

The
GOSPEL in
FAMILY
LIFE

by Elder W. Austin Greaves



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PREFACE



The family is the basic unit of society. The brokenness of the family is mirrored in the brokenness of society. Societies cannot be as God designed them when families are no longer made up the way God designed them. Can the structure of the family with the father as head be still relevant in our postmodern society? What of the submission of the wife to the husband in all things when women are being so brutally ill-treated by husbands? And with women and wives, in many instances, being more educated and intelligent than many husbands can this order of things be still maintained? Is the teaching of the Bible and our male-dominated society the cause of all this confusion? Society itself seems now to be abhorring and revolting against the Bible structure of family and male dominance to the extent that same-sex relationships seem to have become universally acceptable. But first, when do two people, a man a woman, become married? Is it at the wedding ceremony, is it when the man goes into the woman, or is it at the “betrothal?”

But is there a correct way of understanding and experiencing God’s ideal for the family? Have the “experts” gotten it wrong because they “cannot receive the things of God: because there are spiritually discerned?”

In this publication we shall explore the above questions and see the Bible’s way of family. And also find when the Bible’s way is applied according to God’s idea, that it does not keep women in brutal subjection to men as we see obtaining in society. Neither does it give credence to same-sex relationships

or even countenance the dominance of the wife by the husband. We shall also explore how wives being “the weaker vessel” must be “honored” by their husbands, and wives being in subjection to their husbands even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, is not an example of subservience. Are husbands and wives really friends, or are they just in a relationship? Further, can a man really love his wife as Christ loved the church even to the disadvantaging of himself for her? And the women, are they to really to be in subjection to their husbands in all things? Also, is there not an occasion apart from adultery when spouses can be divorced? And though a spouse is unfaithful in the marriage relation should he/she be automatically divorced by the faithful partner?

What type of family government should obtain in Christian families? Should children be part of the decision making process of the family? At what age should children of Christian families be baptized? How should Christian parents deal with children who are in same-sex relationships? Should stay-at-home wives be paid for their services to the family? What type of recreational activities can help bind families? These and several other questions and issues which impact the family will be dealt with.

May that which has been destroyed in the family, by the enemy of humanity, having been restored by the Savior of humanity, be experienced in our families is my prayer for us all.

Elder W. Austin Greaves

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CHAPTER 1

THE GOSPEL IN FAMILY LIFE

The family structure as designed and set it up by God is under coordinated attack by Satan and his allied forces of evil and corrupt men. Therefore, the greatest need in our church today is for a revival and reformation in our families.

“Every family needs now to seek God. They will not endure the test unless there is a revival and a reformation.” *Manuscript (Ms) 54, 1901*. And on *March 22, 1887* also in the Review and Herald, “A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”

The revival in the family which we long for will only come in answer to prayer, and the resultant reformation will be first seen in tender love, affection, and respect between husbands and wives. This revival and reformation will be built upon the gospel in which there first is the unconditional forgiveness of the one who has offended which will lead to a heartfelt response in the offender of the giving up of all forms of hostilities and the putting away of that which separates. Anything short of this will only be a façade which will appear genuine until tested by the adversary and his allies. This very gospel was first worked out at the fall of our first parents in Eden. There Adam

and Eve offended God, and there He freely and unconditionally pardon and forgave their sin which led them to the heart felt response of repentance (Rom. 2:4), clearing the way for their restoration. Thus reformation being a change in ideas and theories, habit and practices could proceed, having been preceded by revival, resurrection from spiritual death.

*“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” **Gen. 1:226-28.** Further, “**And the LORD GOD CAUSED A DEEP SLEEP TO FALL UPON ADAM, AND HE SLEPT: AND HE TOOK ONE OF HIS RIBS, AND CLOSED UP THE FLESH INSTEAD THEREOF;**²² *And the rib, which the LORD GOD HAD TAKEN FROM MAN, MADE HE A WOMAN, AND BROUGHT HER UNTO THE MAN.*²³ *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.*²⁴ *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” **Gen. 2:21-24.****

Here we see the origin of humanity, and the family, which was set up even before the Sabbath day was established here on earth, for if there was no family there would have be no need for the Sabbath day. In this structure, as God set it up, the family was to be comprised of male and female in the bond of marriage. Today this structure is under immense pressure. Can this structure be still held up as the model for family in our post-modern society?

Therefore also now, saith the LORD, TURN YE EVEN TO ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH FASTING, AND WITH WEeping, AND WITH MOURNING:¹³ And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD YOUR GOD: FOR HE IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL, SLOW TO ANGER, AND OF GREAT KINDNESS, AND REPENTETH HIM OF THE EVIL.¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:¹⁶ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck

the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. ²⁵ *And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.* ²⁶ *And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD YOUR GOD, THAT HATH DEALT WONDROUSLY WITH YOU: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED.* ²⁷ *And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD YOUR GOD, AND NONE ELSE: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED.* ²⁸ *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:* ²⁹ *And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”* **Joel 2:12-13, 15-16, 25-29.**

CHAPTER 2

Revival & Reformation in the Family



Reformation is a renovation, a restructuring, and a reorganization. For spiritual reformation to be guaranteed in the family there has to be a spiritual revival. Spiritual revival is therefore the prerequisite for a spiritual reformation, or else there will only be emotional expressions without the real experience. Which aspect of your life is in most urgent need of reformation? Is it your work life, your social life, physical life, spiritual life, or your family life? But first “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. . . it is our work by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us his blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.” *Review and Herald*, March 12, 1887.

Further, *Review and Herald February 25, 1902* “God call for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. . . A revival and reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and Reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of the mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits

and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit.”

Since revival, resurrection from the dead, precedes reformation, again I ask, which aspect of your Christian experience needs most urgently to be revived, and hence reformed? Careful consideration of Christian communities suggest that family life is in dire straits, and hence it has the greatest and most urgent need of revival and reformation. Since reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit., and ‘righteousness is love’ (MB p. 18), a spiritual revival and reformation in the family is the first and best place for Love’s display to begin.

Believing the “true gospel” which is really the good news of God’s love is the only solution for family life, and all the ills of society. But like the family as God designed it, the true gospel is no longer acceptable in our false modern society with its own false construct of family, and the gospel. But what really is this “true gospel” which when applied to any problem can solve it, including problem in the family?

The “true gospel” can be summed up in the words, “God’s unconditional universal pardon to humanity.” The Apostle Paul refers to this in **2 Cor. 5:19,21** where he says, “. . . *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; . . . For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;*” Further, in **John 3:16 (1st part)**, “*For God so loved the world, that He have His only begotten Son,*” The good news then is that God has fully and completely pardon all humanity in Christ to the extent that He actually gave His Son to be sin for us” that we may be free from condemnation. (John 3:17). Remember He was made sin for us, He who was faultless in soul and character. But because of His great love for us He would do anything for us short of sinning, even being accounted a sinner to save us. You see, God not only loves us unconditionally, but His love for us is relentless, overflowing, and does not stop coming at us. This is the kind of love which God has

invested in humanity that brings revival and reformation in the family once it is allowed. It will even lead a man to give up his life for his wife as was demonstrated by our Savior, who gave His life for His wife, the church. This true gospel, which is pure love, is foreign to all except those who have been revived and are being reformed by the Spirit of God. When this true gospel is applied to our lives it makes for joy, peace, and happiness in the family, and by extension society.

The only wise and intelligent response to such magnificent love is surrender, which makes for success in the proper order, functioning and management in the family. This order, functioning, and management in the family is seen in the response to the true gospel as shown in **John 3:16** (2nd part) “. . . *That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,*” Only when the response is one of belief to the “true gospel” of love will there be no perishing of the family relation, i.e. no dissolution (divorce) of the spousal union between the man, the husband, and the woman, his wife. Instead there will only be the attitude of giving up whatever separates them from each other, and not keeping a record of the wrongs done. Such attitude of giving up allows for the blotting out of the character, and soul, the offensive thing so that only love’s, joy, peace and happiness will reign supreme in the relationship.

“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also love the church, and gave Himself for it;” “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband as unto the Lord.” Eph. 5:25, 22.

This is what it means to have a spiritual revival and reformation in the family relationship which will be evinced first between the male, the husband, and the female, his wife.

A strong tender affectionate love relationship between a man and his wife is like unto the relationship that existed between Isaac and Rebekah, **Gen.26:8** (NLT)

“But sometime later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah.” This brings to view the tender

love and affection manifested by Christ for His wife, the church. **Songs of Solomon 2:1-6** “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.² As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.³ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.⁵ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.⁶ His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.”

Also, if the management of your family is not godly, and orderly like that of Abraham’s family “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;” **Gen. 18:19** then there is need for revival and reformation in your family. And because of the true gospel which God Himself has accomplished in the restoration of families in Christ, the fruit of the true gospel will be experienced in all families which believe for its restoration. *Yea, the LORD WILL ANSWER AND SAY UNTO HIS PEOPLE, BEHOLD, I WILL SEND YOU CORN, AND WINE, AND OIL, AND YE SHALL BE SATISFIED THEREWITH: AND I WILL NO MORE MAKE YOU A REPROACH AMONG THE HEATHEN:*²⁰ *But I will remove far off from you the northern army,*²⁵ *And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.*²⁶ *And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD YOUR GOD, THAT HATH DEALT WONDROUSLY WITH YOU: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED.*²⁷ *And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD YOUR GOD, AND NONE ELSE: AND MY PEOPLE SHALL NEVER BE ASHAMED. Joel 2:19-20 (first part), 25-27*

Notice the new covenant promise in which God does all for the restoration of families. He sends the corn, and wine, and oil which are symbols of His Holy Spirit of love (Rom. 5:5), to restore families which are perishing. He also, himself, removes afar off the army of difficulties which interpose between families allowing for them to be at peace when they accept His guidance. The true gospel in the restoration of families is the clearest evidence that God is in the midst of His people.

CHAPTER 3

Mutual Obligations



We shall hear directly from the pen of inspiration in the important area of marriage relations between husbands and wives. May we get a sense of the responsibilities devolving upon our heads as godly, Christians husbands and wives and thus under the influence of the Spirit of God make quick work to stem the tide of disagreement, discontent, and discouragement which result in broken relationships, and ultimately divorce between husbands and wives.

AH 114-120 Mutual Obligations

EACH HAS INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The two who unite their interest in life will have distinct characteristics and individual responsibilities. Each one will have his or her work, but women are not to be valued by the amount of work they can do as are beasts of burden. The wife is to grace the family circle as a wife and companion to a wise husband. At every step she should inquire, “Is this the standard of true womanhood?” and, “How shall I make my influence Christ like in my home?” The husband should let his wife know that he appreciates her work.

The wife is to respect her husband. The husband is to love and cherish his wife; and as their marriage vow unites them as one, so their belief in Christ should make them one in Him. What can be more pleasing to God than to see those who enter into the marriage relation seek together to learn of Jesus and to become more and more imbued with His Spirit?

You now have duties to perform that before your marriage you did not have. “Put on therefore, ... kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.” “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.” Give careful study to the following instruction: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.... Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.”

GOD’S INSTRUCTION TO EVE

Eve was told of the sorrow and pain that must henceforth be her portion. And the Lord said, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” In the creation, God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man’s abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter, and made her life a burden.

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God's plan.

WIVES SUBMIT; HUSBANDS LOVE

The question is often asked, "Shall a wife have no will of her own?" The Bible plainly states that the husband is the head of the family. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." If this injunction ended here, we might say that the position of the wife is not an enviable one; it is a very hard and trying position in very many cases, and it would be better were there fewer marriages. Many husbands stop at the words, "Wives, submit yourselves," but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is. "As it is fit in the Lord."

God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit, which have been ransomed from the slavery of Satan. There is One who stands higher than the husband to the wife; it is her Redeemer, and her submission to her husband is to be rendered as God has directed— "as it is fit in the Lord."

When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. In interpreting the Scripture in this way, they do

violence to the design of the marriage institution. This interpretation is made simply that they may exercise arbitrary rule, which is not their prerogative. But we read on, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." Why should the husband be bitter against his wife? If the husband has found

her erring and full of faults, bitterness of spirit will not remedy the evil.

