

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT



HISTORICAL ADVENTISTS

AdH

"If there is any subject that should be considered with calm reflection and dispassionate judgment, it is the subject of marriage. If there is ever a time when the Bible is needed as a counselor, it is before taking a step that will bind people together for life." (The Adventist Home, p. 70)

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INTRODUCTION: BIBLICAL CONTROVERSY

There is currently doctrinal disagreement among Christianity about the scriptural norm regarding the dissolution of marital partnership. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke record four statements by Jesus concerning adultery, divorce and remarriage. The majority Protestant view is that the wording of the book of Matthew gives rise to an interpretation that favors breaking the marital bond on the grounds of divorce for adultery by providing an exception to the general rule of civil marriage:

"Whoever puts away his wife, **except in the case of illicit sexual relations**, exposes her to become an adulteress; and whoever marries the divorced woman is committing adultery." (Matthew 5:32)

"Whoever puts away his wife, **except for unlawful sexual intercourse**, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is put away also commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

In contrast, the apostles Mark and Luke do not add the exceptional clause, indicating that Jesus did not sanction this type of post-divorce marriage union:

"Whoever **puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery** against her. And if she puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." (Mark 10:11-12)

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso **marrieth a woman whom her husband hath put away, committeth adultery also**." (Luke 16:18)

In his letters to the churches, the apostle Paul also contradicts Jesus' words in Matthew when he writes that only death authorizes the surviving spouse to be free to remarry:

"A wife is **bound as long as** her husband **lives**; but **if** her husband **dies, she is free to marry** whom she wishes, but only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39)

"Now a married woman is **bound by the law to** her husband **as long as** he **lives**; but if he **dies, she is released from the marital law**. Therefore she is considered an adulteress if her husband is still alive and she unites with another man; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law **and is not an adulteress if she marries again**." (Romans 7:2-3)

Jesus and Paul taught that the word of two or three witnesses must be confirmed:

"And Jesus ... said: ... But if he does not hear you, take one or two with you, so that **every word may be confirmed by the mouth of two or three witnesses**." (Matthew 18:2, 3,16)

"This is the third time I've come to you. **By the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter will be decided**." (2 Corinthians 13:1)

The testimonies of the three disciples (Mark, Luke and Paul) confirm that Jesus' position is the illegality of divorce in annulling the first marriage in order to allow a new conjugal union of the divorced, guilty and innocent.

In view of the above, how can we harmonize Matthew's two permissive statements for remarriage of divorcees in cases of marital betrayal, given that there are other biblical passages categorically defending God's original plan that nothing but death can break the marriage bond?

PROPHETIC CONTROVERSY

The great controversy over the question of the law of marriage also recurs among Seventh-day Adventists in the writings of Ellen Gould White. The cause of the discussion are two personal letters written by the prophetess of the church in the book "The Adventist Home" whose content places them at totally opposite poles. The first letter says that "nothing but" adultery is the reason for the dissolution of the first marriage:

"Your ideas about the marriage relationship have been wrong. **Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed** can break or annul the marriage vow." (The Adventist Home, p. 341)

On the other hand, the second letter shows exactly the opposite. The expression "nothing except" death does not open up any possibility of breaking the marriage bond, except the death of one of the spouses:

"... the heavy responsibilities included in the marriage vows. These vows bind the destinies of two people with ties that **nothing but the hand of death** can untie." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

Faced with these two contradictory letters, which represent all of Ellen White's personal letters concerning the law of divorce and the law of marriage respectively, how can we harmonize them in the Spirit of Prophecy? Several attempts have been made to find a convincing answer to this problem, but without success for readers who are not superficial and expect a plausible explanation of the question raised here.

Some may think that the letter of lifelong marriage is the "general rule" and the letter of divorce for adultery is the "exception" in the law of marriage, and this would resolve the contradiction in the Testimonies. However, such an argument is unsatisfactory because the two letters are impossible to harmonize, due to the fact that the expressions "nothing but" and "nothing but" leave no room for any other option than the one proposed in the text.

Ellen White's interpretation of Matthew 19:9 is freedom of marriage for the divorced party who is the victim of adultery. If this is the prophetess' position, then why did she write something so shocking that goes against her beliefs on divorce and remarriage? How can we also understand other letters in the same vein about the lifelong nature of marriage? Did Sister White change her position or is this a text added to make her defend something she didn't believe in? Which of the two positions of Adventists in the Spirit of Prophecy is the true one in relation to marriage law?

The subject is controversial, delicate and requires a careful investigation of the sacred record in order to preserve doctrinal balance and serve as an eye-opener for some people who, because of their lack of understanding of the Holy Bible and Ellen White's writings, end up suffering some yokes in the field of Christian marriage.

The purpose of this study, in addition to bringing instruction on the problem of marriage exception, is to bring about the restoration of the family of all people who have access to the knowledge of the truth. We hope, dear reader, that this literary work will be a blessing in your life and will help you to be delivered from the enemy's deceptions in this matter until the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless you!
Good study.

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PART I:
HOLY BIBLE

1. Concept of Marriage

The book of Genesis describes three institutions for humanity founded by God at the beginning of Creation:

I - Man's diet based on natural products from the earth (Genesis 1:29);

II - The Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the weekly day of rest (Genesis 2:1-3) and

III - Marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24).

Our object of study among these three creational pillars will be the marriage union. In order to have a true understanding of marriage in the Scriptures, we need to analyze what the peculiar elements of this union are. The institution of marriage has five important characteristics to be observed:

a) **Heterosexual** - Marriage is the union between people of opposite sex:

"And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male** and **female** created he them." (Genesis 1:27)

b) **Monosomatic** - The man and woman become one body in marriage (mono = one + soma = body). It is a mystical union of two bodies that merge into one. This means that the dissolution of the flesh with death represents the dissolution of marriage in the death of one of the spouses who make up this single family body:

"And the man said, This woman is **bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh**: she shall be called a woman, because she was taken out of a man. And a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**." (Genesis 2:23-24)

"So husbands should love their own wives as their own bodies. **He who loves his wife loves himself**. For no one ever hated **his own flesh**, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church; for we are members of his body." (Ephesians 5:28-30)

The expression "one flesh" also means "sexual intercourse", which is only permitted in marriage:

"Or do you not know that the man who **unites himself to the prostitute forms one body with her**? For as it is said, the two shall become **one flesh**." (1 Corinthians 6:16)

- c) **Monogamous** - Monogamy was established by God as the moral standard to be followed by all people who unite in marriage; one man for one woman:

"Therefore **a man** shall leave his father and mother and **be joined to his wife**, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

- d) **Indissoluble** - Marriage cannot be dissolved under any circumstances while husband and wife are alive. Once God unites them, no one can break the bond of marriage that exists between them:

"What therefore **God has joined together, let not man put asunder**." (Matthew 19:6)

- e) **Lifetime** - Marriage is a covenant that lasts for the lifetime of the spouses, until death do them part:

"A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but **if** her husband **dies, she is free to marry** whom she wishes, provided it is in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39)

2. Method of Biblical Interpretation

In order to understand the Holy Bible, we must gather together all the biblical passages on the specific subject we want to know about and compare them with other texts that contradict them. The correct interpretation is defined by the largest number of texts gathered together and the rest must be harmonized with them. In this way, the interpreter will eliminate all apparent contradictions and will not be in error:

"To whom will he teach knowledge? And to whom will he make **doctrine understood**? The weaned, and those torn from the breast? For it is commandment upon commandment, commandment and more commandment, rule upon rule, rule and more rule: **a little here, a little there**." (Isaiah 28:9-10)

"Which things we also speak, not in words of human wisdom, but as the Holy Spirit teaches, **comparing spiritual things with spiritual**." (1 Corinthians 2:13)

The problem many people have when interpreting the Bible is using the "Principle of Selectivity". In this principle, the interpreter takes certain texts and disregards the verses or chapters preceding and following them, or in another part of the Bible dealing with the same subject. In this way, the biblical interpretation is incomplete and compromises the correct understanding of the doctrine. However, if we read the text from the beginning to the end of the subject under investigation or other passages dealing with the same subject, then we will find the verse that clarifies the one selected.

Let's now apply the biblical method of interpreting "a little here, a little there" to the subject of marriage:

Lifetime Marriage:

God's Law: Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-8; Mark 10:5-9; Ephesians 5:30-32.

Law of Jesus: Mark 10:10-12; Luke 16:17-18; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 7:8-11; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:6.

X

Divorce on the grounds of adultery:

Jesus' Law: Matt. 5:32 and Matthew 19:9.

We noted above that there are only two texts that defend the legality of divorce. In this case, the method of biblical interpretation requires the interpreter to harmonize these only two texts with all the others that oppose the interpretation of the termination of marriage on the grounds of adultery. Otherwise, he will be sacrificing biblical methodology in order to give importance to personal opinion.

We can't create a doctrine based on two texts that disagree with the whole Bible.

The prohibition or not of remarriage of the innocent divorced party in Matthew 19:9 consists of the concept of "illicit sexual relations":

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, **except for unlawful sexual intercourse**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

So, what is the correct concept in the exceptional clause that obeys the "a little here, a little there" rule of interpretation and doesn't hurt the context described in Matthew 19:3-12? Let's find out now.

3. Jesus and Divorce

The discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees is about the legality of divorce in the law of Moses:

"If a man takes a wife and marries her, and **if she is not pleasing in his sight** because he has found something indecent in her, and if he draws up a bill of **divorcement** against her, and gives it into her hand, and sends her out of the house." (Deuteronomy 24:1)

The spiritual guides of Israel were not there to learn from the Master what the true interpretation of the law was. They asked Jesus a test question based on the rabbinical problem between the Pharisee teachers Hillel (divorce for any reason) and Shammai (divorce for adultery), in order to condemn him to death if he answered anything contrary to the Mosaic law:

"And there came unto him certain Pharisees, trying him, saying, Is it **lawful for** a man to **put away** his wife **for any cause?**" (Matthew 19:3)

"Whoever has rejected the law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses." (Hebrews 10:28)

Jesus presented such an elevated response that he didn't take sides in any of the divorce positions defended by the Jews. He explains Scripture with Scripture itself and defends the Creator's monogamous law written in the Old Testament (Genesis 1:27; 2:24):

"Then he answered: **Have you not read** that the **Creator made them male and female from the beginning**, and that he said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.**" (Matthew 19:4-6)

In other words, Jesus conveyed the following message: "What counts is the law of marriage that the Creator established at the beginning of everything. This commandment cannot be changed by human will. God created marriage. Man, on the other hand, created divorce, which destroys the marriage in order to enter into another. Go back to the Creator's original purpose, which does not allow the marriage bond to be broken through divorce." Dissatisfied, the Pharisees asked:

"They said to him: **Why** then **did Moses command to give her a bill of divorcement** and put her away?" (Matthew 19:7)

Between the lines of the Pharisaic question, we read: "The Lord is saying that you can't divorce to remarry under any circumstances, but the law says you can because there is an exception. You are bringing a teaching contrary to the law of Moses". Jesus explains the reason for his answer:

"He said to them, '**Moses permitted** you **to put away** your wife because of your hardness of heart, but **it was not so at first.**" (Matthew 19:8)

The wickedness of the Jews in satisfying their carnal impulses by marrying other women was the hardness of heart that Jesus censured in front of the listening audience present on that occasion. Christ came to abolish this liberal system of multiple marriages, which was not the case at the beginning of the world.

The remarriage of the divorced couple does not alter the original law of marriage because the Lord does not change His plans to adapt His law to man's fallen condition. The law of divorce that breaks the lifelong covenant was a provisional permission intended particularly for the social, religious and ethical life of Israel in the Old Covenant due to the scenario of polygamy prevalent in Israel.

The Bible presents two types of polygamy:

1° - **Simultaneous polygamy**: Men were married to several women simultaneously (living with all of them at the same time):

"And Joab went in to the king into the house, and said, Thou hast put to shame this day all thy servants, which have saved thy life this day, and the life of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the life of **thy wives**, and the life of **thy concubines.**" (2 Samuel 19:5)

2° - **Successive polygamy**: Women were married to a single man, but with a divorce decree they were allowed to marry other men in succession (she lived with the same man and could only be married to another with a divorce):

"Jesus said to her, "**Go, call your husband** and come here. The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband. Jesus said to her, "You have said well, 'I have no husband,' for **you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.**" (John 4:16-18)

The post-modern Western Christian world has adopted Successive Polygamy: remarriage is only permitted through divorce. In this case, the sin of adultery allows people to change partners if there is no reconciliation between the parties.

In other words, it is a doctrine that encourages someone to be married several times on the grounds of violating the marital vow.

Polygamy is several marriages, either simultaneous or successive.

Usually, when people talk about polygamy, only "Simultaneous Polygamy" comes to mind. However, the biblical concept of Polygamy is broader, as it also includes "Successive Polygamy". The problem is that preconceived ideas get in the way of biblical understanding and confuse people's minds about the two concepts of polygamy in the Holy Scriptures.

Most people think that "Successive Polygamy" is the same thing as "Monogamy" because there is "conjugal cohabitation with only one person", but this is illusory within biblical parameters. Jesus was condemning the legalization of both male (simultaneous) and female (successive) polygamy, bringing them back to the original model of a single marriage: "mono" (one) + "gamia" (marriage).

It's important to note that Jesus' answer is God's law at the beginning of Creation, which rejects the two positions of Jewish Pharisaism in relation to the remarriage of a divorced couple. It makes no sense for Christ to reject the Law of God written in the Scriptures (Genesis) in order to follow the rabbinical thinking of a first century Pharisee (divorce for adultery). Based on this contextual analysis, we come to the following conclusion:

JESUS	HILLEL	SHAMMAI
Divorce for No Reason.	Divorce for Any Reason.	Divorce on the grounds of adultery.
Marriage Law	Divorce Law	

The positions of Jesus, Hillel and Shammai represent three classes of people who defend the interpretation of their respective masters. The story of the past is happening again today:

"What has been is what will be; and what has been done will be done again; **so there is nothing new under the sun**. Is there anything of which we can say, 'See, this is new'? No, it was in the ages that were before us." (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10)

If the law of principle does not break the couple's bond in the first marriage under any circumstances (including adultery), then how can we explain the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 which allows for the dissolution of marriage in the case of marital infidelity?

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, **except for illicit sexual relations**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

Illicit sexual intercourse practiced during marriage is adultery. If Jesus' defense is based on the law of marriage in Creation that does not break the marriage bond, then he cannot say something contrary to that law. So what kind of adultery was Jesus teaching in the exception clause that does not cause the marriage bond to be broken in the first marriage? Let's put together all of Jesus' biblical passages on the marriage exception and we'll have a clear picture of the biblical content:

"And he said to them, 'Whoever puts away his wife and **marries another** woman commits **adultery** against that woman. And if she put away her husband and **marry another**, she commits **adultery**.'" (Mark 10:11-12)

"Whoever puts away his wife and **marries another** commits **adultery**; and whoever **marries** a woman whom her husband has **put away** also commits **adultery**." (Luke 16:18)

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, except in the case of illicit sexual relations, exposes her to become an adulteress; and whoever **marries her who is put away** commits **adultery**." (Matthew 5:32)

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, except for illicit sexual relations, and **marries another**, commits **adultery**, and whoever **marries her** who is put **away** commits **adultery**." (Matthew 19:9)

Marrying another Woman \longleftrightarrow Adultery

Marrying the repudiated \longleftrightarrow Adultery

Adultery is marrying someone who is divorced.

Now, just replace the words "illicit sexual relations" in the restrictive clause with the concept of adultery presented by Jesus, "marrying a divorced woman":

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, **except for illicit sexual relations**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, **except for adultery**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, **not being married to one who is put away**, and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries one who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

"But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, and **is not married to one who is divorced**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries one who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

The reasoning behind the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 is this:

"Whoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery": A husband who divorces his first wife and marries another commits adultery against her because the divorced man, according to the Creator's marriage law, is still bound to the woman of his first marriage.

"Not because of illicit sexual relations": The exception to this is if the man, in his first marriage, marries a divorced woman. In this case, if the husband divorces this woman, who is in her second marriage, and marries another, he does not commit adultery, since the divorced woman, according to the Creator's marriage law, is still bound to the husband of her first marriage. The illicit marriage of the divorced woman makes the second husband free to marry another woman who is also free of any marriage impediment.

"And he who marries her who is divorced commits adultery": A woman who divorces her first husband and marries another commits adultery against him because the divorced woman, according to the Creator's marriage law, is still bound to the husband of her first marriage.

Why did Jesus say that a divorced husband's remarriage to his second wife is adultery? The answer is that the husband is still bound by creational law to his first wife for as long as she lives. This means that the adultery of the guilty party does not break the marriage bond of the first marriage, otherwise the husband would not be married and in adultery in the second marriage.

According to the law of men, the divorced husband is married to the second wife, but before God he remains married to the woman from the first marriage:

"But I say to you, whoever **puts away his wife**, except for illicit sexual relations, and **marries another**, commits **adultery**, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9)

Why did Jesus say that a divorced woman's remarriage to a second man is also adultery? The answer is that the woman is still bound by creational law to her first husband for as long as he lives. This means that the adultery of the guilty party does not break the marriage bond of the first marriage and leaves the innocent party free from her marital commitment to marry another man (as if she were single). According to the law of men, a divorced woman is married to her second husband, but before God she remains married to the husband of her first marriage:

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, except for illicit sexual relations, and marries another, commits adultery, **and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery.**" (Matthew 19:9)¹

Divorce in Jewish marriage allowed the innocent divorced woman to remake her life in another marriage with a second husband who undertook to take care of her during her lifetime. If the second husband was bad and repudiated her for any reason (as the first husband did), the repudiated wife was free to be another man's again.

