

## Chapter 34

# **William E (Part I)**

[William E. was born in Melborn, Quebec, in 1856. After attending Battle Creek College he labored as a minister or colporteur in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, and Alabama.

His first marriage ended in divorce, after which he fathered a child by a second woman without marrying her. Then, on August 5, 1892, he married a third woman, who was still his companion when he died in 1934.

In 1901 William E's father and brother insisted that he should divorce his wife and return to an earlier companion. His first wife had remarried but the second woman, who was the mother of his illegitimate daughter, was anxious to marry him.

Edson White wrote his mother on October 30, 1901, and asked if it was necessary for Brother E to

leave his current wife in order to get right with God. Ellen White's response follows.]

I have just read your letter concerning Will E. I regard the matter in the same light that you do, and think it a cruel, wicked thing that the father of Will E should take the course that he is taking, but I have not dared to answer his letters. If anything can come from me through you to him, I would say that his case cannot be improved by leaving the present wife. It would not better the case to go to the other woman in the question....

I have not written to Will E, but know that if the father would repent before God and do his first works, and cease to consider himself as one that can help his son, he would ask himself the question, "Is my name written there, on the page white and fair?" He might well begin to humble himself before God, and leave Will E with God.

Let the father and brother make diligent work for themselves. They both need the converting power of God. May the Lord help these poor souls

to remove spot and stain from their own characters, and repent of their wrongs, and leave Will E with the Lord.

I am so sorry for the man, for his course is in such a shape that it will not answer to be meddled with, for there are difficulties upon difficulties. I would say that the Lord understands the situation, and if Will E will seek Him with all his heart, He will be found of him. If he will do his best, God will pardon and receive him.

Oh, how precious it is to know that we have One who does know and understand, and will help the ones who are most helpless. But the rebuke of God is upon the father and the brother who would drive to destruction and perdition one who stands in the sight of God under no worse condemnation than themselves, and yet they will so use their gifts of speech as to dishearten, discourage, and drive Will E to despair.

Will E may hope in God and do the best he can to serve God in all humility of mind, casting his

helpless soul upon the great Sin Bearer. I have not written a word to either father or son. I would gladly do something to help poor Will E to make things right, but this cannot be done as matters are now situated, without someone's being wronged.

I understand perfectly the situation between Will E and his first wife ... and I knew how the case would terminate, for Will E cannot endure to be a slave, his identity lost in a wife who made herself his judge in conscience, in his duty, and in his work generally.—Letter 175, 1901.