Next I would like to consider other factors which have stood against the Divine Pattern of Father and Son. We will consider how the Trinity impacts the relation between Agape and Eros, and is one of the major impediments to Agape-based marriage. We will also consider the other reactionary response to Rome – the Renaissance which fostered humanism, which helped to fuel the French Revolution.

CHAPTER 17

AGAPE AND EROS

When we consider the current crisis of our human civilization, the breakdown of morality, gender confusion, and the abandonment of stable marriage, we might be tempted to look for a single cause, or a group of people to blame. We might blame the cross-national technocratic elite for promoting anti-family propaganda in their pursuit of ever cheaper and more efficient labor. We might blame the excesses of modern individualistic liberalism, which often promotes anti-family agendas in their quest for freedom from the old system of society. We can look at the introduction of the birth control pill and the sexual revolution. There are many factors to be considered.

But if we allow ourselves the liberty to dig more deeply into influences from the past 2000 years which have impacted our families and altered our structures of community and government, we might be able to grasp the deeper causes for why the institution of marriage has been prevented from reaching its intended glory.

The starting point for everything begins here.

> yet to us there is one God, **the Father**, out from whom as a **source are all things** and we for Him, and one **Lord Jesus Christ, through**

> **whose intermediate agency all things exist** and we through Him.
> 1 Corinthians 8:6, Wuest Expanded Translation

The primary relation of the universe between Father and Son is a source and channel relationship. The Son receives all that He has from His Father including life itself, for all things find their source in the Father.

The inheritance of the Son of God from His Father is what defines the Father's Agape love. Agape is a love that gives freely with no drawing influence or motivation from the one receiving. Let us contrast Agape with Eros as follows:

> Agape is often contrasted with eros, which is not found in the New Testament though it is prominent in Greek philosophy. Eros can refer to a vulgar, carnal love, but in the context of Hellenic thought it takes the form of spiritual love that aspires to procure the highest good. **Eros is the desire to possess and enjoy** [the need or desire for another]; agape is the willingness to serve without reservations.... **Eros is attracted to that which has the greatest value** [need for equal status or co-equality]; agape goes out to the least worthy. **Eros discovers value** [seeks equal] **whereas agape creates value** [makes equal]. **Agape is a gift love whereas eros is a need love. Eros springs from a deficiency that must be satisfied. Agape is the overflowing abundance of divine grace.**—'*God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness and Love*', D. Bloesch, 2006, p. 147

To believe that Jesus is the begotten Son is to believe that God has given Him everything, and that is why we behold in the person of the Son of God one who is filled with gratitude, joy, and love to His Father.

To accept the begotten Son and receive His Spirit into your heart is to receive life, and His Spirit will overturn the destructive relationship principles that have been swirling through humanity for thousands of years. It will stop the oppositional framework of Satan as manifested in Neoplatonism.

But the doctrine of the Trinity has at its core the idea that Father and Son and Spirit are equal because of their inherent power. Thus the love that exists between them is not Agape, but Eros. They are attracted to each other because of their inherent power. This is how Pope Benedict puts it:

> God is the absolute and ultimate source of all being; but this universal principle of creation—the Logos, primordial reason—is at the same time a lover with all the passion of a true love. **Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape.**—Pope Benedict IX Encyclical Letter, 2005, Deus Caritas Est "God is Love."

The Papacy calls God Eros refined and purified by Agape, but He is Eros first. As Augustine puts it:

> Love is of some one that loves, and with love something is loved. —Augustine. De Trinitite "On the Trinity" Book VIII

Augustine defines love as something being loved. For love to exist, someone or something needs to be there before love can exist. Adventist theologians Whidden, Moon, and Reeve describe it this way:

> If God is truly—in His very essence—the God of "love" (John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8), then we need to consider the following implications. Could one who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image—could this God truly be called love if He existed only as a solitary being? Is not love especially divine love, possible only if the one who made our universe was a plural being who was exercising "love" within His divine plurality from all eternity past?...[now quotes from Bruce Metzger] "The Unitarian professes to agree with the statement that 'God is love.' But these words 'God is love,' have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not love. **For, if love be of the essence of God, he must have possessed an eternal object of love.**

> **Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals.** Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so **God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. Being infinite, he must have eternally possessed an infinite object of his love, some alter ego, or, to use the language of traditional Christian theology, a consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal Son.**—*The Trinity*, Whidden, Moon and Reeve, 115-116

But it is Eros that can't love someone lower than itself, not Agape. Eros can only appreciate and be drawn to something equal or greater than itself. Within the Trinity, this creates a source-source relationship of co-equals, rather than a source-channel relationship as revealed in 1 Corinthians 8:6.

In order to obscure the oppositional framework this produces as we discussed earlier in chapter 14, the Trinity blends the three members of the Godhead into one mystical entity. All elements thus spring forth from the One God.

But as male and female are made in the image of God, to believe that God and His Son are co-equal and thus both sources will cause the husband and wife to perceive themselves in the same manner, creating a natural tension or opposition in the leadership of the home. Their position and role in the relationship become obscured; being co-equal as source-source means that both can be anything in this model – except that this isn't true to reality, the man cannot give birth, for example.

In the true view of God, the clear headship of the Father over His Son is replicated in the man and his wife.

> But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. 1 Corinthians 11:3, NKJV

As Christ received all from God and the woman received all through her husband, the consequent gratitude, joy and honour towards the one who gave provides for a natural headship without tension.

Within the Trinity, the Son receives nothing from the Father, for He is part of the One, and is Himself the giver of all things. The headship then must be arbitrary or imposed rather than natural.

Thus, the worship of the Trinity destroys the true relationship that should exist between husband and wife, and will therefore prevent the marriage institution from finding its completion of God's design.

It was Satan who desired a co-equal position in the Godhead. He wanted to be like the Most High in position and power. In worshipping the Trinity, we are unwittingly worshipping the system that Satan envisaged and desired.

This is one of the reasons why Luther could not progress beyond Eros in his statements about marriage; his worship of the Trinity did not provide him with the correct framework to bring Agape love into marriage.

The Adventist pioneers had the correct understanding of God, and they could have made a natural transition into an agape framework of marriage if they had accepted the 1888 message. But the failure to do this caused a fall back to the Trinity and thus closed the door for marriage to be restored to its rightful place.

The Father of Love movement now has the opportunity to take the step to restore marriage to its correct place in the context of the Divine Pattern which is the foundation for Agape love.

This step will allow us to step into marriage for life without the need for remarriage after divorce. Only the pioneer movement which restored the Father and Son truth, and the 1888 message which gave to us the framework for Agape, can open the door for New Covenant marriage to become a reality.

Will God's people now take this step to believe that He will restore the marriage relation to complete Agape; a love that reflects the character of Christ, who stays with every one of us our entire lives?

Will we open to the knocking on the door to Laodicea which desperately needs Agape? Will we be part of the movement which will close the breach on the seventh commandment?

CHAPTER 18

POST REFORMATION DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the fact that the Reformers made provisions for divorce, and began to write them into their legal codes, the Protestant states of continental Europe made divorce difficult to obtain. In the formulation of their marriage laws, they often referred back to Catholic canon law as a basis for their legislation.

> Despite Luther's attack on the canon law, Protestant jurists, in the main, became advocates for the restoration of the canon law in Protestant lands.[31]

The social structure of society, which saw the family unit as set in the extended family network, combined with the strengthening of parental consent laws both in Protestant and Catholic[32] regions, made divorce difficult to secure. Among Protestant nations, England was particularly resistant to divorce.

[31] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/law-and-history-review/article/marriage-law-and-the-reformation/8444F3C7C839D91DE495DC3B031007C2

[32] This occurred at the council of Trent in response to the Reformation

The Church of England's resistance to divorce was so strong that the only route to a divorce was via an act of Parliament—a law voted through by both houses. Not surprisingly, few people had the means or inclination to expose their private unhappiness to the press, the public and 800-odd politicians. When a divorce law was finally enacted in 1857, and the "floodgates" were opened, the number of divorces in English history stood at a mere 324.[33]

So even though the Reformation made provisions for divorce and remarriage, tighter civil laws, extended family structure, economic inequality between men and women, the responsibility for raising children, and the size of families were all factors in keeping divorce to a minimum.

It is upon this point that researcher J.D. Unwin draws some interesting conclusions about England along with the Sumerian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman, and Anglo-Saxon societies as showing the greatest social energies of any cultures that have existed in this world.

> When absolute monogamy is the rule, marriage is a means whereby a man secures domestic labour and heirs of his blood. A wife and her children are under the domination of her husband; in the eyes of the law he alone is an entity. The wife is taught to submit to her husband in all things; it is her duty to serve him and to obey him. No woman may have sexual relations with any other man than with him whom she marries as a virgin. When she is married, she is not permitted to withhold conjugal rights. In an absolutely monogamous society female chastity becomes desirable for its own sake, for after a while the women accept as a point of honour the restraint imposed upon them by their lords. Over his children also a man has complete power…

[33] https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/heartbreaking-history-of-divorce-180949439/

> Among the English, in spite of a consistent outcry by an excited minority, divorce by mutual consent was not in operation; a semblance of the Catholic tradition which the Protestant and Nonconformist English had inherited prevented its legal enactment. If, however, the contracting parties to an English marriage were rich, they could secure, in the twentieth century, a divorce as and when they wished, by arranging to break the letter of the existing law.
>
> With these two exceptions the same changes were made successively by the Sumerians, Babylonians, Athenians, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, and Protestant English. These societies lived in different geographical environments; they belonged to different racial stocks; but the history of their marriage customs is the same. In the beginning each society had the same ideas in regard to sexual regulations. Then the same struggles took place; the same sentiments were expressed; the same changes were made; the same results ensued. Each society reduced its sexual opportunity to a minimum and, displaying great social energy, flourished greatly. Then it extended its sexual opportunity; its energy decreased, and faded away. The one outstanding feature of the whole story is its unrelieved monotony. [34]

The essence of what Unwin found in his extensive research is that the strongest and most prosperous nations where those which commenced with absolute monogamy, with limited to no premarital sex. The husband and father is the lord of the home and wife and children are in subjection to him. Thus Unwin attributes the vast prosperity of the English nation to its marriage principles of an indissoluble union for life.

It is of significant interest that of the nations listed by Unwin, quite a few of them were seen by Daniel in vision: Babylon, Greece, and Rome. Unwin laments that in every case, when the society became

[34] J.D Unwin, *Sex in Culture* (Oxford University, 1934) p. 381

prosperous, they relaxed their marriage laws and consequently, within three generations lost their social energy and power to rule.

We would not suggest that all of these nations experienced loving family relationships or were devoid of abuse, but simply to observe the correlation between the industry and intellectual advances of a nation and its conservative marital policy.

Many have pointed to the prosperity of Protestant nations as being related to their brand of religion. While it is true that there are aspects of the Protestant faith which fostered prosperity, a wider view of history reveals that similar social energies were displayed in pagan nations which held to strict marital guidelines and the indissoluble union of marriage.

Protestantism is represented by the church of Sardis in the list of the Seven Churches. It has a name that it lives but is dead (Rev 3:1). Like its mother, it held the doctrines of the Trinity, Sunday, and the underpinning framework of Neoplatonism, nuanced through a more rigid reliance on the Bible, than the authority of Popes. As the daughters of Babylon they would not escape the long arm of its mother, but the reformation in the areas of marriage, liberating it from celibacy, forged a path for prosperity, not primarily because of its doctrines but because of its marital policy.

We may question how it is that Roman Catholicism, with its emphasis on celibacy leading to a subvertion of marriage, could maintain its power for so long. A.T. Jones provides an apt summary of the genius of her power.

