Chapter Five : *Paradise Lost* in the Horizon of Love and Wedlock

This chapter is designed to examine Milton's concepts of love and wedlock in the light of certain Biblical truths and the Puritans' practice and experience. The discussion is thus undertaken via a fusion of horizons.

I. Milton's idea of love

The most useful point at which to begin to examine Milton's idea of love[1] as it is expressed in *Paradise Lost* is the first part of Book III. The reader senses from the very first lines of the invocation to light which introduces the Book that something of tremendous importance is about to happen. The setting now is, of course, heaven; the incidents being dramatized concern the divine pair; and what is about to happen is for Milton the single most important occurrence of history: the Son's self-sacrifice for man. The theme of the book is love, more precisely, that apotheosis of love which alone is divine.

In painting his picture of heaven, Milton's goal seems to have been somehow to lift the reader beyond the boundaries of the known world. He therefore substitutes for the familiar and the specific the abstract and the general and thereby creates a sense of diffusion (Wright 67), a general idea of vast eternal beauty. It is

[1] The Greeks recognized four kinds of love over 2,500 years ago. The four most commonly understood kinds of love are: 1. Eros, the basis for the word "erotic", meaning love that is desire, and usually associated with sexuality. 2. Philial, the basis for the word "family", meaning love based on a blood relationship or a group. 3. Caritas, the basis of love for the ultimate worth and destiny of other humans. 4. Agape, the basis of love for the universe, a love that transcends reason, and desires good not only for all humanity, but all living beings, and the earth itself. This love is one that is entirely selfless.

against this background that the reader first sees the figure of the Father sitting "High Thron'd above all highth," and later hears an angelic choir praise him (III, 372-75).

It's pointed out that God is not so much the God of mercy of the New Testament as the God implicit in universal nature; He is in fact the law governing all creation. Critics have grumbled about God's vengeful nature,[2] but if one grants God's role as Creator and designer of nature's laws, then it follows that man and Satan, both of whom enjoy free will, merely reap what they have sown. Satan simply chooses to exist outside God's law and therefore he suffers. For both man and devil, anguish is self-generated. Indeed, the incestuous nature of evil is stated quite clearly in the figures of Sin and Death. Evil thrives upon itself, and suffering is its natural consequence. When Milton describes God hurling Satan out of heaven and later ejecting Adam and Eve from Paradise, he is actually relating Biblical facts; but he is also using his story symbolically to express his belief in the principle of eternal and retributive justice. In contrast to God's immutability, the Son stands for compassion and creativity—a spirit of renewal and innovation, and the quality of being outgoing and engrossed in others, a quality which is in direct antithetical relation to Satan's brooding self-involvement. For his part the Father proves His mercy at the moment when He recognizes the Son's merit and raises him to pre-eminence on its account. At the same time, even while he acknowledges man's pitiable state, God can do nothing to solace him (Book III, 125-27).

In addition, the Son's act of self-sacrifice is the dramatic high point of Book III and also a pivotal point of the epic. A host of other significant incidents relate to it either as echoes, or in counterpoint. It anticipates Adam's eventual regeneration, Eve's compassion for Adam, and the references in the later books to the bruising of Satan's heel.

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[2] See, for instance, William Empson, *Milton's God* (London: Constable, 1961), p.95.

It is important to notice certain things about the manner of the Son's offer. As B. E. Gross has commented, the "difference between true and false glory—between heavenly love and human self-love—is a dominant theme of *Paradise Lost*" (Gross 95-108). The moment of promised sacrifice exemplifies absolute true glory because the offer is motivated purely from compassion. The Son's act is completely innocent of pride and utterly selfless towards self. The difference between true and false glory is best seen by contrasting with the Son's behavior[3] that incident which Milton intends the reader to contrast with it: Satan's volunteering to explore earth on behalf of the fallen angels. Satan not only makes sure everyone is looking at him by means of a flattering bit of rhetoric but he also makes sure that everyone acknowledges the difficulty of what he is about to undertake. The Son's perspective, on the other hand, is entirely objective and altruistic. His concern is only that man be saved, death defeated, and God's glory magnified.

Milton's decision to attribute the work of creation to the Son through the Father rather than to the Father alone was probably governed by theological considerations (Robins 50-52). A spirit of creativity is essential to the Son's character and it is essential also to the particular kind of love which he symbolizes. In contrast to the Son's creativity, one should note that the Son plays another role equally important to that of the creator.[4] Before the work of creation can begin the Son is described as turning back the forces of chaos and darkness; before order may be restored in heaven evil and disorder again must be repelled. Creation of the right kind can only spring from order and harmony.

