

The Most Intimate of All Relations

Amongst all the relationships of mankind, the bond betwixt husband and wife is the most intimate. For a man is not so near unto his mother as he is unto his wife; neither is a woman so joined unto her father as she is unto her husband.

Therefore it is written: *“They twain shall be one flesh.”*

The Image of God in Man and Woman

We beheld that God created Adam, and afterward made Eve his wife, and both were formed in the Image of God. To be made in the Image of God signified this: that God appointed them as His representatives upon the earth, to govern it, to replenish it with offspring, and to have dominion over the creatures thereof.

Even as kings of the ancient East set up their images in the lands which they had subdued, as tokens of their rule and authority, so did the Lord God set man and woman upon the earth as His vicegerents.

The Helper Appointed unto Man

Furthermore, the woman was made as a help meet for the man. This help is not that of a servant, nor yet of a handmaid, but of a covenantal partner, standing in faithfulness and support, even as the Lord Himself was called the Helper of Israel, forasmuch as He entered into covenant with them and stood by them.

Therefore is the wife a helper to her husband in love and loyalty; and the husband is appointed to be the protector and provider of his wife and children.

The Husband’s Duty of Provision and Protection

It is not meet that a man should be idle, leaving his wife to bear the burden alone. For the man is charged first with the care of his household. Many there be who call themselves men, yet do not fulfil the duty of manhood; such are husbands in name, but not in deed.

The husband’s calling is to provide for his wife and children, and to guard them. The wife, as mother, beareth the chief charge of the house and of the nurture of the children. Yet if need arise, she may also labour without; but her first responsibility abided with the care of her household.

Love and Service: The Husband’s Leadership

True leadership is not in idleness, nor in lording it over one’s wife; but in love and service, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. A husband ought to cherish his wife as his own body, to honour her, to ease her burden, and to show forth kindness unto her, not harshness.

For it is a grievous evil when men say, “The woman is but a shoe beneath the man’s feet.” Such sayings are vile and contrary to the Word of God. For the woman was taken from man’s rib, from beside his heart, that she might be beloved, protected, and led with Christ like love.

One Man and One Woman

We observed also that marriage, by divine ordinance, is the union of one man and one woman. Polygamy is not sanctioned in Christ. Neither did God join Adam unto Adam, nor Eve unto Eve; but Adam nor Eve, male and female, created He them.

Therefore same-sex unions are contrary unto God's will, though the world approved them. The Word of God declared plainly: one man and one woman, in a holy monogamous and heterosexual covenant.

The Evil of Violence in Marriage

I must speak plainly: whosoever lifted his hand against his wife is a transgressor, an oppressor, and a covenant-breaker. Such a one is guilty before God, for he hath defiled the holy bond which he entered into a marriage. This act is vile and to be abhorred.

Equality of Worth

Though their roles differ, the man and the woman are equal in dignity, worth, and significance before the Lord. The subordination of the wife unto her husband is functional, not ontological. Both man and woman are equally precious in the sight of God.

The fall of Man and Woman

Now we come to the third matter: **The Fall of Humanity, and its Negative Consequences upon Both Man and Woman.**

Let us turn unto the third chapter of Genesis, beginning at the first verse:

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ...”

Here we behold how the woman was beguiled by the serpent, and the man also did eat, and both fell into sin. Thus were their God-given roles overturned?

Responsibility of the Man

Mark well: the commandment concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was given unto Adam. Therefore the ultimate responsibility lay upon him. For he was set as leader and protector, yet he was absent when the serpent tempted his wife, and afterward he consented unto her voice, partaking of the fruit.

Thus in the eyes of God, Adam beareth the greater blame, for he failed both to guard his wife and to obey his God.

The Question of Jonah's Burial

And I mused within mine heart, saying, *what manner of grave is this, that wandered in the sea three days and three nights, and therein lieth the body of a prophet?*

And I searched diligently in the Holy Scriptures, yet found not such a name written therein. Then I went unto the elders of the quarter, and enquired of them, saying, *Declare unto me, who was that prophet?*

And they answered, *it was the prophet Jonah.*

But I said, *How cometh Jonah into this matter? For it is written, that he was in the belly of the fish, and the fish went about the sea three days and three nights.*

Thus oftentimes men, seeking a new tale, turn the truth of God into strange imaginations, and thereby astonish the simple.

The Age of Adam at His Creation

And the learned among the theologians inquired, saying, *When the Lord created Adam and Eve, what age were they in the strength of their frame?*

Some say, Adam was created in the measure of thirty years. For at thirty a man is accounted full grown, being both youthful and experienced, apt for marriage, and meet for the charge of responsibility.

And behold, even among the Jews it was required that a Rabbi be not under thirty years of age.

Therefore Jesus, the Christ, began His ministry when He was about thirty years old, being in favour both with God and with men.