¹ In some modern Bibles, there is an omission of the final part of Matthew 19:9: "and if he marries her who is put away, he commits adultery". In other Bibles we have the full verse. Which of the two Bible versions is more faithful to the original text of Scripture? To answer this question, we need to understand how the origin of biblical manuscripts works. Fundamentally, there are two families of Bible: the first family belongs to the "*Textus Receptus*" which comes from Hebrew and Greek; precious manuscripts preserved in places like the church of Pella in Palestine from where Christians fled when, in 70 AD, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. These manuscripts came from the Christian area where the apostles were engaged in the work of preaching the gospel. The Christians of Italy received these manuscripts via the Middle Eastern route and not via Rome. From there, the writings spread among European Christians: the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Huguenots, the Protestant Reformers, all had this same manuscript which was translated all over the world. That's why it's called "*Textus Receptus*", because the vast majority of manuscripts come from the original text. The majority is so overwhelming that even the enemies of the *Textus Receptus* admit that 19 out of 20 manuscripts belong to this class. The second family, smaller than the first, is based on ancient manuscripts and belongs to the "Critical or Eclectic Text" which comes mostly from the Alexandrian text. They represent the Greek family: Vaticanus, Latin Vulgate, Codex B from the library of Rome (used to combat the Protestant Reformation) and the Sinaitic Code or Codex Aleph (oldest manuscript) which was found in the region of Egypt. Well, there are Bibles that have adopted the "*Textus Receptus*" (majority text) and others that have adopted the "Critical Text" (minority text). The omission of biblical passages by the Critical Text causes scholars to disbelieve in the ancient manuscripts due to the prohibition on modifying the Holy Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19) and thus compromise the entire doctrinal content. The rejection of the *Textus Receptus* does not affect the originality of the final passage of Matthew 19:9, which condemns the remarriage of the innocent party and the creation of another family in adultery. We only have to look at the Bible, in the Gospel of Luke, and we will see the same marriage impediment for the innocent repudiated woman: "... and he who marries a woman repudiated by her husband also commits adultery." (Luke 16:18)

Against this backdrop of many divorces and remarriages among God's people, Jesus said that if a husband and wife divorced and married someone else, they were both committing adultery and thus preserved the monogamy of marriage:

HUSBAND	WOMAN
"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife , except for unlawful sexual intercourse, and marries another , commits adultery ..."	"... and he who marries her who is put away commits adultery ."
THE GUILTY PARTY	INNOCENT PARTY

Note that the very content of Matthew 19:9 (which depicts the Jewish divorce censured by Jesus) forbids the second marriage of the innocent divorcee: "and whoever marries her who has been put away commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). How can the restrictive clause allow the innocent party to remarry, if Jesus taught that the innocent wife repudiated by her husband is not allowed to become the wife of another husband?

Conclusion: the criterion for dissolving the marriage that Jesus taught is illicit sexual relations with a divorced person practiced in the new marriage: The single man who married the divorced woman is in adultery in this new marriage relationship. Faced with this, Jesus presents the second husband with the option of getting out of adultery through divorce.

A divorced person is a married person before God.

If divorcees are prevented from marrying someone else, then who is free to remarry under the exception clause? Answer: Those who are not bound by the law of marriage, singles and widows:

"But I say to **bachelors** and **widows**, it's good for you if you stay like me. But if you can't help it, **get married**. For it is better to marry than to burn. Now to those who **are married** I **command**, not I, but **the Lord**, that the wife not separate from her husband (but if she should separate, let her **not marry or be reconciled** to her husband); and that the husband not depart from his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:9-11)

1. **Lawful Marriage**: Marriage between single people and widows:

Single + Single

Single + Widowed

Widower + Widower

2. **Illicit Marriage**: Marriage of someone to a divorced person:

Divorced + Single

Divorced + Widowed

Divorced + Divorced

The remarriage of divorced people is considered by Jesus to be adultery. This "new concept" of breaking the marriage vow (taken from the book of Genesis) stunned the disciples, to the point of exclaiming these words:

"His disciples said to him, "**If this is** a man's **condition** with regard to his wife, he **ought not to marry**."" (Matthew 19:10)

As an intellectual exercise: which of the two answers given by the disciples below is in line with Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:9?

- 1) His disciples said to him, "Oh Lord! I'm glad you remembered the innocent party, poor thing! Now she can be happy with another husband because the one she married committed adultery and you made an exception for this case. So the offended party is free from the law of marriage and can marry someone else."

The natural man's thinking is: "It's the adulterous husband (the guilty party) who should pay for his mistake by not remarriage, since the woman (the innocent party) is not to blame for what happened and deserves to be happy in another marriage". If this is the biblical reasoning, then the remarriage of the divorced innocent party wouldn't have caused the disciples so much panic when they heard Christ's words in Matthew 19:9.

When Jesus spoke about the fulfillment of the law in Matthew 5, he always increased the legal demand by declaring "but I say to you". The same is true of Matthew 19:9. So Jesus' marriage law in the exception clause is so strict that it terrified the disciples, and we don't see that in this first answer.

2) His disciples said to him, "Sir? Do you mean that if the husband divorces her and marries another woman, the divorced woman will have to stay alone until the adulterous husband dies or decides to return to her?!! Who wants to be alone without getting married, Lord?! If that's the condition between husband and wife, it's better not to get married at all!"

It is more coherent to think that the second answer harmonizes with the astonishment of the disciples in Matthew 19:10, in accordance with the creative law of marriage expressed in Matthew 19:4-6 which forbids the two divorced parties to remarry, whatever the reason that led them to divorce. In the Creator's marriage law, the innocent party would have only two options: marital reconciliation or solitude until death do them part. A law as rigid as that would astonish anyone.

The disciples understood from Jesus' answer that marriage is not for everyone. God's standard is high for those who wish to unite in marriage: "faithfulness and love to the end". Jesus' message didn't always please his listeners. He scandalized his disciples in the past, as well as his disciples today:

"When many of his disciples heard this, they said, '**This speech is hard; who can listen to it?** But when Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at this, he said to them, "Does **this scandalize you?** For this reason **many** of his disciples turned back and **walked no more with him.**" (John 6:60-61, 66)

Jesus' words had a special reason for being so incisive, so harsh. As well as affirming the sacredness of marriage, he wanted to protect the women of the time who were abandoned for the most banal reasons and to ensure that the husband took care of his wife until death. Christ came to this earth in order to restore the ancient institution of marriage - the Creator's marriage law in its original form - and to correct all the evils arising from divorce and remarriage for whatever reason or from the Jews' adultery with the lifelong conjugal union expressed in the divine Edenic law.

The Creator's marriage law requires a husband to be faithful in marriage and to take care of the woman he has chosen to live with throughout his life. Thus, the woman would not be helpless without her husband and would not marry another man. The couple would be aware that if they were to remarry someone else, they would both be committing adultery.

"But he said to them, '**Not everyone can receive this word, but only those to whom it has been given.** For there are eunuchs who were so born from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were castrated by men; and **there are eunuchs who castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.** Whoever can receive this, let him receive it." (Matthew 19:11-12)

Christ commented that not everyone is able to accept this teaching and take on the lifelong commitment of marriage, since the consequence of divorce taught by the Master is not something couples want, if they are thinking of a second marriage if the current marital relationship goes wrong. If that's what they're thinking, the advice is: don't get married. Otherwise, Jesus' word should be obeyed according to the concept of marriage given by the Creator at the beginning of the world. Jesus then mentions three classes of eunuchs on the basis of all this discussion:

1st - **Eunuchs born from their mother's womb**: Eunuchs are popularly known as men deprived of sexual relations. The origin of the eunuch in the mother's womb consists of someone having some incapacity for marriage due to a physiological limitation for sexual union or having been born with the ability to remain alone.

2nd - **Eunuchs who were castrated by men**: Wicked kings chose male eunuchs who were officials appointed to manage the affairs of the palace and the private lives of the monarchs. Commonly, the king would order the castration of the eunuchs who would be responsible for managing his harem (women's house) in order to avoid sexual intimacy with his wives and concubines:

"Then the king's servants who ministered to him said, "Let virgin and beautiful girls be sought for the king. Let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the virgin and beautiful maidens to Shushan, the capital, to the **house of the women**, under the **guardianship of** Hegai, the king's **eunuch, the guardian of the women**; and let their cosmetics be given to them. And let the maiden who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti. And it pleased the king, and he did so." (Esther 2:2-4)

3rd - **And there are others who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven**: In the context of Matthew 19, eunuchs who have psychologically castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of God are divorcees who decide not to have relationships with other people because they are prevented from marrying again. If they enter into a second marriage, they are committing adultery. Divorced people live alone, in voluntary continence, until the other spouse dies or they reconcile with him or her:

"And everyone **who has left** houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or **wife**,² or children, or fields, for **my name's sake**, will receive many times more and **will inherit eternal life**." (Matthew 19:29)

² Despite the omission of the word "woman" in some modern Bibles in the text of Matthew 19:29 (Critical or Eclectic Text), we can see its inclusion in other Bibles (*Textus Receptus*). Recorded in both Greek manuscripts, the passage in Luke 18:29 proves the authenticity of the word "woman" in Matthew 19:29 and the fact that it came from Jesus' lips to command the husband to abandon his wife for the sake of her name in order to inherit the kingdom of God.

4. Bible Dictionary

We have seen that in the Bible there are two concepts of adultery and the one that harmonizes in the context of divorce in Matthew 19:9 is the second one, which talks about divorcees:

ADULTERY	
Sexual intercourse with a married person.	Marital relationship with a divorced person.

And in the Bible Dictionary? Which of the meanings of "*porneia*" is more appropriate to the context in the exception clause?

"λέγω δε υμιν οτι ος αν απολυση την γυναικα αυτου ει μη επι **πορνεια (porneia)** και γαμηση αλλην μοιχεται και ο απολελυμενην γαμησας μοιχεται." (Matthew 19:9) – Textus Receptus.

"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, except for **illicit sexual relations**, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9) – Bible in the João Ferreira de Almeida Revised and Updated Version.

The subject proposed in Matthew 19:3-12 is "divorce". Therefore, the only biblical dictionary meaning applied to the context and which harmonizes with the whole Bible is illicit sexual relations with divorced people:

<p>4202 πορνεια <i>Porneia</i> from 4203; TDNT - 6:579,918; n f</p> <p>2) <u>Illicit sexual relations:</u> 1st) adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, sexual relations with animals, etc. 1b) sexual relations with close relatives (Lev 18) and 1c) sexual relations with a divorced man or woman (Mk 10:11-12). 2) Metaphysical idol worship 2) the impurity that originates in idolatry, which was incurred by eating sacrifices offered to idols.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(STRONG DICTIONARY, 2002, p. 1753)</p>

If the word "*moicheia*" had been written in the exception clause of Matthew 19:9 instead of "*porneia*", then we wouldn't have the second definition of adultery in the Bible Dictionary, as we see in the word "*porneia*", which Jesus taught was illicit sexual relations with divorced people. For this reason, Jesus didn't say "*moicheia*" in the exception, but "*porneia*":

3430 μοιχεια **Moicheia**
from 3431; TDNT - 4:729,605; n f

3) **adultery**

(STRONG DICTIONARY, 2002, p. 1655)

Note that Matthew 19:9 is the only text in which the Greek word "*porneia*" appears in the New Testament to mean "illicit sexual relations with divorcees". In the other passages, the word *porneia* means illicit sexual relations in general (Acts 15:20, 29; Romans 1:29; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Revelation 2:14, 20-21; 9:21), illicit sexual intercourse with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:13-18) and spiritual prostitution of God's people (Revelation 14:8; 17:4; 18:3; 19:2).

Even without the knowledge of the Bible Dictionary, we find the second concept of adultery in Jesus' dialogue with the Pharisees that harmonizes with God's law, the context of Matthew 19 and all the biblical texts on the law of marriage. The loosening of the law has always been the reason for so many sins among God's people at all times.

5. Spiritual Interpretation

Marriage is compared in the Scriptures to the spiritual relationship between God and his people. In the old covenant, God's wife constantly cheated on him with her lovers (pagan gods) in idolatry (spiritual prostitution). The relationship reached an unbearable point and God, unfortunately, decided to divorce Israel:

"When, because of all this, **because she had committed adultery, I sent away perfidious Israel and gave her a bill of divorcement**, I saw that false Judah her sister did not fear; but she herself went and played the harlot." (Jeremiah 3:8)

"Thus says the LORD: **Where is your mother's bill of divorcement, by which I put her away**? Or who is my creditor to whom I have sold you? Behold, because of your iniquities you were sold, and **because of your transgressions your mother was put away**." (Isaiah 50:1)

Despite the marital separation, God doesn't marry another woman, but remains faithful to the law of marriage which he instituted, he was alone and appealed to Israel to return to be his wife (an attitude contrary to the law of Moses which forbids a repudiated woman to return to the first husband who repudiated her):

"If a man puts away his wife, and she leaves him and takes another husband, will he return to her? Wouldn't that pollute the whole land? You have played the harlot with many lovers, **yet return to me, says the LORD.**" (Jeremiah 3:1)

"Turn, **you rebellious children,** says the LORD; for **I am your husband, and I will take you,** one from every city and two from every family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:14)

"If you return, O Israel, says the LORD, return to me; if you remove your abominations from before me, you will no longer wander." (Jeremiah 4:1)

In the last days, (spiritual) Israel repents of her adulteries, returns to her first husband and lives a lifelong union with the Creator:

"For **your Maker is your husband;** the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of the whole earth. For the **LORD has called you as a woman** forsaken and of a broken spirit, as a woman of youth who has been **put away,** says your God. **For a moment I left you,** but with great mercies I took you up again; in indignation I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting mercies I have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer." (Isaiah 54:5-8)

"In that day, says the LORD, **she will call me 'My husband'** and she will no longer call me 'My Baal'. I will take away the names of Baalim from her mouth, and she shall remember them no more. ... **I will betroth you to me forever;** I will betroth you to me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies; I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, **and you shall know the LORD.**" (Hosea 2:16-17, 19-20)

"For **their mother has played the harlot;** she who conceived them has played the harlot; for she says, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink'. ... **She** will go after her lovers, but she will not find them; she will seek them, but she will not find them; then she **will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband,** for I was better off then than now. (Hosea 2:5, 7)

"And **the children of Israel shall return,** and seek **the LORD** their God, and David their king: and **in the latter days they** shall come trembling unto the LORD, and unto his goodness." (Hosea 3:5)

"Behold, **the** days are coming, **says the LORD**, when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they have broken my covenant, though I betrothed them, says the LORD. For **this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel** after those days, says the LORD: I will write **my laws in their minds, I will write them in their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**" (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

In the new covenant, the marriage between Christ and the New Jerusalem (the bride of the Lamb) is also a lifelong union throughout eternity:

"Then one of the seven angels who have the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke to me, saying, 'Come, **I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, **Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.**" (Revelation 21:9-10)

"And I saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**" (Revelation 21:2)

OLD ALLIANCE	NEW ALLIANCE
<p style="text-align: center;">God</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Israel</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus</p> <p style="text-align: center;">New Jerusalem</p>
Lifetime Marriage	

6. Time of Ignorance

In view of all the biblical exposition, there is still a question to be resolved: the remarriage of a divorcee who was divorced at a time when he was unaware of the message of lifelong marriage. In order to understand the time of ignorance, we need to use the logical reasoning of the Holy Bible. The main passage dealing with the time of ignorance is this one:

"Since we are God's generation, we should not think that divinity is like gold, silver or stone, worked by man's art and imagination. But **God, disregarding the times of ignorance**, now commands all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:29-30)

The first part of the biblical verse refers to the time when the person didn't know the Gospel (time of ignorance), while the second part refers to the time when the person comes to know the Gospel (time of awareness):

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW	
"But God, <u>disregarding</u> the times of <u>ignorance</u> "	" <u>now</u> command all men everywhere to <u>repent.</u> "
TIME OF IGNORANCE	TIME OF AWARENESS

The teaching of Acts 17:30 about ignorance and awareness of sin is repeated in Jesus' words. If not, let's see:

"But God, disregarding the times of **ignorance**, **now** commands all men everywhere to **repent.**" (Acts 17:30)

"Jesus said to them, '**If you were blind**, you would have no sin; but **now** that you say, 'We see,' **your sin remains.**" (John 9:41)

"**If I had** not come and **spoken to them**, they would have had no sin; but **now they have no excuse for** their sin." (John 15:22)

In the time of ignorance, the person will not be held responsible for knowledge they can never obtain. In the time of consciousness, the individual (no longer ignorant) is responsible for the acts committed from then on because they now know what is right and have the free will to make the decision on the side of truth or error:

"Therefore all who have **sinned without law shall perish** also **without law**; and all who have **sinned** through law **shall be judged.**" (Romans 2:12)

Let's look at other texts that speak about God's will at the time when a person has the knowledge of sin:

"At one time I **lived without the law**, but when **the commandment came, sin revived** and I died." (Romans 7:9)

"Once, when **you did not know God**, you served those who by nature are not gods; but **now** that **you know God**, or rather are known by God, **how do you return to those weak** and poor **rudiments**, whom you again want to serve?" (Galatians 4:8-9)

"Now, brothers, **I know that you acted out of ignorance**, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. **Repent**, therefore, and turn to God, **that your sins may be blotted out**, so that times of rest may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ whom he has appointed for you, Jesus." (Acts 3:17-20)

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and hope fully for the grace that is set before you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the lusts which you once had in your ignorance**; but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:13-16)

"Therefore I say this, and testify in the Lord, that you **no longer walk as the Gentiles walk**, in the truth of their mind, darkened in their understanding, separated from the life of God **through the ignorance that is in them**, because of the hardness of their heart; who, having become insensitive, have given themselves over to lewdness, to commit every kind of impurity with greediness. But **you have not so learned Christ**, if indeed you have heard him, and have been instructed in him, according to the truth in Jesus, to **put off** the old man, which is corrupted by the lusts of deceit, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to **put on the new man**, which after God is created in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:17-24)

Applying the biblical principle of the time of ignorance and the time of conscience to the lifelong law of marriage, we have the following example:

"God does not take into account the time of ignorance" - A divorced man has never heard of the law of marriage. If he (who lives the law of divorce) dies in ignorance (of the law of marriage), then he won't be guilty before God because he didn't know he was in adultery in his second marriage to his mistress.

