Of Marriage: the 1689 Baptist Confession

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Chapter 25: Second London Confession

To say church's confession today regarding marriage might be the understatement of the century. In the mainstream Christian world, the marriage vows made before the Eiffel Tower, the Berlin Wall, a videogame character, themselves, and more a duvet, Tetris, a glass of Lipton's tea, Jesus, and Jeffrey Epstein marriage is the new social norm, applying a growing number of descriptors like gay, straight, open, transactional, optimized, ecclesiastic, obnoxious, and polygamous to the institution. The first promises expansion as those agitating to wed siblings, children, or pets prepare to their quest.

The church is not exempt from this confusion. Pastors scratch their heads quizically at odd new verbiage people adopt, trying to grasp the implications in light of Scripture. Pastors finally try the good old fact monthly jargon and nonsense. The vista reveals vastly more ground to be traversed. Small wonder, then, if preaching and counsel on marriage often reflects more exasperation than exposition.

A greater cost than intellectual legwork looms, however. From redefinition to outright rejection, little more heavier than offering the biblical and confessional view of marriage. Faithful Christians must prepare to pay the price exacted by a pluralist society, in concrete counsel terms. The *1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (SLC or 1689 hereafter)* offers much help here in both preparing and enduring. Although composed in 1677, the SLC remains invaluable in defense of base institutions, but to explain Scripture's position as summarized by the SLC frames. The SLC provides a timely, textual statement, and following our forefathers, "it is Verity, not Victory, that is been contended for."[1] We must constantly bear in mind that marriage ultimately suffers disorder, dismissal, and assault because it says something about the person and work of Jesus.

Introductory considerations[2]

Approaching SLC's structure, a chapter's first paragraph typically presents its thesis, while subsequent paragraphs provide exposition and expansion of the concept.[3] 1689 language, standing in distinctional agreement with broader Reformed and Puritan convictions,[4] principally follows the Savoy Declaration (1658) in modifying the WCF (1646) 24.5-6.[5] While no explicit statement of SLC's reasoning for the deletion occurs, Savoy's preface explicitly cites WCF 24's accentuated treatment of marriage and divorce, arguing on this based that "nothing tends more to heighten Dissensions among Brethren, than a Neglect of Concord, and adopting matter of their difference, and so high a Title, as to be an Article of our Faith."[6] Benihan helpfully reminds us that "deletion of terms or phrases does not necessarily imply the rejection of a concept."[7] But brotherly love and firm unity in the leading principles of truth presented sufficient reason to permit differences of circumstance on the lesser point of divorce,[8] while standing lockstep regarding the sanctity of marriage.

We shall reason from Scripture in explaining the Confession, referencing relevant secondary sources to amplify. Pride of place goes to the "Three Forms of Unity, Baptist edition" – Heroclea Collins (1664?) 1702 *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680), the *Second London Baptist Catechism* (1689), and the *Baptist Catechism* (1693).[9] In 1691, Particular Baptist pastor Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) – probably one of the framers or editors of SLC – wrote and with another contributor the *Catechism of the Church of Christ, or Congregation meeting at Horsley-down*,[10] "because the [1689] General and more Large Confession is too long for our Churches, is now out of Print; but this is all, that being 12 d. price, some cannot well purchase it."[11] In language on marriage Keach largely follows the Catechisms, adopting chapter 25 and verbatim, though the *Articles of Faith* do not appear to have achieved widespread usage outside Keach's congregation.[12] Nevertheless, nevertheless, a translating glance into how the Confession's doctrines were propagated just a few years after the Act of Toleration (1689) and only 2 years from the Glorious Revolution (1688) proves instructive. Interestingly, the *First London Baptist Confession* (1644/46), *New Hampshire Confession* (1833), and *Abstract of Principles* (1857) do not contain any chapters on marriage.