> As out of the political difficulties of the days of Constantine, the Catholic Church rose to power in the State; so out of the ruin of the Roman empire she rose to supremacy over kings and nations. She had speedily wrought the ruin of one empire, and now for more than a thousand years she would prove a living curse to all the States and empires that should succeed it…

> Simplicius (467-483) in whose pontificate the empire perished when the Heruli, under Odoacer, overran all Italy, deposed the last emperor of the West, appropriated to themselves one third of all the lands, and established the Herulian kingdom, with Odoacer as king of Italy. In fact, the more the imperial power faded, and the nearer the empire approached its fall, the more rapidly and the stronger grew the papal assumptions. Thus the very calamities which rapidly wrought the ruin of the empire, and which were hastened by the union of Church and State, were turned to the advantage of the bishopric of Rome. During the whole period of barbarian invasions from 400 to 476, **the Catholic hierarchy everywhere adapted itself to the situation, and reaped power and influence from the calamities that were visited everywhere.** —A.T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, 1891 p. 522.1

The Roman power uses cunning, deceit, trickery, and skill in grasping for power through the parasitic process of harnessing the power of nations for its own glory. Such a system must ultimately fail as Revelation depicts the kings of the earth burning this whore with fire. Finally, the world will turn on this insidious power, which has warred against God, and the precious institutions of marriage and the Sabbath.

France had largely resisted the Protestant Reformation, causing their later revolt from Catholicism to be far more violent and sweeping in its scope, wiping Christianity out completely from its government for the period of the French Revolution.

Prior to the revolution, marriage in France was often controlled and regulated by the Catholic Church. The revolutionaries sought to diminish the influence of the church and establish a more secular state. In 1792, the revolutionary government issued a decree that transferred the authority over marriage from the church to the state. Civil marriage became the norm, and religious ceremonies were no longer legally binding.

The revolutionary government also sought to reshape family structures. The idea of the family as a private, self-contained unit was promoted, and efforts were made to reduce the influence of extended family structures. The emphasis on individual rights and autonomy in marriage reflected the broader revolutionary ideals. Divorce was seen by many as a right, and unhappy marriages were to be "liberated".

During the period of 1792 to 1803, there were 30,000 divorces in France.[35]

As the idealism of the revolution waned, accessibility to divorce became harder in France. But the family principles of the French revolution would not completely disappear. They came to life again in the twentieth century, as Protestant countries had grown prosperous, more secular, having greater access to sexual activity, birth control, and women finding greater fulfilment out of the home. These elements, not all of which were bad, provided fertile soil for an attack on the family from secular humanism.

As somewhat of a detour, what is fascinating to me is the divided interpretation of Daniel 11:37 by Adventist pioneers.

> He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor **the desire of women,** nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them* all. Daniel 11:37, NKJV

Josiah Litch taught this power was France, while William Miller and Joshua Himes taught it was the Papacy.

> "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." Such a system as is here described was the French Revolution. It was founded in Atheism, and triumphed in the overthrow of

[35] https://lifetakeslemons.wordpress.com/2011/12/22/divorce-and-the-french-revolution/

> everything which interposed a barrier to their object.—Josiah Litch *Prophetic Expositions, Vol 2*, p.90.1 1842

> "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all." In this passage we have a plain description of Papacy; —William Miller, *Miller's Works, Vol 2*, p. 96.1, 1842

Both of these positions, when talking about not regarding the desire of women, speak of the attacks made against marriage. We need to consider the importance of Daniel 11:37 and how disregarding the desire of women helped the power described here to achieve its goals in Daniel 11:40-45. It was part of the trajectory for this power to get itself into a position to enact the final events of earth's history.

In the case of Rome, it did not regard the desire of women in the sense that its leaders were corralled into a celibate life, or at least claimed this to be the ideal. The French Revolution removed the marriage contract from any connection to God or religion. Through the principles of equality which it espoused it changed the nature of the marriage relation, ultimately giving the women no security in the relationship.

My observation is that the principles of the French Revolution towards marriage are a natural fruit of the Catholic doctrine. As Rome actually undermines marriage even while claiming to uphold it, she produces the fruit that we find in the French Revolution. But we underscore the point that in order for the final movements of the King of the North to succeed, the family unit had to be destabilised through a denigration of marriage.

To conclude this chapter, we look at the present state of the world. The world is addicted to sexual pleasure; and the movie industry glorifies fornication and adultery. The internet has quickly destroyed the energies of our present civilisation.

Every second:

- 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet.

- $3,075.64 is being spent on pornography on the internet.
- 372 people are typing the word "adult" into a search engine.

Every day:

- 13,128 videos are uploaded to pornhub. Just one porn website.[36]
- 2.5 billion emails containing porn are sent or received.
- 68 million search queries made related to pornography – 25% of the total searches made on the internet.
- 116,000 queries are made related to child pornography.[37]

The world is in a death spiral. The next generation of men are losing all sense of how to treat a woman because of porn.[38]

We mentioned earlier, J.D. Unwin's research about sex in culture. He studied 86 civilisations across many eras of history. He stated, that whenever a culture embraced premarital sex, and gave up marriage for life, that society would become dead or inert within three generations.

1960 introduced the advent of birth control, and free sex. This was soon followed by no fault divorce laws in the early 70's If we consider a physical generation of people to be about 20-25 years, we are now closing in on the end of the third generation, with the end point landing between 2020 and 2035.

If Unwin is correct, then Western Civilization will be dead within 10 years. The increasing tensions between the USA, Russia, and China,

[36] https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2018-year-in-review

[37] www.webroot.com/au/en/resources/tips-articles/internet-pornography-by-the-numbers

[38] https://fightthenewdrug.org/sex-before-kissing-15-year-old-girls-dealing-with-boys/

combined with the growing conflict in the middle east, all tell us that time is running out.

Rome's war on marriage and the Sabbath is about to reach its culmination. In the midst of an overwhelming tide comes a message which will restore the Sabbath, and marriage. It starts by receiving Jesus as the only begotten Son of God, embracing His non-violent, non-condemning character, and letting Him lead us to His loving Father.

In this framework, we are now called to the biblical ideal for marriage: a lifelong union between two people, as a reflection of the eternal relationship of the Father and the Son.

CHAPTER 19

ADULTERY AND BREACH PRINCIPLES

For all of us living as God's children in this evil world, we are surrounded by darkness. Evil is present everywhere, and Satan's angels are constantly looking for ways to attack and destroy us. David expresses the peace of knowing our heavenly Father protects us from evil.

> David sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang: **"The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield,** the power that saves me, and my place of safety. He is my refuge, my savior, the One who saves me from violence. 2 Samuel 22:1-3

As the Scriptures tell us:

> Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

Our Father places His angels around us and hedges us in with His protection.

> For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear Him. Psalm 34:7

God is not able to protect those who do not worship and trust Him to the same level as those that do trust Him.[39] God tells us that if we walk in His command-ments and statutes we will be blessed, but if we don't, the fruit of breaking His commandments will curse and destroy us.

> "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you." Exodus 15:26, NKJV

> "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:" Deuteronomy 28:15, NKJV

If we break God's commandments, we create gaps in the wall or hedge of God's protection. If we sin in the light of the truth, God is not able to cover the gaps we create and Satan will find entrance, to confuse, deceive, hurt, and ultimately destroy.

> He who digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent. Ecclesiastes 10:8, NKJV

> The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side, as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. **To the obedient it is a wall of protection.** —*Selected Messages, Book 1*, 235.1

[39] See chapter 21 Hedge Mechanics from the book *Mirror Principle*, available for download from *maranathamedia.com*

As Ellen White points out, we should not look at God's commandments from the prohibition side. God's commandments are their own reward. They bring us blessing and happiness. When we walk within God's commandments, we hear His Spirit more clearly, and are able to respond when He calls us away from danger.

As we indicated earlier in the book, when we don't listen to the Spirit of God, our hearts become hardened.

> And **Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them,** as the LORD had said. Exodus 7:13, NKJV

Every time we knowingly walk outside God's commandments, His Spirit is calling us, appealing to us. If we don't know God's commandments, then our conscience is not as aware to the danger we are in. It is never bliss to be ignorant. Those who unknowingly walk outside God's commandments still suffer the results of evil, but it is when we wilfully walk outside of God's law that we are forced to harden our hearts to shut out the voice of conscience.

When somebody breaks the law concerning stealing, a breach remains as long as the item remains stolen. When the item is returned, and repentance offered, and forgiveness received, the breach is closed.

> If the skies are shut up and there is no rain because Your people have sinned against You, and **if they pray toward this Temple and acknowledge Your name and turn from their sins because You have punished them, then hear from heaven and forgive the sins of Your servants,** Your people Israel. Teach them to follow the right path, and send rain on Your land that You have given to Your people as their special possession. 2 Chronicles 6:26-27

When we turn from our sins, ask for forgiveness, the breach in the wall of protection will be closed. But if someone steals something, and then asks God to forgive him, but keeps the thing stolen, then the breach remains open.

> Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, **"I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"** Jesus responded, **"Salvation has come to this home today,** for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:8-10

The Bible tells us that as we sow, we will reap (Gal 6:7-8), and that as we judge, we will be judged (Matt 7:1-2). If someone tells a lie, they are opening their hearts to a lying spirit. Those who tell lies invite Satan to lie to them, and deceive them. When they read Scriptures, they become more prone to being deceived by false interpretations of Scripture or listening to speakers who are aided by a lying spirit. This is very serious. Honesty brings honesty, and lying brings lying.

As Jesus said to Peter, he who takes the sword will die by the sword. So also, he or she who lies, will be lied to, and will find it harder to discern whether it is a lie or not. If we dishonour our parents, we become dishonourable people and will not be honoured, and so on.

What about the seventh commandment? The violation of this commandment always breaks the 10th commandment of not coveting a neighbour's wife and typically involves breaking the 9th commandment through concealment, lies, and deceit. It most certainly breaks the first commandment, because those who commit adultery make being with another person more important than God. As a Christian, such individuals take God's name in vain as their lives are out of harmony with God. It is also an act of theft to steal another person's spouse. Yet, above all this, the act of putting away a spouse is directly opposite to the loving character of our Father, who never chooses to put anyone away, but only allows others to put Him away respecting their choice.

For a person who has been baptised, has dedicated themselves to God, and has entered into a community which keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12), then

adultery is not a sin of ignorance. At the same time, for any person who makes and then breaks a life-long vow to another person, it is not truly a sin of ignorance. Everyone knows this is wrong at some level. In the next chapter we will discuss the principles of accountability and ignorance versus rebellion, but we make the point here that everyone has a sense that cheating on your partner is wrong. It violates the principles of loving relationships.

A person who has turned from their spouse to someone else will have to eventually look into the eyes of the precious Jesus who never chooses to turn away from any person, under any circumstances. If they have not made a complete and thorough repentance, their guilt will overwhelm them through self-condemnation. Looking into the face of Jesus, they will call for the rocks to fall upon them, so that they will be stoned. It is not Christ who stones them, but their sin is written with letters of fire in their hearts. At that point they will find no forgiveness for their sin, if they have not previously wept bitterly before the Lord and counted the cost of such evil.

Listen to these words from the Spirit of Prophecy. Listen for the loving appeal in them, although some will only read harshness and condemnation. In the light of truth, these words are designed to help the sinner grasp the grave danger of this sin.

> I saw that the seventh commandment has been violated by some who are now held in fellowship by the church. This has brought God's frown upon them. **This sin is awful in these last days, but the church [members] have brought God's frown and curse upon them by regarding the sin so lightly. I saw it was an enormous sin** and there have not been as vigilant efforts made as there should have been to satisfy the displeasure of God and remove His frown by taking a strict, thorough course with the offender.
>
> It has had an awful, corrupting influence upon the young. They see how lightly the sin of breaking the seventh commandment is regarded, **and the one who commits this horrid sin thinks that all he has to do is to confess that he was wrong and is sorry, and he**

> **is then to have all the privileges of the house of God and be held in [the] embrace or fellowship of the church.**
>
> **They have thought it was not so great a sin, but have lightly esteemed the breaking of the seventh commandment. This has been sufficient to remove the ark of God from the camp, if there were no other sins to cause the ark to be taken away and weaken Israel.**—*Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 248.1-3

To those who lightly regard the sin of adultery, these words sound harsh and condemning, but they are a most earnest appeal to the sinner to help them face their own judgment in the light of the character of Jesus.

> Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. **God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.** Hebrews 13:4

But how will God judge them?

> Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know His law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, **for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.** And this is the message I proclaim–that the day is coming when **God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.** Romans 2:14-16

Our Father will lift up His Son before the world and all of us will look into those loving eyes, and we will decide for ourselves whether we can enter heaven or not. Outside of the presence of Jesus, the sinner may feel confident that all will be well, and that God will accept him. He does not account for his own judgment of himself in the light of Christ's astounding unselfishness. Many, like Judas, will cry that they have betrayed innocent blood; they have crucified Christ afresh.

