

Chapter 14

Sexual Excess within Marriage

Celibacy in Married State Not Recommended—My dear brother: I wish to present before you some things concerning the dangers that threaten the work at the present time. The work of Anna Phillips does not bear the signature of heaven. [In a “Testimony” written on August 10, 1892, Anna Rice Phillips stated, “The time has come of which Paul spoke when he said, ‘But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none.’ ... Satan will make you feel that you cannot give up this one thing, that it is yours by right my brother, but is it when God has spoken?”—White Estate Document File No. 363.] I know what I am talking about. In our first experience in the infancy of this cause we had to meet similar manifestations. Many such revelations were given, and we had a most disagreeable work in meeting this element and giving it no place.

Some things stated in these revelations were fulfilled, and this led some to accept them as genuine.

Young, unmarried women, would have a message for married men, and in no delicate words would tell them to their face of the abuse of the marriage privileges. Purity was the burden of the messages given, and for a while everything appeared to be reaching a high state of purity and holiness. But the inwardness of these matters was opened to me. I was shown what would be the outcome of this teaching.

Those who were engaged in this work were not a superficial, immoral class, but persons who had been the most devoted workers. Satan saw an opportunity to take advantage of the state of things, and to disgrace the cause of God. Those who thought themselves able to bear any test without exciting their carnal propensities, were overcome, and several unmarried men and women were compelled to be married. I am afraid of those who feel so great a burden to labor in this direction.

Satan works upon the imagination, so that impurity is the result, instead of purity.—Letter 103, 1894.

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.—The Adventist Home, 121.

The Expenditure of Vital Energy—Many parents do not obtain the knowledge that they should in the married life. They are not guarded lest Satan take advantage of them and control their minds and their lives. They do not see that God requires them to control their married lives from all excesses. But very few feel it to be a religious duty to govern their passions. They have united themselves in marriage to the object of their choice, and therefore reason that marriage sanctifies the indulgence of the baser passions. Even men and women professing godliness give loose rein to their lustful passions, and have no

thought that God holds them accountable for the expenditure of vital energy, which weakens their hold on life and enervates the entire system.

Excessive Sexual Indulgence—The marriage covenant covers sins of the darkest hue. Men and women professing godliness debase their own bodies through the indulgence of the corrupt passions, and thus lower themselves beneath the brute creation. They abuse the powers that God has given them to be preserved in sanctification and honor. Health and life are sacrificed upon the altar of base passion. The higher, nobler powers are brought into subjection to the animal propensities. Those who thus sin are not acquainted with the result of their course.

Could all see the amount of suffering that they bring upon themselves by their own sinful indulgence, they would be alarmed; and some, at least, would shun the course of sin that brings such dreaded wages. So miserable an existence is entailed upon a large class that death would be preferable to life; and many do die prematurely,

their lives sacrificed in the inglorious work of excessive indulgence of the animal passions. Yet because they are married, they think they commit no sin.

Men and women, you will one day learn what is lust, and the result of its gratification. Passion of just as base a quality may be found in the marriage relation as outside of it.—The Review and Herald, September 19, 1899.

The Wife's Dignity and Self-Respect—Many professed Christians who passed before me seemed destitute of moral restraint. They were more animal than divine. In fact, they were about all animal. Men of this type degrade the wife whom they have promised to nourish and cherish. She is made an instrument to minister to the gratification of low, lustful propensities. And very many women submit to become slaves to lustful passion; they do not possess their bodies in sanctification and honor. The wife does not retain the dignity and self-respect which she possessed previous to marriage.

This holy institution should have preserved and increased her womanly respect and holy dignity; but her chaste, dignified, godlike womanhood has been consumed upon the altar of base passion; it has been sacrificed to please her husband. She soon loses respect for the husband, who does not regard the laws to which the brute creation yield obedience. The married life becomes a galling yoke; for love dies out, and frequently distrust, jealousy, and hate take its place.

Mistrust Between Husband and Wife—No man can truly love his wife when she will patiently submit to become his slave, and minister to his depraved passions. In her passive submission, she loses the value she once possessed in his eyes. He sees her dragged down from everything elevating, to a low level; and soon he suspects that she will as tamely submit to be degraded by another as by himself. He doubts her constancy and purity, tires of her, and seeks new objects to arouse and intensify his hellish passions. The law of God is not regarded....

The wife also becomes jealous of the husband, and suspects that if opportunity should offer, he would just as readily pay his addresses to another as to her. She sees that he is not controlled by conscience or the fear of God; all these sanctified barriers are broken down by lustful passions; all that is godlike in the husband is made the servant of low, brutish lust....