WIVES SUBJECT ONLY AS HUSBANDS ARE SUBJECT TO CHRIST

The Lord Jesus has not been correctly represented in His relation to the church by many husbands in their relation to their wives, for they do not keep the way of the Lord. They declare that their wives must be subject to them in everything. But it was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. He must be under the rule of Christ that he may represent the relation of Christ to the church. If he is a coarse, rough, boisterous, egotistical, harsh, and overbearing man, let him never utter the word that the husband is the head of the wife, and that she must submit to him in everything; for he is not the Lord, he is not the husband in the true significance of the term....

Husbands should study the pattern and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians, the relation Christ sustains to the church. The husband is to be as a Saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? Will he breathe about him a pure, sweet atmosphere? Will he not as assiduously cultivate the love of Jesus, making it an abiding principle in his home, as he will assert his claims to authority?

Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary, study as to his own position in the family circle. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He

might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” Jesus gave Himself up to die upon the cross in order that He might cleanse and keep us from all sin and pollution by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE IS NEEDED

We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bonds slave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven.... If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away.

Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other’s love. Be kind, patient, and forbearing, considerate, and courteous. By the grace of God you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage vow you promised to do.

LET EACH GRACIOUSLY YIELD

In the married life men and women sometimes act like undisciplined, perverse children. The husband wants his way, and the wife wants her way, and neither is willing to yield. Such a condition of things can bring only the greatest unhappiness. Both husband and wife should be willing to yield his or her way or opinion. There is no possibility of happiness while they both persist in doing as they please.

Unless men and women have learned of Christ, His meekness and lowliness, they will reveal the impulsive, unreasonable spirit so often revealed by children. The strong, undisciplined will, will seek to rule.

Such ones need to study the words of Paul: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

ADJUSTING FAMILY DIFFICULTIES

It is a hard matter to adjust family difficulties, even when husband and wife seek to make a fair and just settlement in regard to their several duties, if they have failed to submit the heart to God. How can husband and wife divide the interests of their home life and still keep a loving, firm hold upon each other? They should have a united interest in all that concerns their homemaking, and the wife, if a Christian, will have her interest with her husband as his companion; for the husband is to stand as the head of the household.

COUNSEL TO DISCORDANT FAMILIES

Your spirit is wrong. When you take a position, you do not weigh the matter well and consider what must be the effect of your maintaining your views and in an independent manner weaving them into your prayers and conversation, when you know that your wife does not hold the same views that you do. Instead of respecting the feelings of your wife and kindly avoiding, as a gentleman would, those subjects upon which you know you differ, you have been forward to dwell upon objectionable points, and have manifested a persistency in expressing your views regardless of any around you. You have felt that others had no right to see matters differently from yourself. These fruits do not grow upon the Christian tree.

My brother, my sister, open the door of the heart to receive Jesus. Invite him into the soul-temple. Help each other to overcome the obstacles which enter the married life of all. You will have a fierce conflict to overcome your adversary the devil, and if you expect God to help you in this battle, you must both unite in deciding to overcome, to seal your lips against speaking any words of wrong, even if you have to fall upon

your knees and cry aloud, “Lord, rebuke the adversary of my soul.”

CHRIST IN EACH HEART WILL BRING UNITY

If the will of God is fulfilled, the husband and wife will respect each other and cultivate love and confidence. Anything that would mar the peace and unity of the family should be firmly repressed, and kindness and love should be cherished. He who manifests the spirit of tenderness, forbearance, and love will find that the same spirit will be reflected upon him. Where the Spirit of God reigns, there will be no talk of unsuitability in the marriage relation. If Christ indeed is formed within, the hope of glory, there will be union and love in the home. Christ abiding in the heart of the wife will be at agreement with Christ abiding in the heart of the husband. They will be striving together for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him.

CHAPTER 4

Marriage the Gospel Way - Part 1



GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE HUSBAND AND WIFE

God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman's heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband's character and give it completeness—fulfill God's purpose for them.

Christ came not to destroy this institution, but to restore it to its original sanctity and elevation. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, and He began His work by sanctioning the marriage relation.

. . . . He ordained that men and women should be united in holy wedlock, to rear families whose members, crowned with honor, should be recognized as members of the family above.

JESUS WANTS HAPPY MARRIAGES

The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes it. By it human love is refined and purified, elevated and

ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides. **AH 99**

Marriage is one of, if not, the most sublime theme in all the universe, and is mirrored in the union of the Father and the Son. In its primary sense it is the mysterious union of divinity with divinity, the oneness of the Father and the Son. “. . . *that they may be one, even as we are one: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*” **John 17:22, 24.** In the secondary sense it is the union of divinity with humanity. “*This [marriage] is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*” **Eph. 5:32.** And in a tertiary sense it is the union between a man and a woman. “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*” **Matt. 19:5.** Marriage therefore with its inherent tender love is at the center of the universe.

In the incarnation the eternal Son of God humbled Himself to be married (joined) to humanity and become one flesh.

“. . . behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? ³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” **Luke 1:31, 34-35**

In this marriage of divinity with humanity the Son of God submitted His divine spirit, which He possessed as God, to the Holy Spirit, to be joined to humanity that humanity may become one spirit with God. Also, because He became man He was able to submit His humanity to divinity so that God could become one flesh with man (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus received the fullness of the Holy Spirit because He was God (John 3:34) and because He was man (Heb. 2:16) He could, and did submit our sinful human nature which He took on, to the will of God (John 5:30), so that the Spirit of God and the spirit of man could be married (joined) as one in Him. “Jesus Christ laid

hold on humanity that with His human arm He might encircle the race, while with His divine arm He grasped the throne of the Infinite.” MYP 137. “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” 1 Cor. 6:16-17. In the marriage between a man and a woman, we see the same principles of the primary and secondary marriage union. Like Christ who left His Father’s home and became joined to His wife, humanity (2 Tim. 3:16), to become one flesh so that His wife could become one spirit with Him. So also a man leaves his father and mother (Gen.2:24; Matt. 19:4, 5) and is joined to his wife and they become one flesh.

In the divine-human marriage there is always offspring, first, the Son of God became the Son of Man (Gal. 4:4), then through Him we become sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:1, 2). God designed that there was always to be offspring in marriage, but sin does not always allow for this. *“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it:”* **Gen. 1:28.** God’s plan therefore does not lend for same-sex relationships which cannot produce offspring, thus revealing how abominable and destructive of the family and humanity generally such relationships are.

But when does a man and a woman become united in marriage? Is it at the wedding ceremony, at the going into the woman by the man, or at the espousal? To answer this question, we shall look at the marriage of divinity with humanity, and also at the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and she consented to become the mother of the Son of God is when divinity and humanity became united. She believed the angels’ word. (John1:12). The spirit of the human agent, Mary, and the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, became united as one first as she believed.

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, ²⁷ To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And

the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. ²⁹ *And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.* ³⁰ *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God* ³⁸ *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”* **Luke 1:27-30,**

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In this well-known narrative several significant points emerge, but we shall consider four. First, the choosing of the one to be the marriage partner for divinity was a virgin. Secondly, the proposal, “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.” Thirdly, the consent to the proposal, the uniting, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord;” Fourthly, the promise of offspring, “behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. ³² He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest:” Also, vs. 35 as if to give reassurance, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Again note the New Covenant promise, the gospel, in all of this marriage experience between divinity and humanity. God’s unilateral choice of Mary (humanity) and the promise to give Mary a Son “thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS” and Mary’s (humanity’s) submission in quiet confidence that “it be according to the word of the Lord.” God Himself promised to perform, this is the gospel. Humanity’s response in faith, is the fruit of the gospel. This is a classic example of the gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.” But how much like baptism is this experience of marriage, the two become one. Some time before the outward evidence of baptism, there is the inward submission of the spirit of man to the Spirit of God, the union of spirits. Likewise, sometime before the marriage ceremony the two individuals become united in spirit. But also like water baptism, where the individuals await the outward ceremony before becoming joined to the

church as members, so the espoused man and woman await the formal ceremony before being joined together as one flesh.

CHAPTER 5

Marriage the Gospel Way - Part 2



“Those who regard the marriage relation as one of God’ sacred ordinances, guarded by His holy precept, will be controlled by the dictates of reason. The marriage relation is holy, . . . When the sacred nature and claims of marriage are understood, it will even now be approved of heaven; and the result will be happiness to both parties, and God will be glorified.” **Counsel for the Church 133**

God did not leave this matter of marriage to the whims and fancies of humanity. In His Word He has given us the principle, by way of example, of how godly Christian marriages should be contracted and performed. This is similar to the principle shown by way of example, of how baptism should be entered into and performed. And it should always be remembered, as God designed it, marriage like the Sabbath day and baptism is holy and sacred and reflects the union between the Father and the Son. *“that they may be one, even as we are one: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”* **John 17:22, 24.**

The marriage of Isaac to Rebekah furnishes us with the human example of what marriage is and how it is to be conducted.



"... I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac....⁷ The LORD GOD OF HEAVEN, WHICH TOOK ME FROM MY FATHER'S HOUSE, AND FROM THE LAND OF MY KINDRED, AND WHICH SPAKE UNTO ME, AND THAT SWARE UNTO ME, SAYING, UNTO THY SEED WILL I GIVE THIS LAND; HE SHALL SEND HIS ANGEL BEFORE THEE, AND THOU SHALT TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON FROM THENCE....¹² And he said O LORD GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, I PRAY THEE, SEND ME GOOD SPEED THIS DAY, AND KINDNESS UNTO MY MASTER ABRAHAM....¹⁴ And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master....²² And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking that the man took a golden earring of half shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold....³³ And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.³⁴ And he said, Speak on and he said I am Abraham's servant.³⁵ And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants and maidservants, and camels, and asses....⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD HATH SPOKEN.⁵² And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, BOWING HIMSELF TO THE EARTH.⁵³ And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.⁵⁴ And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.⁵⁶ And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD HATH PROSPERED MY WAY; SEND ME AWAY THAT I MAY GO TO MY MASTER.⁵⁷ And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go....⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.⁶⁷ And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's

tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife: and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Gen. 24:3-4, 7, 12, 14, 22, 33-36, 51-58, 66.

From this scenario several principles emerge. First, a wife, a virgin, was sought for from a far country, even as divinity sought a "wife," a virgin, from a "far country" - earth. Secondly, Isaac was not to go to the far country to select his wife, similarly the Son of God was not to go to the far country to select His wife. Thirdly, the chief servant, Eliezer, was instructed to carry the request to the virgin to be chosen as wife for his master's son. Similarly, the chief servant, Gabriel, was to carry the request to the virgin who was to be chosen as the "wife" for divinity. Fourthly, Rebekah readily consented, saying "I will go." Similarly, Mary said, "Behold the hand maid of the Lord." Fifthly, the dowry. ⁵³"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things." This was an indication of the family's position, and at the same time the commitment, the legal aspect. "In early times custom required the bridegroom, before the ratification of the marriage to pay a sum of money or its equivalent in property, according to his circumstances to the father of his wife." ***Patriarchs and Prophets 188.*** Bear in mind that Eliezer was performing all this on behalf of Isaac, and Rebekah, her brother and mother were the other party in what is the legal transaction. Sixthly, the giving away. "*Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD HATH SPOKEN.*" *Seventh,* ⁶⁶*And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.*" This all things included, no doubt, the miraculous finding of Rebekah, her willingness to be his wife, and the transaction which gave her to him. And finally, the consummation of the marriage, ⁶⁷*And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife:*" In both the instance of Mary and Rebekah a virgin was chosen. As God designed it, the woman to be married was always to be a virgin being representative of the bride of Christ, the church., and the man likewise being representative of Christ Himself. **2 Cor. 11:2** "*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*" Remember marriage was always

to be reflective of God's character and His way.

