

*Marriage*

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Q & A 37-b

August 24, 1944

Walla Walla College  
College Place, Washington

Dear Brother

A few days ago we sent forward to you a copy of "The Prophetic Gift in Action." There was a little delay in its publication and it was not ready until last week.

Some time ago I received your letter asking for a copy of "Sketches From the Life of Paul." I regret that I am unable to help you in securing a copy. Quite a large edition was published originally. Of course that was many years ago, and as "Acts of the Apostles" has taken the place of the earlier book it was not reprinted.

You ask a few questions in regard to marriage, and you say you wish complete Spirit of prophecy information on this point. I think a careful study of "Ministry of Healing" and statements appearing in Volume 2 of the "Testimonies" and in "Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students" will give you quite a full picture of Mrs. White's teachings in regard to marriage. Surely in a study of these various sources you found nothing which would forbid marriage. She speaks of it as an ordinance which has come down to us from Eden. Christ was present at the marriage in Cana and fully sanctioned the service.

When one thinks of it from a basic standpoint there would be no justification in forbidding marriage. As we look about us we see great evils which have arisen through the forbidding of marriage on the part of certain religious groups.

Mrs. White was present on a number of occasions where marriages were performed, and she wrote and spoke commendably of the unions which were formed. She spoke of the blessing which the husband would be to the wife and the wife to the husband in their united service in the Lord's work.

You ask if, in view of the fact that we are nearing the close of probation, ministers should have children or should even enter into the physical side of marriage. There is nothing in Mrs. White's writings which would forbid either. You will find that while Mrs. White has counselled against intemperance in the marriage relation and against excesses with their attendant woes, she at no time took the extreme position which some have advocated. In fact when such extreme positions were brought to her attention, she pointed out the danger of such teaching, indicating that it would lead to immorality and the darkest of sins.

I would call your attention not only to the sources which no doubt you have already carefully studied, but also to an article from Mrs. White's pen appearing in the Review and Herald of September 19, 1899 on page 602. The title

is "Christianity in the Marriage Relation." Being at the College, you would have access to the Review and Herald files and consequently I refer you to that source. Should this volume not be in your files, and you wish a copy, let me know, and I will have a copy of the article made for you.

As to the question regarding the propriety of bringing children into the world in this day and age, this question is one which each couple must settle for themselves. We know that trying times are before us, and this should lead us to weigh carefully such questions. On the otherhand, children are a great blessing. Somehow the home is made complete by their presence, and the parents learn many lessons through the responsibilities which come through parenthood. You may recall that Sister White at one time advised one family to adopt children for the blessing they would be in their home. Again, as she looked out over the field in the early days of our work and observed the scarcity of workers, she was led to write in the Review and Herald;

"In sending missionaries to distant countries, those men should be selected who know how to economize, who have not large families, and who, realizing the shortness of time and the great work to be accomplished, will not fill their hands and houses with children, but will keep themselves as free as possible from everything that will divert their minds from their one great work. The wife, if devoted, and left free to do so, can, by standing by the side of her husband, accomplish as much as he. God has blessed women with talents to be used to His glory in bringing many sons and daughters to God; but many who might be efficient laborers are kept at home to care for their little ones.

"We want missionaries who are missionaries in the fullest sense of the word; who will put aside selfish considerations, and let the cause of God come first; and who, working with an eye single to His glory, will keep themselves as minute men to go where He shall bid, and to work in any capacity to spread the knowledge of the truth. Men who have wives that love and fear God and that can help them in the work, are needed in the missionary field. Many who have families go out to labor, but they do not give themselves entirely to the work. Their minds are divided. Wife and children draw them from their labor, and often keep them out of fields that they might enter were it not that they think they must be near their home. Let missionaries be missionaries; let them leave their own and their wives' hands and hearts free, taking their homes with them where they go, and great good will be accomplished."--Review and Herald, Dec. 8, 1885.

As Mrs. White attended the wedding of her granddaughter in the year 1905, and spoke of the new union which was being formed and the mutual blessing which each would be to the other, and the place of service which each would find, she spoke of the lessons which would be learned if there were children to nurse and care for. This would indicate clearly that Mrs. White sanctioned both marriage and parenthood.

I trust that these few thoughts may be a help as you study the question regarding which you write.

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary  
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