"Now let every man repent" - A divorced man has just learned about the law of marriage. He (knowing the law) decides not to leave his second wife and excuses his adultery with the time of ignorance (he didn't know he was still married according to the Scriptures). In this case, as long as he is in the second marriage, the divorced man will be guilty before God, since he now knows that he is married according to the marriage law and yet he has chosen to continue in the second marriage living in adultery with his mistress.

The message is for those who know the law of marriage:

"Do you not know, brothers (for **I speak to those who know the law**), that the law has dominion over a man all his life? Now a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if he dies, she is released from the **marital law**. So she will be considered an adulteress if her husband is still alive and she unites with another man; but **if** her husband **dies**, **she will be free from the law** and will not be bound **by the law**, she will be an adulteress if she marries again." (Romans 7:1-3)

There is no longer any excuse for the divorced person to continue in a second marriage in adultery and to destroy their first marriage after learning about the law (as if they were still living in the time of ignorance). Now he must stand firm in the faith of the gospel he has received:

"You also, who once **were** strangers and **enemies in** your **mind** because of your evil deeds, he has **now** reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, that he might present you **holy** and without blemish and blameless before him, **if you continue in the faith**, grounded and steadfast, not allowing yourselves to be moved away from the hope of **the gospel which you heard** and which was preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister." (Colossians 1:21-23)

Let's look at two examples in Scripture of someone who stopped being ignorant after learning the truth that he was with a married person:

1 - **A former ignoramus who returned his neighbor's wife**: After learning that Sarah was Abraham's wife, King Abimelech returned the woman to her rightful husband:

"Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister,' and Abimelech king of Gerar sent to take her. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, 'You shall be put to death for the woman you have taken, because she has a husband. Now Abimelech had not yet possessed her, so he said, "Lord, will you kill even an innocent nation? Did he not say to me himself, 'She is my sister'? And she also said to me, He is my brother. It was with sincerity of heart and in my innocence that I did this. **God said to her** in a dream, **"I know that you did this in sincerity of heart**; that is why I kept you from sinning against me and did not allow you to touch her. **Now therefore, restore the woman to her husband**, for he is a prophet and will intercede for you, and you will live; but if you do not restore her to him, know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours. ... Then **Abimelech** took sheep and oxen and menservants and maidservants and gave them to Abraham; and **he restored Sarah his wife to him.**" (Genesis 20:2-7, 14)

2 - **Former ignoramus who didn't return his neighbor's wife**: After learning that it wasn't lawful to marry his brother Philip's wife, Herod continued in his second marriage to Herodias and didn't return the woman to her lawful husband:

"For Herod himself, because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife (for **Herod had married her**), had John arrested and thrown into prison. For **John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to possess your brother's wife.** ... Then he sent the executioner, and ordered John's head to be brought to him. He went and **beheaded him in the prison.**" (Mark 6:17-18, 27)

Ignorance does not annul God's first valid marriage for someone to be with their neighbor's husband or wife.

PART II: SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

1. Adventist Pioneers and Divorce

The belief of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the law of divorce:

"Although a divorce can only be granted biblically on the basis of **Matthew 19:9**, so that **the aggrieved party is free to remarry**, there may be many other causes that justify either party refusing to live with the other. Marriage is too serious a matter to be undertaken under the inspiration of any hasty and reckless impulse."
- Pr. Urias Smith, The Review and Herald, January 11, 1887.

"Another question is whether a person can biblically have a second companion if... the first one is still alive. Under the conditions expressed in **Matthew 19:9**, we think he can, because when Christ says that **if a man puts away his wife, except for this cause**, and remarries, he commits adultery, it follows that if the cause exists, **he does not commit adultery if he remarries.**" - Pr. Urias Smith, The Review and Herald, January 11, 1887.

2. Ellen White and the Bible

Having considered the greater light, "PART I: THE HOLY BIBLE", we can now study the lesser light in relation to the law of marriage. Before we begin our study, one question is fundamental: how do we interpret the Spirit of Prophecy? Is there a method of interpretation that we need to use in Ellen White's writings in order to arrive at the correct understanding of the marriage question? The answer is yes! The method of interpretation of the Testimonies is the same as that of the Holy Bible:

"The **testimonies themselves** will be the key that will explain the messages given, as **scriptural text is explained by scriptural text.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 42)

"And as it sometimes happens that they treat the **same subject** under different aspects and relations, **it may seem to** the casual reader, imbued with some prejudice, that their **concepts diverge**, when a meditated **study clearly reveals their harmonious background.**" (The Great Controversy, p. 8)

Based on this principle, we will adopt the "heavenly interpretative method" in our analysis, which will enable us to evaluate (accurately and efficiently) the arguments presented by Ellen White, compare the apparent contradictions in the Testimonies and the "study will clearly reveal their harmonious background".

First, we will study the doctrinal knowledge in the Spirit of Prophecy (Holy Bible) and then the theory applied in practice (Ellen White's letters). The passage in the Testimonies that interprets the texts of Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 on the law of marriage is in the book "The Adventist Home":

Matthew 5	Matthew 19
<p>"Among the Jews, a man was allowed to repudiate his wife for the most trivial offenses, and the woman was then free to remarry. This custom led to great unhappiness and sin. In the <u>Sermon on the Mount</u>, Jesus fully declared that there could be no <u>dissolution of the marriage bond</u>, except for <u>unfaithfulness</u> to the marital vow. "Whosoever," He said, "shall put away his wife, <u>except it be for fornication</u>, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery. <u>Matthew 5:32</u>." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>	<p>"When the <u>Pharisees</u> later <u>questioned</u> him about the legality of divorce, <u>Jesus pointed his listeners to the ancient institution of marriage</u> as it was ordained at creation. "Moses," He said, "because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but <u>in the beginning it was not so</u>." <u>Matthew 19:8</u>. ... Then, as the <u>Creator</u> joined the hands of the holy pair in marriage, saying: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (<u>Genesis 2:24</u>), <u>He enunciated the law of marriage</u> for all the children of Adam, <u>until the end of time</u>." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>
<p>Divorce for adultery</p>	<p>Lifetime Marriage</p>

We see here two of Jesus' positions on divorce:

- 1) **Matthew 5**: the legality of divorce on the grounds that the marriage bond has been broken through unfaithfulness in the marriage vow.
- 2) **Matthew 19**: the illegality of divorce is based on the Creator's marriage law, which does not break the marriage bond under any circumstances.

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches the law of marriage with a marriage exception that allows the second marriage of the innocent divorcee in the case of adultery. Note that in Matthew 19, the same Jesus teaches the law of marriage legislated in the Garden of Eden which forbids the two divorcees (guilty and innocent) from entering into a second marriage as long as they both live:

JESUS		JESUS	
<p>"But I say to you, whoever puts away his wife, <u>except in the case of adultery</u>, exposes her to become an adulteress; and whoever marries her who <u>is put away commits adultery</u>." (Matthew 5:32)</p>	X	<p>"Jesus answered and said to them, 'It is because of your hardness of heart that Moses permitted you to put away your wife, but <u>it was not so from the beginning</u>.' (Matthew 19:8)</p> <p>"For this reason a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and <u>the two become one flesh</u>." (Genesis 2:24)</p>	
Divorce for Adultery		Lifetime Marriage	

Taking the two interpretations presented by Ellen White in the book of Matthew, the conclusion is that Jesus annulled the adultery of the innocent divorcee with an exception that does not exist in God's law:

Matthew 5		Matthew 19	
<p>"You shall not commit adultery (<u>except in the case of adultery</u>)." (Exodus 20:14)</p>	X	<p>"You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)</p>	
CHRIST'S LAW		GOD'S LAW	

Faced with Jesus' change to the seventh commandment of the Decalogue by adding a marriage exception, we ask:

1) Why does Ellen White present God's marriage law as different from Jesus' marriage law (divorce law), when she herself said that we cannot distinguish between God's commandments and Christ's commandments in the Holy Scriptures?

"The Bible declares that no one can truly love God and still refuse to obey his law, after receiving light regarding its immutability. **Many try to justify their disobedience by distinguishing between the commandments of God and the commandments of Christ.** This they do, so that they can bear the name of Christian and still **live in violation of God's law.** But those who claim thus place their faith in a **falsehood invented by the father of lies.**" - Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, May 3, 1898, paragraph 13.

2) Why does Ellen White present in Matthew 5 an exception for adultery in God's law, when in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that he did not come to change the law, but to make it glorious when he taught men its requirements?

"**God's law can never be changed,** because **Christ said:** "Until heaven and earth pass away, **not an i or a tilde will ever pass from the Law,** until all is fulfilled."
Matthew 5:18." (Life of Jesus, p. 51)

"**Christ came to magnify the law and make it glorious.** He showed that it is based on the broad foundation of love for God and love for man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In his own life, he gave an example of obedience to God's law. In the **Sermon on the Mount He showed** how **its requirements** go beyond outward acts, and penetrate the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Acts of the Apostles, pp. 283-284)

3) Why does Ellen White present divorce for adultery that breaks the marriage bond, if she herself said that Jesus came to restore the law originating in Creation that does not break the marriage bond and corrects the evils resulting from divorce?

"**Christ** did not **come** to destroy this institution, but to **restore it to its original holiness** and elevation. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, and He began His work by sanctioning the marriage relationship. **He who gave Eve to Adam for a companion** worked His first miracle at a wedding feast." (Counsels for the Church, p. 128)

"The man was becoming so hardened that for the most trivial excuse he could **separate from his wife, or,** if he preferred, he could **separate her from her children and take her away.** This was considered a great evil and was not infrequently accompanied by more terrible suffering for the repudiated person. **Christ came to correct these evils,** and His first miracle was performed on the occasion of a marriage." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

4) Why does Ellen White present the law of divorce that causes the dissolution of marriage, if she herself said that Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' question was the illegality of divorce written in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament?

"The **Jewish teachers** prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the **Savior's reply there was indirect reproach** for their ignorance of the sacred letters. "**You have never read,**" He said." (The Desire of Ages, p. 194)

"Often, **in presenting the Old Testament Scriptures and showing their application** to Himself and His work of atonement, they had been awakened by His Spirit and lifted into the heavenly atmosphere. They had **a clearer understanding of** the spiritual truths spoken of by the prophets **than those who had originally written them**. From then on, they could read the Old Testament Scriptures not according to the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees, not as the declarations of dead sages, but **as a new revelation from God**." (The Desire of Ages, p. 348)

5) Why does Ellen White present the duration of marriage as "until adultery do them part", when she herself said that the institution of marriage is as enduring as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment?

"'Moses,' he said, 'because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but **in the beginning** it was not so. Matthew 19:8. He drew their attention to the blessed **days of Eden**, when God declared everything 'very good'. Then **marriage and the Sabbath originated, twin institutions for the glory of God for the** benefit of mankind.'" (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

"Therefore, let the divine **institution of marriage** be before you in **as lasting** a position **as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment**." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 159)

6) Why does Ellen White present the legalization of divorce for adultery, if she herself said that the Creator, in uniting Adam and Eve in marriage, enunciated the immutable law of marriage until the end of time?

"Then, **when the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in marriage**, saying: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24), **He enunciated the law of marriage** for all the children of Adam **until the end of time**." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

"In the precepts of His holy law, **God has given a perfect rule of life**; and He has declared that, **until the end of time**, this **law, immutable** in a jot or a tittle, must maintain its claims on human beings." (Acts of the Apostles, pp. 283-284)

7) Why does Ellen White present the law of Creation modified by an exception, if she herself said that God is taking us back to His design written in the book of Genesis?

"**God is** seeking to **lead us back**, step by step, **to His original design**." (Final Events, p. 81)

"We must **return to God's original design in creating man**." (Counsels on Diet, p. 380)

We notice that the isolated text of Matthew 5 in the book "The Adventist Home" is not in harmony with all the passages in the Testimonies. What should we do about this? Answer: reject the discordant text and replace it with another:

"**We have the Bible**. We have our experience, attested to by the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit. We have a truth that admits of no compromise. **Must we not repudiate everything that is not in harmony with this truth?**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 205)

Matthew 5	Matthew 19
<p>"The Pharisees thought he was seeking to diminish the claims of God's law, but his voice rang in their ears, saying: "Do not think that I have come to revoke the law or the prophets; I have not come to revoke, I have come to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one i or one tittle will pass from the law, until all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17, 18. Christ came to magnify the law and³³ make it glorious; he came to magnify the ancient commandment they had from the beginning. We therefore need the law and the prophets. We need the Old Testament to bring us to the New Testament." (Sons and Daughters of God, p. 48)</p>	<p>"When the Pharisees later questioned him about the legality of divorce, Jesus pointed his listeners to the ancient institution of marriage as it was ordained at creation. "Moses," He said, "because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but in the beginning it was not so." Matthew 19:8. ... Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in marriage, saying: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam, until the end of time." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>
<p>Lifetime Marriage</p>	

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus did not change the Edenic law of marriage:

"In the Sermon on the Mount Christ declared: **"Do not think that I have come to abrogate the law** or the prophets; I have not come to abrogate, I have come to fulfill.'" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 240)

"In Eden, Christ made known to man the precepts of the law "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God rejoiced". Job 38:7. **Christ's mission on earth was not to destroy the law**, but, by His grace, to bring man back to obedience to its precepts." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 48)

"The beloved disciple, who heard **Jesus' words on the mountain**, writing much later under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **speaks of the law as a perpetual obligation**. He says that "sin is the breaking of the law", and that "everyone who commits sin also breaks the law". 1 John 3:4 (TT). He makes it clear that the law he is referring to is "the old commandment, which you had from the beginning". 1 John 2:7. **He speaks of the law that existed at creation, and was reiterated on Mount Sinai**." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 48)

"While many say in their hearts that he has come to annul the law, Jesus with unmistakable language reveals his attitude towards the divine statutes. "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets." It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who **declares that it is not His design to set aside its precepts**." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, pp. 47-48)

"In the Sermon on the Mount, **Christ defines the law** and seeks to inculcate in the minds of His hearers the far-reaching claims of Jehovah's precepts. **His instructions were a new revelation to the people**; and the interpreters of the law, the scribes and the Pharisees, as well as the people in general, marveled at His doctrine. **Christ's words were not new, and yet they had the impact of a revelation**; for they presented the truth in its proper aspect, and not in the way the teachers had put it before the people." (Foundations of Christian Education, p. 237)

"The great **principles of the law**, of the **very nature of God**, are contained in the words of Christ on the mount." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 148)

"For all time, the words that Christ spoke on the Mount of Beatitudes will retain their power. Each sentence is a jewel in the treasury of truth. **The principles enunciated in that discourse are for all ages** and for all classes of people." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 7, p. 270)

"The Sermon on the Mount is Heaven's blessing to the world, a voice from the throne of God. **It was given to humanity to be the law of duty and the light of heaven**, its hope and consolation in discouragement. Here the Prince of preachers, **the Master par excellence, utters the words that the Father has given him to speak.**" (Education, p. 220)

Note that the divorce law of Matthew 5 that breaks the marriage bond has caused a scriptural war whose result is: "Ellen White contradicts Ellen White", "Jesus contradicts Jesus", "Ellen White contradicts Jesus", and even "Jesus modifies the marriage law created in Eden". The contradictions in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy will only disappear if we reject this isolated interpretation in favor of divorce.

We cannot create a doctrine based on an isolated verse from the Spirit of Prophecy.

Conclusion: In the Spirit of Prophecy, the correct biblical interpretation is lifelong marriage: "until death do them part".

Let's look at the theory in practice. What was the biblical basis for Ellen White's letters on divorce and remarriage? The law of divorce (Matthew 5) or the law of marriage (Matthew 19) which harmonizes perfectly with all the passages in the Bible and the Testimonies?