Anyone who has committed adultery against their spouse can surely be forgiven. The woman caught in adultery was freely forgiven by Christ, but remember, she had to go through a moment of terror, of thinking she might be stoned to death. She had to have faith to endure that test; she had to hold onto the love of God through Christ, while she was completely exposed to Christ and the church for her sin of adultery.

Church leaders of any faith community who do not appeal to the sinner to repent, and who gloss over the sin of adultery, extend the breach of the adulterer to the entire group. A plague immediately enters the community and begins to blind the eyes of its unsuspecting members until many have lost their faith in the truth. This is why the Spirit of Jesus through Ellen White spoke these words:

> 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."—*Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 248.4

Those who commit adultery must be put out of the church in order for them to grasp the seriousness of their crime against God and themselves. The sin must abound before grace will abound (Rom 5:20). Mercy only can be provided with truth (Ps 89:14). When a person has repented and cut off the adulterous relationship, then after a period of time, they may be re-admitted to the church. If their only true spouse will graciously receive them, this will be well, but if not, we are reminded of the words of Paul:

> But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, **let her remain single or else be reconciled to him.** And the husband must not leave his wife. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

This is an extremely serious issue. Ellen White continues with the implications for the church.

> Never was this sin regarded by God as being so exceedingly sinful as at the present time. Why? Because God is purifying unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It is at the very time when God is purifying this peculiar people unto Himself that [unsanctified] individuals step in among us. Notwithstanding the straight truths they have heard—the terrors of the Word of God set before them, and all the blazing truth for these last days calculated to arouse Israel—**they sin with a high hand, give way to all the loose passions of the carnal heart, gratify their animal propensities, disgrace the cause of God, and then confess they have sinned and are sorry!**
>
> **And the church receives them and says "Amen" to their prayers and exhortations, which are a stink in the nostrils of God, and cause His wrath to come upon the camp. He will not dwell in their assemblies.** Those who move on thus heedlessly, plastering over these sins, will be left to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings.—*Testimonies on Sexual Behaviour, Adultery and Divorce,* 249.1-2

We want to make this crystal clear: any person who commits adultery, keeps a breach open until they repent of their sin and forsake it. If they go on to marry another person, that breach remains open, their hearts will harden every day that they remain in this sinful relationship until finally their consciences are seared with a hot iron; they have shut God's pleas out.

In the final judgement, in the presence of Christ and all the angels, they recall their decision to forsake their spouse and then they see the cross in a different light: they see Christ pierced by their decisions, they see in detail the burden placed upon their spouse, they see the trauma they caused their children, the church, and the community, and they will condemn themselves for manifesting such a character in contrast to Christ. They feel they could not possibly

live in the pure atmosphere of heaven. Their character is completely out of harmony with the selfless pulse of paradise.

Any faith community that justifies such an adulterous relationship will have the ark of God removed from them; the breach will be upon them also; their hearts will harden, and finally they will no longer hear the voice of God. Love to the sinner requires the community of faith to present the truth to those in adulterous relationships with earnest tenderness.

Dear brothers and sisters, please understand the seriousness of this issue. We are on the borders of the heavenly Canaan. We know our Father is incomprehensibly merciful, but us humans are not; our Father knows the things for which we will not be able to forgive ourselves for in the light of the character of God. We appeal to all to see God's commands in Scripture not as punishment, but as salvation. We do not want any to join Cain in declaring in the presence of God, "My sin is greater than can be forgiven." (Gen 4:13 LXX).

The question remains: what about those who have been the victims of adultery? What about those who remarried before they became a Christian? First, we need to speak to the issue of accountability, and then we will consider these more specific cases.

CHAPTER 20

WITHOUT THE LAW THERE IS NO SIN

The Bible defines sin as the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). The Bible and Spirit of Prophecy define the law as a transcript of God's character.

> The law of God is as sacred as God Himself. **It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, the expression of divine love and wisdom.** The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator. God has ordained laws for the government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 52.3

When we are aware of the law, it requires rebellion to go in a different direction. Rebellion is a firm decision to resist the will and character of God.

> Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" **it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.**—*The Great Controversy*, 492.2

For a person raised in the world without a knowledge of the commandments of God, they may pass through a divorce and remarriage without really knowing the law or the consequences of these things. When they come into the church, then they become aware of the law of God. When they remarried in the world, they did not know the law, and thus they were not in rebellion against it. As Paul says:

> because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression. Romans 4:15, NKJV

Still, when a person enters the church, and becomes aware of what they have done, they will repent according to the principles of a sin of ignorance. As we quoted from Joseph Bates previously:

> All who have ignorantly entered into such unlawful covenants of marriage, and have thereby violated the commandments of God, according to the foregoing scripture testimony, will find relief by observing the following rules, viz.:
>
> "And if any of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, . . . and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin which he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him." Lev.4:27,28, and last clause of verse 35.
>
> Under the gospel the offering is godly sorrow for sin. Says Paul, "Who was before a blasphemer, (violating the third commandment,) and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1Tim. 1:13.
>
> *Review and Herald,* March 12, 1857

Such a person is welcomed into the community of faith. For any person who passes through divorce and remarriage, they will still suffer the natural consequences of breaking the seventh

commandment, but God grants them grace to pass through this in repentance and humility.

Such was the difference between Satan and Adam. Satan sinned in the light of truth, while Adam was ignorant of the deeper principles of the law. He took a path away from God, but he did not rebel in the same way Satan did, because he had less understanding of the law, and therefore a second probation was granted to him.

> But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.—*The Desire of Ages,* 761.5

But for a child raised in the light of the gospel and the commandments of God and is aware of the law which says, "you shall not commit adultery," if that child grows up and commits adultery, the action is rebellion against what they know to be right.

I remember one evening as I was staying with a close friend in Puerto Rico. We were sitting on a beach and talking to the neighbour who was a Vietnam Veteran. He said something penetrating about when he was offered to take an administrative position to be the person who helped decide who would go onto the front lines to fight. He said that he refused, because he didn't want to be responsible for sending another man to his death. Then he said something profound, which speaks to the human justice system. He said "there is no forgiveness for the person who violates his own moral code." I admired the man's courage to stay on the front line rather than violate his moral code, and pondered the profoundness

of a statement made by a man who would rather die than send other men to their death.

This speaks of the deeply ingrained justice system in man that we received from Satan: "every sin must be punished" (DA 761.4). Our Father knows us all too well; He knows how our characters will develop when we violate the commandments which we know to be true.

For those of us who have suffered the sorrow of being divorced by their partner, and left for someone else, if you have operated under the principle of innocent party remarriage, after trying all you could to reconcile your marriage, then it is much more likely that you have not rebelled against what you understood to be right. If you prayerfully sought the counsel of the church, presented your case, and invoked the principle of innocent party remarriage, then your conscience should be clear. In such a case, and in the light of what we now know, such couples should confess their sin of ignorance, that they did not know that the Bible does not provide for remarriage. If you are happily married, then there is no reason to separate, as you have not rebelled against what you knew to be right.

For those who have come into the light of the Father's character within the joy of the Father and Son who may be considering remarriage, please consider the Bible evidence we have presented. The question you must ask yourself is: do you trust the Bible even when it feels difficult? Does the love and joy of the Father and Son bring you comfort to the point that you can rest in Their love? To continue with the idea that you wish to be remarried reveals a lack of comprehension of the love of God being revealed in the light of the 4th Angel's Message.

From what the Scriptures tell us, I am recommending that remarriages not be conducted by those within the movement. For those who are new to the message and have been left by their spouse for someone else, and that spouse is not part of the message, then in limited cases remarriage may provide the needed accommodation,

and concession to those wounded by sin. But I would urge you to wait, study, and be strengthened in the message. I believe that the grace of God is sufficient, but as I see my Saviour does not compel or force people, if they wish to take the weaker path, we would not withhold fellowship from you.

But with all love and to help you in your reflection on this serious issue we would ask: do you wish to live by the highest revelation of truth in the Scriptures? Do you wish to take Jesus at His word, that He will comfort you, and bless you, and care for you? But understand that I could not conduct, nor can I recommend any within the movement to conduct a remarriage, for it is against the highest calling of Scripture to which we have come to understand. I am simply saying, we would not withhold fellowship because I don't believe a breach would occur in such a case.

In essence this would be a concession to those living in the Old Covenant experience. I say this by way of a process of transition to the heavenly ideal of marriage for life with one spouse. This is what God wants for His children, and this is the safest option.

But to those who have been married, and understand present truth, I would simply say you have no case for remarriage according to Scripture.

I am asking all the leaders of the movement to appeal to all who wish to remarry, show them the Scriptures, and ask them if they wish to walk in all the light God has revealed or not?

For those who have fallen in love with the precious truth which God has given to us, I appeal to you, to take the higher ground rather than take the path of remarriage. Let the world see that the Father and the Son are sufficient. This will also allow you to keep your heart open to your spouse, to pray for them and live as Jesus lives with all of us, He never gives up; He never lets go until death.

I urge all who are finding themselves in a difficult marriage to pray for the Spirit of Jesus to carry the cross as He does with all sinners in

this world. If matters become unbearable, then reluctantly separate, but do this purposing to pray for your spouse, while maintaining hope and faith of reconciliation at some point in the future.

I am fully aware of the implications of what I am suggesting. I appeal to all that we must base everything we do on the Scripture. Jesus tells us to live by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. From my study of Scripture, my conscience convicts me that remarriage is against the principles of God's character. As a minister of the gospel, it is my duty to tell you the truth in love, and that which I believe is the highest good.

I understand why God has condescended to allow for divorce, and remarriage in past history. It reflects a patience and a longsuffering that is amazing. But now in these last days, God is calling His people to come to the restored understanding of marriage. It will give all of us a much clearer picture of how our Father and His Son never give up on anyone. Let us heed the call and be blessed.

CHAPTER 21

MARRIAGE AND THE ATONEMENT

One of the greatest fundamental shifts of understanding we have discovered in the Father of Love movement is how we understand the Atonement. At the heart of the Atonement is the process by which we are reconciled to God. To summarise, I will quote from the book *At-One-Ment:*

> It is in the Old Covenant gaze upon the Cross that justice demands to be satisfied. The New Covenant desires the reuniting of two hearts in love and harmony. For this to occur, the misunderstanding that men have had about the character of God must be removed, otherwise atonement cannot take place.
>
> The Old Covenant Cross appeases our wrath and allows us to forgive God for the hardships we have encountered in life. The New Covenant Cross grants us access to the sacred chamber of the heart of God and allows us to count the cost of us sinning against Him, within a place of safety, without condemnation.
>
> The fearful picture of the judge in Daniel 7 who scrutinises our every thought and action is transformed into a picture of the

> Sanctuary that no longer demands blood, allowing the Sanctuary to be cleansed in Daniel 8.—*At-One-Ment,* 191-192[40]

Old Covenant Atonement requires punishment, while New Covenant Atonement, requires patient, loving endurance on the part of God to the point that the sinner realises how wrong they have been about Him. As George Fifield expresses it:

> **An atonement can be made only by God's so revealing his love, in spite of sin and sorrow, that men's hearts will be touched to tenderness; and they, being delivered from Satan's delusions, may see how fully and terribly they have misunderstood the divine One,** and so have done despite to the Spirit of his grace. Thus they may be led, as returning brethren, to come back to the Father's house in blissful unity.[41]

In the marriage between Christ and His church, He is the innocent party and us sinners are the guilty party. How does Christ deal with us? He endures terrible suffering because of our sinful selfishness, day after day, year after year. Those who are willing to see it will see how loving Christ has been to them, and their heart is broken. The cross speaks powerfully to them of how He has loved us in the face of our hatred and cruelty towards Him.

All of us are called into this path of being reconciled to those who oppose us both in the church and in difficult marriages.

Old Covenant marriage requires punishment, banishment, or death for transgression to make an atonement. New Covenant marriage invites the innocent party to love their spouse, or their church. It invites them to be willing to suffer patiently in the face of rejection, and selfishness. It invites us to pray for those who have hurt us, and to hang onto hope for a change, even when it looks impossible, without the need for punishment.

