

Chapter 40

A Statement by Ellen and James White

[Inasmuch as this statement was issued jointly by James and Ellen White, it seems clear that the views expressed had the full sanction of Ellen White.]

Possibility of Restoration—In regard to the case of the injured Sister A. G., we would say in reply to the questions of J. H. W., 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.

6. As in the days of Noah, one of the signs of these times is a passion for injudicious and hasty marriages. Satan is in this. If Paul could remain single, and recommend the same to others, that he and they might be wholly the Lord's, why not those who would be wholly His, and wish to make a sure thing of avoiding the cares, trials, and bitter

anguish so frequent in the experiences of those who choose the married life, remain as he was? And more, if he chose to remain so, and could recommend it to others, eighteen centuries since, would not to remain as he was be a commendable course for those who are waiting for the coming of the Son of man, unless evidences were unquestionable that they were bettering their condition, and making heaven more sure by so doing? When so much is at stake, why not be on the sure side every time?—The Review and Herald, March 24, 1868.