ELLEN WHITE	ELLEN WHITE
<p>"Your ideas about the marriage relationship have been wrong. <u>Nothing but the violation of</u> the marriage bed can break or annul the marriage vow." (The Adventist Home, p. 341)</p>	<p>"... the heavy responsibilities included in the marriage vows. These vows bind the destinies of two people with ties that <u>nothing but the</u> hand of <u>death</u> can untie." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>
<p>Divorce for Adultery</p>	<p>Lifetime Marriage</p>

We see here two of Ellen White's positions on divorce:

- 4) **Divorce Charter**: the legality of divorce, the biblical basis for which is the breaking of the marriage bond through unfaithfulness in the marital vow (Matthew 5:32).
- 5) **Anti-Divorce Letter**: the illegality of divorce, the biblical basis of which is the Creator's marriage law, which does not break the marriage bond under any circumstances (Matthew 19:8; Genesis 2:24).

ELLEN WHITE		ELLEN WHITE	
" <u>Nothing</u> but adultery."	X	" <u>Nothing</u> but death."	
Divorce for Adultery		Lifetime Marriage	

Taking the two personal letters that represent Ellen White's two interpretations of divorce, we come to the following conclusion: the foundation of the divorce letter is the isolated text of Matthew 5 from the book "The Adventist Home" which is the causative agent of all this scriptural warfare in the Holy Bible and in the Spirit of prophecy.

If the biblical interpretation of the adultery divorce letter in the Testimonies is false, then all the divorce letters that are under the same foundation are wrong. In view of all our biblical research into the Testimonies, we have four questions to answer:

1) Why did Sister White make a doctrinal error by interpreting Matthew 5 in favor of Divorce for Adultery and wrote that single explanation in the book "The Adventist Home" that married so many contradictions in her writings?

"I have no particular light on this subject, so I will not dare to speak positively about it. ... I don't think it's my job to deal with such cases **unless they are fully opened before me.** There must be brothers in the church who are able to speak decisively about this case. **I cannot understand such things.**" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 234)

Answer: Ellen White had no light on the marriage law because the subject was not fully opened before her. If she had true enlightenment in her writings about the marriage law in Scripture, then there would never have been such contradictions in the Spirit of Prophecy as we see in this matter of marriage. She herself recognizes that she is not infallible in relation to the Holy Scriptures:

"With regard to **infallibility, I have never claimed it**; only God is infallible. **His word is truth**, and in Him there is no change or shadow of variation." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 38)

The doctrines defended by the Adventist people in the past through Sister White and the Adventist pioneers are not infallible:

"**There is no excuse for anyone to take the position** that there are no more truths to be revealed and **that all our views of the Bible are without error.**" (The Other Power, p. 24)

"The fact that certain **doctrines** have been **considered the truth** for many years **by our people is not proof that our ideas are infallible.** Age does not transform error into truth and it can be re-examined." (The Other Power, p. 24)

"There is no more dependence to be placed on those you consider infallible, because **there is none of us who is infallible.** But I tell you what is infallible - **the truth of the living God is infallible.** And if we can hold fast to the truth and have the truth in us." - Ellen G. White, Manuscript 56 (1890), paragraph 3.

"**We must not think, like the Jews, that our own ideas and opinions are infallible,** nor like the Catholics, that certain individuals are the sole guardians of truth and knowledge, that men have no right to examine the Scriptures for themselves, but must accept the explanations given by the Fathers of the church. **We must not study the Bible for the purpose of maintaining our preconceived opinions,** but for the sole purpose of learning what God has said." (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 105)

The restoration of God's law did not end with Ellen White and the Pioneers (as many suppose). The reformatory work continues until the end of this world:

"Truth is a **progressive truth**, and we should walk in **increasing light.**" - Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, March 25, 1890.

"**Truth** is susceptible **of continual enlargement.**" - Ellen G. White to P. T. Magan, January 27, 1903.

"The **Reformation** did not end with Luther, as many suppose. **It will continue until the end of this world's history.**" (The Great Controversy, p. 148)

"At the time of the end, **every divine institution must be restored.**" (Prophets and Kings, p. 349)

2) If Ellen White made a doctrinal error on the subject of marriage, does that mean that she is considered a false prophet for having taught something contrary to the Holy Scriptures?

Answer: Not at all! Ellen White died ignorant of the law of marriage. This does not make her a false prophet because God does not take into account the time of ignorance. Therefore, she cannot be responsible for the light she never had the opportunity to receive:

"We are only responsible for the light that shines on us. The commandments of God and the testimonies of Jesus are serving as proof for us. If we are faithful and obedient, God will delight in us, and bless us as His chosen and peculiar people." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 288)

"Those who lived in past generations were responsible for the light that was given to them. Their minds were awakened to various points of Scripture that served as proof for them. But they did not understand the truths that we understand today. **They were not responsible for the light they did not have.**" (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 286)

Sister White and all the innocent divorcees who followed her advice to marry a second time will not be condemned for the sin of adultery. They did not sin because they did not receive the light of truth and rejected it, but walked according to the measure of light given. On the Day of Judgment, they will be judged by that light:

"If there were light about it and that light were rejected, then there would be condemnation and divine displeasure, but **before the light comes there is no sin, for there is no light rejected.**" (Testimonies for the Church, v. 1, p. 116)

"Men will be judged according to the measure of light given to them. No one will be responsible for the darkness and error in which they walk, if light has not been brought to them. **They have not sinned in not accepting what has not been presented to them.**" (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 285)

3) Why did God allow Ellen White to write the divorce letters teaching the Adventist people that adultery breaks the marriage bond, if this is not the true light of Scripture on the law of marriage?

Answer: There is a prophetic parallel between ancient Israel and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Jewish nation of biblical times prophetically represents God's people throughout the centuries:

"The Jewish nation was a symbol of the people of all centuries, who disdain the pleas of Infinite Love. Christ's tears, when he wept over Jerusalem, were shed for the sins of all times. In the judgments pronounced against Israel, those who reject the reproofs and warnings of God's Holy Spirit can read their own condemnation." (The Desire of Ages, p. 410)

Ancient Israel is compared to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is called in the Spirit of Prophecy "modern Israel", "Israel of God in these last days" and "Spiritual Israel":

"For forty years unbelief, murmuring and rebellion excluded ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of **modern Israel** into the heavenly Canaan." (Evangelism, p. 696)

"When I study the Scriptures, I am alarmed because of the **Israel of God in these last days**." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 1, p. 277)

"Even in the midst of the workings of evil, God's purpose has continued steadfastly toward its fulfillment. So it was with the house of Israel throughout the history of the divided monarchy; so it is with the **spiritual Israel of today**." (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 369-370)

The history of ancient Israel represents the past experience of the first Adventists at the beginning of the movement in 1844:

"Great is the **resemblance** between **our history** and that of the **children of Israel**." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 4, p. 27)

"The history of ancient Israel is a striking example of the past experience of Adventists. God led His people into the Adventist movement, just as He led the children of Israel out of Egypt." (The Great Controversy, p. 458)

The Israelites in the Old Covenant were "spiritual children" who needed a tutor (prophet) to guide them in their spiritual growth until they reached maturity in the New Covenant. It was the same for Adventists. The Adventists' tutor (prophet) had an incomplete light of truth due to the "spiritual childhood" she experienced in the history of Adventism:

"There will be a development of understanding, because truth is susceptible to continuous expansion. **Our investigation of the truth is still incomplete**. We have caught only a few rays of light." - Ellen G. White to P. T. Magan, January 27, 1903.

"I have been asked the question: 'Do you think the Lord has any new light for us as a people?' I answer that **he has light that is new for us**, and yet it is precious old light that will shine forth from the Word of truth. **We have only glimpses of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 401)

Truth will be continually unfolding, expanding and developing, for it is divine, like its Author." (Our Highest Vocation, p. 207)

Based on this prophetic principle, what is the relationship between ancient Israel and Sister White in modern Israel? Ellen White's public ministry of leading and guiding the Adventist people is similar to Moses' ministry of leading and guiding the people of Israel:

Sister White had been appointed by God to **take the place occupied by Moses.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 43)

"Seventh-day Adventists understood, and still understand today, that **Mrs. White's ministry** as "the Lord's messenger" is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Revelation 12:17; Revelation 19:10, that the remnant church, those "who keep the commandments of God," should have the "testimony of Jesus" - "the Spirit of Prophecy." ... **His work was, in its nature, very similar to that of the guide of ancient Israel,** of whom it is recorded in Hosea 12:3: "But the Lord brought Israel up out of Egypt by a prophet, and by a prophet was he kept." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 18)

"While **Mrs. White's work is much like that of Moses in leading and guiding the people,** yet she wrote prophetically of many events to come." (Counsels to the Church, p. 28)

The biblical-prophetic typology between the two prophets of the chosen people in the two concerts leads students of the inspired pen to the following conclusion: Ellen White's work as a prophet is similar to Moses. If Moses represents the Old Covenant in Judaism, then Ellen White represents the Old Covenant in Adventism! The history of Israel in the Old Testament is repeated in the church of the last days:

"All the great **events** and solemn achievements of **Old Testament** history **are being repeated in the Church in these last days.**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 339)

The prophet Moses lived the law of divorce in the literal Old Covenant, similar to Ellen White who lived the law of divorce in the spiritual (symbolic) Old Covenant:

Old Alliance (Literal)	Old Alliance (Spiritual)
Moses Priests	Ellen White Adventist Pioneers
Divorce Law	

The mission of restoring all truths has been entrusted to the last generations of God's church on earth:

"Those who lived in past generations were responsible for the light that was given to them. ... But they did not understand the truths that we understand today. ... They had the Bible, as we do; but **the time for the special truth to be made clear as to** the closing scenes of earthly history, **is that of the last generations** living on earth." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 286)

Sister White thought that the church of her day was the last generation that would restore the truths of the Holy Bible, but history proves otherwise:

"My conviction is as strong as it has ever been that **we are living in the last remnant of time.**" (Evangelism, p. 217)

"The Bible has accumulated and gathered its treasures for **this last generation.**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 339)

The first generation of Adventists began the process of restoring the truth over 70 years. This period stretches from Ellen White's prophetic call in her first vision (17 years) to her death (87 years):

"Ellen White received her first vision in December 1844, in Portland, Maine. Shortly afterward, she was impelled by the Lord to tell others what she had seen." (Daughters of God, p. 203)

"After seventy years of active **work** in many countries, writing and preaching, **Mrs. White fell** peacefully **asleep** in Jesus at her home near St. Helena, California, on July 16, **1915.**" (Life and Teaching, p. 255)

A generation lasts 70 years:

"The length of our life is seventy years; and if some by their strength reach eighty years, their measure is weariness and boredom; for it passes quickly, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10)

If the first generation of Adventists lasted 70 years, then we should adopt this biblical-chronological pattern for the next few generations (every 70 years) until we reach the present day:

Last Generations on Earth		
Ellen White and the Adventist Pioneers	Changes in Adventism (death of the prophetess).	Remnant People (Another Angel)
1st Generation (1844)	2nd Generation (1915)	3rd Generation (1985)

The work of the third and final generation is similar to the work of Jesus, namely to point to the marriage law of the beginning:

"There is a work of sacred importance to be carried out by the pastors and the people. They must study the history of God's cause and people. They must not forget God's past dealings with His people. **They must revive and repeat truths** that have come to seem of little value to those who do not know from personal experience the power and brilliance that accompanied them when they were first seen and **understood**. In all their original freshness and strength **these truths must be given to the world.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 157)

This is how we complete the prophetic picture of the two covenants of the chosen people over the centuries:

Old Alliance	New Alliance
Moses Ellen White	Jesus Remnant People
Divorce Law	Marriage Law

Conclusion: The Adventist prophetess was in the early stages of our history and, in that period, she represented the divorce law of the old Mosaic covenant in Adventism. In the time of Moses, God allowed the law of divorce to come into force, breaking the marriage bond, just as it did in Ellen White's time. For this reason, she was not rebuked by the Lord for advising couples to divorce for adultery.

In the past, literal Israel lived through two literal covenants. In the last days, spiritual Israel would experience two spiritual covenants. Sacred history is not limited to the people of God of the past, but also applies to the people of God of the last days:

"The gift of prophecy is not limited to a certain era. Examples of its manifestation can be found in the inspired account from the earliest times." (Life and Teaching, p. 238)

"Wherever there is an **identical cause**, the **same effects will follow.**" (The Great Controversy, p.378)

Satan's purpose is for Adventists to repeat the attitude of the Jews in rejecting the law of Edenic marriage presented by Jesus (New Covenant) and to live the law of divorce which has its origins in the sexual perversion of the Jews (Old Covenant):

"Satan works that the **history of the Jewish nation may be repeated** in the lives of those who **profess to believe the present truth.**" (Selected Messages. v. 2, p. 111)

Today, many in spiritual Israel are repeating the divorce law of literal Israel. The same disobedience that characterized ancient Israel in relation to the law of divorce is a reality among modern Israel that has received great light from Heaven:

"The **same disobedience** and failure observed in the **Jewish church have characterized to a greater degree the people who have received this great light from heaven** through the last warning messages." (Selected Testimonies, v. 2, p. 157)

"The unbelief and **sins of ancient Israel** have been brought before me, and I have seen that **similar** errors and iniquity **exist among modern Israel.** The pen of inspiration has recorded their crimes for the benefit of those who live in these last days, that they may avoid their evil example." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 4, p. 491)

Looking at the last generation on earth, Jesus saw that the great sin of the chosen people was their rejection of God's law (the seventh commandment):

"Jesus, looking at the last generation, saw the world involved in deception similar to that which caused the destruction of Jerusalem. The great sin of the Jews was to reject Christ; **the great sin of the Christian world would be to reject God's law**, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. Jehovah's precepts would be despised and annulled. Millions in the bondage of sin, slaves of Satan, condemned to suffer the second death, **would refuse to listen to the words of truth** on the day of his visitation. **Terrible blindness!** Strange presumption!" (The Great Controversy, p. 22)

Jesus' appeal to Adventists defending divorce for adultery is not to repeat the Jewish polygamy promoted by the divorce law in the old covenant:

"The remnant church is called to pass through an experience similar to that of the Jews; and the Faithful Witness, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, has a solemn message for His people. He says: "But I hold it against you that you have left your first charity. **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent,** and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee shortly, and **will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**" Revelation 2:4-5. The love of God has been disappearing from the church, and as a result, the love of self has been actively resurfacing." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 387)

4) If Ellen White lived the law of divorce whose origin is the old Mosaic covenant, then when did the new covenant begin in Adventism that would restore the message of lifelong marriage in the last days?

Answer: To answer this question, we need to look at the history of ancient Israel, which "is a striking example of the past experience of Adventists":

"Like ancient Israel, the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 2, p. 441-442)

Ancient Israel	Modern Israel
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "As a people, <u>the Jews failed to fulfill God's purpose</u>, and the vineyard was taken away from them. The privileges they abused and <u>the work they neglected were entrusted to others.</u>" (Parables of Jesus, p. 157) 2. "The <u>Jewish people</u> were destroyed because they <u>rejected the message</u> of salvation <u>sent from Heaven.</u> Will those who live in this generation, to whom God has sent great light and wonderful opportunities, follow the example of those who rejected the light to their own ruin?" (Testimonies for the Church, v. 6, p. 146) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "When a <u>church proves to be unfaithful to the Word of the Lord</u>, whatever their position and however high and sacred their calling, the Lord can no longer cooperate with them. <u>Other people are then chosen</u> to take on important responsibilities." (Final Events, p. 59) 2. "With astonishment they will hear the testimony that <u>Babylon is the church</u>, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her <u>rejection of the truth, sent to her from Heaven.</u>" (The Great Controversy, pp. 606-607)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church rejected the message sent to it from Heaven when it changed the denomination's Fundamental Principles in 1981:

"The cause of Christ will be betrayed. Those who have had the light of truth and have enjoyed its blessings, but have turned away from it, will fight against the Spirit of God. **Inspired by a spirit that proceeds from below, they will tear down what they had built up,** and show all reasonable and God-fearing souls that they are not worthy of trust. The same work that has been done in the past will be carried on **under the guise of the General Conference.**" - Ellen White, Review and Herald, May 24, 1898, paragraph 10.

"We are very sad to see the result of the gathering of a large number of people in Battle Creek. **Ministers** who were believers in the **fundamental truths that made us what we are - Seventh-day Adventists ... are abandoning** these great truths and accepting unfaithful sentiments. This means that **the next step will be the denial of a personal God,** tearing down the bulwarks of faith fully revealed in Scripture." (Advice to the Elderly, pp. 78-79)

"The climax of this phase of doctrinal development was a **new statement of Adventist teachings, voted by the 1980 General Conference in Dallas**. The new 27 fundamental doctrines affirmed the **doctrine of the Trinity** more concisely, but in terms very similar to the 1931 statement, officially voted in 1946." - Pr. Woodrow Whildden, *The Trinity: Understanding the Mysteries of God's Person in the Bible and Christian History*, p. 228.

"Although **no passage of Scripture states the doctrine of the Trinity**, it is assumed as a fact ... only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity." - *Adventist Review*, July 30 (1981), p. 4.