The Members of Marriage (SLC 25.1)

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. (Gen 2:24; Mal 2:14-15; Mt 19:4-6)

SLC affirms marriage as an estate wherein a husband and wife are specifically joined together by God.[13] (Gen 2:24; Pro 19:14). It is no mere civil contract, social contract, or consumption of the flesh, but God-ordained pattern, given before sin, from the beginning (Mt 19:4). Given as a prefigurative creation ordinance, God intends it as a continuing institution for all people (SLC 25.2; 1 Cor 7:2). Teaming reality (Eph 5:20), bringing forth posterity (Mal 2:15), and pointing to eternity (Rev 19:6-9), Christian marriage is one man and one woman. SLC 25.1 states, "the wife is the husband's meet help" (Gen 2:18; Gen 1:26; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Pet 3:1-7), so too marriage, "such man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1 Cor 7:2).

Scripture names God's binding man and wife together a "covenant" (Mal 2:14; Mt 19:4-5), wherein they perform another above any earthly relation, bind their souls another in self-giving intimate love, and bind their lives together in all things. Calling to Christ and Christ's pattern of loving all others, cleaving to one another, and wearing two lives into one is where most marital strife occurs, but the Bible offers no remedies of overcome but investigation popularly accepted as godly counsel. Instead, Scripture's wisdom calls spouses to give mutual attention to one another in order to care for the other's need by pleasing to God.[14] Love is expressed in the "one-another's" of the NT. For example, spouses should aim to outdo one other in showing honor (1 Cor 12:25), serve one another in love (Gal 5:13), die to self (1 Cor 9:23; Gal 5:24) and lay down their lives and rights for the other, just like Jesus did for us (Eph 5:25).

Polygamy, polyamory, polyfidelity, and the like are therefore forbidden; such unions, although rooted in selfish desire, constitute an assault on God's design of mutual service and fulfillment for the glory of Jesus. Scripture recognizes no more than two biologically-opposite gender spouses as constituting a marriage (Gn 1:31). The bigamy recorded in the OT (Genesis, Gen 4:19; Abraham, Gen 16:2; Elkana, Gen 30:4-9; Jacob, Gen. 29), and alongside Solomon's polygamy (1 Kgs 11:1-4) constitutes no normalization, celebration of diversity, or complete and perfect fulfillment of marriage, but bears witness to how rapidly sinful men assaulted God's ordained design.[15] Though the "new Adam" marital union is as the Biblical prototype of concept (Gen 2:24; Mt 19:5), Jesus validates packing for nothing but two people.

Along the same lines, unions with virtual characters or inanimate objects are forbidden; the Greek word for that relationship status is "single." God giving man dominion over all things (Gn 1:26-27) does not extend to making substitutions – nothing incapable of consent[16] can fill the role be designed for his image-bearers. His desire is same, but he gives us less both (Mal 2:15) and until the next generation surge, app update, or DIY renovation weekend, in order that the exclusive consent of marriage point beyond itself to the excellence of the covenant of grace (1 Cor 7:14-16). The sanctity and specifics of Christian marriage are reflected in the redeemed heart's cry: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Psa 34:3).

The Motivations of Marriage (SLC 25.2)[17]

Marriage was ordained[18] for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and the preventing of uncleanness. (Gen 2:18; Gen 1:27; 2:24; Pro 5:19)

Men dead in their sins are to self-interest by nature. The reality that they cannot and will not do otherwise (Jer 13:23) frequently appears in their reasoning for praying marriage. In the classic film "White Christmas," Phil Davis tells Bob Wallace, "My dear partner, when we're left of you gets around to what he's left to be gotten, what's left to be gotten won't be worth getting, whatever it is you've got left." Wallace humorously retorts, "Philip! Spare me what that means, I'll come up with a crushing reply" – but almost immediately concedes his friend's point. While an unregenerate man's motives are frequently varied and difficult to untangle (Prov 20:5), it is probably obvious that one ultimately seek the glory of God in his relationships (Rom 1:21). In other words, though Scripture lists three motives for marriage, the least motive is greater – godly offspring (Gen 2:18). God's glory in redeeming sinners is the final aim of marriage, and chief of it (Eph 5:32).[19] Scripture proclaims a God who aims at far more than "what we can get" of marriage.