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[3] See Hebrew 12:2, "looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith: Who in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

[4] See Colossians 1:15-17,"who is image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation; because by him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by him and for him."

The theme of Book III being love, and its setting Heaven, it is not surprising that Milton uses this section of the epic to demonstrate divine love in action.[5] Like other seventeenth-century scholars Milton believes that all creation represents a graduated scale of being; God held the highest place; beneath God were ranked the archangels and angels, and these beings made up the community of Heaven. Beneath the angels stood man; and beneath man, woman. What is especially or even perhaps peculiarly Miltonic in the picture of heavenly harmony presented in Book III is that the dynamic force causing the up and down flow of worship is love sprung from reason.

In general, for Milton, the faculty of reason is closely bound up with the principle of "right reason".[6] Reason in this sense is that God-given light whereby man recognizes the moral law and obeys it.[7] Milton believes that conscience is an sometimes sufficient instructor but that man commits wrong because, though he knows what is good, he wills what is evil.[8]

It follows that virtue is quite simply a matter of choosing good rather than evil, but the choice must be freely made. In fact, this is why Adam is created just and right but free to fall. Were man to live in a world free from sin, virtue would be scarcely visible. A virtuous man is the courageous man who faces life with all its temptations, pleasures, and difficulties, and uses his free judgment to determine his

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5 Stanley Fish has written that *Paradise Lost* asserts a series of equivalence: knowledge is obedience; freedom is obedience, reason is freedom (and also virtue); and, the most important of the values, love is obedience and obedience is love (Fish 538-40).

6 According to Douglas Bush, right reason is not merely reason in our sense of the word; it is not a dry light, a normal instrument of inquiry. Neither is it simply the religious conscience. It is a kind of rational and philosophical conscience which distinguishes man from the beasts and which links man with man and man with God. This faculty was implanted by God in all men, Christian and heathen alike (37).

7 See Romans 2:15, "who shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing themselves between themselves."

8 See Romans 7:20-21,"But if what I do not will, this I practice, it is no longer I that do it, but the sin that dwells in me. I find then the law upon me who will to practice what is right, that with me evil is there."

behavior. The poet holds that reason is virtue and virtue must be tested. God made the earth to "bear / More than enough, that temperance may be tried."[9] A cloistered virtue merits no praise.

The rewards of reason are as high as her demands; for it is only through complete rational obedience to God that the most intense happiness can be attained.[10] Reason is not only derived from liberty in the sense that reason must operate freely; it also imparts freedom.

However, if the irrational is to be understood as self-involvement,[11] free reason may best be thought of in terms of the man for whom to worship God is to spend life in working for others. There may be an almost complete release from self. In such cases absolute discipline results in an abundant flow of vitality and love. The motivating force behind the man who worships by serving is, however, less a matter of expiation than inspiration. And the nature of that love which flows from free reason yields harmony. Complete harmony, however, can exist only in heaven where divine love is unsullied by human self-love.

To examine the text of Book III of *Paradise Lost* closely is to discover all the components of divine love, according to Milton's conception. As the community of heaven reveals itself so do the various elements of heavenly love.

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9 *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, 804-05.

10 See Hebrew 12:2, "looking steadfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith; who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And Ralph Cudworth said, "happiness is that inward sweet delight that will arise from the harmonious agreement between our wills and God's will" (Samuel 126).

11 In his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, C.S. Lewis explains that no-one had done anything to Satan: he was not hungry nor over tasked nor removed from his place, nor shunned, nor hated—he only thought himself impaired. In the midst of a world of light and love, of song and feast and dance, he could find nothing to think of more interesting than his own prestige (96).

Of these elements by far the most important is the quality of compassion. The perfect merit of compassionate love is emphasized in Book III at the moment when God tells the Son:

> Because thou hast …
> Quitted all to save
> A world from utter loss, and hast been found
> By merit more than birthright Son of God,
> Found worthiest to be so by being good,
> Far more than Great or High; because in thee
> Love hath abounded more than glory abounds,
> Therefore, thy humiliation shall exalt
> With thee thy manhood also to this throne…
>
> (III, 305, 307-14)

The worth and beauty of love are also reflected in the praise bestowed upon the Son by means of the marvelously sustained choruses of angelic allelujahs.