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[40] Available for download from *maranathamedia.com*

[41] George Fifield, *God is Love,* (1897), page 48

It makes complete sense that if we believe that God demands punishment for sin through death before atonement can take place, that when a husband or wife have suffered terrible treatment from each other, that they want to cut off their spouse as a punishment. Banishment is a more civil way of saying that "you are dead to me."

But when we come to understand that God has endured a cross through all of human history, and that He does not judge or condemn, we are called into a different context for dealing with a difficult marriage. A difficult marriage is an invitation to carry the cross; it is an invitation to come close to Jesus to gain His strength to endure suffering and hardship. It is an invitation to draw the Spirit of God in greater drafts through the Sabbath and the feasts, and to know that everything you are suffering, Christ is right there feeling it with you, except that He feels it much more, because His heart is so much more tender than ours.

So how we see the Atonement directly affects how we comprehend how to resolve a difficult marriage. Will we come into the New Covenant Atonement on the subject of marriage?

For all who believe that Christ will destroy the wicked in the end, it is feasible to compare Christ to King Henry VIII. When his wife did not produce fruit, he had her killed, since he could not simply divorce her. At the Second Coming, Christianity believes that Christ will kill His unfaithful spouse along with all those who refused to respond to the wedding invitation. If we place this subject in the context of a parent dealing with children, Christ aborts His unfaithful children and prevents them from coming into the world of light from the world of darkness which we might compare to a womb.

These depictions of Christ are revolting. In the light of the fourth angel, we know that our Saviour, like His Father, does not use force of any kind.

> The principles of the character of God were the foundation of the education constantly kept before the heavenly angels. These

> principles were **goodness, mercy, and love.** Self-evidencing light was to be recognized and freely accepted by all who occupied a position of trust and power. They must accept God's principles and convince all who were in the service of God, through the presentation of truth and justice and goodness, [that] this was the only power to be used. **Force must never come in**....
>
> These principles are to be the great foundation of education in every administration on the earth. The rules given by God are to be observed and respected in every church. God has enjoined this. His government is to be moral. **Nothing is to be done by compulsion. Truth is to be the prevailing power. All service is to be done willingly and for love of the service of God.** All who are honored with positions of influence are to represent God, for when officiating they act in the place of God.—*Christ Triumphant,* 13.2-3

Threatening to kill an unfaithful spouse, or abort your children that don't please you is using principles outside of God's character. For those of us who know that God does not cut anyone off, nor uses force, you know that when applied to the subject of marriage, cutting off a spouse to remarry another is not the Spirit of Christ but that of Satan.

It is true that an innocent spouse like Christ may be left outside the heart and home of their hardened spouse, but with Christ they stand at the door and patiently knock seeking entrance again to their beloved.

In the same context, Christ is standing outside the door of our hearts, pleading with us to put away the sin of remarriage because it is not part of God's character.

CHAPTER 22

A MILLSTONE AROUND THE NECK

I wish to come back to principles we discussed in chapter 8 of this book. I quote:

> This blessed union [marriage], made in the image of Father and Son, is the union from which children are pro-created. The identity of the child comes forth from this loving union. The channel of blessing that the child lives within is completely dependent upon the parents maintaining the principles of blessing and submission.—*Harden Not Your Hearts,* chapter 8

The contemplation of a divorce and remarriage not only requires the hardening of the heart towards a spouse, but also to any children born into this marriage. The blessing system which God designed to help children flourish and grow is dismantled by such actions. In the book *Identity Wars* there is detailed some of the impacts upon children whose parents' divorce.

> The shock, anger and grief felt by the unwilling party have often been compared to experiencing the death of a partner. The devastating realities of divorce mean more than simply a division of assets, it means redefining your whole identity.

The greatest victims, of course, are the children. The range of destructive emotions that pass through the heart of a child, not simply at the time of the event but for the rest of their lives, can never be fully calculated.

Jim Conway surveyed hundreds of adults who had been children of divorce, and the range of emotions that they felt was described as follows:

Unhappy	72%
Felt Powerless	65%
Felt Lonely	61%
Were Afraid	52%
Were Angry	50%
Felt Abandoned	48%
Felt Personally Rejected	40%
Felt Worthless	30%

Being subject to divorce as children left these adults with the following issues:

Constantly seeking approval	58%
Block out some of their past	54%
Judge themselves too strictly	53%
Take themselves too seriously	47%
Overreact to situations over which they have no control	42%
Still having trouble with relationships	40%

Is it any wonder that God says, "I hate divorce!" Malachi 2:16. Regardless of how it occurs, or who walks out on whom, the loss of family relationships is devastating to all parties. There are no winners when family relationships break down.—*Identity Wars,* 26-27

Who can measure the sorrow placed upon a child when their parents' divorce, followed by a remarriage? Often children blame themselves for their parents breaking up. The guilt they carry leads

them into all manner of addictive behaviours and they often repeat the sad history of their parents in their own relationships.

> Then He said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on My behalf is welcoming Me. **But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in Me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.** Matthew 18:3-6

The glory or value of children is their father. When mother and father separate, the child's access to that value is diminished. A worthless child will experience all manner of sorrows and the worthlessness the child feels will be felt by others.

When parents see the full effect of their divorce upon their children, and they realise the truth of God's character, they may be overwhelmed with the thought that their actions are greater than can be forgiven.

It is true that in some cases, remaining together is not possible because one party is completely determined to follow a path of sin. Our focus here is to simply consider the long-term ramifications of breaking apart the bond through which children are brought into the world.

This cry on behalf of the children is part of the Elijah message spoken of by Malachi.

> "Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse." Malachi 4:5-6

The curse with which God strikes the earth is not an arbitrary thing. It is the curse which children receive from their parents when their

home environment is destroyed, leading to insecurity and instability.

We notice the connection between a broken home environment and the spirit ruling the kings of the earth.

> the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, **that the word of God may not be blasphemed.** Titus 2:3-5, NKJV

> So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* **full of names of blasphemy,** having seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:3, NKJV

We have addressed this process in the book *Life Matters* as to how the worthlessness of a soul can lead them to seek to control others in a tyrannical manner. The small boy that cries himself to sleep because his parents have torn his world apart, can provide the motivation for tearing the world apart in a grander scale. Looking into the childhoods of those who rose to lead terrible armies often reveals they had parents with a broken or dysfunctional relationship.

There is a parallel between the slogan "my body, my choice" and "my marriage, my choice." In both situations, the life of the child is not considered relevant. The fruit of such decisions can only lead to suffering, sorrow, and death.

Let us hear the cry of our Saviour who has endured all the suffering of children because their parents decided they couldn't live together anymore.

I wish to express gratitude to all the parents, that battled through difficult circumstances to hold things together in their marriage for

their children. It certainly is a cross to bear, but the fruit in the lives of children may be sufficient reward, if it is done in a Christian spirit.

When thinking of divorce, and especially remarriage, please consider the children.

CHAPTER 23

LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

When Paul defined God's Agape love in 1 Corinthians 13, he stated:

> Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! 1 Corinthians 13:7-8

If love never gives up and this love abides in us then we will never give up on those we love. This principle extends far beyond a spouse; it applies to all close and enduring relationships that we have with those around us. Yes, we may have acquaintances who are not walking in the path of light whom we don't know well[42], but for those we have loved, prayed with, cared for and spent enjoyable time with, we can't simply throw those relationships away when our friends head in a different direction. We never forget them, always pray for them, and yearn for reconnection and restoration when separation occurs.

[42] Jesus has a close relationship to every person, and thus can never leave anyone at any time.

This not only applies to our family and friends, but also to the church. Pastor Robert Wieland made this critical observation about the principle of Agape and its relation to the love for the church:

> Critics who are ready to abandon hope for the church are unwittingly at war with the fundamental truth of God's character—"God is agape" (1 John 4:8). The "final atonement" must include a final reconciliation with the reality of His divine character in the setting of the antitypical Day of Atonement. Where the Jews failed, the church must overcome in response to grace, which does "much more abound."—Robert J. Wieland, *"As Many As I Love ... ,"* 1986

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's remnant church. Those who have Agape in their hearts will not abandon the church in their hearts. They will be forever grateful for the blessings they received through the church, and they will never abandon the hope that God will reconcile His church to Himself. It is true that not every person in the church will choose to be reconciled, but the Spirit of Agape hopes and prays for the church and its leaders.

The principle of divorce and remarriage in a family setting sets a person in a direction that relationships are transitory; eventually they can come to be seen as irrelevant. This principle then spills over into other relationships with friends, neighbors, and coworkers. If a person chooses divorce and remarriage against the counsel from brothers and sisters, they will be tempted to not only cut off their spouse but any person who does not tell them what they wish to hear. This prepares a person to silence any voice that does not agree with their own. This is extremely dangerous.

This same principle applies to those in the church who wish to silence those who bring to their attention the truth of the Son of God. The church uses the biblical principle of disfellowship, not as a redemptive principle to draw a person back to the light, but as a means of cutting people off who do not support the church's creed.

All of these things are violations of the principles of Agape, which reveals a love that never gives up, never stops hoping and praying.

Let us rephrase Pastor Wieland's statement about the church and apply it to marriage.

> Critics who are ready to abandon hope for the[ir spouse] are unwittingly at war with the fundamental truth of God's character—"God is agape" (1 John 4:8). The "final atonement" must include a final reconciliation with the reality of His divine character in the setting of the antitypical Day of Atonement. Where the [church has] failed, the [144000] must overcome in response to grace, which does "much more abound."—Robert J. Wieland, *"As Many As I Love ... ,"* 1986

If we truly believe in the Agape character of God, we must give up the practice of divorce and remarriage. It is true some may need to separate for a period of time, even for years, but Agape never gives up hope. This is the evidence of Agape in action.

In the sphere of the church, any voice which calls people to leave the SDA Church and to forsake her, or which seeks to create a replacement church organisation, is saying they have given up hope for the church. Agape never fails; it never gives up.

Another more subtle method of giving up on people comes in the form of Universalism. The fervency of prayer that we normally would have for those that seem lost is relaxed through this spiritualistic teaching. It seems to espouse a deep care for all, but in reality it is a way for a person to feel alright that someone they love is unconverted. It is a solution that justifies one's lack of faith and hope. For the universalist, you still enter into eternal life whether you divorce and remarry, though it may hurt, and this tends the universalist to be lenient on this matter, just like it tends to mean leniency on other difficult matters.

As Adventists believing that we need to move up the narrow way to be ready for the second coming, a coherent structure of doctrine is extremely important. And in this context, the systematic implications of divorce and remarriage are vast. For those familiar

with the Father of Love message, we know the principles of the seven steps of Peter's ladder is connected to the seven churches.[43]

The last two steps in Peter's ladder are brotherly kindness (Phileo) and love (Agape). Here is the complete table of the seven steps and seven churches:

Peter's Ladder (2 Peter 1:5-7)	**Seven Churches (Rev 2 & 3)**	**Agape**
1. Virtue (G703)	1. Ephesus – Virtuous expansion of gospel	Lost Agape Rev 2:4
2. Knowledge (G1108)	2. Smyrna – Knowledge of suffering. Learn the hatred of the world against Christ	No mention
3. Temperance (G1466)	3. Pergamos – Temperance amidst compromise (eat wrong things and commit fornication)	No Mention
4. Patience (G5281)	4. Thyatira – Patience during long period of Dark Ages (AD 538-1500's)	Agape returns Rev 2:19
5. Godliness (G2150) or piety	5. Sardis – The rise of piety movements in response to Rome	No mention

[43] See this article for an expanded explanation. https://maranathamedia.com/article/view/peters-ladder-agape-and-the-seven-churches

6. Brotherly kindness (G5360)	6. Philadelphia	World knows I loved (Agape) you. Rev 3:9
7. Agape (G26)	7. Laodicea – will she respond?	Rebuke those remaining in Phileo only

What essentially is the difference between Agape and Phileo? We get the phrase *brotherly love* from Phileo. Agape means to love while Phileo means to be a friend. A friend can display affection and feel a sense of attachment because of a common cause or shared history but Agape loves under all circumstances. The Strong's Concordance contrasts the two words this way:

> phileō
>
> From G5384; to be a friend to (fond of [an individual or an object]), that is, have affection for **(denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling;** while G25 **[Agape] is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty** and propriety: the two thus stand related very much as G2309 and G1014, or as G2372 and G3563 respectively; the former being chiefly of the heart and the latter of the head); specifically to kiss (as a mark of tenderness): - kiss, love.

