

Chapter 39

The Adulterer and Church Membership

An Early Ellen White Statement—The Lord gave us labor of spirit last first day [Sunday, February 5, 1854], and while we were engaged in earnest prayer I was taken off in vision and saw the state of some of the professed Israel of God. I saw the situation of many at our meeting in Oswego. I saw that they were standing in the way of the work of God, especially those at Caughdenoy. I saw that God's frown was upon them, also upon some in Roosevelt.

Said the angel, "The ax has not been laid at the root of the tree." Those who have indulged in the wicked passions of the heart have been fellowshiped. If God had made Brother Roosevelt an overseer of the flock, he would have seen the evil and corruption among the people. The ax has not been laid at the root of the tree. God has not

altered nor changed. He is a jealous God, and will not look upon sin now with any more allowance than He did among ancient Israel. Sin is sin. Sins have not been held forth in their sinfulness, but it has been made to appear as though sins have been lightly regarded by God.

An Enormous Sin—I saw that the seventh commandment has been violated by some who are now held in fellowship by the church. This has brought God's frown upon them. This sin is awful in these last days, but the church [members] have brought God's frown and curse upon them by regarding the sin so lightly. I saw it was an enormous sin and there have not been as vigilant efforts made as there should have been to satisfy the displeasure of God and remove His frown by taking a strict, thorough course with the offender.

It has had an awful, corrupting influence upon the young. They see how lightly the sin of breaking the seventh commandment is regarded, and the one who commits this horrid sin thinks that all he has to do is to confess that he was wrong and is sorry,

and he is then to have all the privileges of the house of God and be held in [the] embrace or fellowship of the church.

They have thought it was not so great a sin, but have lightly esteemed the breaking of the seventh commandment. This has been sufficient to remove the ark of God from the camp, if there were no other sins to cause the ark to be taken away and weaken Israel.

Suspension From the Church for Adulterers—Those who break the seventh commandment should be suspended from the church, and not have its fellowship nor the privileges of the house of God. Said the angel, “This is not a sin of ignorance. It is a knowing sin and will receive the awful visitation of God, whether he who commits it be old or young.”

High-handed, Deliberate Sinning—Never was this sin regarded by God as being so exceedingly sinful as at the present time. Why? Because God is purifying unto Himself a peculiar

people, zealous of good works. It is at the very time when God is purifying this peculiar people unto Himself that [unsanctified] individuals step in among us. Notwithstanding the straight truths they have heard—the terrors of the Word of God set before them, and all the blazing truth for these last days calculated to arouse Israel—they sin with a high hand, give way to all the loose passions of the carnal heart, gratify their animal propensities, disgrace the cause of God, and then confess they have sinned and are sorry!

And the church receives them and says “Amen” to their prayers and exhortations, which are a stink in the nostrils of God, and cause His wrath to come upon the camp. He will not dwell in their assemblies. Those who move on thus heedlessly, plastering over these sins, will be left to their own ways, to be filled with their own doings.

Those who anciently committed these sins were taken without the camp and stoned to death. Temporal and eternal death was their doom; and because the penalty of stoning to death is

abolished, this sin is indulged in beyond measure and is thought to be a small offense.—Ms 3, 1854.

No Help for This Man—[The White Estate has no firm documentation on the nature of E's transgression, but Arthur L. White recalls hearing his father, W. C. White, refer to it as a particularly revolting case of incest.] It is impossible for E to be fellowshiped by the church of God. He has placed himself where he cannot be helped by the church, where he can have no communion with, nor voice in, the church. He has placed himself there in the face of light and truth. He has stubbornly chosen his own course, and refused to listen to reproof. He has followed the inclinations of his corrupt heart, has violated the holy law of God, and has disgraced the cause of present truth.

If he repents ever so heartily, the church must let his case alone. If he goes to heaven, it must be alone, without the fellowship of the church. A standing rebuke from God and the church must ever rest upon him that the standard of morality be not lowered to the very dust.—Testimonies for the

Church 1:215.