In the relation of Joseph and Mary, Joseph was the legal guardian of Mary; he was espoused (engaged) to her, hence Gabriel had to consult/speak to Joseph about Mary's situation. In the Christian marriage there is never the spiritual aspect without the legal aspect, i.e. a godly Christian marriage today cannot be effected by just going to the Church (spiritual aspect) or by just going to Caesar (legal aspect). Marriage was instituted by God making it a godly, a holy institution. The marriage of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden was the way God intended all marriages to be, i.e. only the spiritual aspect was necessary, but sin caused an adjustment to that original plan. During the time of the theocracy, when the nation of Israel was under the direct rule of God, there was also both the spiritual as well as the legal aspect of marriage. Deut. 24:1 (bill of divorcement meant that a legal transaction, marriage, was entered into.)

The legal aspect (rendering to Caesar his due) of the marriage institution is a matter of transparency and respect for the laws of the land in which Christians live. Therefore, a godly Christian marriage cannot be effected by only going to Caesar as is the case of so many "Christian" marriages in this postmodern "Christian" society. Remember Christ said *"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Mark 12:17.*

THE EXAMPLE SET BY ISAAC – AH 74

"Parents should never lose sight of their own responsibility for the future happiness of their children. Isaac's deference to his father's judgement was the result of the training that had taught him to love a life of obedience.

Isaac was highly honored of God in being made the inheritor of the promises through which the world was to be blessed; yet when he was forty years of age, he submitted to his father's judgement in appointing his experienced God-fearing servant to choose a wife for him. And the result of that marriage presented in Scriptures, is a tender and

beautiful picture of domestic happiness; Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

CHAPTER 6

Marriage the Gospel Way - Part 3



“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” 2 Cor. 6:14, 15

ST April 10, 1879

“Young men and women sometimes manifest great independence upon the subject of marriage, as though the Lord had nothing to do with them, or they with the Lord, in that matter. They seem to think that it is purely a matter of their own, which neither God nor their parents should in any wise control, that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted. Such make a serious mistake; and a few years of marriage experience generally teaches them that it is a miserable mistake. This is the great reason of so many unhappy marriages, in which there is so little true, generous love, and so little exercise of noble forbearance, toward each other. These often behave in their own homes more like pettish children, than the dignified, affectionate husband and wife.”

The story of Samson stands in stark contrast to that of Isaac, and furnishes us with the knowledge that obeying God in all affairs of life, including the marriage relation, is the only way of happiness and true success in this and the future life.

Consider the story of Samson's marriage, and the lessons it teaches us of not following in God's way, though he was called, and chosen of God.

*“And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.³ And the angel of the LORD APPEARED UNTO THE WOMAN, AND SAID UNTO HER, BEHOLD NOW, THOU ART BARREN, AND BEAREST NOT: BUT THOU SHALT CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON.” **Judges 13:2-3***

Like Sarah, Samson's mother was barren “and the angel of the LORD”, the Son of God Himself, appeared unto her and as usual in typical new covenant style promised her a son. God only deals in promises and not bargains, for He knows that we have nothing to bring to a bargaining table, that is why God's covenant is His promise and not an agreement. This experience of Samson's mother was similar to the experience of Sarah when the LORD appeared to both Abraham and Sarah and promised them a son.

*“Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked. “She's inside the tent,” Abraham replied. ¹⁰ Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!” Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” **Gen. 18:9, 10, 13, 14 (NLT)***

A similar new covenant promise was made to Manoah's wife.

*For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” **Judges 13:5.***

Like John-the-Baptist, Samson “was filled with the Spirit from the womb” being a Nazarite.

Being filled with the Spirit from the womb, and being a Nazarite from the womb are one and the same thing, and does not mean being conceive by the Spirit as was Jesus. Therefore, no other child but Jesus has ever been born “born again.” Both John-the-Baptist and Samson were called to do a special work of revival and reformation for God. Both were filled with the Spirit from the womb, chosen by God. But being conceived of two human parents, of the flesh, unlike Christ, they both needed to be born again of the Spirit of God. It is not enough to be filled with the Spirit from the mother’s womb to be a child of God, what is needed is conception by the Spirit producing the new birth.

“And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. 3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.” Judges 14:1-3

How unlike Isaac is Samson in seeking a wife. Isaac left this important, holy, and sacred matter with his God-fearing father whom he respected as a servant of the Most High God, who by prayer sought a wife for him. But not so Samson. Like so many young people today who do not respect their God-fearing parents, but are only interested in “he/she pleaseth me well”, Samson commanded his parents to “get her for me to wife.” His parents protested this behavior by saying “*Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?*” Back then the distinguishing mark between God’s people and the heathen was the worship of Jehovah with circumcision as the visible sign. Today the distinguishing mark between God’s people and the

other sects in “Christendom” is the Third Angel’s Message in verity with the Sabbath day being the visible sign. Therefore, our children are not to be given in marriage to those who do not hold the Third Angel’s Message in verity which includes; the Character of God message with the distinguishing mark of the Sabbath day.

The objections of Samson parents did not matter to him; all he knew was that “she pleaseth me well.” What selfishness controlled him that he did not heed his parents’ objections. “. . . association with idolaters corrupted him. The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson’s affections, and he determined to make her his wife.” *Patriarchs and Prophets* 562. “God’s sanction is not given to unions which He has expressly forbidden.” “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” *Adventist Home* 61.

Marriage, like the Sabbath day and baptism, is a sacred institution and needs the guidance of godly experienced individuals to guide the young in their choices of life-partners. Samson’s experience in the choice of a life-partner shows what happens when the counsel of God’s word and that of godly parents/persons is not sought, neglected or outrightly rejected.

Letters to Young Lovers 45

“Should a son or daughter select a companion without first consulting the parents, when such a step must materially affect the happiness of parents if they have any affection for their children? And should that child, notwithstanding the counsel and entreaties of his parents, persist in following his own course? I answer decidedly: No; not if he never marries. “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Here is a commandment with a promise which the Lord will surely fulfill to those who obey. Wise parents will never select companions for their children

without respect to their wishes.

One of the greatest errors connected with this subject is that the young and inexperienced must not have their affections disturbed, that there must be no interference in their love experience. If there ever was a subject that needed to be viewed from every standpoint, it is this. The aid of the experience of others, and a calm, careful weighing of the matter on both sides, is positively essential. It is a subject that is treated altogether too lightly by the great majority of people. Take God and your God-fearing parents into your counsel, young friends. Pray over the matter.”

Letters to Young Lovers 79

“Those who would find true happiness must have the blessing of Heaven upon all that they possess and all that they do. It is disobedience to God that fills so many hearts and homes with misery. My sister, unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God.

To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan’s ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life?

.... What ought every Christian to do when brought into the trying position which tests the soundness of religious principle? With a firmness worthy of imitation, he should say frankly, “I am a conscientious Christian. I believe the seventh day of the week to be the Sabbath of the Bible. Our faith and principles are such that they lead in opposite directions. We cannot be happy together, for if I follow on to gain a more perfect knowledge of the will of God, I shall become more and more unlike the world.

... The believer thus makes a sacrifice for Christ which his conscience approves, and which shows that he values eternal life too highly to run the risk of losing it. He feels that it would be better to remain unmarried than to link his interest for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus.

CHAPTER 7

The Palmerworm, the Locust, the Cankerworm, the Caterpillar



*“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.” These destroyers are different stages of the locust family. Notice they all eat for themselves and do not share, even with their young. Likewise, the destroyers of the husband/wife relationship are all members of the “same” family. **Joel 1:4 (NIV)***

1. The palmerworm (gnawer stage) - this is the pupal stage of the locust; this is the stage at which nibbling occurs. In the husband and wife relationship, this is the stage at which small things begin to come in and start trouble. Apparently little things like fixing the bed, spending long periods on the phone, dropping pieces of clothing on the floor, not helping with the children, spending too much time in adorning oneself etc. which things should be “nipped in the bud” so that they do not grow and become more difficult and cause separation or estrangement. *“Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.” **Song of Solomon 2:15***
2. Locust (swarmer) - the wingless stage, nymphs, which grows rapidly and

then become adults and move around rapidly. This is the stage during which things in a relationship develop and grown for some time before emerging openly. Other intimate relationships, like close friends or even family which appear harmless at first, but when they emerge and blossom they could be earth shattering.

3. Cankerworm (devourer) - the stage at which demolition and gobbling (bolting) occurs. This is the stage in a relationship where total disregard of the spouse occurs. Aggressive attitudes and different types of abuses, physical, mental, emotional, occur.
4. Caterpillar (consumer) - this is the ravager stage in which devastation and complete ruin is the experience of the relationship. The relationship is severed, separation occurs and can end in bitter divorce.

But God has promised restoration. *“Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. . . . I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: “Joel 2;21, 25, 26.*

Notice the order in which God restores:

First the removal of the locust, the swarmer (horde, mass), the overwhelming problem

Second the removal of the devourer, cankerworm (powerful destructive entity), that which is eating away at the family

Third the removal of the consumer, caterpillar (consumer of resources), bringing to bareness, poverty

Fourth the removal of the gnawer, the palmerworm (persistent niggling

problems), the irritating situation is removed

COMMUNICATION, THE WAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIP

1. Find the right time that is mutually agreeable to both parties
2. Talk of serious matters face to face (better than in writing)
3. Do not attack (do not say “you” rather say “I” or “we”)
4. Be honest, this can be hurtful (it is key to a healthful relationship)
5. Check your body language (use eye contact, face one another) (**See Appendix 3**)

THE HUSBAND

*“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. ¹² But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. ¹³ . . . the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: ¹⁵ A brother . . . is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. ¹⁶ . . . how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? **1 Cor. 7:10-13, 15-16***

This counsel is reflective of Christ the husband of His bride, the church, who does not believe in putting away. Rather, He goes to the ultimate in order to save His wife at whatever cost to Himself. This is the Agape, selfless, all for the other, none for self love, which He has demonstrated toward His wife, the church, and empowers husbands (men) to do the likewise.

***1 Peter 3:7, 8** “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. ⁸ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:” **1 Cor. 12:23** “. . . those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we **bestow** more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”*

Honoring of the wife by the husband demands knowledge of women. What knowledge? The knowledge of not only how to give honor to the wife who is the weaker vessel, but also a more abundant honour. This idea of giving honor is brought out in the fifth commandment which says “honor thy father and thy mother.” It means respect which is furthermore due to the wife than the parents because your wife is your next self. So in the affection of the husband the wife has pride of place and all others come-in a distant second, including mothers. This is how we see our great Exemplar doing it, and therefore we must follow suit. Our wives must not feel left out in anyway because of any other person, including parents, siblings, or friends. They must be consulted with, in regard to any matter or activity as it impacts the husband. She must be included in all our issues, for to honor means to esteem, and in the wife’s case, above all others. The wife is to be nourished and cherished by her husband, i.e. fed with the affection of love by her husband.

THE WIFE

*“And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, . . . else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. . . . a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. ¹⁶ For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” **1 Cor. 7:13-16***

*“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; ² While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. ³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; ⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. ⁵ For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: ⁶ 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 3:1-6***

A wife whose husband loves, honors, and respects her will find that it is the easiest and most wonderful thing to submit to him. Here both the Apostles Peter and Paul go a little further admonishing wives that they might save husbands who do not know the grace of God.

What power there is in submission for the salvation of someone else, and that your husband. So then, submission is not a whimsical, flippant thing, but rather a principle in righteousness as was demonstrated in our Savior, the Lord of glory who is and will be in subjection to God our Father for all eternity.

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Cor. 11:3 “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” 1 Cor. 15:28.

This principle of subjection is seen in the highest heavens from whence it comes. It will at last be seen in the remnant when the revival of primitive godliness occurs and spiritual reformation is experienced as it was in the early church, and between spouses. Such submission can only be known in the body of Christ when there is also unity of faith between husbands and wives, this is exactly what Christ’s parting prayer in John 17 is all about.