Antitrinitarian Adventist Church (1889)	Trinitarian Adventist Church (1981)
<p>God is a personal being: the Father</p> <p>"I. That there is a <u>God, a personal, spiritual being</u>, creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Psalm 139:7" - <i>Fundamental Beliefs, <u>Yearbook 1889</u></i>, p. 143.</p>	<p>God is three personal beings: God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.</p> <p>"2. The <u>Trinity</u> - There is one <u>God</u>: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a unity of <u>three</u> co-eternal <u>Persons</u>. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever-present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, but is known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration and service by all creation. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 14:7)" - <i>Fundamental Beliefs, <u>Yearbook 1981</u></i>, p. 143.</p>
Monotheism	Polytheism

The Old Covenant in Adventism began in 1844 with the proclamation of the threefold angelic message of Revelation 14:6-12 (Antitrinitarian Church). The New Covenant in Adventism began in 1981 with the loud cry of the Third Angel's Message of Revelation 18:1-6, which has its fulfillment in the last generation of Adventists who left the denomination after the doctrinal apostasy (Trinitarian Church):

"Spiritual Israel has been restored to the privileges granted to God's people at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. In every part of the earth men and women are responding to the message sent from heaven, of which John the revelator prophesied would be proclaimed before the second coming of Christ: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." Revelation 14:14. Revelation 14:7. No longer do the forces of evil have the power to hold the church captive; for "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, which hath made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (**Revelation 14:8**); and **to spiritual Israel the message is given: "Come out of her, My people,** that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you incur not of her plagues". **Revelation 18:4**. Just as the exiles heard the message: "Come out from the midst of Babylon" (Jeremiah 51:6), and were restored to the land of promise, so **those who fear God today are accepting the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon,** and are soon to stand as trophies of divine grace on the renewed earth, the heavenly Canaan." (Prophets and Kings, pp. 366-367)

"The term **Babylon**, derived from Babel, and meaning confusion, is applied in Scripture to the various forms of false or apostate religion. But the message announcing the fall of Babylon **must apply to some religious body that was once pure and has become corrupt. It cannot be the Roman Church that is here referred to;** for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries."
- Ellen White, The Spirit of Prophecy, v. 4, p. 232, paragraph 2.

"The power of darkness has already placed its mold and inscription upon the work that was to remain pure, uncorrupted by the wiles of the devil."
(Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 277)

Babylon	Spiritual Babylon
The Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches.	Seventh-day Adventist Church
Revelation 14:8	Revelation 18:4

The rest of the woman's seed that came out of her in Revelation 12:17 is represented by the "Other Angel" of Revelation 18:

"On the Mount of Zion and in Jerusalem will be those who are saved, just as the Lord has promised, and among the survivors those whom the Lord will call." **This remnant**, which will be existing in the midst of the wonders that will usher in the great and terrible Day of the Lord, is undoubtedly **the rest of the seed of the woman** mentioned in **Revelation 12:17 - the last generation of the church on earth**. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to fight against the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God, and hold fast the testimony of Jesus.**" (Early Writings, pp. 142-143)

"In this **last generation**, ... The last message of warning and mercy must go "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Revelation 14:6), ... **and the earth will be illuminated by his glory. Revelation 18:1.**" (Parables of Jesus, p. 35)

The dissident Adventist movement that restores the seventh commandment represents the "Other Angel" who comes with a great voice and authority to enlighten the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the one true God, to denounce the fall of Spiritual Babylon and to invite God's people out of their fellowship:

"I saw that God has honest children among the nominal **Adventists** and the fallen churches, and before the plagues are poured **out**, ministers and people **will be called out of these churches and joyfully receive the truth**. Satan knows this, and before **the loud cry of the third angelic message** is heard, he will stir up excitement in these religious corporations so that those who have rejected the truth will think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and⁴⁸ urry them into thinking that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all the honest **will leave the fallen churches and take their stand with the remnant.**" (Early Writings, p. 261)

"I saw angels in heaven hurrying from one place to another, descending to earth and ascending again to heaven, preparing for some important event to take place. **I then saw another powerful angel commissioned to descend to earth**, in order to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and strength to his message. Great power and glory were communicated to the angel, and as he descended, **the earth was illuminated with his glory**. The light that accompanied this angel penetrated everywhere, as **he cried out powerfully with a loud voice**: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, the den of every foul spirit, and the hiding place of every unclean and hateful bird." **Revelation 18:2.**" (Early Writings, p. 277)

"**The work of this angel comes, in due time**, to join the last great work of the third angel's message, as it takes on the volume of a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation which they must soon face. **I saw a great light resting upon them**, and they fearlessly united to proclaim the third angel's message." (Early Writings, p. 277)

"The angel who joins in proclaiming the third angel's message is to illuminate the whole earth with his glory. This is predicted to be a worldwide work of extraordinary power. ... Servants of God, their faces illuminated and shining with holy consecration, will rush from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices throughout the length and breadth of the earth the warning will be given." (The Great Controversy, pp. 611-612)

"Those who proclaimed this warning **gave the proper message in due time.**" (The Great Controversy, p. 352)

The Other Angel is coming in due course to proclaim the third angel's message in a Loud Cry with an "additional light" that Adventists did not receive in their time. He comes to recover the old marriage truth of Genesis and replace it in the framework of truth, in a way that people will not agree with because of their preconceived ideas:

"Because there will have to be special light for God's people as the final scenes of this earth's history approach. Another angel will come from heaven with a message and the whole earth will be illuminated with his glory. It would be impossible for us to state precisely how this **additional light will come. It could come in a very unexpected way, **in a form that does not agree with the ideas that many have conceived.** It is by no means improbable or contrary to the ways and providence of God to send light to his people in unexpected forms." - Ellen G. White, Letter 22 (1889)**

"God will give **additional light**, and **old truths will be recovered and replaced** in the framework of truth." - Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, December 23, 1890, art. B, paragraph 19.

"In every age there is a new development of truth, a message from God for that generation. The old truths are all essential; **the new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it.** Only by understanding the old truths can we understand the new ones." (Parables of Jesus, p. 62)

Conclusion: By using the method of interpretation given by God to the remnant people in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, the new and old marriage truth has been recovered by replacing the misinterpreted text that defends the legality of divorce with another with the correct interpretation in the structure of truth.

If Adventists who believe in Divorce for Adultery would follow the rules of interpretation and gather all the gems of truth, comparing scriptural text with scriptural text, they would find the truth of lifelong marriage against the pagan custom of divorce that leads many people to violate the seventh commandment of God's law:

"Unable to find **any biblical authorization for this custom**, the question arises: Will we accept a truth that has become unpopular and obey God's commandments, or will we continue with the world and obey the commandments of men? **With the Bible open**, they weep, and pray, and **compare one passage with another**, until, **being convinced of the truth**, they conscientiously take up their position as observers of God's commandments." (Maranatha - The Lord Comes!, p. 170)

"**The truth was unpopular in Christ's day. It is unpopular in our day**. It always has been, ever since Satan aroused man's dislike for it in the beginning by presenting fables that induced self-exaltation. Don't we find theories and **doctrines** today **that have no foundation in the Word of God**? Men **cling** to them as tenaciously **as the Jews to their traditions**." (The Desire of Ages, p. 162)

"The conviction is gaining ground in the world that **Seventh-day Adventists** are giving the trumpet an uncertain sound, that **they are following the ways of worldlings**." (Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 86).

"If all who profess to obey God's law were free from iniquity, my soul would feel relieved; but they are not. **Even those who profess to keep all God's commandments are guilty of the sin of adultery**. What can I say that will awaken their numb sensibilities? Moral principles, strictly observed, become the only safeguard of the soul." (Counsels on Diet, p. 63)

"**Seventh-day Adventists**, who profess to wait for and love the appearing of Christ, **should not follow the path of worldlings**. They are no criterion for commandment-keepers." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 2, p. 450)

Precious truths that they cannot even imagine are found in God's Word will be discovered by the remnant people:

"To those who are in living communion with the Sun of Righteousness, new light will always be revealed on the Word of God. No one should come to the conclusion that there are no more truths to be revealed. He who diligently and prayerfully seeks the truth will find **precious rays of light still shining from the Word of God**. Many gems are still scattered and must be gathered together to become **the property of God's remnant people**." (Counsels on Sabbath School, p. 15)

"There are glorious **truths** that **will come before God's people**. Privileges and duties **which they do not even imagine are to be found in the Bible will be** set before their eyes. As they continue on the path of humble obedience, fulfilling His will, they will come to know more and more of the oracles of God." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 8, p. 322)

"We need to examine for ourselves and learn the reasons for our faith, comparing text with text. Take the Bible and on your knees beg God for enlightenment for your mind. **If we studied the Bible** each day diligently and prayerfully, **we would daily see some beautiful truth in new light, clear and penetrating.**" (Counsels on Sabbath School, p. 9)

"Great truths which have been ignored and never seen since the day of Pentecost, **shall shine forth from the word of God** in their native purity. To those who really love God, the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal **truths entirely new.**" - Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, August 17, 1897, paragraph 19.

3. Ellen White and the Personal Letters

The Spirit of Prophecy describes time and place as a rule of interpretation to be observed in Ellen White's writings:

"As for **testimonies**, nothing is ignored; nothing is rejected; **time and place, however, have to be considered.** Nothing should be done untimely." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 57)

In 1913, at the end of her ministry, Ellen White wrote that it was not her desire to take responsibility for deciding divorce and remarriage cases. The prophetess transferred the power of decision to the church leaders who will analyze the cases according to the principles of God's Word:

"I don't believe that any questions like these should be put before me. I don't think it's my job to deal with such cases unless they are fully opened before me. **There must be brothers in the church who are able to speak** decisively about this case. I can't understand such things. I don't think God wants me to take on any such responsibility. If they cannot resolve these matters with prayer and fasting, let them continue praying and fasting until they are able. Such issues will arise. Yes, they will, I mean, they will experience these difficult issues and they need to learn how to deal with them. They don't have that experience yet. **They need to bring these issues before the Lord** and believe that He will hear their prayers and grant them a healthy experience in all these things, but **they must not bring them to me.**" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 234)

"I can't take responsibility in such cases. The responsibility of doing so is too great. It could cost me my life. Let **those** who have been **appointed by God** to bear responsibility **handle the case according to Christian principles.**" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 235)

It is worth pointing out that Mrs. White in no way arrogated to herself the duty to decide questions about divorce and remarriage; nor did she even recommend reading her divorce letters as an ecclesiastical norm. Anyone who uses the advice of these letters for this purpose has a misunderstanding and misapplies her writings. The express will of the Lord's messenger is that the Holy Bible is the norm of faith and practice, including in relation to marriage:

"Regarding **marriage**, I would say: **Read the Word of God.**" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 14)

"**Do not repeat what I have declared**, saying: '**Sister White said this**' and 'Sister White said that'. **Find out what the Lord God of Israel says**, and then do what He commands." (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 33)

"The Word of God is the infallible standard. **Testimonies must not replace the Word.** All believers should exercise great caution in carefully expounding these matters, and be silent when you have said enough. Let all prove their attitude by the Scriptures, and **substantiate by the revealed Word of God every point they claim to be true.**" (Evangelism, p. 256)

"My brothers, let **the Word of God remain exactly as it is.** Let no human wisdom presume to diminish the force of a single declaration of Scripture." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 711)

If the prophetess did not authorize the use of her letters on divorce and remarriage and established the Bible as the matrimonial norm for the resolution of concrete cases, then we will discard all divorce letters:

Divorce for adultery (Divorcist Letters)	Lifetime Marriage (Antidivorcist Letters)
<p>1. "There is only one sin, adultery, that can put a husband and wife in a position to feel <u>free from the marriage vow in the sight of God.</u>" (The Adventist Home, p. 344)</p>	<p>1. "In the <u>marriage relationship</u> a very important step is taken: the <u>union of two lives into one.</u>" (Counsels for the Church, p. 133)</p> <p>2. "Advice for newlyweds - Dear brother and sister: <u>You have joined together in a lifelong concert.</u> You are beginning your education in married life. The first year of married life is a year of experience, a year in</p>

2. "I have seen that Sister _____, for the present, has no right to marry another man; but if she, or any other woman, **obtains a legal divorce on the ground of adultery on the** part of her husband, then **she is free to marry** whom she pleases." (The Adventist Home, p. 344)

3. "**God recognizes only one reason** why a wife can leave her husband or a husband his wife: **adultery**. Let this matter be carefully considered." (The Adventist Home, p. 342)

4. I've received a letter from your husband. **I would say that** there is only one reason why a husband can **legitimately separate from** his wife or a wife from her husband: **adultery**." (The Adventist Home, p. 345)

5. "I didn't separate from his wife. She left him and separated from him, and married another man. **I see nothing in Scripture that forbids him to remarry in the Lord**. He has a right to a woman's affection. ... **I cannot see** that this new union should be disturbed. It is a serious matter to separate a man from his wife. **There is no biblical basis for taking such a step in this case. He didn't leave her, she left him.** ... Since you asked for my advice, I give it frankly." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 339)

6. "I received a letter from your husband. I would say that there is only one reason why a husband **can legitimately separate from** his wife or a wife from her husband:

which, like children learning lessons at school, husband and wife discover each other's different character traits. In this first year of married life, don't let there be any chapters that could tarnish future happiness. Achieving a proper understanding of the marriage relationship is the work of a lifetime. ... **In your lifelong union**, affections must lead to mutual happiness. Each should promote the happiness of the other. This is God's will for them. But while you **should unite as one**, neither of you should lose your own individuality in that of the other." (Counsels for the Church, p. 129)

3. "If there is one subject that should be considered with calm reason and dispassionate judgment, it is the subject of **marriage**. If there is ever a time when the Bible is needed as a counselor, it is before taking **a step that unites people for life**." (Message to Young People, p. 447)

4. "Every marriage commitment must be carefully considered, because **marriage is a step that takes place over a lifetime**. Both man and woman should carefully consider whether they can live beside each other through all the difficulties of life, **as long as they both shall live**." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

5. "Let **those who intend to marry** weigh every sentiment and observe every mode of character in the one with whom **they wish to unite the destiny**

adultery." (The Adventist Home, p. 345)

7. "I had a long talk with Sister C, showing her that she is under the obligation of the **marriage vow** and it **does not release** any of the parties involved **from their claims, except in the case of adultery**, or violation of the marital bed." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 55)
8. "Your ideas about the marriage relationship have been wrong. **Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed** can break or annul the marriage vow." (The Adventist Home, p. 341)

of their life. ... Marriage affects future life both in this world and in the world to come. The sincere Christian will not make plans that God cannot approve. ... Under this guidance, receive the young woman as a **lifelong companion.** ... Around every family there is a **sacred circle** that must be kept **inviolable.** No other person has the right to enter this circle. ... Heart will unite with heart in the golden bonds of a **love** that is **everlasting.**" (The Science of Good Living, pp. 359-363)

6. "It is often the case that people, **before marriage**, have little opportunity to become **acquainted with** each other's **habits** and dispositions, and as far as daily life is concerned, they are virtually strangers when at the altar they unite their interests. Many find, too late, that they **are not suited to each other, and lifelong misfortune** is the result of their union." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 129)
7. "But even if a commitment was made without full knowledge of the character of the person you intend to unite with, don't think that just because of the commitment you have to **marry and unite for life with someone** you can't love and respect. Be careful about making conditional commitments; but it is better, much better, to break the commitment before marriage than to separate afterwards, as

many do." (Messages to Young People, pp. 449 and 450)

8. "The idea of **marriage** seems to have a bewitching power over the minds of **many young people**. ... The **passion** which dominates them is like an epidemic, or contagious disease, which must run its course; and it seems impossible to stop it. Perhaps there are people around them who realize that **if they unite in marriage, it could result in lifelong unhappiness**. But advice and warnings are given in vain." (Messages to Young People, pp. 456 and 457)
9. "Long before they reach the age of manhood or womanhood, they think they are competent to make their own choices, without the help of their parents. A few years of **married life** are usually enough to show them their mistake, but it is often too late to prevent its sad results. For the same lack of prudence and self-control that led to the **hasty choice**, the evil is allowed to worsen, until the marriage becomes a torturous yoke. **Many have thus destroyed their happiness in this life** and their hope for the life to come." (Messages to Young People, p. 465)
10. "If men and women have the habit of praying twice a day before thinking about marriage, they should do it four times a day when they think about taking that step. **Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life, both in this world and in the world to**

come." (Message to Young People, p. 122)

11. "It should be a matter of **study throughout the life of both husband and wife** how to avoid everything that produces discord, in order to keep **the vows of marriage intact.**" (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 122)
12. "The **marriage vow** that binds a husband to his wife must **remain intact.**" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 78)
13. "Let them practice self-denial here, and show kindness, courtesy and Christian sympathy. ... you will know how to promote the happiness of **the one you have chosen as your lifelong companion.** Marriage, instead of being the end of love, will only be its beginning." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 120)
14. "**You have united in a lifelong concert.** Your education in married life is beginning. ... Those who marry enter a school where they will never graduate in this life." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 7, p. 45)
15. "The believer then makes a sacrifice for Christ which his conscience will approve, and which shows that he values eternal life too highly to risk losing it. **He feels that it is better for him to remain single than to link his lifelong interests** with a person who prefers the world to Jesus, and who would seek to lead him away from the cross of Christ."

	<p>(Counsels for the Church, p. 126)</p> <p>16. "... the heavy responsibilities included in the marriage vows. These vows bind the destinies of two people with ties that <u>nothing but the</u> hand of <u>death</u> can untie." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>
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Now that we have discovered which letters can be used lawfully, we ask: how do we harmonize the two letters that represent the two Adventist positions in Ellen White's writings? Answer: respecting the rules of interpretation, we reject the discordant letter and replace it with another.