> O unexampled love,
> Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
> Hail Son of God, Savior of Men…
>
> (III, 411-13)

The main component of divine love then is compassion.[12] The Son is obedient and faithful. Also, Milton addresses the Father with reverence and calls upon the angelic host to worship the divine pair with unceasing adoration:

> …thee Author of all beings,
> Fountain of light, thyself invisible
> Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sit'st
>
> (III, 374-76)

[12] See Hebrews 2:14, "Since therefore the children partake of blood and flesh, he also, in like manner, took part in the same, that through death he might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil."

Any hint of pride or selfishness would immediately interrupt the heavenly harmony and introduce dissonance. This truth is nowhere better exemplified than by the moment of Satan's revolt. For after that, heaven's harmony is replaced by discord.

Thus for Adam in the pre-lapsarian world, compassion appears as loving tenderness. For instance, in reply to Eve's question about the stars, Adam answers:

> Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,
> These have their course to finish, round the Earth,
> By morrow Evening, and from Land to Land
> In order, though to Nations yet unborn,
> Ministering light prepared, they set and rise…
>
> (IV, 660-64)

Again in Book V, lines 95-96 Adam tells Eve, his "dearer half" that "The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep / Affects me equally…." One has no reason to doubt the truth of the sentiment Adam expresses. Eve's troublesome dream does affect him "equally." He is altruistic and he cannot be happy while confronting unhappiness.

Compassion is actually the source of our first parents' mutual love. The point is best illustrated in the passage in Book X in which Eve supplicates Adam:

> Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heaven
> What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
> I bear thee…forlorn of thee,
> Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
>
> (X, 914-16. 921-22)

The supplication is followed by a very philosophical suggestion:

> While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
> Between us two let there be peace, both joining…
>
> (X, 923-24)

which in turn gives way to the passionate promise:

> I…
> …to the place of judgment will return,
> There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
> The sentence from thy head removed may light
> On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
> Me me only just object of his ire.
>
> (X, 931-36)

The words have a startling effect upon Adam. Typically, since he now wishes to go back to his old role of protector and supporter, he tells her to "Bear her own punishment first;" next he outdoes her in altruism by expressing a wish of his own:

> If prayers
> Could alter high Decrees, I to that place
> Would speed before thee, and be louder heard
> That on my head all might be visited,
> Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven
> To me committed and by me exposed…
>
> (X, 953-58)

The interplay of pre-ordained hierarchical responses which generates harmony in heaven is equally important on earth. Book IV and V provide some examples, such as the moment when Eve proclaims,

> O thou for whom
> And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,
> And without whom am to no end, my guide

And head, what thou hast said is just and right…

(IV, 440-43)

or when she begins to tell Adam about her nightmare:

O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection, glad I see
Thy face, and morn return'd …

(V, 28-30)

Adam, for his part, is an instructor and guide:

Sole partner and sole part of all these joys
…needs must the power
That made us…
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite…

(IV, 411, 412-13, 414-15)

It is love which motivates such idyllic responses, and therefore the result is harmony and pleasure.

In addition, before the Fall, marriage was ordained by God as a means of human growth and refinement. It was not good for man to be alone,[13] for man "requires collateral love, and dearest amity.[14] Marriage provided the opportunity for love which in itself is spiritually assisting man in his upward and outward growth. Marriage could assist human growth not only through the opportunity it provided for intellectual exchange and relaxation,[15] but also through the sexual component of

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[13] See Genesis 2:18,"And Jehovah Elohim said, It was not good that Man should be alone; I will make him a helpmate, his like."

[14] See *Paradise Lost,* Book VIII, 425-26.

[15] Milton commented that "no mortal nature can endure …the study of wisdom, without sometime slackening the cords of intense thought…" and concludes that "marriage forms the best possible relaxation." See *Tetrachordon,* C. E.4.85.

married love.[16] Indeed, Milton's main thesis is that love can raise man's stature from noble to superior, and that love could become the means of helping him get back to God.

Actually, according to Irene Samuel, Milton adopts Plato's psychology. Reason in this scheme,

> Is the noblest faculty and should therefore rule; the will, as the instrument of action, should carry out the decisions of reason; the appetites, as the lowest part of the soul and most closely bound to the body, should willingly obey the commands of the better part. And Milton accepted other doctrines connected with this analysis of the soul: the concept of tyranny as the rule of appetite (Samuel 159).