Destructive Nature of Sexual Excess—When the wife yields her body and mind to the control of her husband, being passive to his will in all things, sacrificing her conscience, her dignity, and even her identity, she loses the opportunity of exerting that mighty influence for good which she should possess, to elevate her husband. She could soften his stern nature, and her sanctifying influence could be exerted in a manner to refine and purify, leading him to strive earnestly to govern his passions, and be more spiritually minded, that they might be partakers together of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The power of influence can be great to lead the mind to high and noble themes, above the low, sensual indulgences for which the heart unrenewed by grace naturally seeks. If the wife feels that in order to please her husband she must come down to his standard, when animal passion is the principal basis of his love, and controls his actions, she displeases God; for she fails to exert a sanctifying influence upon her husband. If she feels that she must submit to his animal passions without a word of remonstrance, she does not understand her duty to him nor to her God. Sexual excess will effectually destroy a love for devotional exercises, will take from the brain the substance needed to nourish the system, and will most effectually exhaust the vitality. No woman should aid her husband in this work of self-destruction. She will not do it if she is enlightened, and has true love for him....

Preservation of Mind and Body—Let God-fearing men and women awake to their duty. Many professed Christians are suffering with paralysis of nerve and brain because of their intemperance in

this direction. Rottenness is in the bones and marrow of many who are regarded as good men, who pray and weep and who stand in high places, but whose polluted carcasses will never pass the portals of the heavenly city.

Oh, that I could make all understand their obligation to God to preserve the mental and physical organism in the best condition to render perfect service to their Maker....

Transmission of Vice From Parents to Children—From their youth up they have weakened the brain and sapped the constitution by the gratification of animal passions. Self-denial and temperance should be the watchword in their married life; then the children born to them will not be so liable to have the moral and intellectual organs weak, and the animal strong. Vice in children is almost universal. Is there not a cause? Who have given them the stamp of character? May the Lord open the eyes of all to see that they are standing in slippery places!

From the picture that has been presented before me of the corruption of men and women professing godliness, I have feared that I should altogether lose confidence in humanity. I have seen that a fearful stupor is upon nearly all. It is almost impossible to arouse the very ones who should be awakened, so as to have any just sense of the power which Satan holds over minds. They are not aware of the corruption teeming all around them. Satan has blinded their minds, and lulled them to carnal security.

The failures in our efforts to bring others up to understand the great dangers that beset souls, have sometimes led me to fear that my ideas of the depravity of the human heart were exaggerated. But when facts are brought to us showing the sad deformity of one who has dared to minister in sacred things while corrupt at heart, one whose sin-stained hands have profaned the vessels of the Lord, I am sure that I have not drawn the picture any too strong.—The Review and Herald, September 26, 1899. [The two Review and Herald Articles of September 19 and 26, carried the

general title, “Christianity in the Marriage Relation.”]

Abuse of Sexual Privileges—Let the husband and wife in their married life prove a help and a blessing to one another. Let them consider the cost of every indulgence in intemperance and sensualism. These indulgences do not increase love, nor ennoble and elevate. Those who will indulge the animal passions and gratify lust will surely stamp upon their offspring the debasing practices, the grossness of their own physical and moral defilement.—Ms 3, 1897.

It is carrying that which is lawful to excess that makes it a grievous sin.—Testimonies for the Church 4:505.

Those professing to be Christians ... should duly consider the result of every privilege of the marriage relation, and sanctified principle should be the basis of every action.—Testimonies for the Church 2:380.

Vital Importance of a Good Example—The animal passions, cherished and indulged, become very strong in this age, and untold evils in the marriage life are the sure results. In the place of the mind being developed and having the controlling power, the animal propensities rule over the higher and nobler powers until they are brought into subjection to the animal propensities. What is the result? Women's delicate organs are worn out and become diseased; childbearing is no more safe; sexual privileges are abused. Men are corrupting their own bodies; and the wife has become a bedservant to their inordinate, base lusts, until there is no fear of God before their eyes....

Nothing but the truth of God can either make man savingly wise or keep him so. If there is an immortal life to be obtained, if a pure and holy character must be developed in order to gain entrance to the presence of the Lord God and the society of heavenly angels, then why do not teachers, physicians, and preachers act this in their example by their teaching? Why are they not more zealous for the Master? Why do they not have

burning love for souls for whom Christ died?

If man is to become immortal, his mind must be in harmony with God's mind. The true disciple in the school of Christ, whose mind is in harmony with the mind of God, will be not only constantly learning, but teaching as well as learning, constantly reflecting light, teaching upward and away from the common, prevailing errors of this perverse and adulterous generation....

A Christian is to be constantly watching the Pattern, and imitating the holy example of Jesus. Then a right spirit will be infused into the life and character of others. If God were daily sought in earnest, humble prayer for light and for guidance, there would be a sure detecting in the individual course of action; unholy practices and many unholy plans would be repressed, and Jesus would be made the rule of life.—Ms 14, 1888.

Lower Passions and an Unhealthy Mind—
The lower passions are to be strictly guarded. The perceptive faculties are abused, terribly abused,

when the passions are allowed to run riot. When the passions are indulged, the blood, instead of circulating to all parts of the body, thereby relieving the heart and clearing the mind, is called in undue amount to the internal organs. Disease comes as the result. The mind cannot be healthy until the evil is seen and remedied.—Ms 24, 1900.

Indulgence Weakens the Moral Powers—
Said Paul, “With my mind serve I the law of God.” Becloud this mind through indulgence of animal appetite and passions, and the moral powers are weakened, so that the sacred and common are placed upon a level.—Mind, Character, and Personality 1:229.