Further, marriage is never only between a man and a woman. When persons are married it should be understood that they marry into families and not just to their spouses. Again the word furnishes us with the principle and the examples in this regard. In the marriage between divinity and humanity, it was not only Mary that was involved, but the entire human family. Isaiah speaking prophetically of the Messiah tells us in chapter seven verse fourteen “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Matthew confirms the fulfillment of this prophecy in chapter one verse 32, when he says, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” God with us,

humanity, and not God with her, Mary alone. Likewise, in the story of Ruth even after the death of her husband, Mahlon, she had no misgivings about the fact that she had married into a family and not just to an individual. **Ruth 1:16** *“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whithersoever thou shalt go, I will go; and where thou shalt lodge, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”*

Consider the following by *E.G. White in Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, p. 22.*

IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUNDS

Let time teach you discretion, and what the genuine claims of love are, before it is allowed to step one inch further. Ruin, fearful ruin, is before you in this life and the next, if you pursue the course you have been following. Look to the family history. Two families are to be brought into close and sacred connection. Perfection in all these relations is not, of course, to be expected, but you would make a most cruel move to marry a girl whose ancestry and relatives would degrade and mortify you, or tempt you to slight and ignore them. **(See Appendix 3)**

Divorce

Part 1



“And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”
Matthew 19:5, 6

To put asunder is to tear apart, to separate. In the words of Christ divorce is a putting asunder that which God has joined together. Marriage, a joining, a union is seen in the union of the Father and the Son in the godhead by Love, the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). Likewise, separation, divorce is seen in the godhead between the Father and Son when the Son chose to bear the sins of humanity. Remember He was standing as the substitute for the unfaithful spouse, humanity, in the marriage relationship between divinity and humanity. The cry “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” was in recognition of the separation, the divorce of the union which existed between the Father and the Son from all eternity. Christ took on man’s sin, which included man’s selfishness and hardness of heart, which caused the separation, the divorce from the Father. And sin with its inherent selfishness and hardness

of heart is still the cause of all other separations, and divorces in our world. But though humanity, the “wife” of Christ played the harlot and committed fornication He did not divorce her, but instead died for her. What amazing love! it seems that He preferred to be separated from His Father for all eternity than from His wife, wow! And He risked it to reconnect her to Himself. What love is this! He is therefore telling men something most profound by His example, which is “... *for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?*” **Matt. 19:5**. He left His Father Whom He was united to from eternity past to be joined to His wife for the future eternity, and reuniting His wife with His Father. “*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*” **Eph. 2:14**. The both here is divinity and humanity.

The LORD’S love is so intense towards His wife that He cannot bear being separated from her, furthermore being divorced from her. *Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD WHICH HE LOVED, AND HATH MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF A STRANGE GOD.* ¹² *The LORD WILL CUT OFF THE MAN THAT DOETH THIS, THE MASTER AND THE SCHOLAR, OUT OF THE TABERNACLES OF JACOB, AND HIM THAT OFFERETH AN OFFERING UNTO THE LORD OF HOSTS.* ¹³ *And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD WITH TEARS, WITH WEEPING, AND WITH CRYING OUT, INSOMUCH THAT HE REGARDETH NOT THE OFFERING ANY MORE, OR RECEIVETH IT WITH GOOD WILL AT YOUR HAND.* ¹⁴ *Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD HATH BEEN WITNESS BETWEEN THEE AND THE WIFE OF THY YOUTH, AGAINST WHOM THOU HAST DEALT TREACHEROUSLY: YET IS SHE THY COMPANION, AND THE WIFE OF THY COVENANT.* ¹⁵ *And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.* ¹⁶ *For the LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, SAITH THAT HE HATETH PUTTING AWAY: FOR ONE COVERETH VIOLENCE WITH HIS GARMENT, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS: THEREFORE TAKE HEED TO YOUR SPIRIT, THAT YE DEAL NOT TREACHEROUSLY.* ¹⁷ *Ye have wearied the LORD WITH YOUR WORDS. YET YE SAY, WHEREIN HAVE WE WEARIED HIM? WHEN YE SAY, EVERY ONE THAT DOETH EVIL IS GOOD IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND HE DELIGHTETH IN THEM; OR, WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUDGMENT? **Malachi 2:11-17***

Consider the following thoughts which emerge from passage above passage, and notice the recurrence of the word treacherously.

1. In verse 11 it is associated with abomination, profanity and marrying the daughter of a strange god,
2. Verse 12 shows God's displeasure of such treachery against Him
3. Verse 14 speaks of dealing treacherously with the wife of thy youth, whom the Lord still sees as thy companion and the wife of thy covenant (Matt. 19:9)
4. Verse 15 treats to the oneness of marriage for the production of a godly seed, doing otherwise is treachery, and the children are unholy (1 Cor. 7:14)
5. Verse 16 treats of the treachery of putting away, divorce (Mal. 2:16)

In every instance in which the word treacherously (deceitfully, unfaithfully, dangerously, disloyally) is used in this passage it has to do with marriage and the way it is disregarded. Therefore, one can conclude that divorce is really treachery in the sight of God who says "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." Remember that it is in the spirit that treachery first starts against "thy companion and the wife of your youth." (**See Appendix 1**)

"The Captain of our salvation was perfected through suffering. His soul was made an offering for sin. It was necessary for the awful darkness to gather about His soul because of the withdrawal of the Father's love and favor, for He was standing in the sinner's place, and this darkness every sinner must experience. The righteous One must suffer the condemnation and wrath of God, not in vindictiveness; for the heart

of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, the Guiltless, was suffering the penalty of sin. This sundering of the divine powers will never again occur throughout the eternal ages.” **7 BC 924 (MS 93, 1899)**. Also, “He feared that sin was so offensive to God that their separation was to be eternal.” **Desire of Ages 753**.

Let us consider two thoughts from the above two excerpts

1. This sundering of the divine powers will never again occur throughout the eternal ages.
2. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that their separation was to be eternal.

Is it any wonder that God hates putting away, divorce? By experience He knows the pain and heartache that such an experience brings. “.... the heart of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, the Guiltless, was suffering the penalty of sin.” And “the penalty of sin” is the eternal separation, the divorce, the cutting off forever from God, “.... in (whom) we live, and move, and have our being;”

In conclusion we can begin to understand why God hates putting away, divorce, between husband and wife. It no doubt, brings “to memory” a sense of the separation which sin caused between Himself and His Eternal Son with whom He was united as one from all eternity past. And more, the eternal separation, the divorce which sin will bring between Him and His children who are the object of His love and salvation, on whom He expended such an infinite price, even the life of His own dear Son, to have a godly seed.

Divorce

Part 2



On many occasions Christ spoke things hard to bear by those listening who were indulging in practices contrary to the principles He was enunciating, and they became offended at His words. One such occasion was when He said *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*⁵² *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? . . .*⁶⁰ *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*⁶¹ *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? . . .*⁶⁶ *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”* **John 6:52, 60, 61, 66 (KJV)**

“God leads his people on step by step. He brings them up to different points which are calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested, and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to the straight work of God, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, or be spued out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel, “God will bring his work closer

and closer to test them, and prove every one of his people.” Some are willing to receive one point, but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus.” **Spiritual Gifts, Vol. 2, p.226.**

“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? ⁴ And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? ⁶ Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. ⁷ They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”
Matt. 19:3-12.

In the scripture under consideration Christ lays down several principles as they relate to both marriage and divorce, some of which seem hard. Remember “If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to the straight work of God, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, or be spued out of the mouth of the Lord.”

Consider the following;

1. Marriage is a scripture based institution – have ye not read in the scriptures, “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*” **Gen. 2:24.**

2. Marriage is between a man and a woman – he made male and female at the beginning, *“And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman,”* **Gen. 2:22a**.
3. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife – leave and cleave. *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife:”* **Gen. 2:24a**
4. God joins a man and a woman in marriage – a godly marriage is one in which God joins the man and woman. *“ . . . made He a woman, and brought her unto the man”* (**Gen. 2:22b**)
5. Divorce is due to hardness of heart – because of hardness of heart one was allowed to put away his wife *“. . . Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”* **Matt. 19: 8 (Deut. 24:1-4)**
6. Divorce was not in the God’s original plan – it was not so from the beginning. *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* **Matt. 19:6b (Gen. 2:24)**
7. Divorce is only permitted by God on the grounds of fornication – otherwise the person who does the putting away and marries another commits adultery. *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:”* **Matt. 19:9a**
8. If divorce is due to fornication – the one who marries her or him that is put away for fornication commits adultery *“and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* **Matt. 5:32.**
9. If a person who has been put away because of fornication and the partner does not marry – such a one should remain single or seek to

be reunited to the former spouse. *“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” 1 Cor. 7:10, 11.*

10. Divorce and remarrying a different person is a terminal issue, the end of relationship which involved treachery. It is the “unpardonable sin” in the relationship between two persons, a severing of relationship never to be restored. *“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.³ And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;⁴ Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.” Exodus 24:1-4.*

11. Forgiveness is the method love uses to restore the guilty party from an adulterous situation, thus preventing divorce. “. . . forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. . . It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.” **MB 114.1** “If a brother errs, forgive him if he asks you. If he is not humble enough to ask, forgive him in your heart, and express your forgiveness in word and action. . . “If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” And we are not only to forgive seven times, but seventy times seven. Just as often as God forgives us, we are to forgive one another. . . One . . . is never to say to another, “When I see that you

have reformed, then I will forgive you.” This is not God’s plan. This is in accordance with the promptings of human nature. By showing that you do not desire fellowship with your brother, you not only hurt his soul and your own, but you also wound and bruise the heart of Christ.” *Review and Herald, April 8, 1902.*

The Agape love of God is the only basis for a godly marriage, and in that relationship divorce is not an option, it has no place. Marriage as ordained by God is between a biological male and a biological female – he made male and female at the beginning (Gen. 2:23). This is made hard like all the other sayings of Christ because of hardness of heart. Not only is it hard to irreligious persons, but also many religious persons in churches, in politics, in sports, in health, in education, and other circles of influence.

*“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.²⁶ For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:²⁷ And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” **Romans 1: 24-27***

Marriage is a sacred, godly institution when performed and carried out the way God designed it to be. “Wrong sentiments in regard to marriage had found a place in the minds of the teachers of Israel. They were making of none effect the sacred institution of marriage. Man was becoming so hardhearted that he would for the most trivial excuse separate from his wife, or, if he chose, he would separate her from the children and send her away. This was considered a great disgrace and was often accompanied by the most acute suffering on the part of the discarded one. Christ came to correct these evils, and His first miracle was wrought on the occasion of the marriage. Thus He announced

to the world that marriage when kept pure and undefiled is a sacred institution.” **AH 341.2.**

Divorce is only to be done on the grounds of fornication – except it be for fornication (Matt. 19:9a). People divorce for many reasons according to the world’s system. But in God’s economy, divorce is only recognized when done for the reason God says. “. . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:” **AH 341.3** “Your ideas in regard to the marriage relation have been erroneous. Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can either break or annul the marriage vow. We are living in perilous times, when there is no assurance in anything save in a firm, unwavering faith in Jesus Christ. ***There is no heart that may not be estranged from God through the devices of Satan, if one does not watch unto prayer.***” “God gave only one cause why a wife should leave her husband, or the husband leave his wife, which is adultery. Let this ground be prayerfully considered. **AH 342.2.** “If the wife is an unbeliever and an opposer, the husband cannot, in view of the law of God, put her away on this ground alone. In order to be in harmony with the law of Jehovah, he must abide with her unless she chooses of herself to depart.” **AH 344.4.** “A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the sight of God and according to the higher law. There is only one sin, which is adultery, which can place the husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in the sight of God. Although the laws of the land may grant a divorce, yet they are husband and wife still in the Bible light, according to the laws of God.” **AH 344.**

Finally, the Apostle Paul in **1 Cor. 7:10, 11** says,

“And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife

depart from her husband:¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.” Here we see that God is not unmindful of the hardheartedness of His people and that it causes estrangement from each other, and this is so because they have been estranged from Him. It is therefore the selfishness, the stubbornness, the hardheartedness that need to be changed, not the marriage status.