Adam's yielding to Eve symbolizes his subjugating reason to appetite. What follows—the despair, anger, mutual blame, and sheer terror of Book X—represents a rule of tyranny: a rule which is only rejected when both Adam and Eve once again begin to use reason and love to govern their relationship. It can be seen that in Book IV, Adam is portrayed appropriately as Eve's mentor; he fills ideally the role of husband as prescribed by both Anglican and Puritan church fathers. Since he is more exalted in the scale of being, she will augment her own spirituality.

Because the universe in which Milton's total ethic operates is hierarchical there were two main springs of love. These are reverence and compassion. Reverence includes gratitude, obedience, humility, and happiness. Compassion includes tenderness towards all creatures below oneself in the chain of being. Compassion, therefore, is the antithesis of abuse. Love is always outgoing; it is always concerned with the other, and never with the self.[17] Because of this fact,

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[16] C.S. Lewis, attempting to explain Milton's doctrine of love in terms only of procreation and platonic love, complains that Milton does not make a sharp enough distinction between his pictures of fallen and unfallen sexuality. See *A Preface to Paradise Lost,* p.70.

[17] 1 Corinthians 13:5, "love does not seek what is its own."

loving so unleashes the self in a consonant release of creative energy and power that the man who loves becomes resourceful, strong and innovative.

II. Milton's idea of wedlock

A. The Protestant doctrine of wedlock

In the second part of this chapter, I will elaborate on Milton's conception of marriage. In the seventeenth century, there were essentially three major sources of commentary on the family and marriage. For the clergy and learned reader, exegetical tracts on Proverbs, on the Song of Solomon,[18] and on the New Testament letters dealing with marriage appeared with great frequency, particularly in the first half of the century. The two more popular sources were the sermons on marriage and the marriage manual or domestic conduct book. Both attempt to instruct the pair in the formal obligations of marriage and the means to an affectionate, mutually satisfying relationship.

Cleaver and Dod's *A Godie Forme of Householde Government* illustrates the general concerns and the basic format of most puritan conduct books. Like modern sociologists, the Puritan manual writers examine what Keith Wrightson has called the "dyadic" relationships in the family, between husband and wife, and parent and child. In addition, much like modern sociology texts, their work follows the formation of the family from partner selection to having children. Cleaver and Dod begin with extensive formal definitions of the family, the household, marriage, and the duties of husbands and wives. The household is a small "commonwealth," the husband is the family priest whose first duty is to preach the Word, and the wife is his "fellow helper" in all his familial and religious duties (Cleaver and Dod 13).

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[18] Some critics hold that Song of Solomon is erotic and sexual. This denies the centrality of the cross and seeks to find meaning in human reason and experience.

Marriage itself requires the "good consent" of both partners to the end that they may dwell together in friendship and honesty.

Cleaver and Dod's general criteria for fitness in a partner are both routine and broadly representative of comments in this area.[19] They encourage the marriageable man or woman to sift a prospect's richness of mind and body. The object here is to bring together persons of some equality, that is, of some similarity in years, estate and condition, piety and religion (Gouge 188-91). Such temporal and spiritual parity was thought to be a crucial help in cementing affection and interest, and is a standard theme in virtually every discussion of partner selection (Smith 30-31). The advice is always to prefer the virtues of inner character to outward substance.

Cleaver and Dod's broad outlines of the duties of husbands and wives are reflected elsewhere in most marriage manuals and sermons. The husband is to love his wife, and dwell with her in marital fidelity and chastity. Yielding to his patriarchal hierarchy, the wife is in turn to submit herself to her husband, help him, obey him, and give him comfort (Cleaver and Dod 117). In discussing the duties of husband and wife, the conduct book focuses on their social collaboration—as religious partners, as an economic team, as masters of a household, as parents.

Above all, the marriage literature emphasizes the uniqueness of the marriage relation, the intense proximity of union. Such society is based on an unguarded and sympathetic intimacy: "It is a sweet, loving, and tenderhearted pouring out of their hearts, with much affectionate dearness, into each other's bosom" (Bolton 239). Even at the more prosaic level of formal definition, these treatises express the relation between husband and wife as the closest of all possible human relations.

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[19] In order to assure friendly and mutually helpful relations between the sexes in marriage, most manuals dwell at length on the subject of partner selection and how to make a wise choice of mate.