Phileo springs from the emotions, while Agape anchors in the will. We might even say that Agape is the source from which Phileo can be consistently maintained. Our feelings are variable and sometimes unstable. Agape ensures that our love for others doesn't change, even if they hurt us or turn against us.

In order for the final church of revelation to overcome, they must add to their feelings based Phileo, the principled, duty-based love of

Agape. When a couple feels love, they have Phileo. When they begin to have difficulties, then Agape love will keep them together, choosing to display love when the other does not.

To become part of the 144,000 we must respond to the Agape of Jesus in our relationships with our spouse, our close friends, and our church. We can't give up on them. If we have Agape, we will not abandon them, whether it be for another spouse, another church, or another close friend.

When I consider this call of Jesus to His church, the bride, my heart trembles. I confess that I do not have this love in myself. I feel my great need. There are plenty in the church who have cut me off and don't wish to associate with me. Sometimes I am tempted to return to them what they have done to me, but I can't do this. As I look at Jesus, I see I need to be crucified with Him. I need to continue to love, hope, and endure for the sake of Christ and those I love in the church.

I pray you can see the many reasons why the question of divorce and remarriage can't exist where Agape is in the heart. Without Agape, it is impossible to come up to this standard.

Without the knowledge of God's true loving character that does not condemn or force, it is not possible to be transformed into that same image, and our marriages and friendships will suffer. But now, armed with this truth, we are called to step up from being professors in Philadelphia to being overcomers in Laodicea. How wonderful it will be to receive the promise given to those in Laodicea who prevail.

> Those who are victorious will sit with Me on My throne, just as I was victorious and sat with My Father on His throne. Revelation 3:21

We mentioned in the first chapter about the parallels between the two institutions from Eden: the Sabbath and marriage. Just like the Sabbath, marriage in the New Covenant is a powerful presentation of the gospel, the Atonement, and how God deals with us, through

His immense longsuffering and patience, waiting for His children to come back to Him.

What Ellen White has written about the Sabbath also applies to the institution of marriage:

> But these priceless gems [about marriage] had been placed in false settings [Neoplatonism, celibacy, Trinity image of equality]. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth [Father and Son, Divine Pattern, Character of God, Two Covenants]. This work only a divine hand could accomplish. By its connection with error, the truth had been serving the cause of the enemy of God and man. Christ had come to place it where it would glorify God, and work the salvation of humanity.—*The Desire of Ages*, 287.4

The work of restoring the Sabbath to its rightful place has seen many advances; now we desire the same for the marriage institution so it too reflects the everlasting gospel.

In the 1888 message, the Sabbath was transformed from a command that must be obeyed on pain of death, to a promise of the gift of the Spirit of Jesus which will restore us to completeness in Christ. So also in the same manner, marriage is to be transformed from a command to be obeyed on pain of death to a promise of the Spirit of Jesus to manifest Agape to our spouses, never letting go, therefore revealing the Agape of the Father and creating a cascading effect to all close relationships.

I am appealing to all the brethren in present truth to open their hearts to all the implications of Agape. Let us hold onto our marriages, our friends, and our church. May Agape cause us never to give up hope but rather to hold fast our confidence until the end, trusting all things into the Father's hands through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER 24

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter I will address some of the questions that might arise when giving consideration to this subject of marriage for life.

One really good question that some ask is what if I married someone that was not God's will? If God did not will the marriage, then how can He make the two one flesh? This is possibly a question that Jacob asked on the morning after his wedding with Leah.

> So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" Genesis 29:25 NKJV

God did not tell Jacob to put Leah away. Once the marriage was consummated, it could not be broken apart. If our Father in heaven followed the principle of breaking up marriages that were not part of His plan, this is a very good case where He could have revealed this will.

Secondly, our Father in heaven is not arbitrary. He does not force His children to go in one direction. He certainly leads us by His Spirit; He impresses our minds with what would be good for us; He

answers our prayers when we ask Him for wisdom… but He does not force us. It can be equally argued that God did not warn Jacob to not marry two wives, but this only serves to prove that God does not overrule our choices. He works within the decisions we take, and does His best to make them a blessing.

> "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Matthew 18:18-20 NKJV

When two people take vows before God, family, and friends, God honours the vows that are taken, and He sets about to make all things work together for good (Rom 8:28). We are all God's children, and God is able to send His Spirit to those who ask in faith for help. If we have the agape love of Christ, we will love the one we have made our vows to, and we will ask God to help us live out those vows.

If every time a child takes a decision and the parent overturns it, then the child will never feel the weight of their decisions. They will enter a higher level of uncertainty in making decisions, because the decisions they make might be wrong.

We consider also the words of Moses regarding vows,

> If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. "Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and

> the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her. Numbers 30:2-5 NKJV

If our Father in heaven were to stand in the place of a father, and overrule the vow of His precious daughter, He would have to do this on the day the vow was made. The silence of God at a wedding indicates that He allows the vows of His children to stand, because the cost of altering such a vital life decision after the vow is made is far worse than allowing the vow to be carried. But further to this, as we read above, once a man takes a vow, it can't be reversed.

> But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment. James 5:12 NKJV

We are cautioned to let our yes be yes, and our no be no, lest we fall into judgment. Altering a life long commitment does great damage to the soul. Our Father never utters anything that does not stand forever. As His children we should do the same.

The other problem with thinking maybe I married the wrong person is that it robs a person of the power to hold fast their vows. If a spouse does not do what I wish then I can begin to think, "it was not God's will that we be married." Such thoughts destabilise the marriage relation and chip away at love and trust. If we take the promises of God, that with Him all things are possible, and we present our requests to Him, then we can rest safely in His Word. If God can raise the dead, He can even change us though we may be blind to our own faults.

Another Bible text which needs consideration is this one:

> Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14 NKJV

If someone marries an unbeliever, we can say that they are unequally yoked, but this text does not apply to the marriage vow for Peter tells us:

> Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 1 Peter 3:1 NKJV

The principle of agape tells us that love suffers long and is kind – it never fails. As we have discussed before, Paul tells us that a man should not leave his wife, nor should a wife leave her husband. But if the unbelieving spouse determines to leave, then the believing spouse is not in bondage to force them to stay. The believing spouse patiently remains single so as to give the departing spouse the opportunity to be reconciled back.

> But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife. 1 Corinthians 7:11

That is why in the next verse it says that the believing spouse can possibly save their unbelieving partner. How? By bearing their departure without closing their chance to come back by remarrying.

> For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? 1 Corinthians 7:16 NKJV

An extension to this principle of marrying the wrong person can be found in the story of Ezra chapters 9 and 10. Several people, especially the leaders had married pagan wives.

> When these things had been done, the Jewish leaders came to me and said, "Many of the people of Israel, and even some of the priests and Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the other peoples living in the land. They have taken up the detestable practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage." Ezra 9:1-2

As a result of these sinful practices, Ezra became very distressed. He cries to the Lord in repentance:

> I prayed, "O my God, I am utterly ashamed; I blush to lift up my face to You. For our sins are piled higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens. From the days of our ancestors until now, we have been steeped in sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today. Ezra 9:6-7

The spirit of Ezra is admirable. He feels a deep sorrow for the wickedness of his nation. He repeats in prayer the failure of his nation to obey God's instructions not to marry with other nations.

> Your servants the prophets warned us when they said, 'The land you are entering to possess is totally defiled by the detestable practices of the people living there. From one end to the other, the land is filled with corruption. Don't let your daughters marry their sons! Don't take their daughters as wives for your sons. Don't ever promote the peace and prosperity of those nations. If you follow these instructions, you will be strong and will enjoy the good things the land produces, and you will leave this prosperity to your children forever.' Ezra 9:11-12

He wants to make things right, which was a good thing. The people saw his great anguish, and they came to weep with him, and then one of those who did wrong made a proposal to the nation.

> While Ezra prayed and made this confession, weeping and lying face down on the ground in front of the Temple of God, a very large crowd of people from Israel--men, women, and children--gathered and wept bitterly with him. Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, a descendant of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. But in spite of this there is hope for Israel. **Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children**. We will follow the advice given by you and by

> the others who respect the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law of God. Ezra 10:1-3

Ezra takes up this suggestion and puts it into effect.

> So Ezra stood up and demanded that the leaders of the priests and the Levites and all the people of Israel swear that they would do as Shecaniah had said. And they all swore a solemn oath. Then Ezra left the front of the Temple of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He spent the night there without eating or drinking anything. He was still in mourning because of the unfaithfulness of the returned exiles. Ezra 10:5-6

Then things get serious. A decree went out that those who did not assemble within three days would have their property confiscated, and they would be cut off from the assembly.

> Then a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the exiles should come to Jerusalem. Those who failed to come within three days would, if the leaders and elders so decided, forfeit all their property and be expelled from the assembly of the exiles. Within three days, all the people of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem. This took place on December 19, and all the people were sitting in the square before the Temple of God. They were trembling both because of the seriousness of the matter and because it was raining. Then Ezra the priest stood and said to them: "You have committed a terrible sin. By marrying pagan women, you have increased Israel's guilt. So now confess your sin to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do what He demands. Separate yourselves from the people of the land and from these pagan women." Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, "Yes, you are right; we must do as you say!" Ezra 10:7-12

What does our Father in heaven do when His children disobey His instructions to them? God meets them where they are. We know that God hates divorce, it is destructive to all involved, but as the nation remained in the Old Covenant, an Old Covenant solution is employed. It is absolutely true that failure to act would pollute the

nation to the point that their identity could have been irreparably damaged. Ezra acted as compassionately as possible in the situation.

> This was the beginning of a wonderful reformation. With infinite 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 622.3

But as Jesus said to the Pharisees, this was an accommodation to the hardness of human hearts. God did not instruct Israel to take this action, but the reform brought blessing to them. We might compare this to the actions of the priest Phineas who ran a javelin through Zimri and Cosbi to close the breach in Israel, bringing a blessing upon Phineas. His actions do not represent the character of God, but Israel was delivered from a crisis of their own making.

When God told Abraham to listen to his wife to send Hagar and Ishmael away, this was an Old Covenant solution to an Old Covenant situation. If Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar were able to fully embrace the New Covenant, they all would have repented for the parts they played. Hagar would have confessed to Sarah her wrong and likewise Sarah to Hagar. Hagar would have then acknowledged that her relationship with Abraham was adultery, and she would have stepped down herself from the relationship. With the relationship healed, Ishmael might still have grown up under the protection and blessing of Abraham, and Hagar might have been provided for not too far from Abraham's home. But human nature makes these things very hard to do. Throwing out Hagar and Ishmael does not represent the character of God, and there are always consequences from such actions, but it was the best thing to do in the current circumstances.

Therefore, we would not look to this example in Ezra to provide us a guide on how to deal with certain situations related to divorce. Marrying a pagan wife certainly qualifies as being unequally yoked,

but the response was not a New Covenant solution nor did it reflect God's character.

Consider the example of when Jesus encountered leprosy. He had the power to heal the leprosy rather than becoming infected by it. If the men in Israel who had married pagan wives had this Spirit, they might have won their wives to the truth. But their desire to marry a pagan wife reveals their low level of spiritual perception ensuring that they would receive the leprosy of pagan customs rather than overcoming them.

In breaking the vows they had taken in marriage, they suffered damage, but it was the best outcome for a bad situation at that time. In light of the person of Jesus and His revelation of the character of God, we are called to come up higher than this.

CHAPTER 25

YOUR WAYS ARE NOT MY WAYS

There are some key principles we have learned in the Father of Love movement, that we need to consider when we look at the institution of marriage and God's purposes for it.

One of the key texts has been Isaiah 55:8-9 – "your ways are not my ways." This text provides the introduction to a relational kingdom where value comes from the One who gives you life, rather than using the life God gives to prove your value.

In chapter 14 of the book *Life Matters* we have presented the relational view of the law of God. This provided the context for the 1888 messengers along with Ellen White to state that the Ten Commandments are ten promises of what God will do in the life of those who have the faith of Jesus.