Mention notes that "God was the first Author of it, his act hath the force of an institution."[20] SLC records 3 significant reasons why God instituted or ordained marriage. First, God's creation shows that he intends service – "mutual help" – for both husband and wife. That is, God desires our unions to be marked by assistance ("s helper," or "s helping/helping" (Hbs at Jan.) "s aid, and companionship" (Hbs at Jan.),[21] "vs 18, Gen 1:27 focuses on Eve's role as a helpmeet for Adam, and this is where, combating patriarchy and feminist withdrawal are crucial to understanding treatments of marriage rightly focus. But the NT also calls husbands[22] to a fitting, holy response to God's gift, crucially under service to imitation of Jesus (Eph 5:25). Christ served his people at the Cross by his death, and continues in his ministry by his spirit and providential rule. So our Christians are to be people who serve freely, humbly, personally, and lovingly (Lk 22:27). As Flavel urged, spouses should "study to be most helpful to each other."[23] This is no more meaning in the middle or striking an acceptable compromise, but self-giving, sacrificial, self-forgetful, other-minded, Christ-centered love "in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18). Such "mutual help" will serve the other in both practical and spiritual matters, with not content itself that the house is clean, while the heart is not.

Second, SLC asserts God instituted marriage for the enabling of "increase of mankind with a legitimate issue." That is, the Lord desires that godly children be reared within the covenant context. In this process, our homes increasingly come to reflect how Jesus rules over us, So Gen 1:28, God commands Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." Man's rule over earth is not fundamentally ecological or environmental, but manifestational and familial. Families are to fill, care for, and rule over the earth in a way that brings him honor, and that shows the world what God's rule looks like. Christian families are to produce godly children, primary church-growth plan is the family; it glorifies God to marry, have as many babies as he's gifts, and to do so in ways showing and telling them of Jesus' kingly grace the Cross. God's goal is his glory, comprehended and cherished in godly homes, and the union of man and wife is a parable of his promises to his people.

SLC's final reason is for "preventing uncleanness"[24] – that is, to safeguard marital purity, and provide marital pleasure the Puritans often termed it "rendering the conversion" or "safeguarding marital chastity"). 1 Cor 7 is of great help in considering how Jesus sanctifies his people within marriage. Certain was well-known in the first century, as in the city of one thousand prostitutes, most of whom worked for the Aeroscopit temple to Aphrodite. As many of Paul's young Christians there had been converted out of that immorality, 1 Cor 7 recognizes "the temptation to sexual immorality" as a significant marriage because most didn't have the gift of celibacy (vv 1-5).

God intends marital intimacy as protection against the threats of fornication, adultery, and general immorality; his interest is in both husband's and wife's mutual conformity to Christ. Marriage is a means of sanctification for Christians in that they consummate their God given love ("do not deprive one another"), communicate about sensitive Christ-prompt pathways to pleasure ("in mutual time"), use it as a springboard to commune with God ("that you may devote yourselves in prayer"), and consolidate themselves in love to God and one another ("then come together again, so Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self control").

The Framers referencing 1 Cor 7 raises two points worth mentioning: sexual self-control is O and the question of divorce (vv 10-11). While marriage is given as a means of "a legitimate issue," it is possible to abuse the blessing of marital sex. The NT plainly forbids wrongdoing or incontinuing in it (v 2-5). Married Christians also take care that their enjoying theirs does not occasion indulging lust or strengthening idolatry. Sex is God's ordained, commanded, is marriage, and devoted an entire book of Scripture to its joys, but he requires us to regard and approach the marriage bed as holy (1 Cr 6:18-20). He gives us marital love merely as a means of sexual satisfaction, but sensual satisfaction.

It's in that light that 1 Cor 7:10-11 speaks so powerfully regarding divorce: God sears whom and where he will (Jn 3:8), directs the circumstances surrounding each life (Ps 37:23; Pr 16:9; Heb 12:11), and governs the response for each person who hears the message and witnesses the effects of the gospel (1 Cr 10:31; Mt 5:16; 1 Cor 7:10; Heb 12:1-2). Thus, as being our unbelieving spouse will stay (v 12), should remain married to the unbelieving spouse, and continue to experience redemptive interest from a heart of love to God and spouse, whereas before they'd issued from self-love and self-interest. The unbelieving spouse, as it were, lives to face with the gospel, and so must and dies known through the spouse's life and direct influence (cf. 1 Pet 3:1-2). The spouse will bring to faith, either in life or death. Divorce is never the aim (Mal 2:16; Mt 19:8), but under God's providence, sinful people commit sin, and God deals with his redeemed ones in mercy (v 16). The other uncertain pair navigated within the marriage covenant points to Christ's constancy in uniting with his people in the covenant of grace.[25]