Let's now look at another letter from the book "The Adventist Home" that harmonizes with the biblical texts and the letters of the Spirit of Prophecy on the subject of marriage:

ELLEN WHITE	ELLEN WHITE
<p>"... the heavy responsibilities included in the marriage vows. These vows bind the destinies of two people with ties that <u>nothing but the</u> hand of <u>death</u> can untie." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>	<p>"Every marriage commitment must be carefully considered, because <u>marriage is a step that takes place over a lifetime</u>. Both man and woman should carefully consider whether they can live beside each other through all the difficulties of life, <u>as long as they both shall live</u>." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)</p>
<p>Lifetime Marriage</p>	

Even if we don't know how to explain the marriage law in Ellen White's writings, the Holy Bible is self-sufficient to guide anyone on the path of truth. The Word of God is the rule of faith and practice, and of correction for those who deviate from biblical truth:

"I recommend, dear reader, **the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice**. By this Word we will be judged. In it God has promised to give visions in the last days; not to establish a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people and **to correct those who deviate from biblical truth**." (Counsels for the Church, p. 24)

"There is in our time a vast departure from Bible **doctrines** and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle - **the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the rule of faith and practice**." (The Great Controversy, pp. 204-205)

Once, an Adventist in Ellen White's day said that all her personal letters are "as inspired as the Ten Commandments", that is, the letters are immutable truths like the Law of God. On hearing this, Sister White pointed out that she had never intended such a thing, nor had the Adventist pioneers in their writings:

"Now, however, I must reply to the letters received from you and others. You speak in your letter of your early education so as to have implicit faith in the testimonies, and **you say**: 'I have been led to conclude and believe most firmly that every word you ever uttered in public or private, that **every letter you ever wrote** under any and all circumstances, was as **inspired as the Ten Commandments**.' (Ellen White replies) My brother, you have diligently studied my writings, and you have **never found any such claims on my part, nor** will you find that the **pioneers** of our cause made any." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 24)

If we take the writings of Ellen White and the pioneers on the law of divorce as an infallible norm, then we make serious doctrinal errors. In addition to divorce for adultery, we cite another example. There is a letter from Sister White that can be used to defend "divorce on the grounds of sickness" and apply it to all cases of this nature:

"One of Mrs. White's older sisters, Sarah Harmon, **had married Stephen Belden** and become the mother of five children. After his wife's death, out of pity for his children, he married a woman who had served faithfully in his family for years. Shortly after that, measles struck the neighborhood, and this woman, along with others, was severely affected by the disease. **The measles affected her brain and she became insane, having to be left in an asylum**. Brother **Belden** struggled for some time, trying to look after his five children, when he **decided**, out of love for them, to **marry a** very good and efficient **woman**. She helped him rebuild his home and look after his children, and was by his side on Norfolk Island when he died. On several occasions, individuals from the places where Stephen lived **sought to secure his exclusion from the church** because he had married without separating from his other wife, and **accused him of adultery**. When **someone appealed to Sister White** in this matter, **she said, 'Let them alone**." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery, and Divorce, p. 224)

Conclusion: Ellen White's writings have shed enough light for us to understand that the correct interpretation is the lifelong marriage written in the book of Genesis - "the law of marriage given to Adam and Eve" - which represents the law to be followed in all marriage relationships in humanity. Consequently, the same law is applied to the spiritual marriage between Christ and his Church:

"**Marriage**, a **lifelong union**, is a symbol of the union **between Christ and His church**. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is what husband and wife should dedicate to each other." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 7, p. 46)

"In the **Scriptures**, the sacred and permanent character of the **relationship between Christ and His church** is represented by the **marriage union**." (The Great Controversy, p. 381)

"In both the **Old** and **New Testaments**, the **marriage relationship** is employed to represent the tender and sacred union existing between **Christ and His people**, the redeemed whom He purchased at Calvary's price. "Fear not," He says; "for your **Maker is your husband**; the Lord of hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer." "**Turn, O rebellious children**, says the Lord, for I will betroth you." Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14. (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 64)

By not applying the principles of interpretation of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, most Adventists believe in the law of divorce and think they are right in their conclusions:

"God's work is a great work. **Wise men are needed to keep biblical principles free from a shred of human method**. Every worker is being tested. Paul speaks of those who bring wood, hay and straw for the foundation. This represents those who present as truth what is not the truth, but their own suppositions and inventions." (Evangelism, p. 213)

4. Time of Ignorance

The message in the Testimonies about the time of ignorance is also the same as in the Holy Bible. Once the law is known, the divorced person cannot claim ignorance of it in order to remain married for a second time in adultery:

"**Ignorance is now no excuse for transgressing the law**." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 3, p. 162)

"**Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin**, when there is every opportunity to know God's will." (The Great Controversy, p. 598)

"**Sins** that were once committed **out of ignorance**, due to the blindness of the spirit, **can no longer** merit condescension without incurring guilt. As greater light is given, **men must reform**, elevate and refine **themselves** by it, or they will

become more wicked and obstinate than before it came to them." (Gospel Workers, p. 162)

"Ignorance will not excuse young or old, nor free them from the punishment due for transgressing the law of God, for they have within their reach a faithful exposition of that law, its principles and requirements." (The Great Controversy, p. 598)

On the Day of Judgment, there will be no excuse for divorcees to continue in second marriages in adultery, to say before God that they were ignorant after receiving the truth and to remain in error with their neighbor's husband or wife:

"At the judgment, men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed the lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity to learn what the truth is." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 27)

"Being ignorant of God's commandments and His laws will not justify a person. **They won't dare claim before God's throne: 'I didn't know the truth. I was ignorant.** The Lord has given His Word to serve as a guide, an instructor, and with this heavenly enlightenment **there is no excuse for ignorance.**" (Our High Vocation, p. 63)

"On the day of judgment men will see what they could have become through the power of Christ. They will see how they have robbed God. **They will recognize that they have fallen away from their Creator.** They will see the good they could have done, but did not. They refused entirely to be perfected. Efforts were made in vain on their behalf. They knew God's claims, but **refused to submit to the conditions laid down in His Word.** ... They will clearly see the mystery of the holiness they despised and hated during their lives. And the fallen angels, endowed with greater intelligence than man, will recognize what they have done in using their powers to lead human beings to prefer deceit and falsehood. All who have united with the deceiver, all who have learned his ways and practiced his deceptions, must perish with him. ... The Lord **Jesus looks with pity on them and declares: "Depart." Romans 16:17.**" (Looking Up, pp. 219-220)

PART III: OBJECTIONS

1. God's Ideal

In our conversations about divorce and remarriage, we've noticed that the justification put forward by the defenders of the legality of divorce and remarriage of divorcees is the "Ideal of God". They claim that we can't follow God's ideal in marriage because of sin. With this in mind, Jesus created an exception in the law in Matthew 19:9 that breaks the lifelong bond of the first marriage and the innocent party is happy in their next marriage union.

The Testimonies show that God's ideal is the fulfillment of His holy law. It is perfectly possible for any human being to meet the requirements of the law by the grace of Christ Jesus working in the heart. The Lord expects nothing from us but perfect obedience to His ideal with regard to marriage:

"Monogamy is God's ideal for humanity. "God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance." - Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, v. 3, p. 100.

"Nothing less than perfect obedience can satisfy the ideal that God requires. He has not left His will undefined. He has not commanded anything that is not necessary in order to bring man into harmony with Him. We must lead sinners to His ideal of character, and **lead them to Christ, by whose grace alone that ideal can be attained.**" (*The Science of Living*, p. 180)

"In his efforts **to attain God's ideal for himself, the Christian must not despair of** anything. Moral and spiritual perfection through the grace and **power of Christ is promised to all.**" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 267)

"Men and women can reach God's ideal for them if they take Christ as their helper. What human wisdom cannot do, His grace will accomplish for those who give themselves to Him in loving trust." (*The Science of Living*, p. 362)

"Diligently and tirelessly, **we must seek to achieve God's ideal for us.** We should not do this as penance, but as the only means of obtaining true happiness." (*The Care of God*, p. 261)

The Christian's true happiness lies in obedience to God's holy law:

"God's ideal for His children **is higher than the** highest **human thought** can conceive. In His holy law He has given a translation of His character." (*Counsels on Education*, p. 231)

"Man's happiness must always be safeguarded by God's law. Only in obedience can they find true happiness." (*Jesus My Model*, p. 49)

"God made man upright, but he has fallen and degraded himself by refusing to obey the sacred demands that God's law has on him. All man's passions, if correctly controlled and properly directed, will contribute to his physical and moral health, ensuring him great happiness. **The adulterer, the fornicator and the incontinent do not enjoy life. There can be no real joy for the transgressor of the divine law.** The Lord knew this, so he restricted man. He directs, commands and positively forbids. ... **The Lord well knew that the happiness of His children depends upon submitting to His authority,** and living in obedience to His holy, just, and good rule of government." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p.100)

Adam received the law of marriage from God in Eden and passed it on to successive generations, but few followed his instructions:

"For almost a thousand years, **Adam lived among men** as a witness to the results of sin. He faithfully sought to oppose the tide of evil. He was commanded to instruct his posterity in the way of the Lord; and he carefully treasured **what the Lord revealed to him, and repeated it to successive generations.** To his children, and his children's children, up to the ninth generation, he described the holy and happy condition of man in Paradise, and repeated the story of his fall, telling them of the sufferings through which **God had taught him the necessity of strict adherence to His law,** and explaining to them the merciful providences for his salvation. **However, there were few who heeded his words.** He often faced bitter reproaches for the sin that had brought such misfortune on his posterity." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 47)

"Separated from the presence of God, the human family, **with each successive generation,** had been drifting farther and farther **away from** the **original** purity, wisdom, and **knowledge that Adam possessed in Eden.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 267)

Today, most of Adam's children have acquired the knowledge of divorce, knowledge that God never wanted them to attain for marriage. The result for the conscientious observers of the law of divorce, the knowledge forbidden in marriage relations, will be exclusion from Heaven:

"The **sons and daughters of Adam** are no less inquisitive and presumptuous than Eve was in seeking forbidden knowledge. They **acquire** an experience, **a knowledge, which God never wished them to attain, and the result will be,** as it was with our first parents, the **loss of their Edenic home.** When will human beings learn that which is so fully demonstrated before them?" (Counsels on Education, pp. 107-108)

Satan's plan is to annul the law of marriage and, consequently, the marriage vow. The enemy's calculated effort to pervert the institution of marriage succeeded through the law of divorce. The change in the law in marital relations was gradual, like any apostasy implanted among God's people. The holy legacy of marriage that was once given to the holy pair by the Creator has been cast to the ground. The law of marriage over the centuries has lost its strength and vigor and the sacred bulwark protecting the family has been annulled:

"It was **the calculated effort of Satan to pervert the institution of marriage**, in order to **weaken the obligations proper to it**, and to diminish its sanctity; for in no other way could he more surely disfigure the image of God in man, and open the door to misery and vice." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 240)

"**If the law wasn't in force**, why fear breaking it? Property would no longer be secure. Men would obtain the possessions of their fellow men by violence, and the strongest would become the richest. Life itself would no longer be respected. **The marriage vow would no longer remain the sacred bulwark protecting the family**. ... and peace, rest and happiness would disappear from the earth. ... Satan is at work in the family. His banner flutters even in homes that profess to be Christian. There is envy, suspicion, hypocrisy, separation, emulation, strife, **betrayal of holy legacies**, the satisfaction of passions. ... **Satan exults in the success of his infernal plans**." (The Great Controversy, p. 585)

When our first parents in the Garden of Eden fell into disgrace for their disobedience to the Creator at that time, Satan said that it was impossible for fallen man to keep God's law:

"**Satan**, the fallen angel, **had declared that no man could keep God's law after Adam's disobedience**. He claimed that the whole human race was under his dominion." (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 136)

The moral law in the marriage relationship went beyond the gates of the Garden of Eden to all the children of Adam until the end of the world:

"God celebrated the first **marriage**. Thus this institution has as its originator the Creator of the Universe. "Venerated... be marriage" (Hebrews 13:4); this was one of God's first gifts to man, and **it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him from beyond the gates of Paradise**." (Letters to Young Lovers, p. 13)

"Then, **when the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in marriage**, saying: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Genesis 2:24), **He enunciated the law of marriage** for all the children of Adam **until the end of time**." (The Adventist Home, p. 340)

Jesus Christ proved that it is possible for everyone to be perfectly obedient to God's law:

"The Redeemer of the world passed over the ground into which Adam fell because he disobeyed Jehovah's explicit law; and the only begotten **Son of God came** into our world as a man, to **reveal to the world that men can keep God's law.**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 136)

"The Savior overcame to show man how he can overcome. Christ faced all of Satan's temptations with the Word of God. Trusting in the divine promises, he was empowered to obey God's commandments, and the tempter could not gain the upper hand. To every temptation, His answer was: "It is written." So **God has given us His Word to resist evil with.** They belong to us, very great and precious promises, so that through them we may become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust". 2 Peter 1:4. Tell the one who is tempted **not to look at the circumstances, at the weakness of his own self, or at the power of the temptation, but at the power of the Word of God.** All its power belongs to us. "I have hidden your word in my heart," says the psalmist, "that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11. "By the word of Your lips I have kept myself from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 17:4." (The Science of Good Living, p. 181)

The apostle Paul was also an example of self-denial of his carnal inclinations in the midst of loneliness, like his Master when he was on earth, in order to do God's will. This should be an act of motivation for those who are prevented from remarrying and securing Heaven by being on the right side:

"If Paul was able to remain unmarried and recommended the same to others, so that he and the others could belong entirely to the Lord, why do not those who could be entirely His do the same, and wish to make sure of avoiding the cares, trials and bitter anguish so often experienced by those who choose marriage? Moreover, if he decided to remain so, and was able to recommend it to others some eighteen centuries ago, wouldn't **it be something worthy of note for** those who are awaiting the return of the Son of man **to remain in the apostle's** condition, unless there was unquestionable evidence that they would be improving their condition and **making heaven more certain** by getting married? When so many things are at stake, **why not be on the right side all the time?"** (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, pp. 251-252)

"Paul's sanctification was the result of a constant conflict with his own self. He said, **"Every day I die." 1 Corinthians 15:31**. His will and desires fought daily against duty and the will of God. **Instead of following his inclination, he did God's will, even though it meant crucifying his own nature**. God guides his people step by step. The Christian's life is a struggle and a march. In this war there are no turns; the effort must be continuous and persevering. **It is through incessant effort that we maintain victory over Satan's temptations**. Christian integrity must be sought with irresistible energy, and maintained with resolute firmness of purpose." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 8, p. 313)

"It is time for us as Christians to reach a higher standard. God forbid that any institution founded by Him should become a means of deceiving souls, a place where iniquity is taught. Let everyone learn humility of heart in the school of Christ; let them lean their helpless souls on Jesus. Live in the light of God's oracles. **Educate your mind and heart to pure, elevated and holy thoughts**; "become holy yourselves also in all your conduct." (Medicine and Salvation, p. 145)

The change in the creational law in marriage relations by Jesus in the discussion with the Pharisees is totally incoherent. God would not change His holy law through His beloved Son by introducing an exception clause to destroy the institution of marriage, allow the formation of another in adultery and adapt the norm to man's condition after sin. If that was Christ's mission, to add something that didn't exist in the law, then he wouldn't have needed to come to this world:

"If God could modify His law to meet man in his fallen condition, Christ would not have needed to come to this world. Since the law was immutable and unchangeable, God sent His only begotten Son to die for the fallen race. But did the Savior take upon Himself the guilt of human beings and **impute His righteousness to them so that they would continue to violate Jehovah's precepts? No, no!**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 179)

"God's law is immutable and eternal; for it is the transcript of his character, and so God plans to bring the family on earth into harmony with the family in heaven. **God has made it possible for men to obey his demands**, making it possible for them to be partakers of the divine nature. In this way, our characters **can be shaped according to God's law**. And by voluntary obedience to that law, our characters are conformed to the character of God." - Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, May 3, 1898, paragraph 12.