B. The Protestant practice of wedlock

In addition to defining obligations of the married couple, these tracts also draw on and examine the experience of marriage itself. Basically, these conduct books and marriage sermons are rooted equally in a practical psychological realism: what does it take to create a lasting and satisfying marriage? In between their precise definitions of the purpose of marriage, the spiritual headship of the husband, and the obligatory submission of the wife, these works also consider the practical problems of married life: quarreling, sexual relations, management of children, personality conflict, disease and death.

We can look, for example, at the matter of physical affection in marriage, an area in which a false stereotype of Puritan rigidity and constraint still persist in modern comment. Most Puritan authors begin such discussion with a glance at the Pauline injunction[20] that both spouses will have sexual authority over each other's bodies (Cleaver and Dod 179-80). Moreover, William places satisfying sexual relations at the heart of a successful marriage, marriage itself being rooted in this intimate and exclusive relation.[21] And despite lingering sentiment that the Puritans were sexually austere and rigid, there is much evidence that Milton's own emphasis on marital privacy and sexual intimacy in *Paradise Lost* derives from such Puritan contexts. Daniel Rogers, in his *Matrimonial Honor*, analyzes the centrality of physical affection in marriage quite openly (150). He pictures marriage as a compound of both religion and nature, of both Christian fellowship and physical affection. Carnal or natural love, that is to say, real physical attraction, is here embraced as the material cause of marriage. Rogers and others note with practical

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[20] But see 1 Corinthians 7: 3-5, "Let the husband render her due to the wife, and in like manner the wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her own body, but the husband. Defraud not one another, unless, it may be, by consent for a time, that ye may devote yourselves to prayer, and again be together, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency."

[21] "The marriage-bed signifies that solitary and secret society, that is between man and wife alone." See William Perkins, *Christian Deconomie* (London, 1609), p.111.

detachment that marriage is indeed grounded in nature and the flesh, and tied to the strength of physical impulse.

Indeed, William Gouge pins down the matter of sexual performance rather precisely: "it is called benevolence because it must be performed with good will and delight, willingly, readily and cheerfully…" (Gouge 222). In words of advice widely repeated in Puritan writing, Gouge plainly advocates a healthy and frank enjoyment of sex. Not only are marital sexual relations undefiled, but temperate and delightful sexual recreation serves as a well-spring of marital love. Milton himself makes the same points in his famous apostrophe to wedded love in Book IV of *Paradise Lost.* Delight in sexual love is the "perpetual fountain" for an enduring, "constant" marital love (Book IV 758-65). For the Puritan, cheerful, regular and affectionate sexual relations lay at the heart of a successful marriage.

In addition, Puritan records indicate that in a conflict of will or opinion the husband's patriarchal authority was rarely asserted. Like early feminist tracts or apologies defending the rights of women, Puritan marriage manuals repudiate the tyranical husband. And in the decision making process, the opinion of the Puritan wife seems to have shaped the final resolution as much as her husband's.[22] In successful matches, conflicts were resolved and decisions reached through cooperative processes.

The conduct books themselves generally advise and endorse such behavior. Formally, the tracts allow the husband to admonish his wife, while the wife is merely to counsel her husband, though her high value as advisor and counselor makes such counsel extremely important (Gataker 15). Indeed, the question is how to settle serious differences without putting in motion the forces of alienation and bitterness. Robert Cleaver suggests that arguments should be secret and brief

[22] See Ephesians 5: 21-22, "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ. Wives to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ head of the assembly."

without "no hard words of either side" and no "opening of old matters" (Cleaver and Dod 73). The actual parameter for healthy disputes were dictated by common sense: to bring offenses to light, to bear no secret grudge, to retain tokens of courtesy and respect even in argument, to hear the full story of injury without anger, and following the Biblical injunctions, to settle wrath before sunset (53).

C. Female subordination

In addition to the Puritan practice of marriage, female subordination deserves the reader's attention.[23] On the basis of autobiographical revelation and other contemporary records, Keith Wrightson holds that there is an interesting discrepancy between public sentiment and private behavior among the Puritans in terms of the doctrine of male authority and public female subordination.[24] This is not, however, simply a deeply internalized communal hypocrisy. In fact, there is much rigor of language and sentiment in the Puritan definitions of hierarchical law in human relations. Marriage is created for the purposes of procreation, the avoidance of lust, and often, lastly, "society." The wife is considered to be an inferior creature, a "weaker vessel."[25]

Indeed, dogmatic assertions of male superiority are not difficult to find. Gouge's discussion in his *Of Domestical Duties* covers the territory in illustrative and comprehensive detail. He argues that the Pauline comments on the relation

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[23] For discussion of the most popular writers on marriage, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (NY: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 135-38; Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1935), pp. 214-15.