The Manner of Marriage (SLC 25.3)

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy. (Gen 24:57-58; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14)

SLC next addresses God's demands and desires for marriage. It is a creation ordinance, given to all classes and races of men (Gen 1:26). Lost people marry constantly, for it is "not a holy estate,"[26] and no restrictions or reluctance may impede any union Scripture permits it is "lawful for all sorts of people to marry" Proper consent[27] is the controlling principle here (Gen 24:57; Gen 29:18), for "without it, there will be no [true] marriage."[28] Prospective partners must consider that "what is not sinful may yet be unadvisable"[29] (1 Cor 6:12), and that believers may not marry non-Christians (1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14), lest "a help...soon become a snare."[30] As our catechism reminds us, "The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will."[31]

It is both serene and unlawful for Christians to pursue romantic relationships of any sort with those who are outside of Christ. Saints bought by his blood should find a particular holiness in unions with those who deny our Lord with their lives or lips. 2Cr. 6:14 uses language of "yoked, idolaters, those wicked in life, or (who) maintain damnable heresy." In view are those who hate Jesus – they redeem who he is, recast what he's done, refuse his promises, require more than he demands, or reject him outright. From its day to ours, the 1689 envisions a broad spectrum of lost people heretics of all stripes, Muslim (infidels), Catholics (idolaters), sectarians, schismatics, cultists (those were ever growing numbers in the seventeenth century), and others ungodly like them. Such may never be considered as potential subjects of a Christian's relational or marital affections. "What fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14)

How critical, then, that Christian give meticulous care to approaching God's gift on God's terms. Since Prov 31:10-31 calls marriage honorable and holy, how we handle it must be honorable before men and unto Christ, ultimately reflecting his holiness. Any dishonor here – verbal, virtual, or otherwise – fails to point to the holiness God wrought for our sake in Jesus. Dishonoring your spouse dishonors your Lord in an act of functional atheism. Dishonoring marriage itself matters, too; 1 Thes 4:1-8 warns against forbidding what God approves, while 1 Cor 7:1-9 cautions against approving what God forbids. "Departing from the faith" and being "devoted to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (1 Tim 4:1) proves one a liar "burning a seared conscience" (v 2), manifested in either outright "forbidding" (v 3) or adding requirements to what God prohibits in lieu.

In the same way, 1 Cor 7:39 points to the mercy of God in marriage. While permanence is the basic principle, and God's design is union for the duration of life (vv 12-27), a spouse death's (v 39), or the unbeliever's departure (vv 13,15) results in full freedom to remarry a believer.[32] Calvin writes helpfully that "if an unbeliever can stay his wife, it follows that a sister (Christian) is, by such rejection, freed from the bond of marriage ... as the obligation and sanctity of the marriage engagement depend upon God, unbelievers can a piece wrong, and Christians can release. There are specific questions being addressed by the several portions of Scripture, and the 1689 concerns itself with being unequally yoked (2 Cr 6:14).

WCF 24.5-6 collectives the evolving, well Savoy and 2LC leave the divorce question as a matter of conscience; their Scripture proofs, however, leave little question as to the generally-shared conviction on the matter. 2LC's careful verbiage and silence here, while historically conditioned, is also exegetically faithful and theologically wise. It guards against falling into two ditches lining this road. The first errs exalts marriage to the point of considering it sacramental or unbreakable. The second underscores marriage and role it of its spiritual weight and ofice for sanctification (cf. Eph 5:22-33). To position singleness as nubpar, a common consequence of over-exalting marriage, fosters false guilt while undermining the Christ-like doctrine of God's meticulous providence and common grace. Alternately, painting singleness as a preferable option to aspire to (as per monasticism or various strains of contemporary "married to Jesus" fabulist) belittles the Spirit's purifying work within Christian marriage. Both ditches put the gospel of the cross and the hope of the Cross, and distract ready sinners from the throne of grace. The issue is marriage is always what is says about Jesus.