Like the Sabbath, the marriage law has become a commandment forgotten by God's people over the centuries:

"**Marriage** was within the order determined by God; it was one of the first institutions He established. He gave **special instructions concerning this ordinance**, clothing it with holiness and beauty; but these instructions **were forgotten**, and **marriage was perverted**, and made to serve the passions. A similar condition of things exists today." (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 62)

Nevertheless, today we still see the remnants of the "heavenly ideal" discourse, originated by Satan after the fall of man, which presents the condition of ungodly society as an excuse to validate non-compliance with God's law and keep people in transgression of the seventh commandment:

"**Today**, as in the days of Christ, **the condition of society presents a sad commentary on the heavenly ideal of this sacred relationship**. Yet even for those who have encountered bitterness and disillusionment when they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers consolation. The patience and gentleness that His Spirit can communicate will soften the condition of bitterness. ... And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human wisdom fails to do. **Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or disaffected can be united** in bonds firmer and more enduring than those of earth - the golden bonds of love that will endure the path of trial." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 65)

By disobeying the express will of God, the heavenly ideal, ancient Israel went their own way and were rejected as the chosen people. The same disposition towards transgression applies to modern Israel. They hastily follow in the footsteps of their ancestors in marriages that are made and then broken up for reasons contrary to God's Word:

"The **sin of ancient Israel was to disregard the express will of God** and go their own way according to the inclinations of an unsanctified heart. **Modern Israel is fast following in his footsteps**, and the displeasure of the Lord is surely resting upon it." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 94)

The message of the inspired pen to hearts that are insubmissive to God's marriage law is not to follow the impulses of the heart. Human feelings are deceitful when it comes to spiritual matters. The heart needs to be deeply examined in order to deny the preferences inherent in one's own self and be in conformity with God's law:

"With every step forward the heart is tested, and tested a little more closely. **If anyone finds his heart opposed to the right work of God**, this should convince him that he has a work to do in order to win, otherwise **he will ultimately be rejected by the Lord**. This world is the place to prepare ourselves to appear in God's presence. Individuals will show here what power affects their hearts and governs their actions." (Our High Vocation, p. 157)

"Let us, as followers of Christ, search our hearts, as with a lighted candle, to see what kind of spirit we are. For our present and eternal good, let us evaluate our actions **to see if they resist the Law of God.**" (Our High Vocation, p. 158)

2. Destroying a Family

In discussions among Christians about biblical marriage, we realize that there are two groups of people: sentimentalists and fundamentalists. The sentimentalists use emotional arguments to move people to follow their preconceived ideas and, through the misinterpreted text of Matthew 19:9, support divorce for adultery that breaks the marriage bond. On the opposite side are the fundamentalists who use rational arguments to teach the law of marriage and interpret the text of Matthew 19:9 in harmony with all the texts of the Holy Bible, so that divorce for adultery does not break the marriage bond of the first marriage.

The emotional appeal that the sentimentalists make not to separate an adulterous couple in their second marriage is this: "I don't believe in a God of love and mercy who destroys the second marriage of the innocent party just because she wanted to be happy with someone else in another marriage". We (fundamentalists) reply: "You can't believe in a God of love and mercy who is going to throw people into the lake of fire and brimstone just because they think differently from the Lord and haven't believed in his Word:

"But as for the cowardly, the **unbelieving**, the abominable, the murderers, the unclean, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, **their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone**, that is, the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

Jesus orders the destruction of the second marriage of the divorced man in adultery in Matthew 19 for the following reasons:

- a) **No marriage bond with the lover**: There is no marriage bond between the divorced woman and her second husband in the remarriage. As long as the first husband is alive, the second husband and the innocent divorced woman are in adultery originating from her second marriage: "And he who marries her who is put away commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9).
- b) **Abandonment of Adultery**: Jesus allows the divorced woman's second husband to divorce her, and he is not committing adultery if he remarries another woman, provided that she is also unbound by marital law. The purpose of the separation between the divorced and their respective lovers is to undo the illicit union of adultery.

- c) **Reconciliation of Spouses**: The separation between divorcees and lovers creates the opportunity to restore the first family that was destroyed through reconciliation between the divorcees of the first marriage. If this is not possible, the lifelong covenant must remain intact without remarriage of the lonely divorcees.

It's incoherent to think that God destroys the first marriage in order to make valid the second marriage constituted in adultery by the divorced person, in the lover's claim to remain married to another's spouse. This contradicts the words of Jesus when he said that adultery is the husband "marrying another" and also someone "marrying the one repudiated" whose purpose is the preservation of the first marriage sacramented by the Creator. Jesus' faith is closely linked to God's commandments given at the beginning of Creation:

"As long as you hold fast the banner of truth, proclaiming the law of God, let every soul remember that **the faith of Jesus is bound up with the commandments of God.**" (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 117)

Unfortunately, the consequence of adultery leads to the destruction of the illicit marriage formed by the divorcee in his new marriage:

"An abyss calls to another abyss at the noise of your waterspouts; all your waves and billows have passed over me." (Psalms 42:7)

What we observe in sentimentalists is that since they cannot biblically defend the destruction of the first marriage through divorce in order to maintain the second marriage of divorcees in adultery, they appeal to emotional discourse. They interpret the Bible in such a way as to please the deceitful feelings of the heart, lowering the standard until it is reduced to sentimentality. In this way, they turn the sinner away from genuine repentance, while divine grace becomes an instrument for breaking God's law:

"But **the Bible is interpreted in such a way as to please the** unregenerate **heart,** while its solemn and vital truths are nullified. **It is concerned with love** as the chief attribute of God, but debases **it until it is reduced to sentimentality,** making little distinction between good and evil. God's justice, His reproof of sin, **the requirements of His holy law, are** all **set aside.** The people are taught to regard the decalogue as a dead letter. Pleasant, fascinating fables captivate the senses, **leading men to reject the Holy Scriptures** as the foundation of faith. Christ is as truly denied as before; but **Satan has so blinded the people that the deception cannot be discerned.**" (The Great Controversy, p. 558)

"Many have confused ideas as to what constitutes faith, and live altogether beneath its privileges. **They confound feeling and faith**, and are continually distressed and perplexed in spirit; for **Satan takes every advantage of their ignorance** and inexperience." (Our High Vocation, p. 72)

"The sword of **truth** was **blunted** by **excuses and assumptions**." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 150)

"Some **will not make proper use of the doctrine of justification by faith**. They will present it in a **one-sided** way." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 20)

God does not destroy the original family through divorce in order to form another.

3. Unforgivable sin

It is common for unbelievers in the sound doctrine of lifelong marriage to declare these words: "The Bible does not teach that there is such a thing as unforgivable sin. The blood of Jesus is effective in forgiving any sin. When the adulterer divorces and forms another family, he asks God for forgiveness for his mistake and can continue with the second wife because he will no longer commit adultery by cheating on his current wife. God only considers a sin unforgivable if it is committed against the Holy Spirit."

In fact, the Bible teaches that any sin can be forgiven by God through the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. However, there are conditions to be met by the sinner in order to receive divine forgiveness. The process of salvation involves four things: 1) repentance, 2) confession, 3) conversion and 4) forgiveness:

"(1) And if my people, which are called by my name, shall **humble** themselves, (2) and **pray**, and seek my face, (3) and **turn** from their wicked ways, (4) **then** will I hear from heaven, and will **forgive their sin**, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Based on the assumption that the divorced person knows the law of marriage, we can say the following: if the adulterous divorcee feels sorrow for his sin (repentance), confesses his sin before God (confession), but remains married to his mistress as if nothing was happening (non-conversion), then he has rejected the forgiveness offered by God. Sin is only erased if it is abandoned by the sinner:

"Repent therefore, and **be converted**, that **your sins** may be **blotted out**, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

"To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26:18)

There may be confession of the sin through prayer, but if there is no conversion in his heart and life (he continues to commit adultery), then this sin will remain with him until he leaves his lover and follows biblical guidance.

We are on dangerous ground if, after receiving knowledge of the truth about biblical marriage, divorcees continue to practice adultery in their second marriages:

"For if we willfully continue in sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fiery burning that will devour the adversaries." (Hebrews 10:26-27)

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn aside from the holy commandment given to them. Thus it came about that this true proverb says: The dog returns to its vomit, and the washed sow returns to her mire." (2 Peter 2:21)

4. Ellen White's View or Opinion on Divorce for Adultery?

"I have seen that Sister _____, for the present, has no right to marry another man; but if she, or any other woman, obtains a legal divorce on the ground of adultery on the part of her husband, then she is free to marry whom she pleases." (The Adventist Home, p. 344)

In an attempt to favor the breaking of the marriage bond, the divorcists claim (based on the text above) that Sister White received a vision from the Lord about the exception clause of Matthew 19:9 when she said "I saw that". Let's look at the original text from which this quote was taken from the book "Adventist Home":

"I have seen, brother _____, that the church has not adopted the correct view of Scripture. A woman can be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land and yet not divorced in the eyes of God and according to the higher law. There is only one sin, and that is adultery, that can put a husband or wife in a position where they can be free from the marriage vow in God's eyes. Although the laws of the land may grant divorce, they are still husband and wife in the light of the Bible, according to God's laws. **I have seen that sister _____ does not yet have the right to marry another man; but if she or any other woman should legally divorce on the ground that her husband was guilty of adultery, then she is free to marry whom she chooses.**" - Ellen G. White, Manuscript 2, 1863, paragraphs 11-13.

Note that the language of the manuscript does not point to the expression "I saw that" as being a "vision" of the Lord, but a "personal opinion" of Sister White based on the Scriptures. In addition to this, we cite two other situations in the Testimonies:

a) Eating Pork

"I saw that your **ideas about pork** would not be harmful if you kept them to yourselves, but in your judgment and opinion, the brothers have made this issue a test, and your actions have demonstrated what you believe about it. **If God sees fit that His people abstain from pork, He will convince them of this.** He is just as willing to show the duty to His sincere children, as He is to individuals upon whom the Lord has not entrusted the responsibilities of His work. **If it is the church's duty to abstain from pork, God will reveal it** to more than two or three people. He will teach the church its duty." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 1, p. 206)

b) Everyday life in the Church

"I saw that they are not **qualified to judge or decide the affairs of the church** unless they can govern their own homes well. They must first have order at home, and then their judgment and influence will have weight in the church." (Counsels for the Church, p. 193)

"I've seen that many people compare themselves and **their lives with others.** This should not be the case. No one but Christ is given to us as an example. He is our true model, and all should strive to imitate Him." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 26)

"I've seen that some of **God's servants,** even pastors, **get discouraged so easily,** so quickly **is their self hurt,** that they think they are belittled and offended when there is no such thing. They think their lot is bad. Such people do not understand how they would feel if God were to forsake them, and they would go through anguish of soul." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, pp. 34-35)

"I saw that not one **young person** in twenty **knows what experimental religion is.** They serve themselves and still claim to be servants of Christ." (Just for Young People, p. 62)

"I saw the **pastors' wives.** Some of them **are no help to their husbands,** and yet they profess the third angelic message. They think more of their own desires and pleasures than of God's will, or of how they can hold up their husband's hands by their faithful prayers and careful manner of living." (Selected Testimonies, v. 1, p. 26)

None of Sister White's individual letters on divorce law are special visions given by the Lord, but only human advice or opinions based on the light she received from Scripture:

"I can't see that this new union should be disturbed. ... **I see nothing in Scripture** that forbids him to remarry in the Lord. He has a right to a woman's affection. ... **I see nothing in God's Word** that requires her to separate from him. Since **you asked my advice, I give it frankly.**" (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 339)

"One thing is certain: I will not be able to associate with any of you if this step is taken, because **the way I see it, the Scriptures would condemn your union.**" (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 208)

"She'll be able to accompany her husband on his journeys and be of help to him; when she stays at home, she'll be able to serve you as if she weren't married. **This is my point of view.**" (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 69)

"I would say that there is only one reason why the husband can legitimately separate..." (The Adventist Home, p. 345)

"You asked for my advice in this case. I must say that unless those who are overwhelmed by this situation have carefully studied a better arrangement of things, and can find places for people where they feel comfortable, it is much better that they do not go ahead with their ideas of separation." (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 218)

"I don't see any grounds for you to get a divorce. Even if your husband cheated on you, there's an oath. If he told you, as he claims he did, and denies cheating on you, and you married him, how can you now get a divorce? I wish you to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with **the advice I am giving you, for I have no other advice to offer you.**" (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 55)

"Had your father married that woman, **I believe the Lord** would have blessed them both profusely. But **I do not believe that** the matter, being handled as it has been, can go forward." (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 36)

"At the end of this letter Ellen White personally jotted down the following words of endorsement: **This counsel is right** for similar cases. Let him walk humbly before God. **I see no light** in giving him responsibility." (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 231)

"**I advise you** to place your thoughts and plans concerning this matter, exactly as they are, **in the hands of our responsible brethren, to obtain from them counsel** and allow them to show you by the law of God the mistake you have made." (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 209)

"I see, as regards your daughter's marriage to Walter C, the reason for your distress. That marriage, however, took place with his consent, and your daughter knowing all about it, accepted him as her husband, and now I can see no reason why you should worry about the matter. Your daughter loves Walter C, and **it may be that this marriage is in God's design.**" (Testimony on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 67)

"But if they do not do what they must, and **the innocent party has claimed the legal right to divorce** by living with the guilty party after his guilt is known, we do not judge that the innocent party is in sin for not separating, and **his moral right to leave seems questionable**, if his health and life are not greatly endangered by remaining." (The Adventist Home, p. 347)

However, we have a vision from the Lord about the law of marriage:

"**I have been shown families** in which the **husband** and father has not maintained that discretion which dignifies a holy manhood pertinent to a follower of Christ. He has failed to practice acts of kindness and courtesy due to his wife, **whom before God and the angels he promised to love, respect and honor as long as they both lived.** The young woman employed to do the housework has taken bold steps, feeling free to comb his hair and showing affectionate attention, and he is pleased, foolishly pleased. His love and attention for his wife is no longer as exuberant as before. Be sure that Satan is at work here. Respect your maid, treat her kindly, with consideration, but no more than that. Let your behavior be such that there is no room for familiarity. If you have words of kindness and acts of courtesy to express, it's always safe to⁷³ urific them to your wife. This will be a great blessing to her and will bring you happiness, reflecting back on yourself. **I have also been shown** that the **wife** has allowed her sympathies, interest and affection to drift to other men, who may be family members. She makes them her confidants, shows preference for their company and tells them about her problems, perhaps even private family matters. All of this is wrong. Satan is behind it and, unless you are awake and stop where you are, he will lead you to ruin. In this matter, caution and discretion cannot be too much. If you have tender, loving words and kind attention to give, let them be expressed to **the one you have promised before God and the angels to honor, respect and love as long as you both shall live.**" (Testimonies for the Church, v. 2, pp. 461-462)

The passage above is a vision of the Lord teaching the law of marriage to Christian families. As it is a "vision", there is no middle ground. Testimonies are either from the Spirit of God or from the devil:

"Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What spirit do their teachings reveal? What has been the result of their influence? All who wish can familiarize themselves with the fruits of these **visions**. For seventeen years the Lord has allowed them to survive and grow strong against the opposition of satanic forces, and the influence of human agents who assist Satan in his work. Either God is teaching His church, reproofing their errors and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This is God's work or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work, over the last thirty years, bears the stamp of God or that of the enemy. **There is no middle ground here. The Testimonies are either from the Spirit of God or from the devil.**" (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 671)

We believe that the Testimonies are from the Spirit of God. All those who insist on divorce for adultery are fighting against God Himself by rejecting the message of lifelong marriage (until death do them part). Don't the words spoken by the Creator Himself to all of us through the prophetess in vision move the hearts of those who are in direct rebellion against God's holy law instituted in the Garden of Eden?

"But if they begin to fight visions of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to fight that of which they have no experience, and are annoyed when those who believe that **visions come from God** speak of them in the meetings, and are comforted by the instruction given in vision, **the church may know that they are not right.**" (Evangelism, p. 258)

5. Are All Ellen White's Writings Visions?

We receive from Adventist brothers who disagree with our faith the accusation that we select texts from the Spirit of Prophecy and thus try to prove that our interpretation is contrary to the Word of God and the letters on divorce for adultery because they are special revelations from the Lord received by the prophetess. The most famous text is this one:

"When men dare to **criticize the Word of God**, they dare to tread on holy, sacred ground, and it would be better for them to fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God has not appointed any man to pass judgment on His Word, **choosing some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way;** but God is not in it." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 23)

Let's look at the original text from which this quote was taken:

"I told the Conference what had been shown to me in the past in reference to resolutions covering the same ground. I stated that many things had been taught in college that were like seeds planted in minds and would produce a harvest that would not be pleasant to reap. **I affirmed that I had light in reference to this matter.** Both in the tabernacle and in the college, the subject of inspiration was taught, and finite men took it upon themselves to say that some things in the

Scriptures were inspired and others were not. **I was shown that** the Lord did not inspire the articles on inspiration published in the Review, nor did He approve of their endorsement before our youth in college. **When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture onto holy and sacred ground and are most afraid, tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God does not set any man to judge His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way, but God is not in it.**" - Ellen G. White, Letter 22 (1889), paragraph 25.