> "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." This promise is given on condition: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." **The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and, Thou shalt not, are ten promises secured to us if we**

> **render obedience to the law governing the universe.**—*Review and Herald,* Oct 26, 1897

And as we stated with emphasis in the book *As You Judge,* chapter 11, because the law of God is spiritual, it is not an arbitrary legal code that requires us from our own resources to obey, but is a spiritual code showing us the character of God, and promises us what God will give us, when we trust in Jesus and His faith to make these things a reality in us.

One of the key points we have presented as a result of this is the Sabbath rest experience found in Christ. The only way to obtain the Sabbath rest, is to have the Spirit of Jesus, who rests in His Father, come into our hearts. Sabbath rest is a gift of the Spirit of Jesus, which manifests in us. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath because He is the begotten Son. His begotteness is the basis of His rest. It is not arbitrary or poetic rest. The rest is real because the begotten Son looks to His Father for all things. This is the source of the Sabbath experience. We can have this experience by believing in the begotten Son. It is a free gift.

This principle is vital to grasp and apply to all our understanding of Scripture. This principle is at the heart of "by beholding we become changed into the same image." Ellen White puts it this way:

> The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; **but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus;** a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son.—*Steps to Christ,* 27.2

Through this understanding we underscore the point that there is nothing arbitrary in the character of God. He never forces anyone at any time. He influences every person through His gentle Spirit, and those who do not resist will manifest His character as He designed it.

> **The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government;** He desires only the service of love; and **love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority.** Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2.—*The Desire of Ages*, 22.1

> In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, **nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal.** It is the result of character.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, 543.2

Based upon this truth, we see that nothing in our characters are changed when we go to heaven. The characters we have formed here on earth are the characters we will have in heaven.

> If you have become estranged and have failed to be Bible Christians, be converted; for the character you bear in probationary time will be the character you will have at the coming of Christ. If you would be a saint in heaven, you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection.—*The Adventist Home*, 16.2

Our first principle is that God is not going to do anything arbitrary or by force to change us in heaven.

Secondly, we consider this vital principle concerning the formation of man:

> And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7, NKJV

A living soul is not simply a spirit; a living soul is the breath of life from God's Spirit plus a body. The truth of the Divine Pattern tells us that everything invisible is manifested through the visible. In total rejection of Neoplatonism, the Bible declares the harmonious union

of spirit and body as one person. It is true that in the resurrection we will have new bodies, but these bodies are a vital channel in which our characters and spirit operate. The spirit cannot operate without the body.

> **The resurrection of Jesus was a type of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him.** The countenance of the risen Saviour, **His manner, His speech, were all familiar to His disciples.** As Jesus arose from the dead, so those who sleep in Him are to rise again. **We shall know our friends, even as the disciples knew Jesus.** They may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured, in this mortal life, and they rise in perfect health and symmetry; yet in the glorified body their identity will be perfectly preserved. Then shall we know even as also we are known.—*The Desire of Ages*, 804.1

When Jesus rose, His mannerisms were the same, His disciples recognised His voice, and they knew Him by His features. Christ's identity on earth was manifested through a male body. The Divine Pattern teaches us that the source is never without the channel. Christ's male attributes were preserved in His resurrection, because His Father did nothing arbitrary to change those characteristics. It is true that the person of Christ possesses feminine qualities in His divine relationship to His Father, but to us, He manifests Himself through a male voice, and body.

As the resurrection of the saints will be in the same manner, this means that men and women will be raised in male and female bodies for this is a vital ingredient to preserve a person's identity.

The principles of Neoplatonism place the mind against the body which potentially fosters a war of the mind against the gender the body manifests. Transgenderism is a consequence of Neoplatonism. But God made male and female in the beginning. In the first five days of creation, God said that things were good, but on the sixth day of creation, God pronounced the creation of man as *very good*.

> Then God looked over all He had made, and **He saw that it was very good!** And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

The one thing which all the universe needed to have a greater understanding of was the relationship between the Father and the Son. Adam and Eve were specifically created to provide an image of the Father and the Son. They were to be a living testimony to the truth of the Father and Son relationship.

Male and female qualities manifest vital aspects of the relationship between God and His Son. They are a vital ingredient given to the universe to explain the Divine Pattern.

Male and female attributes provide the context for the oneness between Adam and Eve. These are part of the teaching tools to the universe.

Therefore we conclude that in the resurrection, we will be raised as men and women. But does that mean husband and wife will still retain their Divine Pattern relationship in heaven and on the new earth? We need to examine the Bible evidence carefully, and will do so in the next chapter, but how we read the Scriptures depends on the framework and principles we use.

The Spirit of Prophecy reveals to us Satan's utter hatred of the marriage relationship, and his determination to destroy it. We repeat again a quote we shared previously:

> **But when God said to His Son, "Let us make man in our image," Satan was jealous of Jesus.** He wished to be consulted concerning the formation of man, and **because he was not, he was filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred.** He desired to receive the highest honors in heaven next to God.—*Early Writings,* 145.1

The jealousy of Satan against Christ's relation to the Father naturally turned towards the image which God made of Himself and His Son.

> No longer free to stir up rebellion in heaven, Satan's enmity against God found a new field in plotting the ruin of the human race. In the happiness and peace of the holy pair in Eden he beheld a vision of the bliss that to him was forever lost. Moved by envy, he determined to incite them to disobedience, and bring upon them the guilt and penalty of sin. He would change their love to distrust and their songs of praise to reproaches against their Maker. Thus he would not only plunge these innocent beings into the same misery which he was himself enduring, but would cast dishonor upon God, and cause grief in heaven.—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 52.1

Other than Christ Himself, if there was one thing in the universe that Satan wanted to destroy, it was the oneness that Adam and Eve shared together in the bonds of marriage. His objective was to obliterate the Divine Pattern reflection of God and His Son. This image reminded him of his exclusion from the heart of the Divine Government.

God had pronounced this image as very good. It was His purpose that Adam and Eve would be a reflection of the oneness between Himself and His Son, forever. They would be a lesson to unfallen worlds as to how the Father and Son relationship works; their lives and the lives of their children would be a continual, growing expression of how God and His Son relate to each other and work together.

The rest which the Son experiences in the bosom of the Father, is the absolute assurance that His Father's love, protection, intimacy, and care for His Son will never change. Their relationship is forever.

In order for man and woman to be able to reflect this image, in order for the woman to settle into complete rest, she needs the same assurance in her relationship with her husband as Christ does in the Father. In other words, in order to reflect this eternal oneness of God and His Son, the relationship between Adam and Eve had to have the loving unity that lasted forever also. Any possibility that their

relationship could end would ruin the image of the original eternal relationship between God and His Son.

Satan certainly has perverted the marriage relationship through fornication, pornography, homosexuality, and transgenderism, but something far more subtle than these, is the Christian teaching concerning the temporary nature of the marriage relationship.

If the Divine Pattern relationship which God created in mankind is removed, and the human race returns to singleness, what does this say of the permanency of the Divine Pattern relationship? Does this mean that God's original purpose in placing the Divine Pattern in mankind was just a temporary one? Or is it possible that Satan wishes us to believe that male and female will no longer have a Divine Pattern connection in eternity providing a subtle form of subversion of the image in man?

If the relationship of male and female is temporary for a maximum of sixty or so years, then could this cast a shadow rather than light on God's eternal Divine Pattern relationship with His Son? Does it cast a shadow on Christ's headship over His church, subtly suggesting that Christ won't be our head in the new earth?

Deeper still, if marriage is a temporary institution for the present, then could this facilitate people thinking that it is temporary now, and if things don't work out now, I could get another relationship, because they are, after all, only a temporary thing? Is it possible that believing marriage is a temporary thing potentially erodes what was designed to be a permanent thing here on earth?

How many women have had to wrestle with the thought that in heaven, the man she has given herself to will have no more closeness to her than to any other woman in heaven. How does this thought give her stability, rest, and assurance in this life?

How many husbands and wives, influenced by the temporary nature of marriage, were tempted to be with someone else on the subtle understanding that marriage is of no eternal significance?

Based upon one statement of Jesus recorded in three of the Gospels, much of the Christian world has concluded that everyone will be single in heaven. This is a master stroke of genius on the part of Satan to eradicate the Divine Pattern image in man and woman.

God's purpose was for Adam and Eve to live forever in a Divine Pattern relationship. Do we conclude that Satan, through sin, succeeded in overturning what God said was very good, and making us to believe that we all will be as the angels?

For those of us that have travelled this path of truth through the Father of Love movement, we have discovered over and over that the way we have read Scripture is not God's way, but our own way. In the story of Abraham and Isaac, we discovered amazingly that God never told Abraham to sacrifice his son, but that was how Abraham understood God's words.[44]

In the story of the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and in all the stories of the Bible, we have discovered that God's ways are not our ways. This has been a disorientating process for many of us, and some in the process, who are not anchored upon the pioneer platform of 1844 and the truths of 1888, are losing their bearing and veering off into strange teachings.

There are clear rules, which need to be applied when approaching the stories and teachings of the Bible, but we can be assured that Satan has laid layer upon layer of deception for the human race to prevent us from fulfilling our destiny as men and women in a Divine Pattern.

I say to you all, my brothers and sisters, that now it is high time for us to awake out of sleep and reclaim our destiny as men and women in Christ Jesus.

The rest of the Sabbath derives its power directly from the Divine Pattern of Father and Son. The Son of God is in perfect rest, in the

[44] See *At-One-Ment* chapter 14, The Faith of Abraham.

eternal bosom of the Father. As we take this into the image of Adam and Eve, the formation of male and female, with Eve coming from the side of Adam, and resting in his bosom, we have the framework to then enter into the Sabbath. We can't experience the Sabbath without the Divine Pattern understanding of Father and Son, which we are invited to contemplate through the Divine Pattern of Adam and Eve.

Therefore, the twin institutions of the Sabbath and marriage are not unrelated twins, but one depends upon the other. As the Father of Love movement has begun to grasp the Sabbath through the Divine Pattern of Father and Son, so we now need to grasp this in the image of husband and wife.

The double portion of the Spirit coming to us on Sabbath and more again during the feasts, is enhanced and magnified in the Divine Pattern of marriage. This principle is then extended to elders and pastors. Thus the fourth commandment is magnified in the seventh and fifth commandments.

Our movement has taken a number of setbacks in establishing the blessing principle. One of the main reasons for this is an incorrect understanding of the marriage institution. The principle of divorce and remarriage undermine the strength of the blessing system, and part of this undermining is fuelled by the idea that there will be no Divine Pattern relationships in heaven.

In the next chapter I want to lay out some context for the statements of Jesus and Ellen White on the subject of the future of the marriage institution.

CHAPTER 26

THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them in the image of Himself and His Son as we examined earlier. One of the purposes of the male and female relationship was to teach the angels about deeper aspects of the Father and Son relationship (1 Cor 11:10).

As we have examined, God's design for Adam and Eve was to remain forever. It is evident that the earth is a finite size and that procreation would have stopped at some point. Consider also another line of evidence.

> Those who walk even as Christ walked, who are patient, gentle, kind, meek, and lowly in heart, those who yoke up with Christ and lift his burdens, who yearn for souls as he yearned for them—these will enter into the joy of their Lord. They will see with Christ the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Heaven will triumph, **for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord.**—*Review and Herald,* May 29, 1900, par. 12

> **It was God's purpose to repopulate heaven with the human family** if they would show themselves obedient to His every word.—*Christ Triumphant,* 26.1

These quotes tell us that the vacancy created by the departure of the fallen angels will be filled with the saved. This is a specific number of people. When this number is made up, there will be no more people procreated. And Ellen White indicates there will be no children born in the new earth.

> There are men today who express their belief that there will be marriages and births in the new earth, but those who believe the Scriptures cannot accept such doctrines. The doctrine that children will be born in the new earth is not a part of the "sure word of prophecy"....
>
> It is presumption to indulge in suppositions and theories regarding matters that God has not made known to us in His Word. We need not enter into speculation regarding our future state.—*Last Day Events,* 290.4-5

Jesus in speaking to this question makes this point:

> And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Luke 20:34-36, KJV

Commenting directly on this verse, Ellen White states:

> The Sadducees reasoned that if the body is to be composed of the same particles of matter in its immortal as in its mortal state, then when raised from the dead it must have flesh and blood, and must resume in the eternal world the life interrupted on earth. **In that case they concluded that earthly relationships would be resumed, husband and wife would be reunited, marriages consummated,**

and all things go on the same as before death, the frailties and passions of this life being perpetuated in the life beyond.