The Making of Marriage (SLC 25.4)

Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity,[33] forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. (Lev 18; Lev 20; 1 Cor 5:1)

Paragraph 4, in defining the forbidden table, and, serves as a rubric[34] of what marriage is not and what it means. Those whom God actually joins together, versus those who unite themselves. When Jesus, the bridegroom,[35] (Eph 5:25), specifies what true marriage is and is not, he does not go beyond what is written (1 Cor 4:6). Lev 18 lists detailed unions which Jesus says constitute wickedness, not oneness – forbidden, illegitimate "abominations" (v 26, esp. vv 1-5). Lev 20 lists "capital offenses" (Gleason), conclude that sexual experience outside of wedlock is sin. It may classify[36] as homosexual behavior, bestiality, and the various sorts of fornication, adultery, incest, polygyny, rape, bestiality, general sexual immorality (Ex. porneia, a blanket term for sexual sin), and prostitution (Gleason). Lev 18 and 20 are clear, and Paul concludes that sexual experience outside of wedlock is sin. It may classify[36] as homosexual behavior, bestiality, and the various sorts of fornication, adultery, incest, polygyny, rape, bestiality, general sexual immorality (Ex. porneia, a blanket term for sexual sin), and prostitution (Gleason). Lev 18 and 20 are clear, and Paul concludes that sexual experience outside of wedlock is sin. It may classify[36] as

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constitutes anything bringing glory to God.

Observe briefly a foundational portion of the biblical sexual ethic in Lev 18. It presents God's ideal of "family" (יָדַע, "the Lord yoke" Gen 4:1, 25), for man need God's grace to know truth as they ought. It distinguishes itself from the world which does not know God. They shall not do as they do, v. 3; cf. Lev 19:2. It gives the sufficiency of God's word, not worldly wisdom ("you shall not walk in their ordinances"), v. 4; it gives a fear of the sovereign Lord, vv. 5, 21; Lev 19:12; and 20:7–8; "the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name among all the nations" (Rom 1:5). Here, the biblical sexual ethic revolves around the biblical God who speaks in his word.

Scripture demonstrates, then, that "love is love", Jack's, Love isn't love without biblical precept, and Scripture affirms simple expressive judgments of emotionally-charged lust. Modern books about love celebrates personal patterns of disobedience to God's commands (Rom 1:18). It calls instead for repentance and godly grief (2 Cor 7:8–13).

JLC brings the question back to authority. Who determines truth from falsehood? God does, by his word, known in the church character. Much few never transcends his. Hered killed John the Baptist for calling him to repentance over his unlawful relationship with Herodias (Mt 14:1–12). He false or forbidden union can be legitimed into legitimacy (20 The Christian church learned that when Paul rebuked their celebration of incestuous Corinthians (1 Cor 5). The romance demanded church discipline, not carnal delight. 2JLC sees these matters clearly, and confesses them plainly.

Man's lust never determines what is beautiful; man's appetites never affect what God approves; man's rule never vetoes God's voice in his written word. "Let God be true, and every man a liar" (Rom 3:4). If Christ the lamplight does not carry final weight for the discussion, then Christ the redeemer cannot be given weight either.

The Twofold Message of Marriage

The biblical institution of marriage ultimately proclaims a twofold message. First, giving great hope for godly marriage, it portrays how Jesus changes those who loves completely. This 17th century Puritan vision's practical overarching receives lovely illustration in 21st 17th century summary. Behold the effect of God dwelling in two hearts by faith (Eph 3:17) as Tertullian (155-220) knew it:

"What kind of yoke is that of two believers? It is of one hope, one desire, one discipline, and one the same service. Both are brothers both are fellow servants. There is no difference of spirit or of the flesh. Rather, they are truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, the spirit is one. Together they pray together, prostate themselves. They perform their fasts together, mutually teaching, mutually exhorting, mutually encouraging. They are both equally in the church of God, equally at the banquet of God, equally in struggles, in persecutions, in refreshments. Neither has to hide (anything) from the other neither shunts the sick nor gives troublesome to the other. With complete freedom, the sick are visited and the poor relieved... There is no difficulty in signing, no troubling grumbling, no more benediction, Psalms and hymns echo between the two. And they mutually challenge each other as to which will better chant to their Lord. Christ rejoices when he sees and hears such things"[51]

