

## 79. The Sixth Commandment.

**Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications.** *Matt. 15, 19.*

Thou shalt not commit adultery. According to Luther this means: We should so fear and love God that we live chaste and pure in word and deed, each one loving and honoring his spouse. God says "Thou" and thereby addresses Himself to everybody without exception, to man and woman, married and unmarried, and demands absolute chastity in deed, word, look, and thought; and He forbids each and every kind of impurity.

In what great honor God holds marriage may be seen from the fact that in Ps. 45 He pictures the union of Himself and the Church under the family relation; in Isaiah He says to the Church: "Thy Maker is thy Husband," and in Ephesians, chapter 5, having spoken of husband and wife, the apostle says: "But I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

To emphasize and safeguard the holy estate of matrimony, the Sixth Commandment was given, which forbids everything by which the divine ordinance of matrimony is broken, violated, or discredited, be it in or out of wedlock, by deed, word, or desire. This commandment hallows the prerogatives of matrimony, without which there would be no family ties, no well-ordered state, no rightly constituted society. Although not a sacrament, marriage is nevertheless to be held sacred by all. "Marriage is honorable in all," we read in Heb. 13, 4.

Let us, therefore, approach the subject of matrimony with due reverence. And because we no longer wear the image of God as our wedding-garment, it behooves us all the more to heed well the commandment by which God impresses upon us the sanctity of marriage. The worldling sniffs when Christians speak of "holy" wedlock. Thereby the world lays bare its shallow vulgarity and bestial way of looking at things solemn and sacred. We regard wedlock as holy, as a sweet flower from Paradise, as a token of God's bounteous grace and goodness.

## Prayer.

O holy and righteous God, who art pure and didst create us pure and desirest us to be holy and free from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: we confess unto Thee that our hearts are filled with fleshly desires and that we have often in thought, word, and deed sinned against Thy pure and holy Law. Cleanse us, therefore, we beseech Thee, with the blood of the Lamb and renew a right spirit within us. Grant Thy grace to all spouses that, in obedience to Thee and in love to each other, they may together keep the bond of matrimony holy and unbroken. Amen.

Art thou the house of God, then bear  
Within thy breast all purity,  
That God may come and, dwelling there,  
May every joy and sorrow share  
In time and all eternity.

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