ADVICE TO A SEPARATED COUPLE

My brother, my sister, for some time you have not been living together. You should not have pursued this course and would not have done so if both of you had been cultivating the patience, kindness, and forbearance that should ever exist between husband and wife. Neither of you should set up your own will and try to carry out your individual ideas and plans whatever the consequences may be. Neither of you should be determined to do as you please. Let the softening, subduing influence of the Spirit of God work upon your hearts and fit you for the work of training your children.... Appeal to your heavenly Father to keep you from yielding to the temptation to speak in an impatient, harsh, willful manner to each other, the husband to the wife, and the wife to the husband. Both of you have imperfect characters. Because you have not been under God’s control, your conduct toward each other has been unwise. have never overcome this objectionable trait of character. But every wrong habit must be overcome. Make a complete surrender to God. Fall on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and be broken. As husband and wife, discipline yourselves. Go to Christ for help. He will willingly supply you with His divine sympathy, His free grace....

Repent before God for your past course. Come to an understanding, and reunite as husband and wife. Put away the disagreeable, unhappy experience of your past life. Take courage in the Lord. Close the windows of the soul earthward, and open them heavenward. If your voices are uplifted in prayer to heaven for light, the Lord Jesus, who is light and

life, peace and joy, will hear your cry. He, the Sun of Righteousness, will shine into the chambers of your mind, lighting up the soul temple. If you welcome the sunshine of His presence into your home, you will not utter words of a nature to cause feelings of unhappiness. **AH 342, 243.**

CHAPTER 10

A Godly Seed



“And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. . . .” Malachi 2:15

“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.” 1 Cor. 11:11, 12

The one in Malachi 2:15 refers to one in marriage. The oneness of marriage was designed by God to reflect heaven’s order, and unity for the production of godly seed. Notice how God addresses the matter of marriage and seed production in what can be called “the principle of oneness.” *“And did not he make one? And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.”* Also, there is oneness in which *“neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.”* In the scriptures oneness in marriage in the Lord always produces godly seed. This godly seed would be a result of marriage, the marriage between divinity and humanity. That godly Seed would be Christ, the Son of God. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Gal. 3:16.* Christ being the godly seed would

then produce a line of godly seed, the principle of after “it’s kind, which will fill the vacancies caused by the defection of Satan and his cohorts in heaven. *“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Heb. 2:10.* This production of godly seed is the mystery of godliness at work, the manifestation of God in the flesh.” *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,” 1 Tim. 3:16.* Also, *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:” Col. 1:27.*

Before the rebellion of Satan there was a perfect balance in order, unity, and numbers, in heaven, and hence the universe. But after the rebellion there was an imbalance in numbers in heaven, and also of order, unity, and harmony in our galaxy. Heaven, and the universe generally, cannot long continue in a state of imbalance and yet be perfect. *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Col. 1:20.* In heaven God had to reconcile, resolve, the numbers that were missing, and straighten out the deception that occurred. And on earth He had to straighten out the deception that occurred and use humanity to restore the balance and numbers that were missing in heaven. *“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” Isaiah 40:12.* Therefore, God who is perfect in all His ways, including measurement, weight, balance, precision, and accuracy had to find a way to restore this balance, using a just method. *“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.” Prov. 11:1.* The creation of man was God’s answer to the imbalance problem. Through human marriage God intended for the production of godly seed to fill the vacancies in heaven and through the said godly seed to demonstrate His unchanging character of love to all His creatures, whether they are for Him or against Him. So man is central in God’s plan in rebalancing the universe, what a thought! For such great love and consideration of humanity we ought to bow our knees to the

God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we do not know the numbers needed to fill the vacancies, we are sure that they would amount to the optimum population that the earth can accommodate in a perfect state, obviously without being overpopulated. “An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received “the seal of the living God.” Then Jesus ceases his intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts his hands, and with a loud voice says, “*It is done;*” and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as he makes the solemn announcement: “*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*” Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for his people, and blotted out their sins. The number of his subjects is made up: “*the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,*” is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords.” ***Great Controversy 613.2.*** This number, made up of His subjects, redeemed humanity, will fill the vacancies left in heaven by the rebellion led by Satan. It will be comprised of all the faithful of all the ages, “the heirs of salvation.” It would have taken a shorter time in a perfect world, and without any deaths, to fill the vacancies. But because of the entrance of sin in our world it has taken much longer and resulted in the death of God’s dear Son, as well as that of trillions of humans for the number of his subjects to be made up, the vacancies filled, and the universe rebalanced in righteousness.

With His plan in place God proceeded to fill the vacancies and redress the imbalance with the creation of man.

*“So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them.”²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.” **Gen. 1:27, 28. (RSV).***

Man's creation was only the beginning of a magnificent plan God had for them.

*“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? ⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [for a little while, margin] and hast crowned him with glory and honour.” **Psalm 8:3-5.***

Of all God's creation man was made most like God. Wow! He was the only one made in the image and likeness of God, and who like God is able to produce offspring (Acts 17:28; Gen. 1:28).

But soon after the launch of this amazing plan to through man fill the vacancies left by Satan and his co-defectors, which plan filled the holy angels with delight, man joined Satan in his rebellion and fell from his high estate. But amazement of amazements immediately at the fall God set a plan in motion, which plan was hid for ages to restore and elevate man to a position way above his original estate, and way beyond any other creature in the entire universe. Man being most like God at his creation was still to be elevated. But how much higher could God elevate him? To sit him on the throne of His Son which is the ultimate that any creature can reach. And it was all because of His Son the godly Seed who became man (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2: 14, 16), and produced a line of godly seed.

*“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” **Heb. 2:10.***

Praise and glory to God and the Lamb! Amen.

*“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” **Rev. 3:21.***
(NKJV).”

God created man for His own glory, i.e. to share in, and show forth His

Unselfish Agape Love to the universe, and in so doing dispel the lies of Satan that He was selfish, and only for Himself. “It was His purpose to re-populate heaven with the human race, if after test and trial they proved to be loyal to Him. Adam was to be tested, to see whether he would be obedient or disobedient. Had he stood the test, his thoughts would have been as the thoughts of God. His character would have been moulded after the similitude of the divine character.” *Signs of the Times May 29, 1901*. Adam and his seed, offspring, being made a little lower than the angels for a little time would then have filled the vacancies and re-populate heaven.

At the beginning of man’s creation, we see God testing Adam to “see” if he would be capable of thinking like Him.

*“And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” **Gen. 2:19**.*

Not only did Adam give the animals their names, but the names which he gave them were the names God had for them. God was testing His new product as it were, to see if his ‘on the road performance’ met all the specifications, i.e. would his new product Adam (man), be capable of thinking exactly like Him. Yes, he passed that test, and “. . . the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” **Job 38:7**.

But after all the excitement at his creation man was subsequently tempted and defeated by Satan. How will God’s plan of re-populating heaven with the human race, and rebalancing the universe in righteousness be accomplished now? God is the master of the third option, and when it seemed as if His plan had failed it was only the beginning of a more glorious outcome. Remember “. . . we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” **2 Cor. 13:8** This is a principle that holds for all time and under all circumstances, whether in heaven or on earth. But enters now the godly Seed. “*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law*” **Gal. 4:4**. When it seemed that God would have to cancel His plan and

go back to the drawing board, and start over from scratch, He solved the problem by giving His only begotten Son (John 3:16), the godly Seed, to produce a line of godly seed to fill the vacancies and rebalance the universe in righteousness. But more than that, He exalts the godly seed produced by His Son beyond even the angels who had never sinned. Hallelujah to God and the Lamb! *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Rev. 3:21* “Great as is the shame and degradation through sin, even greater will be the honor and exaltation through redeeming love. To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heavenly treasures, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never sinned.” *ST June 4, 1902.* The godly seed, is really God’s seed (DNA) implanted in humanity.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:9.

This text not only speaks to a time in the restoration, but especially to this side of the restoration when complete and total surrender to the godly Seed is experienced in fallen humanity, and they cannot be made to sin. Like their Maser, the prince of this world will come and will find nothing in them to respond to his temptations, and it is all because Christ Himself, “the seed” “the hope of glory” is fully formed in them, and they cannot be made to sin.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Eph. 4:13.

Eph. 5:31 “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” This one flesh has to do with seed, offspring. “. . . And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.” *Mal. 2:15b* Note this same intent at the creation of man. “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” *Gen. 1:28. (RSV)* Man was created after

the rebellion in heaven and it was God's intention to fill the vacancies and rebalance the universe, and the seed of Adam was the objective of the plan. Adam's seed, unfallen humanity, would have filled the vacancies and replace the fallen angels. But because of the fall God's own seed, the offspring of Christ, not only fills the vacancies, but will be exalted to sit on the throne of the Son of God throughout eternity. In the divine economy in order to have seed, i.e. godly seed, offspring, a man must take a wife and be married. Christ illustrates this by being married Himself. The church is the bride, the wife of Christ.

*“For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” **Isaiah 54:5**. Also, For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. **1 Cor. 11:2**.*

So Christ set the example in marrying, and not committing fornication.

The marriage between divinity and humanity produced the godly Seed. Likewise, as His children, because His DNA (life) spiritually is in us, we will follow His example in having godly marriages and having seed, godly seed. Paul gives us a glimpse of this. After saying, *“A man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh”* he says *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” **Eph. 5:32***. So the mystery of a godly seed is each individual of the Christian family and hence the church, the bride of Christ, being born of God having His seed, His life in them.

*“By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. ⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature . . .” **2 Peter 1:3, 4 (NLT)**.*

(D)IVINE (N)(A)TURE, DNA. And it is received by faith alone, i.e. by believing on the Son of the Eternal God. Yes, and it's that easy.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:” John 1:12.

A most solemn responsibility therefore rests upon parents, who like Abraham, being married, . . . *command his children and his household after him, to “keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;” Gen. 18:19.* This business of having godly seed starts with ‘*wherefore one?*’ It should be clearly understood that God’s ideal is for individuals, who are godly seed, to be married and train their children that through surrender to the godly Seed they may become godly seed. And remember it is not only to fill the vacancies left in heaven, but more than that, it is to show the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8), and be able to sit and share the throne of our Elder Brother and rule the universe with Him in the next eternity. O the precious Son of God, what love, what humility in sharing all that He has with redeemed humanity, His seed.

“All who follow the leading of God’s Spirit are God’s own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, “Father, my Father”. The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory. Rom. 8:14-17 (J.B. Phillips).

Yes, He is our Father and we are His children. Children who are not products of ‘the wherefore one’ godly relationship, may also by the surrender of themselves to the godly Seed become godly seed, and be candidates to fill the vacancies, sit on the throne of the Son of God, and rule in the kingdom during the next eternity.

These vacancies like all other vacancies have a very strict set of qualifications

to be met. If you are to be considered, you must possess **ALL** of the following qualifications:

1. A **B.A** - Born Again (“*Ye must be born again.*” **John 3:7**). This is the basic qualification to fill the vacancy.
2. A **M.A** - Master of Adversity (“. . . *That by many tribulations [adversities] it behooveth us to enter into the kingdom of heavens. Acts 14:22. Wycliffe Bible (WYC)*). A graduate degree. “*So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don’t need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. 2 You don’t need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*” **Heb. 6:1, 2 (NLT)**; Rom. 5:3; Eph. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:4; Psalm 35:15; Eccl. 7:14; 1Sam.10:19.
3. A **P.H.D** - Patient Humble Disciple (“*In your patience possess ye your souls. Luke 21:19; “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.” James 1:4; “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord” James 4:10; By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35*).
4. A **D.S** - Death to Self “*our old man (self) is crucified (dead) with him*” (**Rom. 6:6**)

Note that all of these qualifications have both intellectual and practical components, and hence are experiential, being comprised of “a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved”

Parents ought to understand the responsibility of preparing their children and or charges to fill the vacancies that have been left in heaven which has thrown the universe out of balance. No effort must be spared to seek to induce them to fulfill their potential of sitting on the throne of Christ, even as He is set down on His Father’s throne and be a part in redressing this

imbalance. Parents have the privilege of helping God redress this imbalance by having children, and training them to surrender to the Godly seed and fill the vacancies. And amazingly the experience of having and raising children does far more for the development of the character of spouses than not having children. **(See Appendix 2)**

CHAPTER 11

The Oneness in the Family & the Church



*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” **Hosea 4:6***

*“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.” **Malachi 2:7***

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: ¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” **Matt. 7:13–15***

The Christian home is a microcosm of the Christian church. The same principles, and not similar principles, which govern the Christian home governs the Christian church.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto

Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. . . .³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . .³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
Ephesians 5:22-27, 30, 32.