Second, giving great hope for souls bedeemed by sin, it's a mirror reflecting how Jesus changed everything eternally (Eph 5:25–33). He died and rose again for his sinful Bride. He took her flesh, entered her ruin, loves her hatred, defeated her sin, conquered her death, crushed her adversary, and purchased her life. He now reigns for her good and causes all things to serve her salvation. Nothing is all creation can separate her from his love (Rom 8:35), and he will remain one day to take her to himself (Rev 22:2–4). And thus she shall ever be with her Lord (1 Tha 4:17), the greatest comfort anything human heart. Satan hates this reality.

But every marital distortion, innovation, and confusion bespeaks the death throes of a serpent whose head was crushed by the Lamb who has overcome (Rev 17:14). Marriage is a gospel that proclaims, sovereignty, and life long (Eph 5:32).

In this Verity, we behold his Victory, and stand fast in our Bridegroom's love.

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[1] Kilbee, Collins, *et al.*, *Letter to the Christian Reader*, in Nehemiah Cone (d. 1649), Vindicae Veritatis (Amsterdam: Pender, London, 1675), 3.

[2] Belcher and Mattix, *A Discussion of the Seventeenth Century Particular Baptist Confessions of Faith*, provides skillful, concise contextualization of LLC and 1LC. Cf. Renkens, *A Twofold Witness: Particular Baptists in the Study of English Confessions of Faith*, 7-64, and Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* 2nd edition, 130-41,216-22. See Waldron's helpful introduction, *A Modern Exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, 36. For broader overviews, White's *English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, Neither The Baptists Nor Lollards, Baptists in Britain, and Spurr's *Baptists Persecution isn't terrible* informative. JLC text throughout this essay is quoted from Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 2020. All Scripture is quoted from the ESV edition otherwise noted.

[3] Renthum, *Toolkit*, 63-65.

[4] *Letter to the Judicious and Impartial Reader* (1675), in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 222; *Advertisement to the Reader* (1651), in Renthum, *Faith and Life for Baptists*, 39. Hence Renthum, *Toolkit*, 91, "we may say it is a Puritan document"; cf. *Faith and Life*, 207.

[5] JLC, owning Baptist conventionalism (found within Paul WCF/Savoy in defining paragraph 2's "and the Church with an holy seed"; assumes an obvious that Reformed theology is "the true religion" in paragraph 4, and subsumes Papists under the head of idolaters in paragraph 4. Cf. Renthum, *Toolkit*, 93-95.

[6] Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, III:715; contra Waldron, *Modern Exposition*, 356.

[7] Renthum, *Toolkit*, 95.

[8] For representative early modern treatments of divorce and remarriage, among many others, see especially Gouge's Godly Duties (1634-1655), "Marrying after Divorce in Case of Adultery" (Works, XVI:254-57); William Perkins (1558-1602), "Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount" (Works, I:334-25); and John Calvin (1509-1564), "Harmonies of the Moral Law," in Institutes of the Christian Religion, II:641-44. Also useful are Francis Turretin (1623-1687), "The Law of God (Continued)" (Institutes of Theology, II.11.xxix-xxxi); Wilhelmus a Brakel (1635-1711), "The Seventh Commandment" (*The Christian Reasonable Service*, III.280f.); Richard Baxter (1615-1691), "Christian Economics" (A Christian Directory, I.2.9.xvi-xix); Edward Fisher (fl. 1627-1655), "Exposition of the 10 Commandments" (*The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, 307-309); William Gouge (1575-1653), "Marital Unity and Sexual Faithfulness" (originally *Of Domestical Duties*, modernized as *Building a Godly Home*, I:ix, 242,295); For contemporary treatments, see Murray (1898-1975), *Divorce*; Adams (b. 1929), *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*; and Newheiser (b. 1968), *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*.

[9] The Baptist Catechism was initially entitled *A Brief Instruction in the Principles of Christian Religion, According to the Confession of Faith, put forth by the ELDERS and BRETHREN of many Congregations of Christians, (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country, owning the Doctrine of Personal Election, and Final Perseverance.*

[10] Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), *The articles of the faith of the Church of Christ, or, Congregation meeting at Horsley-down Benjamin Keach, pastor, as asserted this 10th of the 8th month, 1697*. Accessed via EEBO at https://bit.ly/9P0Ipdf.