In answer to their questions, Jesus lifted the veil from the future life. "In the resurrection," He said, "they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." He showed that the Sadducees were wrong in their belief. Their premises were false. "Ye do err," He added, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." He did not charge them, as He had charged the Pharisees, with hypocrisy, but with error of belief.—*The Desire of Ages,* 605.3-4

Clearly the Sadducees had a false view of the afterlife. Jesus exposes this understanding. Some people have used ideas of the afterlife to imagine they will marry someone else and live with them forever. Others wish to fixate on the privileges of the sexual union lasting forever, making this more important than the relationship itself, giving marriage an earthly or sensual focus. Ellen White provides a very forceful response to these notions:

The enemy of souls has gained much when he can lead the imagination of one of Jehovah's chosen watchmen to dwell upon the possibilities of association, in the world to come, with some woman whom he loves, and of there raising up a family. We need no such pleasing pictures. All such views originate in the mind of the tempter.

We have the plain assurance of Christ that in the world to come, **the redeemed "neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die anymore:** for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

It is presented to me that spiritual fables are taking many captive. **Their minds are sensual, and, unless a change comes, this will prove their ruin.** To all who are indulging these unholy fancies I would say, Stop; for Christ's sake, stop right where you are. You are on forbidden ground. Repent, I entreat of you, and be converted.—Letter 231, 1903. *Medical Ministry,* 100-101

Two things which the Spirit of Prophecy says will not be in heaven:

1. Couples getting married.
2. Couples having children.

In a letter written in 1904, Ellen White makes this statement:

> Had the Sadducees understood the Scriptures, they would have known that the marriage relation, as instituted in Eden, will not exist in Paradise.—*Manuscript 28,* 1904

If Ellen White had intended to state that the marriage relationship would not exist at all in heaven, she would have stated this:

> Had the Sadducees understood the Scriptures, they would have known that the marriage relation will not exist in Paradise.

But she qualifies the statement by stating *as constituted in Eden*. We have seen that there will be no children born in the new earth. This means the aspect of marriage that involves being fruitful and multiplying will not exist. This would be a change in the marriage institution, and Ellen White's comment actually suggests that the marriage institution will exist but not as it was instituted in Eden.

There are some verses in the book of Isaiah which speak of children after this present world.

> They shall not labor in vain, **Nor bring forth children for trouble;** For they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, **And their offspring with them.** Isaiah 65:23, NKJV

We know that little children that have died will be raised and brought to their mothers in heaven.

> The living righteous are changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. Angels "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Little children are borne by

> holy angels to their mothers' arms. Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.—*The Great Controversy*, 645.1

There will be a multitude of babies that died over the centuries due to persecution that will be reunited with their mothers in heaven. There also will be miscarriages that angels will restore to their mothers. What a glorious reunion that will be!

If both parents are saved, we would not suggest that the child becomes the property of the mother only, but both mother and father will have the joyful task of raising their child in the heavenly atmosphere.

It is also possible, that some women will be pregnant at the time just before the Second Coming, as remote as that possibility seems, but in such cases, the child would be born in heaven, and raised there. These cases would answer to the verses about babies and children in heaven.

> In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, **and a little child will lead them all.** The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. **The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.** Nothing will hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD. Isaiah 11:6-9

We need to be careful not to speculate about the future state, or make assertions that are not proved by inspiration. But we do need to harmonise these statements in Isaiah with what Ellen White has spoken about. We must also reconcile all this with the issue of the Divine Pattern we spoke about in the previous chapter. In this context, let us consider this verse:

> But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:3

Do we conclude that the headship of God over Christ is eternal but the headship of man over his woman is temporary? As we mentioned in the last chapter, how then would the example in the image reflect the original? If the image is transitory, then what reflection does this cast on the original?

Is there a connection to the statement of Paul, that a woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives, and a couple who have lived together on the earth in one marriage union, who then both go to heaven? Will the Divine Pattern still apply, or having lived in a Divine Pattern their whole lives, they are then arbitrarily made co-equal with the headship removed, so there is no more source and channel operating? God would have to apply the principle of force to make these changes. Men and women that have lived together for 40 or 50 years will continue to relate to each other in the same way as they have on earth. Their mannerisms will be the same, their character unchanged.

Consider what inspiration says of God's original design in marriage:

> God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. "Marriage is honourable" (Hebrews 13:4); it was **one of the first gifts of God to man,** and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. **When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race,** it provides for man's social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 46

God designed that marriage was to be a guard to the human race. Marriage is also one of the greatest blessings ever given to mankind.

> And at the beginning of His public ministry Christ gave His decided sanction to the institution that had been sanctioned in Eden. Thus He declared to all that He will not refuse His presence on marriage occasions, and **that marriage, when joined with purity and holiness, truth and righteousness, is one of the greatest blessings ever given to the human family.**—*Signs of the Times*, August 30, 1899

The Bible says they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but what about a couple that remained married for life on this earth and did not remarry? What if they only had the one partner during this life? If they come up together in the resurrection, they would not need to marry as they were married already. In the heavenly realm they would not resume the position of a husband or wife like here on earth for the purpose of raising a family, because there will be no procreation after the Second Coming. So what then did Jesus mean about not marrying in heaven?

The question put to Jesus about marriage in the afterlife was about a woman who married seven times. His questioners refer to the woman and the seven men as *they*.

> In the resurrection therefore, when **they** shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. Mark 12:23, KJV

When Jesus responded to this as recorded in Mark, His subjects were also described using the same word *they*:

> For when **they** rise from the dead, **they** neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. Mark 12:25, NKJV

When Jesus mentions the word *they*, is he referring to all redeemed humanity, or is he referring to the *they* mentioned in the question of the Sadducees from verse 23? Can you see the point? Is Jesus telling us that those who have had multiple partners on earth will not marry or be given in marriage, or is Jesus saying that none of the human race will have a Divine Pattern relationship in heaven, but all are like the angels?

In other words, is Jesus speaking of a specific case related to the question of remarriage? Or is He speaking universally of the eradication of marriage/Divine Pattern relationships all together?

The accounts of this story in Matthew and Mark are almost identical, but the story in Luke adds more details.

> There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and **they** left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, **The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:** But **they** which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Luke 20:29-36, KJV

When we read the words:

> **they** which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.

To most it appears that the words of Christ apply to all the saved human race. But again, what does the term *they* mean? Is this the whole human race or is it those who are being considered in the question of the Sadducees?

Now if you come to these passages in the framework of Neoplatonism, or you consider marriage to be a necessary evil to keep the human species alive, then the answer will be obvious; it must apply to all human beings. Add to this the fact, that if a person subscribes to the Trinity doctrine, the image of source and channel is not relevant, and needs no memorial or preservation.

The other thing that is interesting about this passage in Luke is the phrase *The children of this world*. Most people translate this as *The sons of this age*, which give a sense of time frame, meaning, this is what people do now. What is interesting is that Luke uses this exact same phrase in another place as a contrast to *the children of light*.

> And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the **children of this world** are in their generation wiser than the **children of light.** Luke 16:8, KJV

The case which the Sadducees put to Jesus, was most likely a hypothetical question, unless this woman was the queen of all widow makers! E.J. Waggoner also concludes this question is hypothetical.

> First of all, it must be premised that Jesus exactly and completely answered the objection which the Sadducees raised. They denied the resurrection, and brought a hypothetical case to show, as they supposed, that the doctrine of the resurrection could not be reconciled with the teachings of Moses. Thus they hoped to put Jesus to confusion before the multitude, who revered Moses as a prophet of God.—E.J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, July 7, 1887

It is possible the Sadducees were referencing the case of a woman in the apocryphal book of Tobit, but this does not say the seven men were brothers. Also the woman married an eighth man and had children to him.

> Then the young man answered the angel, "I have heard, brother Azarias that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber." Tobit 6:13

> It came to pass the same day, that in Ecbatane a city of Media Sara the daughter of Raguel was also reproached by her father's maids; Because that she had been married to seven husbands, whom Asmodeus the evil spirit had killed, before they had lain with her. Dost thou not know, said they, that thou hast strangled thine

> husbands? thou hast had already seven husbands, neither wast thou named after any of them. Tobit 3:7-8, KJVA

What is fascinating about this story though is that the men who previously married this woman were killed by a demon called Asmodeus. This demon has historically been associated with lust.[45] This could be a possible allusion to the earthly, sensual mindedness of the men in question.

The Sadducees approach to this subject was not that of the children of light, but of the children of this world. I think we can safely say that these Sadducees, who were of the ruling party in Israel that finally put Jesus to death, were not children of light. They denied the resurrection and the afterlife and thus were completely earthly focused.

If we add to this thought the phrase *marry and give in marriage* in the context of Matthew 24, we once again see this term used in the context of the unrighteous, not the righteous.

> For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, **marrying and giving in marriage,** until the day that Noe 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 24:38-39, KJV

Here the process of marrying and giving in marriage is associated with those who are not preparing for the coming of Christ. Their focus is earthly, not heavenly. After quoting the above passage, Ellen White says:

> So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. **So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in**

[45] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asmodeus

> **worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities,** that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table.—*Christ's Object Lessons,* 228.2

As the case of this woman was most likely not real, Jesus is responding to a group of men who are children of this world. He speaks to the issues needed in their situation, addressing their focus which was earthly and not heavenly.

Even if Jesus is not referencing a specific group of people who will not be married in the future life, those who have already been married and never marry another person have no need to be married in heaven. So either way, Jesus is not referring to all people in these verses.

Taking all these things into consideration, is it possible that Christ is referring to *a certain segment* of people as being unmarried in heaven, rather than that *everyone* will be unmarried in heaven?

It is *they* who have remarried who will be raised in an unmarried state, because the original Divine Pattern image is broken for those who are remarried.

Are these thoughts in any way related to Paul's counsel that an elder should be the husband of only one wife? Is it also the reason why Paul says that the widows that are to be cared for in their community must have been the wife of only one husband?

> Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, 1 Timothy 5:9, NKJV

Why would Paul say this? Why would he not encourage these women to get remarried? What relevance does it have? There are many questions like this that need consideration.

Paralleling this question to the institution of the Sabbath, as I studied the subject of the feasts, one of the things that convicted me that the feasts were important was the principle contained in this statement:

> Again the people were reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath. Yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men of the nation were to assemble before the Lord, bringing to Him their offerings of gratitude and the first fruits of His bounties. The object of all these regulations was stated: they proceeded from no exercise of mere arbitrary sovereignty; all were given for the good of Israel. The Lord said, "Ye shall be holy men unto Me"—worthy to be acknowledged by a holy God.—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* 311.2

God's people were reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath through the feasts. They were not arbitrary commands, but contained moral principles. I reasoned at the time that for something such as a feast to be able to point to the good and moral qualities of the Sabbath, it must contain within it good and moral qualities, otherwise it can't point to the Sabbath in a way that reaches the human mind and heart.

I contend upon the same principle, that in order for Divine Pattern marriage to reflect the perfect and eternal relationship of the Father and Son, that it must contain within it, an eternal principle, otherwise it can't point you to the original correctly. If the memorial of the original is only temporary in nature, and of limited scope, then it reflects on the original the idea that it is temporary and limited in scope, and this would defeat the whole purpose of the image.

Now ask yourself, could it be possible that Satan would want you to believe that Divine Pattern marriage is temporary and limited in scope to hide the true and eternal principle contained in the Father and Son relationship? Please consider this well, it needs careful thought.

The Bible clearly reveals that Christ will be subject to the Father throughout eternity.

> Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:28, NKJV

Additionally to this point is the fact that angels are at work to bring the human race into a closer relationship with God than they themselves possess.

> The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know. —*The Desire of Ages*, 21.1

What is one area in which men are relationally closer to Christ than the angels? It is in the aspect of a Divine Pattern relationship bringing oneness. Those who live in this relationship in heaven and the new earth will discern and appreciate the Father and Son relationship in a deeper way than the angels.