The above gospel passage by the Apostle Paul is a mirror image of the gospel passage by our Lord in **John 17:11, 12, 21-23** in which He prayed for the unity of His church.

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

In the two passages quoted above oneness, unity, is both the overarching and underlying principle which governs both the Christian spousal relationship in the family and the church.

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. . . . but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Eph. 5:32.

Adam used a similar expression when Eve was brought to him.

*“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: **Gen. 1:23a.***

And in that last prayer Christ also voiced a similar sentiment, *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”* **John 17:12c** Oneness is seen in there being one body with that one body believing the same thing, having the same purpose, working together for the same outcome, and being under the same head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, in the Christian spousal relationship there can be no rival spouse with a rival house, likewise in the Church of Christ there can be no rival church with a rival house. Also there can be no rival establishment, no pulling apart, but rather the harmonious working together in the family as in the church. The Apostle Paul’s words are instructive here, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. Rom. 16:17. “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” 1 Cor. 14:33.* As in the family so in the church, where there is unity there will be peace and where there is peace there will be unity. When a son or daughter goes out from such a home to establish his or her own home, because there is unity and harmony, that home is a mere extension of the family, so also with the church. The converse is also true, if there is disunity or disharmony in the home or church and one goes out without the cooperation of the family or church, and sets up its own family or church, it cannot be said to be an extension of the family or church in the truest sense, it is a rival family or rival church. It is all about the spirit, “therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.” It matters not how an entity looks or functions, if the spirit was or is wrong, the whole thing is wrong. Remember the family is a microcosm, a miniature of the church. To adapt an E.G, White’s statement (DA 25.3), “The church is enshrined in the family, and the family is enfolded in the heart of the church.

Divorce is a separation and not a union and therefore is not an option in heaven’s economy. It is the end of relationship and is evinced, demonstrated, in the setting up, without justification, i.e. where adultery did not occur a “rival family” and where apostasy did not occur a “rival church”. In the marriage relationship the only reason for divorce is adultery (Matt. 19:9). Likewise, in the church the only reason for separation is apostasy, “marrying a strange

god” (Mal. 2:11). Both adultery in the marriage relation and apostasy in the church, when not repented of, and not apologized for, end in divorce which is terminal and hence incurable. And this is all because of hardness of heart, “own-way-ness” i.e. wanting our own way.

In heaven where there was perfect oneness, and no apostasy, Lucifer divorced himself from God and established a rival kingdom, and committed the unpardonable sin and was therefore never able to return to his former allegiance. He chose a different god, “self.” Is it any surprise then that God says “. . . he hateth putting away: . . . therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.” **Malachi 2:16**. Similarly, whether in the family or the church in heaven or earth, where there is a divorce without justification, i.e. not due to treachery, unfaithfulness and the setting up of a rival “family” or “church” divorce is terminal. If Lucifer was to be reinstated to his former position he would have to:

1. Return to his former allegiance,
2. Disband his rival kingdom, and
3. In humility submit himself to the rule of God.

Remember that the Son of God counseled, pleaded with Lucifer, to humble himself and return to his former allegiance before he divorced himself from God and set up his rival kingdom. And the objective of all this was to save him from himself and all that it would bring, but alas it was to no avail. Likewise, in spousal relations because there is no effective relation with God, no humbling of self, divorce is very often entered into in resistance to the Holy Spirit.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES JANUARY 16, 1879

“Satan now beheld the terrible results of his rebellion. He shuddered, and feared to face the future, and to contemplate the end of these things. Where was he? Was it not all a horrible dream? Was he shut

out of Heaven? Were the gates of Heaven never more to open and admit him? Bright, holy angels bow before the Father, but no more will Satan unite with them in heavenly song. No more will he bow in reverence and holy awe before the presence of the eternal God. Could he be again as when he was pure, true, and loyal, gladly would he yield up the claims of his authority. But he was lost beyond redemption, for his presumptuous rebellion! And this was not all; he had led others to rebellion and to the same lost condition with himself—angels who had never thought to question the will of Heaven, or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds, presenting before them that they might enjoy a greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them. A responsibility now rests upon him from which he would fain be released. . .

Satan trembled as he viewed his work. He was alone, in meditation upon the past, the present, and the future. His mighty frame shook as with a tempest. An angel from Heaven was passing. Satan called him, and intreated an interview with Christ. This was granted. He then related to him that he repented of his rebellion, and wished again to enjoy the favor of God. He was willing to take the place which had been assigned him, and be under Christ's command. The Son of God wept at Satan's woe, but told him, as the mind of the Father, that this could never be. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. The peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received back; for sin originated with him; the seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would still have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast. The law of God could condemn, but could not pardon.

Satan did not repent of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused. The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of Heaven, the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him,

and the disappointment he experienced in not finding his expectations realized, were the cause of his grief. To be commander out of Heaven, was vastly different from being thus honored in Heaven. The loss of all the privileges of Heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these.

The great change in his position had not increased his love for God, nor for his wise and just law. When Satan became fully convinced that it was impossible for him to be re-instated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence.”

Let us consider some lessons from this extract.

1. “Presumptuous rebellion!” It is always presumption, arrogance, that leads to rebellion and ultimately being lost. E.g. Cain, Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On, King Saul, Absalom etc.
2. “He had led others to rebellion.” Followers of rebels e.g. (Korah) two hundred and fifty princes, (Saul) with some men of the tribe of Benjamin, and (Absalom) almost all of Jerusalem. “When one who is supposed to be led and taught by God turns out of the way, because of self-confidence, many follow his example. His false step may result in misleading thousands.” *Testimonies Treasures Vol. 3, 184.*
3. “They never thought to question the will of Heaven, or refuse obedience to the law of God till he had put it into their minds.” Persons never see things ‘so’ in ‘that light’ until put in their minds by the leader of a rebellion.
4. “A false greater good, a higher and more glorious liberty. This had been the sophistry whereby he had deceived them.” This is the dishonesty, the fraudulence always used – making the followers believe that they are now free.

5. Interview requested by Satan. The rebellious always want an interview to put their case. Amazing that at the beginning of the rebellion “Satan [was] . . . ambitious to exalt himself, and unwilling to submit to the authority of God’s Son, heaven’s great commander.” *Signs of the Times January 9, 1879*. Now, pretending to be repentant he “told Christ that he repented of his rebellion and wished again to enjoy the favor of God. He was willing to take the place which had been assigned him, and be under Christ’s command.” *Signs of the Times January 16, 1879*.
6. Interview was granted by Christ. Christ and those actuated by His Spirit are always open to the requests of the rebellious to be heard.
7. Christ’s response. “. . . he [Christ] told him [Satan], as the mind of the Father, that this could never be. Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. The peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received back; for sin originated with him; the seeds of rebellion were still within him. He had no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would still have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast.”
 - a. Christ spoke “the mind of the Father” not His own, as He did in Heaven so on earth. “. . . the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me” *John 14:10b*.
 - b. “Heaven must not be placed in jeopardy. The peace of Heaven would be marred, should he be received back; for sin originated with him; the seeds of rebellion were still within him.” Because he was not genuinely repentant this was the only course which could be taken to safeguard the peace and security of heaven. Likewise, it is also the only course

to safeguard peace and security in the family and the church when divorce and set up a new family occurs.

- c. “He had no occasion for his course, and he had not only hopelessly ruined himself, but the host of angels also, who would still have been happy in Heaven had he remained steadfast.” There was no apostasy in God, but others believed Satan’s lies, became deceived, and were also hopelessly ruined. The importance of leaders in the cause of truth standing steadfast in the truth least the feet of others are caused to be led out of the way.
 - d. “It would not have been safe to suffer any who united with Satan in his rebellion to continue to occupy heaven. They had learned the lesson of genuine rebellion against the unchangeable law of God; and this is incurable. If God had exercised his power to punish this chief rebel, disaffected angels would not have been manifested;” *Signs of the Times January 9, 1879*. Disaffected ones, sympathizers, would “hide” and cause rebellion again. “Rebellion against the unchangeable law of God. . . is incurable.”
8. “Satan did not repent of his rebellion because he saw the goodness of God which he had abused.” It is only the goodness of God which leads to genuine repentance. “. . . *despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*” **Romans 2:4**
 9. “The wretchedness he realized in losing the sweet light of Heaven, the sense of guilt which forced itself upon him, and the disappointment he experienced in not finding his expectations realized, were the cause of his grief.” Oh, the deceitfulness of the natural heart which is not submitted to the Lord. “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” **Jer. 17:9**

10. "To be commander out of Heaven, was vastly different from being thus honored in Heaven." Out of heaven there is war and contention between him and his subjects.
11. "The loss of all the privileges of Heaven seemed too much to be borne. He wished to regain these." It was not sorrow for sin, he only wanted to be reinstated without being reconciled to God and His government. He only wanted the recognition and privileges which he lost.
12. "When Satan became fully convinced that it was impossible for him to be re-instated in the favor of God, he manifested his malice with increased hatred and fiery vehemence." This is an outcome which always occur with unerring accuracy. It occurs in spousal relations often ending in murder, and also in the church with lies and accusations by the disaffected one(s) and his/their followers which ends in separation.

The principles of the Law that God gave are for the good governance and management of the home and the church. These principles are the only safeguard against divorce in spousal relationship, and separation in the Church of God. May we, armed with the knowledge of the Word of God, and the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, be able to detect the enemy under his various guises and strategies seeking to cause divorce in spousal relationships and separation in the Church of God.

CHAPTER 12

The Tender-Firmness of Agape Love



SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 34:4 -17 (KJV)

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: ¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” **Matt. 7:13, 14***

Whenever God is about to do a mighty work in the earth He always sends a message of repentance to prepare His people for that work. But the message of repentance is always a hard message to the people because they are entrenched in erroneous teachings and are hardhearted, hence the message seems hard. In the days of John-the-Baptist, *“he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins . . . ⁷Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. **Luke 3:3, 7-10, 12, 14.** Likewise, as Christ began His ministry, He began with a message of repentance,” *Now after**

*that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. **Mark 1:14, 15.** Similarly on the day of Pentecost, “. . . Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: . . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” **Acts 2:14, 23.** Paul also says that “. . . the Gentiles . . . should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” **Acts 26:20.***

From the preaching of the gospel in the above four scenarios a trend emerges which can be seen from:

1. John-the-Baptist’s statement - bring forth fruit worthy of repentance
2. Christ’s statement - repent and believe the gospel
3. Peter’s statement - repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost
4. Paul’s statement - repent and do works meet for repentance

It should be noticed that repentance is always in response to the preaching of the gospel, it’s fruit, without out which no genuine change can occur. In the four points mentioned above there were somethings to be repented of if the listeners were to be part of the kingdom of God. In John-the-Baptist’s day the people believed that because they were descendants of Abraham they had a free pass to the kingdom. In Christ’s day it was not believing that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In Peter’s day it was not believing the work of the Holy Ghost and putting it down to drunkenness. And in Paul’s day it was that the Gentiles were to turn from their idolatry.

Like the church of God in former times we too must also repent of our sins or we too will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Here are some things for consideration that must be repented of:

1. Laodicean lukewarmness. Like the Jews of Peter's day S.D.A. generally believe that Sabbath keeping gives entrance to the kingdom of God.
2. Unbelief of the true gospel which, as a precious message, was sent to the S.D.A church organization in 1888 to up lift the Savior more prominently before the people, and the world, and to cure the church of Laodicean lukewarmness thus preparing it for the 2nd coming of Christ
3. Repent for the rejection of the gift of the Holy Ghost which was also sent to the S.D.A organization in latter rain proportions in 1888 to ripen the harvest of the earth for the granary of God.
4. Allowing persons in adulterous relationships to lead out in the church of God, and in so doing defying the word of God.
5. Countenancing same-sex marriage relationships in the "church" which is an abomination as they cannot fill the vacancies left in heaven resulting from the rebellion led by Lucifer.