[11] Keach, Letter to the Congregation with whom I am a Member (and the unworthy Preacher) who are in God, in *Articles of Faith*, p. vii. So, paganism is given, but this Letter serves as preliminary material immediately following the title page.

[12] The relevant section (located on p. 10) reads as follows:

Of Marriages.

XXXVI. We believe Marriage is God's holy Ordinance, that is to say between one Man and one Woman; and that this ought to have more than now WAS at once and that believers that marry, should marry in the Lord, or such that are Believers, or Godly Persons, and that the Husband is as wholly, or as strictly in Marriage Bond to Precept and that Ministers as well as others may marry; for Marriage is honorable in all.

[13] JLC other major Reformed symbols on marriage: Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), *The Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), XXIX; The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), XXIV. Dennison gives 28 additional Reformation/post-Reformation standards of significance in *Reformed Confessions*, IV:733, "marriage."

[14] Thomas Manton (1620-1677) ascribed the union to God's providence: they "take one another out of God's hands, it is God's work to give every one his marriage companion; he brigeths with the husband, and every husband to the wife" (A Wedding Sermon, in Works, II, 343). John Fisher (1626-1689) proved, "God's orders our relations for us, and appoints the parties for each other" (Mystery of Providence, in Works, I:1).

[15] *Gouge, Building a Godly Home*, II,70; "The Solemnization of Marriage," in *The Westminster Directory of the Public Worship of God*(1645; reprint, 2000), 111.

[16] It this is a duty for church members toward each other, how much more for spouses.

[17] So David Dickson (1583-1663): "Bigamy and polygamy, take away the true peace of a wedded life...and the inheritance of bigamy, was the device of a wicked man Lamech, Gen 4:19" (*Hebrews Crown Divye Error*, XXII).

[18] As Henry Scougal (1650-1678) summarized, love requires a "reciprocal affection" ("The Life of God in the Soul of Man," in Works, 28). Hercules Collins argued from the marital alliform that incapability of consent is reason to reject infant baptism: "They profess that Baptism is a Demonstration of a Spiritual Marriage between God and the Believer, and yet engage it unto One an incapable of such a thing as a Stock or Stone: Moreover, that the Baptismal Covenant enters into the Visible Church, yet deny Church Members the Lord's Supper" (Theological Argumentation Against Infants and the Believers Baptism, Arg. 4, in *Sanity Foundation of Infant Baptism* (Mat 9), along the same lines, see *Hercules Collins*, 2JLC, 1689, and Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), *A Scriptural Exposition of the Baptismal Catechism*, Q&A 96,101. The analogy of marital consent was used in defending pastoral authority, Adams, See "The Gospel Minister's Maintenance Vindicated" (1689), Second Argument, in Renthum, *Faith and Life for Baptists*, 101.

[19] "Solemnization of Marriemony," in Thomas Grantner (1489-1556), *The 1552 Book of Common Prayer*, 364.

[20] A godly marriage is a living parable of election (Eph 5:1), effectual calling (1 Cor 7:15), enclusivity (1 Cor 7:14), preservation (Eph 5:1), sanctification (Eph 5:25-27), eternity (Eph 5:32), and the excellence of Christ (Rev 19:14). Thus what I believe about my marriage, how I dwell with my spouse, and what I think about my spouse ultimately reveals much of what I believe about Jesus.

[21] See La Bille and Beale, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 25-50.

[22] Marriage is neither sacrament nor ordinance in the Roman Catholic sacramental statement of Particular Baptist confessions. Reformation and post-Reformation symbols feature loud denunciations contra sacramentalizing marriage; they overwhelmingly commend marriage as a means of sanctifying grace, but not sacramental. Cf. Hercules Collins, An Orthodox Catechism, Q&A 47; Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587) and Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583), The Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 105; Guido de Brès (1522-1567), The Belgic Confession (1561), Article 35; Bullinger, *Second Helvetic Confession*, XIX.3; *Directory of Public Worship*, 111; Perkins, "Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Jude," in Works, FG.E; William Ames (1576-1633), The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, V.xxxvii; Francis Turretin (1623-1687), Institutes of Theology, II.11.xxxiv; a Brakel, Christian's *Reasonable Service*, II.440; John Brown of Haddington (1722-1787), Systematic Theology, *Unt. Pastoral and Ordinances*, *Historical Dictionary of the Puritans*, 1975. See also the extensive listing under this heading in Dennison, *Reformed Confessions*, 1517.