[24] "The picture which emerges indicates the private existence of a strong complementary and companionate ethos, side by side with, and often overshadowing, theoretical adherence to the doctrine of male authority and public female subordination." See Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Hutchinson, 1982) p. 92.

[25] As William Whately argues, a wife must say to herself and believe: "Mine husband is my superior, my better; he hath authority and rule over me: Nature hath given it him, having framed our bodies to tenderness, men to more hardness." See Whately, *A Bride-bush*, p. 36. Cf. 1 Peter 3:7"Ye husbands likewise, dwell with them according to knowledge, as with a weaker, even the female, vessel, giving them honor, as also fellow heirs of the grace of life."

between husband and wife preclude a liberal interpretation of marital equity: "though husband and wife may mutually serve one another through love: yet the Apostle suffereth not a woman to rule over a man." (Gouge 274). Unless the husband's commands are against the commands of God, in everything the "wife's obedience requireth…submission in yielding to her husband's mind and will…" (289). It should be noted that the relation between husband and wife is analogous to the relation between Christ and His church,[26] a focal point for much Puritan discussion of marriage.

Gouge's arguments are generally pervasive in the Puritan literature of marriage. Aside from Christ's husband relation to the Church, the standard defense of subordination was drawn from the Genesis account of Eve's creation from Adam's rib.[27] Puritan exegesis noted that Adam's wife, Eve, was consequently neither his equal nor his gross inferior, but closest to his heart in the nearest of all hierarchical relations. In addition, Gouge finds that female submission was ordained before the fall: "we cannot but think that the woman was made before the fall, that the man might rule over her"[28] (270).

Moreover, though ballad lyrics and criticism of public opinion in the conduct books make clear that popular sentiment often reduced the question of subordination to that of a power struggle between the sexes,[29] Puritan writers by no means found the issue so easy to dispose of. To the Puritans, submission was a

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[26] See Ephesians 5:31-32,"Because of this a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great, but I speak as to Christ, and as to the assembly."

[27] See 1 Corinthians 11:8-10,"For man is not of woman, but woman of man. For also man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. Therefore ought the woman to have authority on her head, on account of the angels."

[28] On the other hand, female subjection came after the fall, as in the divine curse addressed to Eve: "To the woman he said, I will greatly increase thy travail and thy pregnancy; with pain thou shalt bear children; and to thy husband shall be thy desire, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16).

[29] For ballads on the subject, see *Ballads from Manuscripts*, ed., Frederick J. Furnwall (Hereford, England: Stephen Austin, 1868-1876.)

complicated doctrine, although it is one we don't need to see as complexly as they did. For the Biblical truths themselves make it clear and simple, as I have elaborated in my "Introduction." Puritan authors asserted the concept of female subordination. The doctrine of male headship had been instituted by Scripture and could not be diminished.[30] Writers like Gouge could and did make protracted arguments for the inherent authority of the male. Actually, in terms of the conception of headship, the theoretical definition of subjection proved in itself fairly simple. Female subordination is here modeled on the broader, more basic Reformation perception of man's proper relation to God. Not only is the individual is to allow the will of God to govern him over and above the desires of his own will, but the real exercise of his free will consists in choosing to align his will with the divine. Without this yielding of will, lines of social authority will disintegrate. In short, the Puritans reasoned that the principle of subordination appeared intrinsic to the divine order of things.

In sum, then, the Puritan dogma of female subordination is complexly linked to a larger ethic of submission. Puritan writers embraced a spiritual rather than pragmatically observed construct of female subordination. While the husband was clearly enjoined to preserve his headship within the family and to govern his wife, his obligation to submit himself; their mutual obligations to cooperate sexually, economically, and spiritually; and their own bonds of love, affection, and respect—all these things allowed the Puritans to respond to their dogma with a great deal of private flexibility.

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[30] See 1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I wish you to know that the Christ is the head of every man, but woman's is the man, and the Christ's head God." Such dogma was central to the preservation of a divinely ordained hierarchical order, and from such models of subjection descend the lines of social authority.