At the family level there are things which need to be repented of which will prevent the blessings of God from coming upon the family to restore unity and harmony, and bring about peace and happiness. Broken relationships between husbands and wives are a major issue in families which affect the flow of the Spirit of God within the family and hence the church. As John-the-Baptist said, fruit must be brought forth meet for repentance, i.e. showing repentance. When John-the-Baptist was asked by the people, "*What shall we do then?*" he was very specific and said, "*He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* **John 3:11.** When the Publicans asked, "*Master what shall we do?*" Again he was very specific and said, "*Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* **John 3:13.** And finally when the soldiers asked, he was again very specific, "*he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your*

wages. **John 3:14.** Also, when Christ, Peter, and Paul were asked questions about salvation they were also very specific in answering. Christ said believe on Him Whom God has sent. Peter said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and Paul said the same thing, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing as they refer to it is the surrender of the soul to God.

Likewise, when we are asked what shall we do in the family relationship where there is estrangement, the answers must be very specific. Where there is unfaithfulness in spousal relations let it cease, be repented of, turn away from it in heart and in experience, and return to faithfulness that reconciliation may occur between spouses.

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;” Eph. 5:3

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” 1 Cor. 6:18.

Reconciliation must first begin with forgiveness, repentance and confession between husbands and wives who are estranged. Let the innocent party freely forgive so that the guilty party will be able to freely, frankly and humbly admit the estrangement and return to oneness. This is the New Covenant principle in which forgiveness precedes repentance and confession.

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. Eph. 4:32

Where there are divorces and remarriages which are not in accordance with the principles of God’s word, let them be dismantled, for such are living in adultery. The Holy Spirit speaking through both our Savior Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul makes it very clear what should be done when there is estrangement ending in separation and divorce. Christ’s addresses the perplexing problem of divorce this way.

“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.

Also,

“. . . Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” Matt. 19:9.

In both instances adultery is committed because the only reason given for which divorce is permitted is fornication, unfaithfulness. If unfaithfulness is not the cause of divorce and either of the two parties remarry someone else they are still married in the sight of God, hence the adultery. This also means that whoever conducts such marriages become a partaker in their sin. They are putting together what God hath said should not be together.

After identifying the sin of adultery in both the man and his wife, many today like His disciples cannot see it as sin. *“His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. Matt. 19: 10.* Jesus then gives the solution to the perplexity of both His disciples and us. He first prefaces His statement by saying unto them ¹¹*“All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given”.* Now for His statement,¹² *“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.* Then like His signature statement, *“He that hath an ear to hear let him hear,”* he says, *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” Matt. 19:11, 12.* Here Our Savior is saying to such ones, who are divorced without scriptural basis, that they should not re-marry but remain single, be *“eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.”* And the Apostle Paul corroborates Jesus’ hard statement with what is also an apparently hard statement when he says *“But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 1 Cor. 7:11.* Therefore, in the mouth of two witness regarding divorce, the answer is that of becoming eunuchs, remaining single, having no other further spousal relationship as long as the divorced spouse is alive, i.e. if divorce was not due to adultery.

Further, the only way an adulterer or an adulteress can be married is if his or her spouse dies.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as 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.
Rom. 7: 1-3.

From a spiritual perspective this means that if we have been united/married to Christ and then join our self to another, the world, we also have become adulterers or adulteresses.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” **James 4:4.**

The only way we can be freed from this spiritual adulterous situation is also by death, the death of our husband, the old man.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is free from sin.” **Rom. 6:6,7.**

Now if divorce is due to adultery and there with an innocent party in the relationship that person can remarry even when the other person is still alive. The except clause gives the innocent party the right to marry, but only in the LORD, if he or she so chooses.

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery,” (Matt 5:32; 19:9)

If revival and reformation, which are desperately needed, are to be effected in the church of God today, obeying the commands of God including those on adultery and divorce must be adhered to.

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: ¹¹ But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”
1 Cor. 7:10, 11.”

For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: . . . therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.”
Malachi 2:16.

So there is a command by the Lord not to divorce, and this is because it does not reflect the unity between the Father and the Son. Divorce therefore must not be given countenance, credence, or credibility, in the church of the living God. Further, ministers of the gospel of Christ must see to it that they do not marry divorcees who are:

1. Put away for adultery, or
2. Put away for other than adultery, for such are still married in the sight of God

And where ministers have been partakers in the sin of others, the evil must be repented of.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Tim. 5:22.

In the Old Testament these same principles are seen. Abraham, though called of God, fell into an adulterous situation with Hagar while still being married to Sarah. He went along with Sarah in the custom of the day, which custom was ungodly, though he did not divorce her. To redress this situation, which seems hard to some, God bade Abraham to dismantle the relationship by getting rid of Hagar and her son Ishmael.

*“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. ¹⁰ Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: . . . ¹¹ And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son. ¹² And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice;” **Gen. 21:9-12.***

Sarah’s decision was the right one this time around. “. . . *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* ⁶ *Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. . .*” **Matt. 19:5, 6.** A godly Christian marriage is between two persons only, one male and one female, they two become one flesh in marriage. A man and his wife are therefore like the two sides of the same coin. While they are two sides there is only one coin and nothing comes between the two sides. Also, this experience of Abraham shows that there is to be no sharing of spouses, whether husbands or wives in godly Christian marriages. It therefore also forbids surrogacy. Hagar was a surrogate mother; she was carrying the child for a couple who could not have one. When it dawned on her that she was to have a son for Abraham, her master, her behavior towards Sarah her mistress changed causing much confusion in the family circle.

*“And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai . . . And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. **Gen. 16:2, 4.***

In our day we also hear of such confusion surrounding surrogacy with surrogate mothers wanting to keep the child. Truly there is nothing new under the sun.

An apparently harder situation is brought to view under the theocracy in the book of Ezra relating to marriage and divorce, “putting away”. It has to do with unequally yoking up with unbelievers (2 Cor.6:15) and shows how such situations were dealt with if the people of God will be distinct from all other

people. In such circumstances one cannot be yoked up with unbelievers and yet honor God.

*And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the word of our God; and let it be done according to the law.” **Ezra 10:2, 3.***

In this scenario the following emerge:

1. An acknowledgment – We have transgressed, sinned against our God
2. The transgression – we have taken strange wives of the people of the land, unbelievers
3. Hope – make a covenant with God
4. The covenant – to put away all strange wives, and their children
5. Methodology – according to the counsel of the man of God, those that tremble at the word of God, and it must be done according to the law

The point of significance in all of this is it must be done according to the law or word of God. But what law is here spoken of with reference to the putting away of foreign wives and their children? It must be this law that Ezra, the priest of God, and those that tremble at the word of God are in accord with.

“And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy

*son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. . . For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. . . Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; . . . Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgements, which I command thee this day.” **Deut. 7:2-4, 6, 9, 11.***

Should a spouse who has become a believer put away the other spouse who remains an unbeliever? Paul answers this in 1 Cor. 7:12-16. This must not be mixed up with believers deliberately marrying unbelievers. But if any who are not of Israel turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and become joined to Him then it is permissible for marriages to take place for they are no longer unbelievers. The story of Rahab the harlot furnishes this example.

*“And Solomon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king; and David begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; **Matt. 1:5, 6.***

Remember Rachab (Rahab) was a harlot of Jericho, and not an Israelite, who hid the two spies in the time of Joshua. She was saved with her family, mother, father, brothers, and sisters, from the destruction of Jericho. She became part of Israel and was married to Solomon (Salman), the father of Booz (Boaz), and became an ancestor of our Lord, according to the flesh.

*“. . .Of a truth . . . God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” **Acts 10:34, 35.***

Home Government



In the affairs of secular governments there is a ministry called the Ministry of Home Affairs or Homeland Security (USA) which deals with the internal affairs of the country. In some countries with significant issues and problem afflicting families there has been established a Ministry of Family and Social Care (e.g. Barbados). This is laudable, but as the kingdom of God is not of this world, worldly governments cannot be or set standards for Christian homes. If the Christian home is to be governed as its government demands, the blue print as has been outlined by the Christian's government must be followed. This blue print is found in the document for the good governance and functioning of the home, the Bible. To the first couple, in the first home established in the earth, home government consisted of total loving submission to the Sovereign LORD, and then in loving submission to each other.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD: ⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT.” Deut. 6:4, 5. “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Eph.5:33.



When these principles of God's Government were observed there was total and complete unity, peace and happiness in the spousal relationship of that first home. But an attack on, and the subsequent overthrow of this structure, which was designed as a model for all succeeding homes and families occurred. As a result, there has never been another home and or spousal relationship which was able to have the model perfectly reproduced in it. It should be noted that a most vicious attack by Satan has been against the twin institutions established in Eden, the Family, and the Sabbath. The Family because of what it is intended to achieve, to fill the vacancies left in heaven by his rebellion, and rebalance the universe in righteousness. The Sabbath because it calls attention to the fact of creation and more importantly, the Agape Loving, personal, selfless, all for the other Creator, Jehovah – Father and Son.

*“And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. **Exodus 6:3.***

*“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.” **Psalms 83:18.***

The first couple was able to experience unity, peace, and happiness because the first law of home government, which is self-government, was observed. Solomon puts it this way, *“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. **Prov. 16:32.*** Self-government is really the ruling of one's spirit. If this principle of self-government was the experience of the people of God what happy, peaceful, and harmonious spousal and family relationships would there be in each home. But alas, the law of God's government, the law of love, is not only not known by almost all and sundry, but is almost totally disregarded in Christian homes and is even made to seem like weakness when practiced. This disregard of the law of home government, which is the law of self-government, results in disunion between spouses and disrespect in the family, and it's all because of self, wanting our own way. If we are to escape the perils that are ravishing

societies, families, and spousal relations particularly, revival and reformation in these relations are imperatives. “Every family needs now to seek God. They will not endure the test unless there is a revival and a reformation.” *Manuscript 54, 1901*. The gross disregard exhibited by spouses toward each other, the disrespect of children for parents and those in authority, should be the cause of much concern and anguish, and so much the more when these are prevalent in the families of God’s people. But in spite of this there is hope, “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*” **2 Chron. 7:14**. It is about turning from the wicked ways and the treacherous spirits that afflict spousal relations, and the family by extension, that are in most urgent need of healing. The assurance is, if we God’s people humble ourselves and turn he will hear from heaven and heal. He will heal broken spousal relationships, unfaithfulness, estrangements, divorces, also disobedient and rebellious children and family relationships generally as outlined in His word. “*Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?*” **Jer. 32:27**.

Let us consider some thoughts from *E.G. White, The Adventist Home, Chapter 52*.

RULES NECESSARY FOR GOVERNMENT IN THE HOME

Every Christian home should have rules; and parents should, in their words and in their deportment toward each other, give to the children a precious living example of what they desire them to be.... Teach the children and youth to respect themselves, to be true to God, true to principle; teach them to respect and obey the law of God. Then these principles will control their lives and will be carried out in their association with others.

BIBLE PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED

There is need for constant watching that the principles which lie at the foundation of family government are not disregarded. The Lord

designs that the families on earth shall be symbols of the family in heaven. And when earthly families are conducted in right lines, the same sanctification of the Spirit will be brought into the church.

Parents should themselves be converted and know what it is to be in submission to God's will, as little children, bringing into captivity their thoughts to the will of Jesus Christ, before they can rightly represent the government that God designed should exist in the family.

God Himself established the family relations. His word is the only safe guide in the management of children. Human philosophy has not discovered more than God knows or devised a wiser plan of dealing with children than that given by our Lord. Who can better understand all the needs of children than their Creator? Who can feel a deeper interest in their welfare than He who bought them with His own blood? If the word of God were carefully studied and faithfully obeyed, there would be less soul anguish over the perverse conduct of wicked children.

RESPECT THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Remember that children have rights which must be respected.

Children have claims which their parents should acknowledge and respect. They have a right to such an education and training as will make them useful, respected, and beloved members of society here, and give them a moral fitness for the society of the pure and holy hereafter. The young should be taught that both their present and their future well-being depend to a great degree on the habits they form in childhood and youth. They should be early accustomed to submission, self-denial, and a regard for others' happiness. They should be taught to subdue the hasty temper, to withhold the passionate word, to manifest unvarying kindness, courtesy, and self-control.