Note that the above passage from the Testimonies is a "vision" because the expression "I was shown" is present in the letter written to the leaders of the General Conference. Usually, the texts that divorce lawyers use to say that all of Sister White's writings are not opinions, but visions linked to a divine revelation:

"In a recent dream I was taken to a meeting of people, some of whom were endeavoring to stifle the impression of a solemn testimony of warning which I had given them. They said, "We believe Sister White's testimonies; but when she tells us things that **were not directly revealed to her in vision** about the case at hand, her words are of no more importance to us than anyone else's." Then **the Spirit of the Lord came upon me**, and I arose and rebuked them in His name. I repeated to them in substance what I said above about the watchman. "This," I said, "fits your case as well as mine." If, therefore, those to whom these solemn warnings pertain object, "**This is but Sister White's individual opinion**," I prefer to follow my own judgment," and continue to do the very things against which they have been warned, they will thereby reveal that they **despise divine counsel**, and the result will be just what the Spirit of God has revealed to me it would be: injury to the cause of God and perdition to themselves." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 687)

"While I was at _____, **the Lord came to me in the evening** and encouraged me with precious words of encouragement about my work, repeating the same message he had given me several times before. Concerning those who had turned their backs on the light that had been sent to them, he said to me: "In despising and **rejecting the testimony that I have caused them to bear**, they have despised not you, but me, the Lord." ... Some, in order to better guarantee their own attitude, **will present statements from the Testimonies which they think favor their opinion**, giving them the strongest possible interpretation; but that which makes their conduct suspicious, or which does not accord with their way of seeing, they **denounce as Sister White's individual opinion, denying its divine origin** and leveling it at their own concepts.... They do not recognize the **light communicated by God**, so they allow themselves to remain in darkness." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 688)

"Many excuse their disregard of the Testimonies by saying: 'Sister White is influenced by her husband; the Testimonies are shaped by her spirit and judgment. ... Have I no knowledge of the state of the church, **when the Lord has laid her case before me several times for years**? Repeated warnings have been given, but there has been no decisive change ... Nevertheless, when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of **you declare that it is simply Sister White's opinion**. You have thus insulted the Spirit of God." (Selected Messages, v. 1, pp. 26-27)

"I often don't expect to say the things I say when I'm speaking in front of people. **God may give me words of rebuke, warning or encouragement, as He sees fit**, for the benefit of souls. I will speak these words, and they may interrupt the path of my brothers whom I sincerely love and respect in the truth. I expect these words to be twisted and misrepresented by unbelievers, and this comes as no surprise to me. But it grieves His Spirit that my brothers, who are familiar with my mission and my work, should **belittle the message that God has commissioned me to convey**. It is disheartening to me that they pick out certain parts in the testimonies that please them, in order to use them to justify their own procedure, giving the impression that they accept that part as the voice of God, and then, when other testimonies come that rebuke their conduct, when words are spoken that do not coincide with their opinions and criterion, **they dishonor the work of God by saying: "Oh, this we do not accept, for it is only Sister White's opinion**, and it is no better than my opinion or anyone else's." (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 81)

"Nevertheless, when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of **you declare that it is simply Sister White's opinion. You have thus insulted the Spirit of God**. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy. Past, present and future have passed before me. **I have beheld faces in vision** which I never beheld before, and after many years urifica7676 them readily when in their presence." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, pp. 64-65)

One of the most appealing texts used by divorcists to claim that each and every letter is a vision of Ellen White is the one below:

"God was speaking through the clay. **You may say that this communication was nothing more than a letter. Yes, it was a letter**, but motivated by the Spirit of God, in order to present before you **the things that were shown to me**. In the letters I write, in the testimonies I present, I put before people exactly what the Lord has presented to me. I don't write a single magazine article expressing mere ideas of my own. They correspond to what **God has revealed to me in vision** - the precious rays of light that shine from the throne." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 67)

However, the letters written by Mrs. White are not always visions. As well as proving this in the previous topic, we'll show you another case: in the past, Adventists believed that all the prophetess' instructions were visions. They even thought that the Lord had revealed the number of rooms the sanatorium (Adventist hospital) should have. She wrote:

"The information as to the **number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium** was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as **a human opinion.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 39)

"The exact number of rooms in any of our hospitals has never been revealed to me; and the knowledge I have obtained of these things, I have had by inquiring of those who were expected to know. In my words, when I speak of these common matters, **there is nothing to lead the spirits to believe that I receive my knowledge in vision from the Lord and am declaring it as such.** ... But to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. We can see in the tendency to do this the operation of the enemy to destroy souls. ... There are times, however, when common things must be declared, common thoughts must occupy the mind, **common letters must be written and information given,** which has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such **information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 39)

Ellen White rebuked this attitude of mixing "opinion" with "vision" in the Testimonies. The great difficulty for some Adventist divorcees is that they do not distinguish between a "human opinion" and a "divine revelation" in the passages of the Spirit of Prophecy:

"My opinion has nothing to do with what God has shown me in **vision.**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 63)

Let's be careful to read Ellen White's texts in their entirety, paying attention to the details so that we don't misinterpret the Testimonies:

"There is a **danger** that **any words I speak** will be reported as something **the Lord has given me.**" (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 60)

"It is not always safe for me to express my own opinion; for sometimes, **when someone wants to accomplish his own purpose, he will regard** any favorable word I utter **as special light from the Lord.** I will be cautious in all my movements." (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 60)

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

John the Baptist is the representative of the defenders of the lifelong marriage law in recent days:

"Herod was affected when he heard John's powerful, direct testimonies, and with deep interest he asked what he needed to do to become his disciple. John was familiar with the fact that he was about to **marry** his brother's **wife, her husband being still alive**, and faithfully declared to Herod that **this was not lawful**." (Early Writings, p. 154)

"The message we give must be as direct as John's. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. He reproached kings for their iniquity. **He rebuked Herod's adultery**. Although his life was at stake, the truth did not fade from his lips. And it is important that **our work for this century be done with equal faithfulness**." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 151)

"**John the Baptist** went forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord, and to turn the people to the wisdom of the just. **He was a representative of those who live in the last days**, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to be presented before the people, in order to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ. **John was a reformer**." (Counsels on Diet, p. 71)

"The influence of **John's teachings** was not muted; it **was to extend** to every generation **until the end of the ages**." (The Desire of Ages, p. 151)

"A **work and message like John's** will be carried forward **in these last days**. The Lord has been giving messages to His people through the instruments of His choice, and He wants all to heed the admonitions and warnings He sends." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 150)

"**John's** voice **was like a trumpet**. His commission was: **'Declare to my people their transgression**, and to the house of Jacob their sins. Isaiah 58:1." (Patriarchs and Kings, p. 148)

God's servants must carry the message and leave the consequences to the Lord:

"God calls men like Elijah, Nathan and **John the Baptist** - men who **will faithfully carry His message without considering the consequences**; who will courageously speak the truth, even if it means sacrificing everything they own." (Patriarchs and Kings, p. 69)

"Does anyone suppose that messages of warning do not come to those whom God reproves? **Those who are reprov'd may rise up in indignation and try to bring the law down on God's messenger,** but in so doing they are not bringing it down on the messenger, but on Christ, **who gave the reproof and warning.** When men jeopardize God's work and cause by their wrong way of acting, will they not hear a voice of reproof? **God requires that the warning be as broad as the damage done.**" (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 152)

"**Preachers should have no qualms about preaching the truth** as it is in the Word of God. **Let the truth cut through.** I have been shown that ministers are no longer successful because they are afraid of hurting feelings, they are afraid of not being courteous, they lower the standard of truth and, if possible, hide the peculiarity of our faith. I have seen that God cannot make it successful. The truth must be presented and the need for a decision urged. And as the false shepherds are crying "peace" and preaching smooth things, **God's servants must cry aloud, spare not, and leave the result to God.**" - Ellen White, Spiritual Gifts, v. 2, p. 284.

"**We must never lower the standard of truth** in order to obtain converts, but we must seek to **raise** the sinful and corrupt **to the high standard of God's law.**" (Evangelism, p. 137)

"**True Christianity** will always be aggressive and, wherever it exists, it **will arouse enmity.** All who live a conscientious life, who bear witness to the claims of God, the evil of sin and the judgment to come, **will be called troublers of Israel.** Those whose testimony arouses apprehension in the mind, offend pride and **arouse opposition.**" (Christ Triumphant, p. 394)

God will have a people who will repair the gaps in the marriage law left by successive generations over the centuries:

"...and they shall call thee a repairer of the breach, and a restorer of paths to dwell in". Isaiah 58:12. The prophet here describes **a people** who, in a time of general abandonment of truth and justice, are seeking to **restore the principles** that are the foundation of God's kingdom. They are the repairers of the **breaches that have been made in God's law.**" (Prophets and Kings, p. 348)

"God's people have a special work to do in repairing the breaches made in His law; and **the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes.**" (Selected Testimonies, v. 2, p. 503)

"There is a **large class that will reject any reform movement,** no matter how reasonable." (Advice on Diet, p. 195)

"Of this class, all those who leave the beaten track and **advocate reform will be opposed and considered radical**, no matter how consistent their approach." (Advice on Diet, p. 195)

The Fundamental Principle of the remnant people in relation to marriage reform is the indissolubility of marriage laid down in the seventh commandment of God's law:

"The great **reformatory movement** must begin with the presentation to fathers, mothers, and children of **the principles of** God's law." (Selected Testimonies, v. 2, p. 406)

Fundamental Principle No. 20: That God, according to his uniform relations to the race, sends forth a proclamation of the approach of the second advent of Christ; and this work is symbolized by the three messages of Revelation 14, the last to see the work of **reformation upon the law of God**, for his people to acquire a full readiness for that event." - Fundamental Beliefs, **Yearbook 1889**, p. 143.

"There is a **fundamental principle** to every precept, and we cannot properly understand the precept without understanding the principle. ... **God said, 'What God has joined together, let not man put asunder'**; yet Christ explains that the law of divorce was given because of the hardness of their hearts. Because of the degeneracy of people, the **law of divorce** was allowed, which **was not in God's original plan**." (Selected Messages, v. 3, p. 221)

"Let not erroneous theories receive the support of the people who must stand firm on the platform of eternal truth. **God appeals to us to hold fast to the fundamental principles** which are based upon unquestionable authority." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 8, p. 298)

"The **old landmarks** must be **preserved**, lest **we lose** our **way**." - Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases, v. 1, p. 55.

We are living in the time of the restoration of the truths of the Holy Bible. If we now have the opportunity to hear the truth and we shy away from understanding and accepting the message, then we will be found wanting:

Those who have the opportunity to hear the truth, but don't make the effort to hear or understand it, thinking that **if they don't** hear it they won't be responsible, **will be considered guilty** before God, as if they had heard it and rejected it. **There will be no excuse for those who prefer to continue in error** when they could understand what is true. In His sufferings and death, Jesus made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but no provision was made for **willful blindness**." (Final Events, p. 218)

Opponents of the law of marriage need to abandon the law of divorce, which destroys the marriage union instituted in the Word of God:

"Don't read the Word in the light of old opinions; but, with a mind free from prejudice, search it carefully and prayerfully. If, as you read, you feel convinced about something, and you notice that **your own opinions are not in harmony with the Word, don't try to adapt it to those opinions.** Adjust your opinions to the Word. Don't allow your previous beliefs or practices to dominate your understanding. Make your mind receptive to the wonders of the Law. Discover what is written, and then set your feet on the eternal Rock." (Messages to Young People, p. 260)

"Those who think they will never have to give up a cherished point of view, **never have occasion to change their mind, will be disappointed.** As long as we cling to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistence, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed." (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 37)

"We cannot maintain the view that a position once taken, once the idea has been advocated, must not under any circumstances be abandoned. **There is only One who is infallible:** the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life." (Testimonies to Ministers and Evangelical Workers, p. 105)

"Here is the **greatest deception** that can affect the human mind, that **people believe they are right when they are wrong.** They are found wanting when it is too late forever." - Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, v. 4, p. 157.

"No amount of **evidence will convince** men of the truth when **they are not willing to yield** their pride, subdue their carnal nature, and become disciples in the school of Christ. Obstinacy and pride of opinion lead many to reject the light of heaven. **They cling to fond ideas, fanciful interpretations of Scripture,** and dangerous heresies; and if a testimony is presented to correct these errors, they, like many of Christ's day, **will turn away in disgust.**" (Selected Messages, v. 1, p. 72)

Remember:

"Divorce is an eternal and deep sorrow. May God have mercy on the innocent party! Marriage should be considered long before it is contracted." (The Adventist Home, p. 346)

"As in the days of Noah, all kinds of evil are multiplying. **Divorce and marriage are the order of the day.** At a time like this, the people who seek to keep God's commandments should seek out remote places, far from the cities." (Country Life, p. 21)

"Truth has never been found among the majority. It has always been found among the minority." (Christ Triumphant, p. 81)

ADVICE FOR SOMEONE IN ADULTERY

"Once again I'm addressing you so that you don't fail, in this moment of crisis in your life, to adopt the only right course of action. The strength of sin lies in the will. Put your will on the divine side of the issue... You may not be able to see clearly how you will obtain deliverance from sins that have been cherished and strengthened through repetition. The only way is to confess your sins, forsake them and believe that Jesus will forgive you. Your deliverance must be found in Christ, and in Him alone. ... You have been living in adultery for so long that sin no longer seems abhorrent to you. You love sin. If you are now willing to leave it, you must renounce it forever." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 140)

"You are reasoning incorrectly about divorce. Your views cannot be sustained. No person is free to create a law for themselves in order to abandon God's law and satisfy their own inclinations. It is necessary to consult the high moral standard of divine justice." (Foundations of the Christian Home, p. 50)

"You have both broken the law just by thinking that you could unite in marriage. You should have repelled the thought at its first suggestion." (Selected Messages, v. 2, p. 341)

"A woman may be legally divorced from her husband by the laws of the land, but not divorced in the sight of God and according to the highest law. ... Although the laws of the country may permit divorce, in the light of the Bible they remain husband and wife according to the laws of God." (The Adventist Home, p. 344)

"Any woman who allows the advances of any man who is not her husband, who listens to his impudence, and whose ears delight in the outpouring of lavish words of affection, of adoration, of fondness, is an adulteress and a harlot." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 238)

"You have violated the divine safeguards of your peace. If you refuse to heed the voice of reproof, if you choose your own ways, if you do not allow the grace of Christ to transform you, your guilt will be greater than that of an ordinary sinner, the greater have been your advantages in light and influence." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 190)

"The heart is not in harmony with the law of God, but at enmity with that law. So was the great rebel in heaven. Will the Lord take to heaven men and women who have no respect for the law of His Universe? ... What can bring a sinner to recognize his sins unless he knows what sin is? The only definition of sin in God's Word is given to us in 1 John 3:4: "Sin is the breaking of the Law." The sinner must be made to feel that he is a transgressor. ... The awakened sinner... is brought back to the law he has transgressed. It calls him to repentance, yet there is no saving property in the law to

forgive the transgression of the law, and his case seems hopeless. The law, however, draws him to Christ. Though his sins of transgression run deep, the blood of Christ can cleanse him from all sin." (Our High Vocation, pp. 136-137)

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink or do anything else, do everything to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31. Here is the principle under every act, thought and motive, if the whole being is submitted to the will of God. The voice and passions need to be crucified. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philipians 4:13." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 140)

"Perhaps you will say: "But I gave my word, should I now go back on it?" I answer: If you have made a promise contrary to the Scriptures, by all means retract it without delay, and in humility before God repent of the imprudence that led you to make such a rash commitment. It is far better to give up such a promise, in the fear of God, than to keep it and thus dishonor your Creator. Remember that you have Heaven to gain and an open road to perdition to avoid. When God says a thing, he means it." (Testimonies for the Church, v. 5, p. 365)

"You two swore an oath, recorded in Heaven's records by the reporting angel, that you would love each other until death did you part. Have you forgotten that? Do you so easily cast aside your vows? In exchange for bad advice, will you give up your honor, your oath, your duty? If bad thoughts have come to you, if bad advice has suggested separation, is this a reason for you to lightly set aside your oath? Does it mean nothing? Do your whims deserve your full attention? You could say that you don't love your spouse. Should that be a reason not to try to love him? Is this life so long and so valuable that you will decide to go your own way and turn away from God's law? I see no grounds for you to get a divorce. Even if the husband had cheated on you, there is an oath." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, pp. 54-55)

"Marriage has received Christ's blessing and must be considered a sacred institution. True religion must not act against the Lord's plans. God ordained that man and woman should unite in the holy bond of matrimony, to create families that, crowned with honor, would be symbols of the family of Heaven. And at the beginning of His public ministry, Christ gave His decisive approval to the institution He had created in Eden. Thus He declared to all that He will not refuse His presence on occasions of marriage, and that marriage, when united with purity and holiness, truth and justice, is one of the greatest blessings bestowed on the human family." (Daughters of God, p. 143)

"I must tell you that you cannot break your marriage vows and feel blameless before God. Join your interests to those of your husband. Love him, tolerate him and work with him. Discard evil counselors. The affair is between you, your husband and God. It's the pride of your heart that blinds your eyes so much that you don't see the need to be faithful to your husband. Hold faithfully to your marriage vows because you are a person of upright heart; will you regret having preserved those vows when you are

clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness?" (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p 56)

"We only have a short time to live on earth, a time when licentious practices nestle under marriage vows, to the ruin of tens of thousands. Although you have a cross to bear, I beg you in the name of Christ not to depart from justice, from what is right." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p 56)

"Give up _____ and set your affections on God. He will give you relief. Time is short; you can't stop and feel sorry for yourself; go and work for the Master. Do your duty to the best of your ability; don't give in to discouragement; walk humbly with God; seek communion with him. Let it not be the case that your disappointments lead you to focus on the self, thinking about yourself, talking about yourself. ... Live for God. Be kind and courteous. Don't let disappointment lead you to ruin. Cast out melancholy. God will help you if you truly give yourself to him. Remember, God's eyes are on you, searching the depths of your soul. ... May the Lord help, strengthen and bless you to do your best. Turn your eyes away from earthly things, from earthly idols, and worship the Lord your God, serving Him "with all your heart and with all your soul". Matthew 12:30. In this way you will be entirely devoted to the Lord." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p 58)

"Now is the time to fight the good fight of faith". 1 Timothy 6:12. Now is the time to fight against the tendencies of the natural heart. Now is your opportunity to be true as steel to your marriage vows, refusing - in thought, word or deed - to sully your record as a man who fears God and obeys His commandments." (Testimonies on Sexual Conduct, Adultery and Divorce, p. 201)

"The grace of Christ alone can make this institution what God intended it to be: a means for the blessing and upliftment of humanity. And so the families of earth, in their unity, peace and love, can represent the family of heaven." (Christ's Greatest Discourse, p. 65)