God loves all of His children equally; this is never in question. Just to be in heaven with the Father and His Son is reward enough. Some people can't avoid the need for remarriage ; for example, it is understandable for a widow with small children to remarry.

But the key question here is this: is the image of God in the relationship of man and woman only a temporary one and in heaven will there be no living memorials to the most critical relationship in the universe?

All the Neoplatonists would say yes, the single life is far superior to the coupled life. All those who hold to the Trinity would see no relevance to a permanent memorial to the Divine Pattern. But those of us who see that the Divine Pattern is the key to life might well ask: Is this pattern to be eradicated? Or will God preserve it through those who were married to one person in this life and will have no need to be married or given in marriage for they are already in a relationship that was never broken here on earth, thus reflecting the eternal image of the Father and the Son.

So when considering some statements from Ellen White:

> We have the plain assurance of Christ that in the world to come, **the redeemed "neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die anymore:** for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." —Letter 231, 1903. *Medical Ministry*, 100-101

Does this statement apply to those who only married once and have no need of remarriage?

> In that case they concluded that earthly relationships would be resumed, husband and wife would be reunited, marriages consummated, and all things go on the same as before death, the frailties and passions of this life being perpetuated in the life beyond.—*The Desire of Ages*, 605.3

Here, Ellen White speaks of several points concerning the Sadduccees' beliefs connecting to the activities of husband and wife, saying it won't be the same in the new earth without sin as it is here now. Also, the marriage institution has fundamentally changed since there will be no procreation in the new earth. It will not continue as before.

The Father and Son relationship is not sexual in nature. As married couples come into heaven; their Divine Pattern oneness will reflect this more perfectly. It is their oneness of heart and mind which become a lesson book to the universe, an eternal teaching tool to all creation of the Divine Pattern of Father and Son.

Consider also, if two people commit to each other "until death do them part" and if what men call death is actually a sleep, as the Bible teaches, then is it possible that couples can only be separated by the second death? For those who are in Christ shall not die! They only sleep.

What could be the consequences of following this line of thought to its conclusion? It would mean that every action that a couple makes in this life would have eternal consequences or rewards. Couples

would think of their relationship upon eternal principles, for they would see themselves as a reflection of the forever relationship of the Father and the Son. Would this cause young people to choose wisely? Would it help them to cherish their gender as a gift from God to display the Divine Pattern always?

What would this do for the institution of marriage? What would happen if couples actually believed that they would live in this Divine Pattern forever to the glory of God and His Son?

I don't know about you, but I find these thoughts to be beautiful. Such a system of belief would transform marriage in such a way as to cause couples to do what Jesus does with us to keep the relationship together. Wouldn't it? If you believe that your relationship on earth is only of temporary significance, then what ultimate loss is it to you? But what if this relationship was of eternal consequence, and that a couple might be granted the principle of representing the Father and Son relationship forever!

Would this elevate the institution of marriage? Would it rescue it from Neoplatonic rubbish and place it on an eternal platform?

The words of Jesus in answering the Sadducees are a test for the human race. We read in them what we truly think. Satan does not want any of us to entertain the idea that we might enter into a oneness of relationship that reflects God and His Son in a greater way than the angels do.

Our Father wishes to invite us as men and women to come into a closeness that reflects the truth of Father and Son. Fallen human nature does not want this. It wants to be independent, it reflects the mind of Satan, and restricts us to thinking we will be only as the angels. In this story, we are looking into a mirror because the original design of God for marriage is in conflict with what Christianity teaches about the woman who has seven husbands. I contend that the discussion is restricted to those who have married more than once in this life, and does not apply to those who only were married to one partner for life.

Further evidence of the mirror operating in this story of the woman with seven husbands is found in statements from the Spirit of Prophecy that clearly indicate that families will be reunited in heaven.

> Some come to me, saying, "Mrs. White, don't you want to call for a season of prayer, that the Lord would raise your husband from the dead?" No, indeed. The old warrior has fought his battles. One came to me, and said, "We have selected a monument for your husband, with a broken shaft." You may take that monument down and you may put up a full, perfect monument; for, said I, he completed his work. Yes, we worked together as long as God spared him, and he has been dead now twenty years. Said I, We laid him in the grave to rest until the morning of the resurrection. **Then he will come forth at the call of the trump of God, and we shall be reunited. Then we shall be a family reunited**. {Ms 230, 1902, par. 37}

Ellen White had complete faith that her family would be reunited in heaven – as a family. In a letter to a grieving husband she wrote similar sentiments:

> We will pray for you and your precious little ones, that you may, by patient continuance in welldoing, keep your face and steps always directed heavenward. We will pray that you may have influence and success in guiding your little ones, that you, with them, may gain the crown of life, and that in the home above, now being prepared for us, **you and your wife and children may be a family joyously, happily reunited, nevermore to be separated**. {2SM 262.7}

Once again, as Ellen White encountered those who had laid their children in the grave, she wrote with great confidence:

> Thursday we went into Portland again and took dinner with the family of Brother Gowell. We had a special interview with them, which we hope will result in their good. We feel a deep interest for the wife of Brother Gowell. This mother's heart has been torn by

> seeing her children in affliction and in death, and laid in the silent grave. It is well with the sleepers. May the mother yet seek all the truth, and lay up a treasure in heaven, **that when the Life-giver shall come to bring the captives from the great prison house of death, father, mother, and children may meet, and the broken links of the family chain be reunited, no more to be severed.** {1T 654.2}

Does this not encourage us to hold fast our family relationships, knowing that they have the potential to be held forever?

> Christ is coming with clouds and with great glory. A multitude of shining angels will attend Him. He will come to raise the dead, and to change the living saints from glory to glory. He will come to honor those who have loved Him, and kept His commandments, and to take them to Himself. He has not forgotten them nor His promise. **There will be a relinking of the family chain.** {Mar 308.2}

Such statements deepen my sense of yearning for my family, that we may all be together as a family in the heavenly city, reunited but in the perfection of character and health. What a joy that will be.

Beyond this in the scope of this mirror are some who have been placed in circumstances where they were forced into marriages while in adolescent life (physical or spiritual) either by parents compelling them or conversely abandoning them through their own divorce, leaving them vulnerable to be preyed upon. As we discussed previously, without the law there is no sin. It is the act of the will to rebel against what you know to be right that determines whether God is the one that joins a couple in the bonds of marriage. For some in these cases who emerge from a terrible situation into a loving marriage of decades in the love of the truth, these also may find a place in an eternal divine pattern relationship.

It is not my place to speak to every situation, only God knows the hearts of His children. I am simply offering to you the thought that some who have remarried under complex circumstances, may yet find themselves in a divine pattern relationship beyond this present

world. I don't wish to offer false comfort, nor do I wish to lay down rigid principles that do not take each case into consideration. I would simply offer that remarriage greatly reduces the Divine Pattern image of Father and Son.

With respect to this message and movement looking forward, we do not judge or condemn the actions of the past, but call all to the true standard of marriage for these last hours of earths history. Remarriage has now become an impossibility for those who have entered the New Covenant.

Within the words of Christ is a message to those who break the Divine Pattern in marriage – yes you will be as the angels, and yes I will bless you, love you and welcome you as my precious child, and I will have wonderful things for you for eternity, but if you hold to the principles that bind my Father and I together, then you will be a memorial to me and my Father forever within the Divine Pattern.

How do you read?

CHAPTER 27

A PASTOR'S PRAYER

Coming to the completion of this book, I am deeply convicted. I am living in a blessed marriage for which I give thanks, but as I consider my relationships with those in the wider Adventist Church, and those close to me, I see such a wide gap between myself and Jesus. Do I still hang onto them in my heart, never giving up hope?

I see such beauty in the character of God, and I long to possess it.

Father, I come to you to ask for this love, this precious love that never lets go, but continues to hope and endure. You know that Satan tempts me regularly to give up on those around me, especially those who have wounded me deeply, but your love calls me, and guides towards your perfect love.

The subject of divorce and remarriage is only one piece in the puzzle of how we as humans treat each other. Lord Jesus, I pray for your Spirit. I am aware that where sin abounds, grace will much more abound to those who have faith.

I also want to repent of believing that marriage could be a transitory transaction for one deemed as the innocent party. I believed that what Ellen White wrote as a modification of what Moses gave us, was your will, but now I see this is not true. It has been our will because of our hard hearts, and you accommodated us, and let us

have these statutes that do such incredible damage to our families and communities.

Lord, you know the unspoken words of my heart for a number of my dear friends who have walked a path against Agape. I know I have not always displayed your perfect love in seeking to uphold your commandments. I know I have sometimes made things difficult by my manner of speaking. Forgive me for my agitated manner which surfaces at times. I want your perfect peace Father.

I try to fathom the cross you have carried these past six thousand years through your Son. Your unfailing love for us overwhelms me. I feel such a wide gap between the love I now manifest and your perfect, endless love.

I choose to believe you will give it to me through your Son. I thirst for your Spirit; pour it upon me, each day, Sabbath, New Moon and feast day in greater measure.

Father let there be a repentance and revival amongst us in our gatherings. Please may hearts that have been separated be reunited in love. You know our community is divided; you know that hearts are alienated in homes, in churches and beyond.

Father I tremble as I consider the contents of this book, and ponder what you are saying to us. I am tempted to fear that I will have more people cut me off. This brings up feelings of trauma.

You know Father that I didn't want to be cut off from the Adventist Church. I can see all the faces of those I once enjoyed fellowship with. Your love has given me comfort in the face of these things. I compare these losses to the truth I have in you; I find solace in your arms. You know I am tempted to fear being divorced from more of my friends, but I determine to trust you will care for all these things.

I just have to give all these things to you. I close my eyes and I see God's people united in tenderness, going forth as an army of love to bless the world. Their faces lighted up with joy as they hasten from place to place with this most precious message.

Father, you know the sorrow of many in our movement, who feel divorced by those we once were close to. I ask you to comfort my brothers and sisters who feel bowed down with heartache for their loss. It truly is a crucifixion, but You Lord Jesus have walked this path before us; you were a man of sorrows and afflicted with grief. Is the servant greater than his Master?

Father, the world grows darker and darker as it becomes a common thing for families to be torn apart. At present it seems that few people want to take the time to dig deeper into the reasons why everything is failing. It all feels so overwhelming at times, but here I am with you on the Sabbath. I sense You near me, and I am comforted.

Bless all the leaders of this movement Father. Give them courage, faith, and diligence to study this question carefully, that the experience of the Sabbath will be maximized in the restoration of marriage, the image of the Divine Pattern of Father and Son.

I sense your love Father through Jesus, and I am encouraged, comforted and blessed. I believe the dormant energies of the church are soon to be aroused. We will face severe conflicts, and trials, but will be blessed with an ever deepening repentance and corresponding filling of the Spirit.

I believe your words Father in Revelation that the whole world will be lighted with Your glory, Your beautiful character and that we will triumph over the Beast and its image. We do not know what we shall be but we know that when our Lord Jesus appears, we will be like Him. I trust Your promise in this regard Father, and believe You will fulfil it according to your word.

In Jesus blessed name,

Amen.

Harden Not Your Hearts

Restoring the Institution of Marriage

Our loving Father bestowed two precious institutions upon us in Eden which have continued to this day. The first was marriage, and it was immediately followed by the Sabbath. Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, and this rest in the Sabbath is His possession by His dwelling in the bosom of God the Father in perfect peace. Man and woman were made in the image of God and His Son. Therefore, Marriage is the source from which perfect rest came to Eve, through her resting in the bosom of her husband, who rested in the bosom of Christ.

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that every divine institution will be restored before the Second Coming. This most certainly includes Sabbath and Marriage.

Within the Father of Love movement we have seen a wonderful shift in our understanding of the Sabbath and the Feasts as special gifts of the Spirit of God. It has transformed completely the Sabbath institution. Now we turn to marriage which has had no significant change in 500 years since the time of the Reformation. Rather we have seen the deterioration of marriage, especially over the last 50 years.

This book is a call to restore of the true purpose of marriage in the light of the Atonement, and the ever-present Cross. The content is potentially challenging as all reforms are, but the onward advance of truth ensures a rich reward for those who are determined to stand solely upon the Word of God.