EVEN, STEADY MANAGEMENT

I have seen many families shipwrecked through over management on the part of their head, whereas through consultation and agreement all might have moved off harmoniously and well.

Unsteadiness in family government is productive of great harm, in fact is nearly as bad as no government at all. The question is often asked, Why are the children of religious parents so often headstrong, defiant, and rebellious? The reason is to be found in the home training. Too often the parents are not united in their family government.

A fitful government—at one time holding the lines firmly, and at another allowing that which has been condemned—is ruination to a child.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN GOVERNMENT TO BE SHARED

Unitedly and prayerfully the father and mother should bear the grave responsibility of guiding their children aright.

If fathers and mothers are at variance, one working against the other to counteract each other's influence, the family will be in a demoralized condition, and neither the father nor the mother will receive the respect and confidence that are essential to a well-governed family.... Children are quick to discern anything that will cast a reflection upon the rules and regulations of a household, especially those regulations that restrict their actions.

CHILDREN ARE CONFUSED BY PARENTS AT VARIANCE

The family firm must be well organized. Together the father and mother must consider their responsibilities, and with a clear comprehension undertake their task. There is to be no variance. The father and mother should never in the presence of their children criticize each other's plans and judgment. . .

If parents do not agree, let them absent themselves from the presence

of their children until an understanding can be arrived at.

Too often the parents are not united in their family government.

FAMILY RELIGION DEFINED

Just as you conduct yourself in your home life, you are registered in the books of heaven. He who would become a saint in heaven must first become a saint in his own family. If fathers and mothers are true Christians in the family, they will be useful members of the church and be able to conduct affairs in the church and in society after the same manner in which they conduct their family concerns. Parents, let not your religion be simply a profession, but let it become a reality.

Some thoughts from the above extract for consideration:

1. Every Christian home should have rules; and parents should, in their words and in their deportment toward each other, give to the children a precious living example of what they desire them to be.
2. Teach the children and youth to respect themselves, to be true to God, true to principle; teach them to respect and obey the law of God
3. There is need for constant watching that the principles which lie at the foundation of family government are not disregarded.
4. The Lord designs that the families on earth shall be symbols of the family in heaven. And when earthly families are conducted in right lines, the same sanctification of the Spirit will be brought into the church
5. Parents should themselves be converted and know what it is to be in submission to God's will, as little children, bringing into captivity their thoughts to the will of Jesus Christ, before they can rightly represent the government that God designed

should exist in the family.

6. God Himself established the family relations. His word is the only safe guide in the management of children
7. The young should be taught that both their present and their future well-being depend to a great degree on the habits they form in childhood and youth. They should be early accustomed to submission, self-denial, and a regard for others' happiness. They should be taught to subdue the hasty temper, to withhold the passionate word, to manifest unvarying kindness, courtesy, and self-control.
8. Unsteadiness in family government is productive of great harm, in fact is nearly as bad as no government at all
9. Unitedly and prayerfully the father and mother should bear the grave responsibility of guiding their children aright
10. Children are quick to discern anything that will cast a reflection upon the rules and regulations of a household, especially those regulations that restrict their actions.
11. The family firm must be well organized
12. The father and mother should never in the presence of their children criticize each other's plans and judgment
13. If parents do not agree, let them absent themselves from the presence of their children until an understanding can be arrived at.
14. Just as you conduct yourself in your home life, you are registered in the books of heaven. He who would become a saint in heaven must first become a saint in his own family

Oneness vs. Singleness



As God designed it, human marriage comprised of two becoming one is to reflect the order, the harmony, and the oneness of the Father and the Son as well as the oneness of Christ and the church. As it relates to the Father and the Son, the Son says, “*I and my Father are one.*” **John 10:30**. He further says, speaking of his disciples, the church, “*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: . . .*” **John 17:21**. And of human marriage he says “. . . *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?*” **Matt. 19:5**. These are the three levels of union found in sacred scripture which God uses as teaching-models for universe:

1. The Father and the Son
2. The husband (a man) and the wife (a woman)
3. Christ and His bride (the Church)

From these models oneness always refers to two becoming one. Thus God’s ideal for humanity is oneness and not singleness. The question therefore arises, is singleness a curse.



Singleness like divorce is an outcome of sin, the curse, but is itself not a curse. While God says he hates divorce, (Malachi 2:15), conversely the scripture says of singleness, being unmarried, *“But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:”*³³ *But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*³⁴ *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”* **1 Cor. 7:32-34.** Verse 34 shows the difference between oneness and singleness. A wife, a married person being united to her husband is an illustration of oneness. A virgin, a person not having a spouse, illustrates singleness. Since oneness, God’s ideal, is not represented in singleness, does it mean that the unmarried person, being single, cannot represent God. Paul’s gives us the answer in the argument of singleness, the unmarried:

4. Such ones’ care for the things of the Lord
5. That they may be holy both in body and in spirit

The single godly person does not have a partner and therefore should be a virgin caring only for the things of the Lord. The godly divorced person, man or woman, though not a virgin, will live like a virgin seeking only to please the Lord and care for the things of the Lord. This means that there can be no indulgence in sexual activity of any kind by the single unmarried godly person or godly widowed individual. Singleness though not God’s ideal because it cannot produce godly seed to fill the vacancies in heaven, can rebound to God’s glory as such persons, man or woman, can be models of wholeness in body, not being touched sexually, and also holiness in spirit.

An example of singleness honoring God is seen in the experience of Anna the prophetess.

“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years

*from her virginity; ³⁷ And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. **Luke 2:36-37.***

Anna at the dedication of Christ had reach the ripe old age of eighty-four years. She was most likely a young woman when she became a widow having lived seven years with a husband from her virginity. She therefore was a married woman for seven years. After the death of her husband she no doubt dedicated herself more fully to God, and was found in the temple night and day fasting and praying. Like Simeon, she too was looking for and beheld the consolation of Israel.

Further, **1 Cor. 7:33-34 (NLT)** the privilege of being single is shown,

“But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. ³⁴ His interests are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband.”

The Apostle here shows how godly single persons, both male and female, not having a spouse should have less care for the world in contrast to the married person who have the responsibilities of pleasing a spouse. In singleness more time can be spent in serving God since there are less distractions than that of the married person. But it does not necessarily mean that single persons are more spiritual than married persons. Apart from being holy in spirit, the unmarried person has the privilege of being wholly consecrated, with the body being only used for God and for no other activity.

The scriptures say of the married,

“The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for

a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.” 1 Cor. 7:3-5. (RSV).

The unmarried always have the privilege of giving themselves to prayer and fasting as they have no spouse to please or to rule over the body. But the following admonition should be considered carefully before deciding to be single.

“To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. ⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion. 1 Cor. 7:8-9. (RSV).

It should not be imagined that the Apostle is here saying that the reason for marriage is because one cannot control their sexual desires, but rather that sexual fulfillment should be within the confines of marriage.

JESUS DID NOT ENFORCE CELIBACY

Those who regard the marriage relation as one of God’s sacred ordinances, guarded by His holy precept, will be controlled by the dictates of reason. Jesus did not enforce celibacy upon any class of men. He came not to destroy the sacred relationship of marriage, but to exalt it and restore it to its original sanctity. He looks with pleasure upon the family relationship where sacred and unselfish love bears sway.

MARRIAGE IS LAWFUL AND HOLY . . .

The fact that all the relations of life are of a transitory nature should have a modifying influence on all we do and say. In Noah’s day it was the inordinate, excessive love of that which in itself was lawful, when properly used, that made marriage sinful before God. **AH 121.**

In conclusion, godly marriages are God’s ideal and must be treated as such. But since all persons will not be married singleness can also be used as a

model to glorify God. Since oneness is God's ideal, and two becoming one is stronger than being single, the single unmarried, widowed, or divorced (the innocent party), should consider carefully if they are able to remain such without being married. And to the married, remember that only wholesome sexual activity is to be carried on in the marriage relation between a man and a woman as spouses. So that withholding from one's spouse, (acting as celibates), or excessive indulgence must not be countenance in Christian the marriage relation.

Appendix 1



A WIFE URGED TO CHANGE DISPOSITION, NOT THE MARRIAGE STATUS

“I have received a letter from your husband. I would say that there is only one thing for which a husband may lawfully separate from his wife or a wife from her husband, and that is adultery.

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

A husband and wife should cultivate respect and affection for each other. They should guard the spirit, the words, and the actions so that nothing will be said or done to irritate or annoy. Each is to have a care for the other, doing all in their power to strengthen their mutual affection.

I tell you both to seek the Lord. In love and kindness do your duty one to the other. The husband should cultivate industrious habits, doing his best to support his family. This will lead his wife to have respect for him....

My sister, you cannot please God by maintaining your present attitude.

Forgive your husband. He is your husband, and you will be blessed in striving to be a dutiful, affectionate wife. Let the law of kindness be on your lips. You can and must change your attitude.

You must both study how you can assimilate, instead of differing, with one another.... The use of mild, gentle methods will make a surprising difference in your lives.” **AH 345**

ADULTERY, DIVORCE, AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

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

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.
2. If they would be liable to place themselves and their children in worse condition by a divorce, we know of no scripture that would make the innocent party guilty by remaining.
3. Time and labor and prayer and patience and faith and a godly life might work a reform. To live with one who has broken the marriage vows and is covered all over with the disgrace and shame of guilty love, and realizes it not, is an eating canker to the soul; and yet a divorce is a lifelong, heartfelt sore. God pity the innocent party! Marriage should be considered well before contracted.

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?
5. But, if they will not do as they should, and if the innocent have forfeited the legal right to a divorce, by living with the guilty after his guilt is known, we do not see that sin rests upon the innocent in remaining, and her moral right in departing seems questionable, if her health and life be not greatly endangered in so remaining." **AH 346, 347.**

Appendix 2

ADVENTIST HOME (PAGE 159-161)



GOD PLANNED FOR FAMILIES

He who gave Eve to Adam as a helpmeet ... ordained that men and women should be united in holy wedlock, to rear families whose members, crowned with honor, should be recognized as members of the family above.

Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property.... In love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me."

A childless house is a desolate place. The hearts of the inmates are in danger of becoming selfish, of cherishing a love for their own ease, and consulting their own desires and conveniences. They gather sympathy to themselves, but have little to bestow upon others.

COUNSEL TO A CHILDLESS COUPLE

Selfishness, which manifests itself in a variety of ways according to circumstances and the peculiar organization of individuals, must die.

If you had children, and your mind were compelled to be called away from yourself to care for them, to instruct them, and be an example to them, it would be an advantage to you.... When two compose a family, as in your case, and there are no children to call into exercise patience, forbearance, and true love, there is need of constant watchfulness lest selfishness obtain the supremacy, lest you yourselves become the center, and you require attention, care, and interest, which you feel under no obligation to bestow upon others.

Many are diseased physically, mentally, and morally because their attention is turned almost exclusively to themselves. They might be saved from stagnation by the healthy vitality of younger and varying minds and the restless energy of children.

NOBLE TRAITS ARE DEVELOPED IN CARING FOR CHILDREN

I have a very tender interest in all children, for I became a sufferer at a very early age. I have taken many children to care for, and I have always felt that association with the simplicity of childhood was a great blessing to me....

The sympathy, forbearance, and love required in dealing with children would be a blessing in any household. They would soften and subdue set traits of character in those who need to be more cheerful and restful. The presence of a child in a home sweetens and refines. A child brought up in the fear of the Lord is a blessing.

Care and affection for dependent children removes the roughness from our natures, makes us tender and sympathetic, and has an influence to develop the nobler elements of our character....

A PRECIOUS TRUST

Children are committed to their parents as a precious trust, which God will one day require at their hands. We should give to their training more time, more care, and more prayer. They need more of the right

kind of instruction....

Remember that your sons and daughters are younger members of God's family. He has committed them to your care, to train and educate for heaven. You must render an account to Him for the manner in which you discharge your sacred trust.