

## **CHASTITY**

Rev. W. Cairns Henderson

*Lesson: Genesis 2:18-25, Conjugal Love 64*

The virtue about which we wish to speak today is called chastity. By chastity is meant a clean attitude towards sex. This virtue is given by the Lord to those among us who keep themselves pure and clean in thought, word, and deed. We have it as a gift from the Lord when we feel only pure desires and think only pure thoughts when anything connected with marriage is mentioned. Then we can think of marriage with deep affection as the most holy state into which people can enter. There is no virtue that is more important than chastity for our future happiness, both here and in the Lord's other world.

In reciting the Ten Commandments, as we do every Sunday, we repeat the words "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This means that the state of true Christian marriage is most holy, and that we are not to think, say, or do anything that would take away from its holiness. Marriage is most holy because it comes from the Lord Himself out of heaven. It comes from a very wonderful marriage in the Lord Himself. You know that all good and truth, or all love and wisdom, come from the Lord because the Lord is all the love and all the wisdom that there is. Now in the Lord love and wisdom are one, or united. That is, the Lord never thinks anything except that which His love wants, and never wants anything that is not wise; and this union in Him of love and wisdom is called the Divine marriage.

Because of this marriage in the Lord there is a marriage of the Lord with heaven and the church that is called the heavenly marriage. The angels of heaven and those who truly belong to the church on earth do not love their own wisdom. They love only the wisdom of the Lord as they see it in His Word. They wish to be led by it alone; and the Lord in return loves their love of His wisdom, and by means of it draws them closer and closer to Himself. This is the marriage of the Lord with heaven and the church, and it is because of it that the Lord is called in the Word the "Bridegroom" and "Husband of the church". The church itself is called the "Bride" and "Wife of the Lamb".

When people love the Lord's wisdom in this way a marriage takes place within their minds - a marriage in which good and truth are the bride and the bridegroom. The Lord then so changes their minds that the things they want to do are always in agreement with what they think, because all their wishes and all their thoughts are inspired by Him; and this, too, is called a marriage.

Now when a man and a woman who both love the Lord and look to Him are united in marriage, the Lord gives to them a similar love. To the wife He gives especially a love of what is good, to the husband a love of what is true; and each is inspired by the love given them by the Lord to love what has been given to the other partner. This love which unites them is called “conjugal love”. It is the most pure and holy love that comes from the Lord, it gives to men and women the greatest happiness they can possibly have. It is because of it that marriage is most holy, and that we should think, speak, and act concerning it only with true chastity.

All the angels live together in heaven as married pairs. Those who were blessed by the Lord with a true and happy marriage while they lived on this earth just continue that marriage when they come into heaven. Those who could not be so blessed, either because they came into the other world as children, or because they could not meet their true partner here in this world, are married in the other world just before they come into heaven. In their marriages the angels find their greatest happiness, and it is only those who can enter into such a marriage who can come into heaven as angels.

Now think of this great happiness that the Lord has in store for you—a happiness about which you will understand more and more as you grow older. It can be given to you only if you keep yourselves pure in thought, word and deed. How important it is that you should seek from the Lord the virtue of chastity! It is true that chastity is one virtue that you cannot have as children. This is because you cannot be in its opposite yet. The opposite of chastity is sexual impurity. A time will come when you can be in one or the other—when you yourselves will have to choose which it is to be. And if you have already made a habit of thinking of marriage only with love and reverence, and of shunning all impurity, you will find it much easier to make the right choice. Everything depends on how you make it at the beginning. For the Lord promises that He will provide a pure and lovely marriage here on earth for all young people who, from the beginning of their youth, pray for it, and keep themselves pure in thought, word and deed.