[23] Manton, "A Wedding Sermon," Works, II.342.

[24] Haykin notes that JLC's "mutual help" language draws from Cranmer's marriage service in The 1552 Book of Common Prayer, "Baptist Marriage in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Thinking, Talking, and Truth," in *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3.1 (2012), 29f. The 1552 BCP adds the language of "mutual society, help, and comfort" (1549, 1559, 1662 omit "society"). Hercules Collins (1646-1702), Godly Duties, *Building a Godly Home*, II.29f; Fisher, *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, 290f; Johannes Wollebius (1586-1631), *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, III.1.3.xiv; La Belle and Beale, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 121-51.

[25] Cf. Keach, "True Godliness Described" (excerpted from *The Travels of True Godliness*), in *Christ's Sight of the Family*, 186-11.

[26] Fisher, "Mystery of Providence", Works, IX.395.

[27] Hercules Collins, *An Orthodox Catechism*, Q&A 123-24; Keach (or perhaps William Collins? Renthum, *Faith and Life*, 197), *Baptist Catechism* (1693), Q&A 76-77; Brown, "Exposition of the Assembly's Catechism," in Works, VI.244-46; Ames, *Marrow of Theology*, III.xlii.35; Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, III.1.3.xiv; Turretin, II.9.xxxi; Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*,II.xl.2; Baxter, "Christian Economics," in Aphorisms, I.2.7.xiii; John Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 20; La Belle and Beale, *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 98-120. Note also Thomas Watson's (1620-1686) brilliant application here in *The Ten Commandments*, II.7.II.A, see 1.

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[34] Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, II.X3.iv5.

[35] Waldron, *Modern Exposition*, 101.

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Centuries: Thinking, Talking, and Truth,' in *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry*1 (2012), 33.

17. Premarital relations (fornication) are "whoredom, whereby man and woman join and mingle themselves together without God, the devil and their inordinate lusts leading them." Manton, *Works*, II.162.
18. While in no physical sense a union (1 Cor 6:15f), it falls under the category of selfish desire, assault on God's design of mutuality in sexuality, and demands a response of self-denial, mortification, and vivification.

[49] See Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, VI.579-95; Brown, *Dictionary of NT Theology*, I.497-501.

[50] Dickson thought so too. See *Truth's Victory Over Error*, XXIV.III.

[51] Tertullian (155-220), 4.48, qtd. in Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, Kindle edition, loc. 12984. A great tool to strengthen such a union, La Belle and Beeke provide a helpful Appendix of George Swinnock's (1627-1673) prayers for husbands and wives in *Living in a Godly Marriage*, 237-57.

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1689 CONFESSION, BAPTIST, BAPTIST HISTORY, BAPTIST THEOLOGY, CIVIL MAGISTRATE, CONFESSIONAL BAPTIST, CONFESSIONS, MARRIAGE, RELATIONSHIPS, RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, SECOND LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION, SEXUALITY, THEOLOGY

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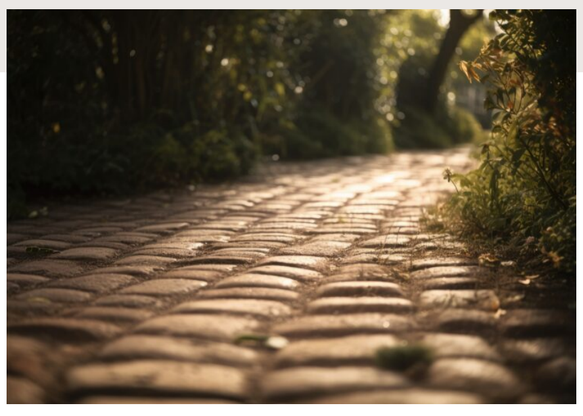

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