So also, some do hold that in the new heaven and the new earth, the saints shall have the vigour and the strength of thirty years forevermore; never aging, nor failing, but abiding in the fullness of life eternal.

Marriage in the Resurrection

And others questioned, saying, *shall husbands and wives abide together in the world to come, even as now?*

But Jesus answered them, *ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven* (Matthew 22:29–30).

Thus shall the saints be filled with the joy, gladness, and satisfaction of the presence of God; a joy surpassing all the pleasures of this present world.

The Fourfold Ruin of Sin

When Adam and Eve fell into transgression, fourfold was the ruin thereof:

1. **Man's Relation unto God** – They heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid themselves amongst the trees. Once they walked with Him as a friend; but now were they afraid, and kept afar off. Distance, alienation, and separation entered betwixt man and his Maker.
2. **Man's Relation unto Himself** – Adam said, *I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* Fear, shame, and guilt entered into the soul of man, which a foretime knew only innocence. Where once was transparency, intimacy, and purity, there entered insecurity, inferiority, and shame.
3. **Man's Relation unto Woman** – And the man said, *the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* Thus did Adam lay the blame upon his wife, and not only upon her, but even upon God who gave her? Where once Adam

rejoiced, saying, *this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*, now did he turn to accusation and contention?

4. **Man's Relation unto Creation** – For by their disobedience, the serpent was cursed, the woman was burdened, and the man condemned to labour in toil all his days.

The Innocence of Nakedness before the fall

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:25).
For in the holy estate of innocence, marriage was marked by three things:

- **Transparency** – their hearts and bodies were open one to another, without guile.
- **Intimacy** – their union was in perfect nearness and trust.
- **Innocence** – their nakedness carried no shame, even as little children, for sin had not yet corrupted their thoughts.

But after the fall, shame and fear entered in; therefore man clotheth himself, lest his nakedness be discovered, and his honour brought low.

The Oneness of Marriage

For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:24).
This oneness is fourfold:

1. **Physical Oneness** – in the union of their bodies.
2. **Emotional Oneness** – in mutual harmony of affections.
3. **Practical Oneness** – in the labours and burdens of the household.
4. **Spiritual Oneness** – in salvation and the new birth through Christ.

And though differences arise, yet in godly marriage there is faithfulness, unity, and perseverance until death do part them.

The Beginning of Strife

But as soon as they sinned, strife entered between the man and the woman. The first union of joy was broken by blame and accusation.

Thus the relationships of man—unto God, unto himself, unto his companion, and unto the creation—were marred by sin, and the world fell into corruption.

The Breaking of the Fellowship

Thus was the fellowship broken? For many men do yet the same unto this day: men as well as women. They refuse to bear their charge, but cast blame upon another. Some lay it upon God, some upon their brethren, some upon their wives, some upon their children, some upon their parents, some upon the rulers, yea even upon the order of society itself. Yet the fault was their own.

When the Lord said unto Adam, "*Of the tree whereof I commanded thee not to eat, thou hast eaten,*" Adam turned, and laid the charge upon the woman. "*The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*" Behold, he excused himself, though he

was the head and leader. He should have admonished, restrained, or turned her aside; but instead he partook, and after partaking, laid blame.

The Blame of the Woman

And the Lord God said unto the woman, *“What is this that thou hast done?”* And the woman said, *“The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”* Thus Adam accused the woman, and the woman accused the serpent. Neither accepted the burden of guilt.

Even as Ananias and Sapphira agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, so here also the man and the woman cast away their responsibility, and turned to accusation.

The Third Effect of Sin: The Spirit of Accusation

Therefore the third fruit of sin, which appeared in mankind, is accusation and blame. Man accused God, his wife, his husband, his parents, his brethren, yea even the rulers and the princes. All are guilty in his sight, save himself alone.

Yet this is no new thing; it began in Eden. And Satan himself, being wearied of such accusations, might well cry, “Lo, they work all manner of evil of themselves, and yet they lay my name to it.”

The Fourth Effect of Sin: The Curse upon the Ground

And unto Adam He said, *“Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee.”*

Once the garden was called Eden, which being interpreted is *delight* or *pleasure*? A river flowed through it, watering every part, and all things that God had made were good. But now the ground was cursed for man’s sake. Instead of plenty, it brought forth thorns. Instead of delight, it yielded labour and toil.

The Bond between Man and Creation Broken

Thus the fellowship of man with his Creator was broken, the fellowship of man with his own self was broken, the fellowship of man with his fellow was broken, and now also the fellowship of man with creation was broken. The earth groaned under the burden of sin, and the air is filled with corruption. Pollution, decay, famine, and pestilence—these are the fruits of transgression.

But behold, it is written in the Revelation of John, that God shall make a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelled righteousness. And in that holy city there shall be no more curse, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain.