

The Human Body

The Skeletal System

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The Muscular System

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The Human Reproductive System

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The Skeletal System

Gary VanDerSchaaf

I am six years old, and hanging from the water pipes that run the cool dark length of my grandmother's cellar. My hands are cramped around the pipes, and my arms ache, stretched to their endurance. I glance down nervously: the cement floor is feet, yards, miles away. Like a small kitten in a tall tree, I am transfixed: how did I get up here? How do I get down? "Let go," says my cousin. "I'll catch you. Just drop."

I do.

He doesn't.

I hit the floor, landing, uncatlike, on my side. In my left arm, that softly curving spiral of bone between elbow and wrist, the radius, snaps neatly, cleanly.

Altogether, it will take more than six hours to get me to a doctor, determine that the arm is indeed broken, then set, wrap, and cast the fractured limb. The bone itself, however, responds to the break immediately. In an instant, the body reacts to this breach in its foundation, and millions of the three basic types of bone cells are formed, or transformed from existing cells, and gather about the break.

Osteocytes, which maintain live bone tissue, minister to the areas on either side of the break, making sure that no further trauma to the bone will occur. Osteoblasts, bone-repairing cells, await the completion of callus formation, a sheath-like growth of collagenous protein and cartilage which will unite again the severed bone. Once the softer callus framework is established, the osteoblasts will fill and harden it, leaving the bone whole and strong again, but with a swollen growth surrounding the area of the fracture, like a burl upon a tree.

Meanwhile, large osteoclasts, giant bone-destroying cells, each containing 10-30 nuclei, have been busy cleaning the area of minute bone fragments. And once the callus is completely hardened, these osteoclasts will break down the extra material, like a sander smoothing down a concrete patch, finally leaving the repaired bone in almost original shape and condition, sometimes even stronger than before, the breach filled, the body's foundation again complete.

The human skeleton, that unseemly and unappealing collection of 206 lengths of calcium and collagen, is indeed the body's framework and foundation. Over two millennia ago Job observed, "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinew" (Job 10:11), and I do not believe that 2,000 years of scientific advancement has provided a better summary of the function of human bone. As a fence defines and protects property, and as a building's foundation determines its size, strength, and shape, so our skeleton protects us, gives us our shape, and sets the broad limits of our physical abilities.

Bones are the only hard tissue within the body, buried deep within us; it is their strength which supports and upholds our clothing of skin and flesh, just as a home's plaster walls are built upon and upheld by the buried rock or cement foundation. And as a fence protects property so does the skeleton protect our vital organs, the skull enveloping the brain, the ribs covering heart and lungs.

Unlike man-made fences and foundations, however, bones are not inanimate, static things. Not only does the skeleton, in conjunction with the muscular system, give us freedom of movement, but it is itself a dynamic, growing, changing, living thing.

An infant is born with a “skeleton” of some 350 “bones.” Some are true bones, calcified and hardened, but many are still soft cartilage. A baby with the firm skeleton of an adult could not undergo or survive birth. Its small body would be too rigid and incompressible, unable to pass through the birth canal.

Throughout life, the bones will calcify, coalesce, expand, lengthen, and finally shrink, while constantly tearing down and rebuilding themselves. The virtually boneless skull of the infant will not harden and glow to close off the last of the openings, the fontanelles, until the child is two years old. And the then bony plates will still not be completely coalesced even four decades later.

Every bone in the hand of that two-year-old will replace itself by the child’s third year; not one will be the same. The 26 bones in each of the child’s feet are especially active; they will not be fully and finally formed until he is 15, a fact that dismays parents and delights shoe salesmen.

But because the skeleton is a living thing, it is subject to the law of death. And die it does, like the rest of the body, slowly at first, then more rapidly, finally ending in a frenzy of self-destruction in a headlong rush to the grave. The bone-building osteoblasts, which dominated the first half of life, gradually become less active, and the bone-destroyers, the osteoclasts, begin to dominate the body. The amount of annual bone replacement, 100% in youth, plummets to under 20% after age 60.

And the rate of that replacement grows slower each year. The fractured arm of a four-year-old will heal within 4-8 weeks; the same fracture in a 65-year-old may require nearly twice that time to mend, if it will mend at all. Then, that which once was made well by a simple splint and cast demands surgery, possibly a bone graft, metal screws, pins, and plates, perhaps a teflon joint, and weeks of therapy to be made, not as good as new, but merely functional.

Bone replacement lags further and further behind bone destruction. That which was once gently rounded becomes pointed and sharp. The chin bone grows more pronounced, the jawbone pulls inward, the hipbone protrudes, and its now brittle structure threatens to turn a fall into a disaster.

The old find that their clothes no longer fit. Shirts and blouses are tight across the shoulders; slacks and pants are too long. What is happening? The body’s frame, the skeleton, is shrinking. If this shrinkage is uneven, and if the person has a history of calcium depletion (common among women), the bones will slowly deform. The strong men of Ecclesiastes 12:3 will bow themselves: spine and femur, tibia and fibula will bend and stay bent. Grandmother and grandfather will totter out to greet you, stooped and bowlegged, smiling faces pinched and pointed, their bent and failing bones a testimony to their sojourn in a fallen world.

Yet for 70 or more years the skeleton will fulfill its fourfold function. It will give shape to the body, protect vital organs, house red marrow for blood cell production and store fat for energy reserves, and provide that system of levers, operated by the muscles, which gives us movement. These four functions both reveal and underscore the fundamental nature of bone and the skeleton, and it is that nature, or rather two aspects of it, which form the subject of the pages which follow.

UNITY

The first picture that bone presents is that of fundamental identity, oneness, and unity: identity of self, oneness of self and mate, and unity with God through unity with the body of His Christ.

Scripture frequently uses part of the body (bone) to refer to the whole. This is not mere synecdoche. When David wishes to express the totality of his commitment to and adoration of Jehovah, he writes:

And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my bones shall say, LORD: who is like unto thee (Ps. 35:9-10a).

Note the parallelism: soul and bone respond as one. The sweet psalmist's entire being is dedicated to praise as he approaches the throne of the Almighty and prostrates himself before it. Bone is fundamental. What it bolts, the whole body experiences. Where it goes, the rest is sure to follow.

In like fashion the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the picture of a tendered skeleton to complete his picture of the all-encompassing and profound power of the Word over and within the lives of men:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (4:12).

Mind, soul, spirit, joints, and marrow, man is a fundamental unity of all these things, the immaterial and the corporeal, and the Word has dominion over all that makes man himself.

Our Savior also uses bone to identify himself as "very man." Upon His first post-resurrection appearance to the gathered disciples, Jesus must first assure them that He is indeed Himself, not a phantom or spirit: "Behold my hands and feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).

In effect, Jesus says, "Look, it is I. I appear to you not as spirit but in a body, new and glorified. But I am still Myself; the clothing of this new flesh still hangs on a framework of bone. I am the firstfruits of the grave, not a ghost. I am indeed the New Man, and I am risen."

Because of its fundamental nature, the skeleton does much to determine, physically, who we are and what we do. Man is created to be lord of creation, called to subjugate creation to the praise of its Creator. To this end, our bodies are framed with bones, which enables us to traverse this earth. (Quite literally so. Even in our non-ambulatory age, the feet and leg bones of the average American will carry him over 65,000 miles — more than twice around the globe.) Many creatures are able to stand and walk on two legs for brief periods, but only man, the intended master of such beasts, has a skeleton designed that he might stand and walk erect for 70 years. And although many creatures have hands, even hands with an opposable thumb, man alone in creation can touch the tip of his thumb to the fingertip of his forefinger, due to a skeletal arrangement unique to man, without which manipulation and mastery of the environment would be impossible.

One could go on and on about how bone and skeleton are structured to allow us to function in our God-ordained roles. The skeleton and its component parts are an architect's primer-book: a system of obdurate columns, hollowed to provide the maximum strength with the minimum of material, cushioned and joined and arched to

absorb shock and distribute stress, supporting every cell in the body yet comprising only one-fifth of its weight. Light but durable (remaining intact centuries after the flesh returns to dust), inflexible yet providing a range and finesse of movement unparalleled in nature. And bone is alive. It maintains, repairs, and replaces itself continually. It grows as we do.

As a junior-high teacher, I am surrounded by growing skeletons nine months of the year, and I am always amazed at the outward evidences of a living skeleton changing itself to prepare its owner to function in the adult world. The small boys who enter seventh grade metamorph into towering ninth graders; and their lithesome, curveless little-girl classmates will graduate two years later, well-rounded in more ways than one as their growing, changing skeletons prepare them for their places in God's earthly kingdom.

In these days of godless feminist philosophy and unisex culture, the skeleton maintains a rigidly chauvinistic witness to fundamental differences between male and female, and accordingly, to the God-ordained roles of each sex in the home, church, and society. Generally speaking, the male skeleton is larger, its bones thicker and stronger than the smaller and lighter bones of the female. Male bones exhibit a slight difference in structure which allows for a muscle, ligament, and tendon arrangement that provides more efficient and smoother motion, and a teacher can tell his students that this difference is the reason why a girl throws a ball, swings a bat, and runs like...like...well, like a girl. In short, a man's skeleton outfits him for harder, more physical labor. It is a fitting framework for one who is called to lead and to provide for a family.

And even if our perception of the implications of the differences between the overall size, structure, and strength of male and female skeletons becomes clouded in our day of "househusbands" and female body-builders, the skeleton maintains one startling and irrefutable testimony to the uniqueness of each sex's structure and function — the pelvis. A male pelvis is narrow and heart-shaped, its bones heavy and very hard, its inner ring lined with knobby, hooked points to which the muscles and ligaments attach. The acute angle of the inner opening brings the hip sockets closer together, nearer the body's center of gravity. Altogether, it is an arrangement providing a powerful lifting of the upper body and fluid, efficient movement.

The female pelvis is quite another story. Upon puberty, its lighter, more flexible bones broaden in anticipation of pregnancy: it will have to support a child-filled womb, and the inner opening grows larger, more obtuse, to permit the passage of the baby. This pelvic flaring pushes the hip sockets out, away from the body's center of gravity, and in conjunction with a muscle and ligament attachment different than the male's, producing the rolling, less efficient but distinctly feminine walk (which, alas, some young ladies are inclined to exaggerate).

Finally, the inner ring of the female pelvis is smooth and oval. The projections for muscle and ligament attachment present in the male pelvis are absent, and the opening is unobstructed, precisely the size of an infant's head. All-in-all, the female pelvis is a structure clearly designed for childbearing; and we should remind our students, when they are of appropriate age, that while perhaps the young ladies may not be able to throw as far, jump as high, or run as fast as their male classmates, it is their unequalled privilege, attested to by their very bones, to bring forth covenant seed.

Scripture, in addition to using bone as a picture of essential personhood, also uses bone as an image of kinship unity. II Samuel 19:13, 14 records David's reaction to

Judah's absence at his return to Israel after Absalom's rebellion. The disappointed king cries out:

Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh, wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also. [note close identification with self implied. GVS] if thou be not captain of the host before me.

This use of bone as a picture of extended-family unity is found throughout Scripture (Gen. 29:14; Judges 9:2; I Chron. 11:1) and has an interesting parallel in the field of animal classification. The outward appearance of a marlin, a shark, and a dolphin would suggest some taxonomic relationship among them. An examination of their respective skeletons, however, reveals that the shark has no true skeleton at all, only cartilage, and that the skeleton of the dolphin resembles more closely that of a mouse, a fellow mammal, than that of the marlin.

Consider also the panda bear, the polar bear, and the brown bear. Outwardly, the animals are very similar, yet most taxonomists are reluctant to classify the panda bear as a bear at all. Stripped of its charming fur coat and mountains of flesh, the "bear's" skeleton reveals a close similarity to that of a raccoon. And a polar bear's skeleton resembles nothing so much as the skeleton of a wolverine (if there were such a thing as a wolverine the size of a Volkswagen), an implied kinship that is, perhaps, mirrored in the extremely aggressive natures of both animals — wolverines do not hesitate to threaten grizzly bears, and a polar bear is the only animal that will hunt man.

That Scripture uses bone to picture familial relationships should come as no surprise, for it was bone from which the first family was formed. So closely did God wish Adam to identify with Eve, so intimate a union does God intend the marriage relationship to be, that God took from Adam's own skeleton, his own frame and foundation, that from which his mate would come.

In his commentary on Genesis, John Calvin describes the divine purpose behind the means of Eve's creation in this manner:

...that the conjunction of the human race might be the more sacred, He [God] purposed that both male and female should spring forth from one and the same origin. Something was taken from Adam, in order that he might embrace with greater benevolence a part of himself. He lost, therefore, one of his ribs, but instead of it, a far richer reward was granted him, since he obtained a faithful associate for life. For he now saw himself, who had before been imperfect, rendered complete in his wife. And in this we see a true resemblance of our union with the Son of God: for He became weak that He might have the members of his body endued with strength (pp. 132, 122).

That Adam understood the significance of the means of Eve's making is evident in his first words upon beholding her: "This is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). Adam could love his wife, care for her, and nourish her as he would his own body (Eph. 5:28, 29) because inwardly and fundamentally they were one — "bone of my bone" — and so, naturally, the union of their flesh into one flesh would follow.

And, finally, building upon this image of "bone of my bone" inherent in the marriage union, Scripture describes our eternal covenant union with God in terms of bone. By adoption we enter the family of God, and claim Jesus as elder brother. But even this blood relationship does not describe the depth of the intimate and sweet communion our God has decreed for His chosen friend-servants. By the gracious mercies and mysteries of the covenant we are made part of Jesus Himself. This does Paul declare in

Ephesians 5:30, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Thus our unity with Christ is complete and fundamental, total, absolute, and everlasting. We are flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones, in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Do you know this in your heart? Can you “feel it in your bones”? They testify to its very truth.

THE LAW

My junior-high students loathe rules. They want to do and say what they want, whenever and wherever they want. “Our mere presence here in school,” they seem to think, “is quite enough. Don’t make it worse by trying to tell us how to behave.”

Christian teachers, in turn, despise and labor against this attitude, sometimes growing very angry at those who exhibit it with soul-wearying consistency, sometimes forgetting that it is often our own attitude toward our own participation in the body of Christ.

Rules of behavior—the law—and rules of belief—doctrine—have fallen on hard times. The law, say its detractors, is negative and restrictive, denying the positive freedoms we enjoy in the new dispensation of Christ and His Spirit. And doctrine? Dead and divisive, the binding and bitter fruit of struggles long since forgotten. The church of God, after all, is one body. We should have no creed but Christ.

Those who confess this may belong to a body, but it is not the body of Christ. The body to which they belong has no strength: it cannot stand, and is buffeted about by every wind of doctrine. It has no support, no structure; it is shapeless, shifting, and ever-changing, and cannot be part of the eternal, immutable Word. It has nothing by which its several parts are united and made one, and thus its ecumenicity is a perverse parody of the brotherhood of all believers and of the one, holy, catholic church. It has no foundation on which to grow, nothing on or by which to build an edifice of praise to the glory of the Father, and thus it has no purpose. This body is like a house built upon the sand, like a skyscraper without a core or steel. Or like a body without bones.

Bone and skeleton are a picture, I believe, of God’s law and of the truths of His Word and, like many Scriptural images, a picture that operates on many levels. Notice first the natural human reaction to a skeleton: in the words of one of my seventh grade students, “Oh, gross!” Like the law, the skeleton holds no natural appeal for natural man. It is an offense to the senses, the stuff of horror and nightmare.

Our natural aversion to a skeleton stems in part from the stark reality it presents. Again, as one student remarked upon seeing a human skeleton, “You mean, that’s ME?” Yes, that is you. Stripped of our fleshly clothing and all the added adornment we smear, spray, and hang upon it, we are not pretty things. In like manner is the law of God’s Word a schoolmaster, revealing us for what we are apart from grace: vile corpses in animated rebellion against the living God. All self-deception as to our innate goodness and beauty is just that — a lie. Apart from Christ’s body and His revivifying Spirit, we are all whited sepulchers, full of dead men’s bones.

Our appreciation of the picture of bone as law is increased when we consider the many Scripture passages that speak of bone in association with God’s law and the truths of His Word. The verses that speak of aching, shattered bones as a result of sin or that tell of the destruction of bone as a sign of God’s wrath against the covenant-breaker and infidel are so numerous that only three of the most familiar passages, all found in the Psalms, are given here:

My strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed (31:10).
When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long (32:3).
There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger: neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin (38:3).

Conversely, obedience to the law and spiritual restoration are pictured by strong, healthy bones:

Fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones (Prov. 3:7b-8). And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy the soul in drought, and make fat thy bones (Is. 58:11a).

Are there lessons to be learned from these word pictures? I think so. First, we can see that sin is a profoundly serious thing. Sin is grievous; it is all pervading, infecting and inhabiting us, as it were, at our core, our very bones. C. H. Spurgeon, reflecting on Psalms 6 and 51, remarks that sin is “no mere flesh wound.” Rather, “the solid pillars of the house of manhood are shaken.” Sinful man cannot stand before God: the knowledge of our sin is a rottenness in our bones. We tremble in fear, bones shaking, reeling and falling like drunken men “because of the words of his holiness” (Job 4:14; Jer. 23:9; Hab. 3:16).

Secondly, we understand that broken law, like broken bone, violates harmony and unity. Unconfessed sin is like an unset fracture: a source of pain, misery, and deformity. In the impenitent state we are vexed, poured out like water, and all our bones are out of joint (Ps. 6:2; 21:14). Our bones provide no support and allow no rest (Job 30:16, 17), for our sins rise up against us, like ribs against shrunken flesh, to remind us that we have broken the covenant that unites us with God, that we are living outside the body, not members of it but enemies to it, enemies that will be cut off, burned, utterly destroyed as would be diseased and cancerous bone.

Yet the Great and Loving Physician has sent His Son, with healing in His wings, to heal that which is wounded and to bind up that which is broken down. Even as our sin and our disobedience to the law and truth are pictured in broken bone, so is our salvation found in Him Who is Truth, Who kept the law perfectly, Whose bones were kept whole: not one of them was broken (Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20; John 19:32-37). Then does the healing and Holy Spirit apply the Balm of Gilead to our broken selves, and then again do we hear joy and gladness, and the bones which were shattered do rejoice (Ps. 51:8).

There remains one more lesson to learn, or, if you will, one final warning to heed, and that is the lesson and warning found in Ezekiel 37:1-15: the macabre vision of the valley of dry bones.

In the valley Ezekiel sees the bleached bones of the scattered skeletons of “the whole house of Israel,” dead in its own conceit, lifeless in its national sin of outward obedience and works-righteousness, withered and dry and blasted to the bare bone by the heat of God’s indignation. Here is a glimpse into the charnel house of man’s efforts to live apart from God’s law and to save himself apart from God’s grace. But even as the vision progresses, and the skeletons are reknit and clothed with flesh, we witness that Israel is yet dead. God withholds His breath, His reviving Spirit, from them. Only when God pours out His Spirit do the flesh and bones of the house of Israel arise from the grave and enter into a living relationship with their covenant Head.

So it is with us. We must constantly beware of “dead bones,” of dead orthodoxy, of outward compliance with the law, of our natural inclination to the heresy of salvation by works.

Only when bone is alive can it fulfill its functions; dead bone is harmful, worse than useless, fit only for removal and destruction. Thus God’s law must be within us a living and growing thing, ever enabling us to live and move and have our entire being in obedient living to the praise of the mercy of the Father. Man is not an insect, and neither is he crustacean or mollusk; his skeleton is not a dead thing worn without, but a living part of him, within him, protecting and nourishing him, giving shape and purpose to his being.

Therefore the law of God and the love of His Word must be written deep within us, and our innermost man must be renewed. When dead bone is removed from the body, the surgeon will graft into its place a section of healthy bone from elsewhere in the body. But spiritually we are dead throughout, and such an intrapersonal transplant is impossible. When God said to Ezekiel, “Son of man, can these bones live?” the prophet’s hopeless reply was, “O Lord God, thou knowest.” The question is rhetorical, the conclusion foregone.

Foregone, that is, as far as man can comprehend. “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all” (Eccl. 11:5). With God all things are possible, and with such dead bones as we has He made covenant. In faithfulness to Himself we are made new. Like branches grafted into a living vine, we are grafted into the living body of Christ, made living members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Only in the strength of His scarred flesh and unbroken bone can we withstand the assaults of the evil one, and clothed in the righteousness of His unbroken obedience alone are we able to stand, not merely before God but with Him and in Him, united in eternal, unbreakable covenant fellowship.

What Christian science teacher has not envied Adam unfallen, able intuitively to determine exactly God’s purpose and plan for each facet of creation? It is so very hard for fallen man to ascertain God’s hand in creation, to discern God’s message there, to hear His voice amid the babel of our own confusion. Every year I teach, I am reminded of that old Puritan prayer:

God, forgive me if I know many things,
but know not thee alone,
If I hear many things, but heed not thy voice,
If I see many things, but see not Jesus only.

In these pages I have tried to present a few ideas about one small yet significant part of God’s world, the human skeleton, ideas based upon what I hope is an accurate and sanctified reading of God’s Word. As do God’s people everywhere and always, I have found that Word comforting and instructive and, no matter how dim our understanding of it, “sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Prov. 16:24). Even as sinful creatures we are knit together by the hand of God, and fearfully and wonderfully made. And as far as we are in Christ, and as we shall be in perfection, these things are mysteries, even for the angels.

Scripture References to Bone, Skeleton, and Related Topics

- I. As Picture of Unity
 - A. Of man
 - 1. Psalm 35:9, 10
 - 2. Luke 24:39
 - B. Of Man and Wife
 - 1. Genesis 2:23
 - 2. Proverbs 12:4
 - 3. Ephesians 5:22ff.
 - C. Of Extended Family
 - 1. Genesis 29:14a
 - 2. Judges 9:2b
 - 3. II Samuel 5:1
 - 4. II Samuel 19:12, 13
 - D. With Christ — Ephesians 5:30

- II. As Indicative of Health
 - A. Proverbs 15:30
 - B. Proverbs 16:24
 - C. Proverbs 17:24
 - D. Job 21:24

- III. As Picture of Law
 - A. Obedience to the Law and Righteousness
 - 1. Proverbs 3:7b, 8
 - 2. Isaiah 5:8
 - 3. Isaiah 66:14b
 - B. Affliction of God's People Because of Sin
 - 1. Job 30:16b, 17
 - 2. Psalm 6:2
 - 3. Psalm 22:14
 - 4. Psalm 31:10b
 - 5. Psalm 32:2
 - 6. Psalm 38:3
 - 7. Psalm 51:8
 - 8. Psalm 102:3
 - 9. Proverbs 14:30
 - 10. Lamentations 1:13
 - 11. Lamentations 3:4
 - 12. Ezekiel 37:1-15
 - C. Destruction of Wicked
 - 1. I Kings 13:1-3
 - 2. II Kings 23:14
 - 3. Psalm 53:5b
 - 4. Jeremiah 8:1-4
 - 5. Jeremiah 50:17b

6. Ezekiel 6:5b
7. Ezekiel 24:1-14
8. Ezekiel 32:27b

- IV. As Typifying a Fear of God or a Zeal for His Word
 - A. Job 4:14
 - B. Jeremiah 23:9
 - C. Habakkuk 3:16
- V. Christ's Unbroken Bones, Foretold and Fulfilled
 - A. Exodus 12:4b
 - B. Psalm 34:20
 - C. John 19:32-37
- VI. Miscellaneous
 - A. Job 10:11
 - B. Ecclesiastes 11:5
 - C. Hebrews 4:13

The Muscular System

Gary Lanning

One of my favorite sea creatures is the anemone. These delicate flowers of the sea capture food by suspending their tentacles in the water currents and capturing any prey that swims, crawls, or floats by.

While the anemone's goal is to stay alive by capturing a meal, we see this animal as a graceful, flower-like organism rippling and waving its tentacles in the current. However, if you take this creature out of the water it contracts into a shapeless blob of jelly-like goop. All of its beauty and gracefulness disappears when you take away its means of support, for the anemone has no muscles of its own to provide it with support and shape.

We, too, would collapse into shapeless forms if our muscles were not constantly contracting to give us what we call muscle tone. Our individual looks are due largely to muscle shape and tone. God's plan for the sea anemone was that it should seek its existence only in water. Thus it did not need muscles, only water, to support it and give it the shape it needs. God's plan for man was different. Man was to live on land, and he needed a means of support and locomotion. Therefore God supplied man with muscles.

These muscles supply much more than shape and a means of locomotion. They move blood throughout our body, they produce heat to keep our body temperature within its range of tolerance, they help to acquire and digest food, they allow us to move our eyes and help in giving birth. Muscles also provide aesthetic qualities to man's existence. Muscles are a gift of God in which we can rejoice.

However, muscles can also be used sinfully to glorify man's body and to boast of man's strength.

What can be said about this major system of our bodies? What can we find in Scripture which could help our understanding of this aspect of our bodies?

Our bodies, the muscles too, are a vessel for God's image. One might think that a strong, well-toned body reflects this image of God. But surely this cannot be, for Christ Himself did not have what we would think of as a perfect physique. We today place much emphasis on being "in shape" and on having a good shape to our bodies. Most of the advertising world tries to make us believe that a good physique is necessary to have a fulfilling life. Our degree of happiness is directly influenced by the shape of our bodies, we are told. If this were even remotely true, then surely Jesus Christ, our supreme example, would also have been a handsome person with a good physique. But the Word of God tells us that He had no form nor comeliness and no beauty that we should desire Him. Certainly the Bible does not emphasize the good looks of our Master. Yet even as Christ's broken body hung on the cross it expressed perfectly the image of God.

To be sure, we do not want to condemn healthful exercise and the desire to be physically fit. However, too often this becomes an obsession and a means of achieving the goal of self-satisfaction. We become proud of our looks and strive for compliments on the way we look. This, of course, is vanity.

Dr. Paul Brand is a surgeon who has dedicated much of his life to working among leprosy patients in India. In his book, *In His Image*, he has this to say about our physical shape:

Human self-image thrives on physical attractiveness, athletic ability, a worthwhile occupation, But paradoxically, any of these desirable qualities may raise a barrier against the image of God, for virtually any quality that a person can rely on makes it more difficult for that person to rely on the Spirit of God. The beautiful, the strong, the politically powerful, and the rich do not easily represent God's image.

We so easily surround ourselves with the physically beautiful people and shun those whose muscles have not given what we deem to be appealing shape to the person.

Dr. Brand came to his conclusions after years of observing his patients whose limbs were usually deformed from leprosy. He writes,

Again and again I saw these people, so cruelly ostracized from society, somehow radiate the love and goodness of God far better than wealthy, handsome, and comfortable Christians I had known. Just as God Himself had taken on a lowly image, so it seemed His most faithful followers commonly revealed that same homeliness. They had a more natural right to anger and bitterness, yet the level of dedication and spiritual maturity among patients who came to know Christ shamed us doctors and missionaries.

Dr. Brand also tells of his own mother, Granny Brand, whom he describes as having been a classic beauty as a young woman. However, years of rugged work in India as a missionary and doctor had drained all traces of physical beauty from her body. Wind, sun, crippling falls, malaria, dysentery, and typhoid had left her with a furrowed, leathery skin, and a thin and hunched-over body. So completely had the last remnant of physical beauty vanished that Granny Brand refused to keep a mirror in her house, there being no chance to improve her looks. Still, this remarkable woman found fulfillment in continuing to care for the destitute mountain-folk in India. At age 75 she broke her hip and lay all night on the floor until discovered the next day. For the next 20 years her legs and feet were paralyzed below the knee and she had to walk with the aid of two tall bamboo canes. At age 93, she gave up riding her pony because she fell off too frequently. Yet, she continued to tell the villagers about Jesus, and to bind their wounds and pull their teeth. The villagers loved her and were devoted to her. Despite her physical appearance she was beautiful. Says Dr. Brand, "Granny Brand had no need for a mirror made of glass and polished chromium; she had the incandescent faces of thousands of Indian villagers. Her worn-out physical features beaming through her like a beacon."

Our society also honors strength. From the raucous crowds at big-time wrestling to the bellicose challenges which schoolboys level at each other, our children grow up in a society which promotes physical strength.

The Bible has much to say about strength. Well over 400 verses mention the word strength or strong. Many of these deal with physical human strength and our proper attitude towards it.

Human strength is obviously a gift of God to be used in His service. God does not condemn human strength. Proverbs 20:29 states that "The glory of young men is their strength..." Surely God has endowed young people with strength so that they may have the ability and stamina to work hard in His kingdom. They have the energy to match their enthusiasm. They have the ability to go to bed late and get up early. They have been given the ability to work hard in order to support physically and financially their needs and the kingdom causes. Likewise Proverbs 31:17 speaks approvingly of the physical strength of the virtuous woman.

But these two examples are a far cry from the way in which the world views the strength of men and women. Around us we see a corrupting of the proper use of strength.

Boxers use skill and strength to dominate another person, often causing serious harm. Hordes of people, delirious with joy at the superior strength and skill of their favorite team, burn police cars, destroy property, and maim and kill each other. Men and women spend many hours of each day to develop their muscles so that they may be acknowledged as having the best-shaped bodies. How contrary to the Word of God found in Isaiah 10:12, 13,

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man.

But what does all this avail a child of God? Nothing! The Word of God clearly and repeatedly states that human strength alone never achieves deliverance. Psalm 33:16 states, "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength." II Chronicles 32:8 also emphasizes the futility of depending on human physical strength, "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles..."

This idea that human strength alone is never a reason for boasting is shown throughout the Old Testament. The Israelites were to trust in God alone and never delight in their own strength. Time after time they were victorious when they put their trust in God, and time after time they were defeated when they trusted in their own strength. Even though Israel did have to fight and subdue enemies physically, nevertheless, their strength, even their physical strength, was from the Lord. They were not allowed to fight using horses and chariots but had to rely entirely on strength from the Lord. This is so clearly expressed in the biblical account of Samson. Surely Samson, more than any person in history, was the epitome of strength. Samson could carry away the gates and posts of a city on his shoulders. He could kill a thousand Philistines with nothing more than a small bone. He could pull down a large building with nothing more than the strength of his arms. Yet Samson could do none of these things without the direct help of God Who promised to be Samson's strength as long as Samson did not cut his hair. No sooner had he forsaken his consecration as a Nazarite than he became powerless to defend himself.

Hannah, Job, David, and Isaiah all speak of human strength alone being of no significance. Physical strength is only a tool to be used meekly by those who have been given it to honor God's name. Never is the glory of a young man or woman the actual strength that they have, but rather their glory is found in the godly use of this strength. It is never to be viewed as a goal in itself to bring praise to oneself. The apostle Paul goes so far as to say that through physical weakness he and we are made truly strong. Jesus Himself did not use physical might to subdue His enemies. Rather His strength was found in the way of meekness and in the way of submitting to His Father's will.

At one point in their history Israel turned to Egypt for help. They trusted in the physical might of Pharaoh. But God says in Isaiah 30 that the physical strength of Egypt will be of no help. Rather God tells Israel that they will find strength in quietness and confidence in God. What a difference in the way we perceive strength and in the way God perceives it. We rely on physical strength to save us and to glorify ourselves. God,

on the other hand, has given this strength in order that His name, not our name, might be glorified.

Our duty then is to use our strength to serve God: “and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30).

As we study the muscular system, we cannot help but see the wisdom of the Creator. He has so designed our bodies that we are perfectly fitted for the normal activities which we must perform. Our muscles play a role in virtually everything we do: talking, breathing, running, playing the piano, eating, reading, watching a ball game. Our body contains approximately 700 muscles. And they are all of just the right proportion and size to fit efficiently in the framework God has made for them. Let us take a closer look at the placement of these muscles.

Every junior high school student has learned about levers and fulcrums. These students know that placing the fulcrum at different positions along the lever gives certain advantages. For example, lifting a load of rocks is accomplished easily by putting the load between the fulcrum and the effort — in this case our arms trying to lift the rocks. Thus we use a wheelbarrow to lift easily a heavy load. Students also realize that relative distances are important when using levers. Very long handles on the wheelbarrow would make lifting the load of rocks much easier. However, there is a price to pay in that the rocks would not be lifted very high off the ground. Moving the wheelbarrow pan closer towards the hands of the operator would allow the user to lift the rocks higher; but again a price is exacted from the user in that it takes more effort now to lift the rocks.

Lever systems occur as one of three basic types determined by the relative placement of the force, the load, and the fulcrum. First-class levers are characterized by the fulcrum being placed between the load and force. This type is used when trying to pry something loose with a pry-bar. This type of lever increases the amount of force we can apply. Second-class levers place the load between the fulcrum and force. Our wheelbarrow was an example of this type. It too makes work easier. Third-class levers place the force between the load and fulcrum. When we use a tweezers, we are using a third-class lever. It takes more force to pick up a stamp with a tweezers than with our fingers; thus we find that to use a third-class lever requires more effort than if we did not use the lever at all.

What many students do not know is that our muscles and bones make up a system of first, second, and third-class levers too. God has designed the attachment of muscle to bone in just the right place in order for that bone and muscle to carry out their function in the best way. We often refer to this as form-serving function. We see this design principle over and over again as we study the workings of the human body. Evolutionists, of course, say that an organism’s function is limited by the form or structures which it has evolved. We, on the other hand, say that God gave an organism just the right form or structure that it needed in order to carry out the function for which God created it.

The biceps is a muscle familiar to most people. This upper-arm muscle’s function is to raise the forearm. We use this muscle hundreds of times during the course of the day to lift objects varying in weight from a pencil to a child. In this case, the object being picked up is the load while the elbow is the fulcrum. The biceps muscle is attached in front of (distal to) the elbow, giving the following arrangement to this lever system: fulcrum-force-load. Thus, surprisingly, we see that the arm is a third-class lever. But we

have seen that it takes more energy (force) to use a third-class lever than it does to use no lever at all. There would seem to be a flaw in this design. Such is not the case however. Remember that the purpose of the biceps is to move the forearm and hand, and it does this quite well. At times it would seem nice to be stronger — to be able to lift more weight. But there is a very real advantage to a third-class lever which far outweighs its apparent disadvantage. (There is no real disadvantage, for God has made our biceps strong enough to be able to do that which we normally need to do.) You see, the real advantage to arms is not how much they can lift but how far they can lift it. Almost all of our forearm actions deal with moving relatively light-weight objects through considerable distances. We bring food from our plates to our mouths. We open car doors wide enough to fit through. We bring telephone receivers to our ears. We bring a newspaper within reading distance. We raise hammers, boxes, milk cartons, and pails of water. But most of our actions do not require tremendous strength in our biceps.

God, in His wisdom, provided a structural form which fills this need. For a third-class lever increases the distance (and speed) through which the load is moved, even though it requires more energy to accomplish this. Consider how far your biceps move when you pick up a book — only several centimeters. But notice how far the book moves. If our biceps were attached near the wrist, what would be the result? Certainly we would have a greater mechanical advantage and thus we could lift objects four or five times as heavy as we can now. Who could not find a use for being able to lift 500 pounds? But look at the price we would pay. Ten to twelve inches of biceps muscle would have to fold up and get out of the way as our arm bent. We would find our arms to be very bulky and awkward. Motions would be slow and clumsy even though we could lift more weight. So God has provided us with an efficient means of lifting objects. A muscle system which allows us to accomplish His purpose for us, that is, that we should be able freely to move from place to place.

Most skeletal muscles could be classified as one of the three types of levers, although some are complex systems. Thus also we see that the muscles which bend the knee are part of a first-class lever system which multiplies our effort, thus serving the function of easily moving our relatively heavy bodies from place to place.

Our fingers also are used more for moving objects through a long distance than for moving heavy objects, and they also are made up of third-class levers. They have the added feature of having no muscles whatsoever in the finger itself. All muscles used for moving fingers are located in the arm, while less bulky tendons connect them with the finger bones. Thus, our fingers can be more dexterous due to the lack of bulk.

When we think about muscles, we tend to think only about those muscles which move bones — the skeletal muscles. We tend to forget about those muscles inside our skeletal framework: muscles which help us to breathe, pump blood, and digest food. Maybe we tend to forget about these muscles because they are not under our conscious control. We do not consciously will our heart to beat. Nor do we consciously determine when to begin and end peristalsis or when to take every breath. In fact, parents really need not fear when a stubborn child holds his or her breath. We cannot consciously will to hold our breath until we pass out. Breathing is controlled automatically by the brain, which will detect a high level of carbon dioxide in the blood and trigger the filling of the lungs with life-giving oxygen long before a person lost consciousness. Here, too, God's wisdom in creation is observed. Those muscles which control activities as essential as

breathing and heartbeat God did not leave to our conscious control. Rather, we often go days or weeks without giving them any thought at all.

Clearly, the action of our muscles and bones tells about the power and wisdom of the Creator. Isaac Newton once stated, "In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence."

This study-guide has been an inadequate attempt to examine a part of creation closest to us: ourselves. Augustine noted that, "Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering."

The purpose of this guide has been to initiate that wonder about ourselves so that after arriving at a better understanding of the workings of our bodies we can more fully exclaim with David, "I will praise Thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works and that my soul knoweth right well."

The Human Reproductive System

David Harbach

CREATION OF THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

When God formed Adam out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul, Adam's reproductive system was perfect. But the total human reproductive system was incomplete. There was something missing, something that required the creation of another person; for Adam alone could not have fulfilled the command, had it been given to him at that time, to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." God created Adam good, but in God's counsel it was not good that he should be alone.

Adam understood he needed another person, his complement, in order to serve God completely as God's friend-servant. How did Adam know this? God created the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them and in this way He showed Adam that there was not a help meet for him. God, no doubt, brought male and female animals to Adam so that he would understand from viewing the animals, while he was giving them their names, that there was something lacking in his life, his female, a "female man."

Did this mean then that the help meet for Adam was an afterthought of God? No. God was not finished creating the heavens and the earth on this sixth day of the creation week. God had not finished creating man in His own image; He had not finished creating male and female in His own image. We might say, that God had not finished creating Adam. God certainly had not finished creating the human reproductive system.

God also showed Adam that only He could make his help meet for him. He did that by causing a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. Adam may not do anything more in the creation, he may not dress or keep the garden, nor may he eat of its bounty: Adam could no longer walk and speak with God his Creator until God completed him, until God created his help meet for him, his complement, his "female man." Then God did not add something to Adam. Instead He takes something away, his rib, a bone out of Adam's own body, and makes a woman from that bone, and brings the woman, the help meet for him, his wife, to Adam. Notice that the two distinct parts of the human reproductive system are brought together in marriage! God clearly shows that the purpose of the human reproductive system is for the marriage state and only between husband and wife who love each other. The institution of marriage has taken place, and Adam exclaims, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." Eve, the help meet for Adam, was taken out of, made and brought to, Adam by God, for Adam to love and cherish all his life.

Adam is no longer alone, he and Eve are married by God, the human reproductive system is complete. Adam and Eve stand naked before each other and before God in love, without shame, and God blesses them and tells them to "Be fruitful, and multiply..." And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. For us today, the words of Psalter 360:2, 3 come to mind:

In thy wife thou shalt have gladness,
She shall fill thy home with good,

Happy in her loving service
And the joys of motherhood.
Joyful children, sons and daughters,
Shall about thy table meet,
Olive plants, in strength and beauty,
Full of hope and promise sweet.

What we find here are three wonderful truths involving the precious gift of human reproduction. First, it was God's purpose that Adam should not live alone to serve Him as His friend-servant. It is true that Adam could have served God alone, and in fact he did do that on part of the sixth day of creation when the Lord God took Adam and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. Adam alone was commanded by God not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Besides, Adam named the animals alone as he served his Creator. But it was in Adam's serving God alone that God showed Adam that it was not His purpose for Adam to remain that way. Adam knew there was someone lacking from his life who belonged to and with him to make his life complete, spiritually and physically (his reproductive organs also showed this to him).

Secondly, it was God's purpose that Adam and Eve should be married and live together in love as a perfect husband and wife. Their bodies complemented each other for this purpose. God institutes marriage, and in doing that shows Adam and Eve that His purpose for them spiritually and physically is that they be one in love. I do not mean here that two people live side by side and share each other's separate life but that very really two become one — that is, two people, husband and wife, share one life spiritually and physically in love. How else can you explain Adam's speech, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"? Adam knew that it was good to love Eve and live his life through Eve, he needed her help to do this! And Eve knew that it was good that she should help Adam live his life of love through her.

Thirdly, it was God's purpose that Adam and Eve beget children through love. We know this not only from the fact that God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply but also because God had made them spiritually and physically able to obey His command. Their reproductive system was a precious and perfect gift from God by which Adam would bring forth children through Eve. Again, Eve is the help meet for Adam to bring forth their children in love, in their likeness.

A MEANS TO SERVE THE COUNSEL OF GOD

This question may be raised at this point: What was God's purpose in creating the reproductive system? We might settle for the simple answer: so that Adam and Eve could obey perfectly the command to be fruitful and multiply. From Adam and Eve's point of view that was true. They understood that as husband and wife their bodies were instruments to love and serve their Creator, and in the way of begetting children they obeyed God as His friend-servants. But this is looking at God's purpose in creating the reproductive system only from the viewpoint of our first parents. If we go to verse 26 of Genesis 1 we find the words, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." These words would seem to be explained in what we have already noted above, that is, God made man spiritually and physically capable of bearing the image of God, which is true righteousness, holiness, and the knowledge of God. Adam and Eve bore that image and thereby were able to serve God perfectly as husband and wife, and to beget perfect children, who would also serve God perfectly. What strikes us about all this, though, is the words "Let us make." Here we are turned from what is about to be made to Who is

going to do the making. And it is in these words that we see the Triune God's purpose, a greater purpose, in creating man and, of course, the reproductive system.

These words bring us to the counsel of God and to God's main purpose for all things. The creation of man and the reproductive system are related to that main purpose as means. Our first Scriptural principle of the reproductive system is that it is a means, as the revelation of God's counsel, to serve the purpose of the counsel of God.

What then is the counsel of God? Reformed people understand the counsel of God to be God's decree for all things. But even in God's decree we distinguish between the counsel of providence and the counsel of predestination. These are not two parts of the whole counsel of God but are various harmonious moments of the one counsel of God. God's counsel of predestination is often seen from two basic viewpoints: the infralapsarian and the supralapsarian viewpoints. For a more thorough explanation of the counsel of God, consult pages 153 to 165 of Herman Hoeksema's book, *Reformed Dogmatics*. Our purpose now, as Protestant Reformed teachers, is to see the order of the counsel of predestination from the supralapsarian viewpoint which is quoted here from page 165 of *Reformed Dogmatics*.

- 1) God wants to reveal His own eternal glory in the establishment of His covenant.
- 2) For the realization of this purpose the Son becomes the Christ, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, that in Him as the first begotten of the dead all the fullness of God might dwell.
- 3) For that Christ and the revelation of all His fulness the church is decreed and all the elect. In the decree of God Christ is not designed for the church, but the church for Christ. The church is His body, and serves the purpose to reveal the fulness there is in Him.
- 4) For the purpose of realizing this church of Christ, and, therefore, the glory of Christ, the reprobate are determined as vessels of wrath. Reprobation serves the purpose of election as the chaff serves the ripening of the wheat. This is in harmony with the current thought of Scripture; and we find it expressed literally in Isaiah 43:3, 4: "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."
- 5) Finally, in the counsel of God all other things in heaven and on earth are designed as means to the realization of both election and reprobation, and therefore, of the glory of Christ and His church.

God's counsel of predestination gives a fathomless depth of richness to the purpose of God in creating the human reproductive system. Now the words, "Let us make," bring to our minds a moment, a special moment, in God's eternal counsel. We understand here that the Triune God is talking with Himself and reveals to us in human language that God will bring into existence that which He has eternally conceived, the lord of creation, capable of loving God, God's friend-servant, man, a living soul. But now this living soul serves the purpose of God's counsel and, therefore, the first Adam serves the last Adam, Christ, the firstborn of every creature, by being the human instrument through which God brings, in the highest sense, the Christ into the world, and also the church of Christ. Part of the human reproductive system, the womb, is then the means by which God brings into earthly existence the Christ, incarnate, conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary, the female part of the human reproductive system, born of a virgin, without the instrumentality of the male part of the human reproductive system. And yet the Christ is also very God, the Son Who becomes the Christ by the divine will acting through a human means. Again, part of the human reproductive system is used by

the Son, the only begotten Son of God, to become the Christ. And furthermore, God brings into existence the elect church of Christ and the reprobate, who serve the church, that He has eternally conceived, through the means of the human reproductive system. These are wonderful and awesome truths which we believe by faith.

It will be worth our time to say a few words about the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary and about God's purpose in conception in regards to election and reprobation.

The conception of Christ by the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary is an amazing wonder. The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 14, Question and Answer 35, states, "What is the meaning of these words — 'He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary'? That God's eternal Son, who is, and continueth true and eternal God, took upon him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that he might also be the true seed of David, like unto his brethren in all things sin excepted." And in the Belgic Confession of Faith, Articles 18, 19 we read in part:

We confess, therefore, that God did fulfill the promise, which he made to the fathers, by the mouth of his holy prophets, when he sent into the world, at the time appointed by him, his own, only-begotten and eternal Son, who took upon him the form of a servant, and became like unto man, really assuming the true human nature, with all its infirmities, sin excepted, being conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the means of man, and did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, that he might be a real man...

We believe that by this conception, the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature; so that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person: yet, that each nature retains its own distinct properties. As then the divine nature hath always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth: so also hath the human nature not lost its properties, but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and retaining all the properties of a real body...

And the Scriptures speak of Christ's conception in Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 1:31,34. In Luke, Mary asks, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" To which the angel replies, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

A few comments as to how this relates to our study of the human reproductive system are in order — though this runs the risk of bringing this amazing wonder down to the level of the weak creature that we are, and of taking away from its importance. First, what is impossible with man is possible with God. In the counsel of God, the Son becomes the Christ and assumes a human nature only through a virgin. The will of man may not and can not bring forth the Christ. This is alluded to in Mary's words, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" and made clear by the angel's answer to her question. Secondly, part of the importance in the human reproductive system here is in this: God used part of it to accomplish a wonder of wonders which no man can comprehend except the Wonder of Wonders, Christ, Who is also very God. The human reproductive system can not explain the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary, because God did not use the means of a man. Thirdly, the main importance of the human reproductive system here is that it was the means by which Christ assumed a real human nature and was born into this sin-cursed world. But even here we are faced with

another wonder. Christ's human nature was without sin — the exact opposite of our human nature. All of this leads us to the conclusion that we must not delve into these wonders any deeper than God permits us to in the Scriptures, for these are things which God has alone accomplished for our benefit and which we can not fully comprehend, but must believe by faith.

That Adam and Eve, as husband and wife, would be the instruments by which the elect and reprobate would be brought into this world is clearly understood from Genesis 3, 4. God's ultimate purpose was not that Adam and Eve, as husband and wife, be fruitful for the purpose of bringing perfect children into the world to have a covenant life with God. Then, you realize, there would have been no reason for Christ, our Savior, to be born. Adam, Eve, their children, and their children's children would have lived perfectly in their earthly existence serving God forever, but would not have reached the highest revelation of the covenant life of God. The highest possible revelation of the covenant life with God could only be reached in Christ, according to God's counsel. Next, after the fall of our first parents, God says to the serpent in Genesis 3:15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." God distinguishes two seeds, the seed of the serpent, which means the serpent brood, the reprobate, and finally the Antichrist; and the seed of the woman, the children of God in the line of the continued generations of the elect and in the highest sense, Christ. We also begin to see God's counsel of predestination in the first two sons of Adam and Eve. God had respect unto Abel and to his offering but not unto Cain and his offering. And so human reproduction serves the purpose of bringing into this life the elect and reprobate according to the counsel of God.

An even more striking example of the human reproductive system serving God's purpose according to election and reprobation is seen in Rebecca's conception of her twins, Jacob and Esau. Isaac entreats the Lord because Rebecca had no children, which shows that this believing husband and wife knew that conception was by the will of God through the means of their bodies. When Rebecca conceives and goes to God to find out why the two children were struggling in her womb, God says to her, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Rebecca was made to understand that God loved one of these children and hated the other. God also brings this fact to the house of Israel through the prophet Malachi when He says in Malachi 1:2, 3, "I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." And again, God speaks to the church through Paul the apostle in Romans 9:10-13,

And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Conception of a child in the womb through the means of the reproductive system serves God's counsel and is the means through which the elect and reprobate are brought into this world by the sovereign will of God. "O truly is the nation blest whose God before the

world confessed, Jehovah is alone; and blest the people is whom He has made His heritage to be, and chosen for His own" (*Psalter* 86:3).

REFLECTION OF GOD'S LOVE

God's plan for all human reproduction involves three aspects: marriage, coitus, giving birth. Scriptural principles involving the reproductive system may involve all three, two, or one of these aspects of God's plan. Part of the reproductive system, however, we must remember, does not necessarily involve a bringing to birth. To be more precise, one of God's purposes in the marriage state was that there be a close physical relationship, coitus, between husband and wife, not only to bring forth children, but to "pay the debt" in love. Although the means is the same that God uses to bring forth children into this world, God's purpose for that means is twofold: to pay the debt and to bring forth children in love.

There are times when God withholds children from the womb. God, according to the purpose of His counsel, closes the womb of a covenant mother. Sarah and Hannah immediately come to our minds. It is true that God did open their wombs, the one to bring forth the promised seed, Isaac, and the other to bring forth a prophet of the Lord, Samuel, and other children. The point here is that God closes the womb for reasons that we may not understand, but which carry out the counsel of God. Those of us, therefore, who are childless need not be ashamed nor despair. Even though the reproductive system may be complete, God still is the giver of life. And remember, too, that the reproductive system was complete, so that Adam was able to love his help meet for him, his complement, his "female-man" who was also able to love him. After this main purpose, then, God gives the command to be fruitful. A married couple whom God, for His reasons, does not give children, still obeys that command, even though God closes the womb.

Since one of the principles of reproduction is that human reproduction is a means by which God populates the earth with the elect and reprobate, the question may be asked, Is there another principle involved when God closes the womb? When a husband and wife have no children do they in their life show forth another principle involving the human reproductive system? Our second principle comes to the forefront. Although the next principle involves all three aspects of human reproduction, for our purposes we will center on the two aspects of marriage and coitus. It is God's purpose that husband and wife reflect through each other His love; and part of that reflection of love is seen in marriage and coitus.

God is love. In the Old Testament love pictures a spiritual bond of fellowship by which two parties cleave to each other and long after each other with mutual delight. In the New Testament the cause for this mutual delight is that the two parties are ethically perfect and holy. This love is present in the divine nature of God and exists between the three persons of the Holy Trinity. Love is eulogized in I Corinthians 13:6: "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth." Man expresses his love by seeking to be ethically perfect. And we also see that man's holiness can only consist in being God-centered and consecrated with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength to the living God. The two are joined together. Love is an expression of God's holiness. God is holy and, therefore, God is love.

This principle of God's love is reflected in God's plan for human reproduction. The love that pervades human reproduction does not make coitus simply human pleasure,

and giving birth simply a natural function of the body. Love adds the ethical spiritual qualities in human reproduction that are necessary in the lives of God's people.

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS CHURCH

Our third Scriptural principle, as seen in human reproduction, is the principle of Christ's love for His church and the church's love for Christ her head. This beautiful principle of the marriage covenant of Christ and His church is revealed in many places of Scripture, especially in the Song of Solomon 8:6,7; Ephesians 5:22-33; and Colossians 3:19. There is a danger that when we use the Scriptural texts that focus on conjugal love, we lose sight of the whole picture of Christ's love for His church as expressed throughout the Song of Solomon, Ephesians, and elsewhere in the Scriptures. The teaching of this principle, as seen in reproduction, includes other passages than those which focus on conjugal love. The nature of this paper, however, demands that we pay special attention to the above-mentioned passages.

As teachers we may think of the divine arrangement as analogous to the marriage of Christ and His church: marriage -we are married to Christ our husband; coitus — oneness of body and soul, and Christ's love for the church and the church's love for Christ in that marriage; giving birth — Christ begets many sons and daughters by His Word and Spirit.

The nature of love in human reproduction is that two become one, united together spiritually, mentally, and physically. When a husband loves his wife he loves himself, and the two become one flesh. The love that a husband shares with his wife must be a reflection of the love that Christ has for His church. Christ pours Himself into His church. He takes the believer, us, to Himself so that we become engrafted into Him and derive our life from Him. Our Lord breathes into us His own life and power so that we live not only with Him but *in* Him. And the church expresses her love for Christ by living thankful, holy, and obedient lives. *Psalter* 125:1-4 expresses this relationship:

O Royal Bride, give heed, and to my words attend;
For Christ the King forsake the world and every former friend.
Thy beauty and thy grace shall then delight the King;
He only is thy rightful Lord, to Him thy worship bring.
To thee, since thou art His, great honor shall be shown;
The rich shall bring their gifts to thee, Thy glory they shall own.
Enthroned in royal state, all glorious thou shalt dwell;
With garments fair, inwrought with gold, The Church He loveth well.

The husband, therefore, will give of himself for his wife, he will love her, as much as he would love himself, because in loving her he loves himself. Just as our Lord nourishes and cherishes us, so the husband will nourish and cherish his wife. He will love her, pouring his life into her. And that love can not be quenched by many waters nor can it be drowned in a flood. No storms of trouble will lessen his love for her nor hers for him. This is because the husband knows that God's love is abiding and everlasting, which is the love he must show to his wife. Such is the love that Christ has for the church and such is the love a husband has for his wife, and the godly wife for her husband, even as the church has for Christ.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/TEACHERS

Every covenant parent has the God-given responsibility to teach his or her children about the wonder and beauty of the human reproductive system. There are many

means that God provides for this purpose so that our covenant children are not nurtured by the piggish profanity of the world of darkness, which the world is willing to heap upon their senses. Satan, no doubt, wants our young people to be made spiritually senseless. To that end he uses the mad dogs of worldly-mindedness, who bark their heads off with their perverted desire to tell it like it is, to distort the beauty of reproduction by heightening the sensual lust of man, which is a powerful force present within each of us. Our young people need not only to know about the physical aspects of coitus, the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and birth, but also they need to see reproduction in the divine light of the Word of God which He has given us for this purpose.

Are you, Protestant Reformed teachers, a means by which our young people are taught reproduction in the divine light of the Word of God? And are you a means by which the physical aspects of human reproduction are taught to covenant youth in the classroom? As to the latter question, no teacher may instruct covenant children in the area of reproduction, which is the responsibility of parents, even if the parents are negligent in performing their duty. But to assume that there is therefore no aspect of reproduction that is ever to be taught in our schools would be a false assumption indeed. Human reproduction is taught by you, dear teacher, not as a formal course on the subject with all of the physical details, but during the daily use of the Scriptures in the classroom. This is not to say that every day you are purposely to use Scripture in the classroom to teach children about human reproduction. But let us not be blind to the fact that the Holy Scriptures are abundantly filled with examples of the whole aspect of reproduction, which God has graciously given parents so that they may instruct their children. And some of these passages, you as teacher will use in the instruction of God's children so that they will raise questions which touch on certain aspects of human reproduction. Some of these questions may only be answered by parents, but some questions must be answered by you as you stand in the place of parents in the classroom using the Scriptures. We can, therefore, say in answer to the first question, that you are a means by which covenant children will be taught about human reproduction in the light of God's Word.

A couple of examples will suffice to clear up any misunderstanding in the matter above. In the study of the lives of biblical characters, e.g., King David, we will come across passages which may raise questions in the minds of our covenant youth, passages such as "...and she came in unto him, and he lay with her;" the reading of which may occasion the question, "What does God mean when He tells us that 'he lay with her' "? Rather than stumbling around with an answer and stepping into the sphere of covenant instruction that rightfully belongs to parents, you, as a teacher, will tell the questioner to ask his or her parents the detailed meaning of the verse. You do have something to say here as an answer without overstepping your bounds. You could say, "King David and Bathsheba acted as though they were husband and wife while actually Bathsheba was Urijah's wife." In doing this, you have pointed out the sin of adultery that was committed, which you must teach.

Or take this example. You are studying the life of Abram and Sarai and read, "through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age." Obviously you are not going to teach about menopause, or the physical aspects of conception, or the details of giving birth. But you are going to teach covenant children that Sarah's body could not produce any more children unless

God gave her that ability, which He did and which she believed by faith that He would give her. Human reproduction is a gift from God which He sovereignly determines, so that an old, godly woman is able to bear a child, a promised seed. As teachers, we have been given sanctified wisdom so that we will know what answers to give to questions that can only be answered in detail by covenant parents and to questions that we must answer as teachers.

INFLUENCE ON OUR LIVES

The extent of the influence that the reproductive system has on us runs the gamut of our daily lives, from birth to death. As God brings us into this life through our parents, our mothers are saved in childbearing (I Tim. 2:15). They have the promise of our covenant God, that He uses them as a means to bring forth His children into a sin-cursed world. And even though God never promises that all or some of our children will be His children, God does promise that He will continue His covenant in the line of continued generations. For the sanctified mother in Christ, this is a wonderful blessing as she brings forth sinful children into this valley of tears. Godly women experience a deep spiritual and physical joy as they cradle their babies in their arms. There is no despair, anger, or indifference shown towards their infants, but instead, a profound responsible love, which says, "With God's guiding grace, I will raise you, precious gift from above, in the fear of the Lord." What this means is that covenant parents, who possess a sinful human nature, will instruct their child, who possesses the same sinful human nature, in the doctrines of the church, whether the child be the seed of the woman or the seed of the serpent. And this responsible love is already reflected in the attitude of the mother while still in the hospital.

The influence that the reproductive system has on our lives also involves our being born male or female. You often hear little children say, "I want a brother" or "I want a sister," while their mother is pregnant. When God brings us into this world, our gender is important, even though we do not realize it. Being born a boy or a girl is important to God and to us. Through the means of reproduction, God fulfills the promise He gave to His people as in the example of Abraham and Sarah. Sarah laughs at the idea that she will bear a son in nine months, because she is ninety years old, way past the years of childbearing. But God will accomplish the impossible. And Sarah did bring forth a son, the promised seed, Isaac, at ninety years of age. Another striking example is King Hezekiah of Judah. Hezekiah asked God not to take his life, not because he was scared to die, but because the promise of God would not be fulfilled. Hezekiah had no children, and, more importantly, no son. If he died, then the promise always to give a son to succeed the king to the throne of Judah would be violated. For the cause of God's promise, Hezekiah asked God to give him a longer life. This was right for Hezekiah to do, as we know that God gave Hezekiah fifteen more years of life, time enough to beget and raise in the fear of the Lord a son, who would succeed him on the throne. The biblical examples could be multiplied. Although there are few examples of the births of daughters, we may not conclude that they are worth less than a son. God's emphasis for the daughter is that she grow to be a God-fearing woman to serve Him and, if this is God's will for her, to marry and bring forth the covenant seed into this world.

How we began from our parents and developed in our mother is often overlooked in our teaching. A couple of paragraphs here may help.

God created you in the ovaries of your mother as one ovum out of approximately 300,000 ova. As an ovum, you were expelled from one of your mother's 400 follicles that develop enough to expel their ova. Then God made you a mature ovum traveling the length of your mother's fallopian tubes at a predetermined time, ready to be fertilized. At this time you were genetically 23 unpaired chromosomes encapsulated in your spherical home. In God's counsel you were only half complete within your mother's reproductive system. The other half of you was in your father. By God's will you began there as a sperm in a seminiferous tubule and traveled with half a billion other sperm to a destination within the womb of your mother. And again you were 23 chromosomes within your tailed, oval home swimming to reach your God-appointed ovum. The end of all ovum and sperm is death unless fertilization takes place. By the time you reached your mature ovum there were only 1,000-3,000 other sperm with you, and God determined before you began that you would be the only sperm to succeed in entering your spherical home. God brought you together as a complete complement of 46 paired chromosomes and began to divide you repeatedly.

After one month in the womb of your mother, you were given a beating heart, completely formed foundation of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and sense organs, and the building blocks for forty pairs of muscles. This was your period of relatively greatest size increase, so that you were approximately a quarter of an inch long. God had covered you with skin and given you arms and legs by the eighth week of life. As to body organs, you were complete, though you weighed less than an ounce. In the third month God enabled you to kick your feet, move your feet, thumbs, wrists, and turn your head, frown, squint, and open your mouth to drink and swallow the fluid surrounding you. Many other wonderful changes took place while you were in your mother during the next six months until God brought you forth into this world.

The words of Psalter 383:1, 2 come to mind.

All that I am I owe to Thee,
Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me;
I give my Maker thankful praise,
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.
Ere into being I was brought,
Thy eye did see, and in Thy thought
My life in all its perfect plan
Was ordered ere my days began.

SATAN'S ATTEMPT TO RENDER US SENSELESS

Satan has not been idle in producing his every evil work. Human reproduction is an area of human life where he, with a great effort, gains his most willing proselytes to work his most diabolical purposes. This is not surprising, for two reasons. Satan has been trying, from the fall of our first parents into sin, to annihilate the seed of the woman. What better place to begin than in the area of human reproduction. And what more efficient means than through abortion, genetic manipulation, in vitro and vitro fertilization, surrogate mothers, artificial insemination, contraceptives, and intra-uterine devices. Satan also knows the power of the lust of the flesh within us and will desire to have us be his most willing servants in order to destroy us. So why not unashamedly teach that vile affections, e.g., homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery, fornication, incest, and bestiality are good because we must feel good about ourselves and have freedom to live our own life styles. Notice that all of these words are in some way connected with the

gift of human reproduction that God has given to us. The nominal Christian young person is increasingly being caught up in these evil practices, either willingly or unwillingly.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome has taken the world by storm. What a glaring indication this is of how widespread is the sin of homosexuality. “Women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, how they burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Rom.1:26, 27). Unequivocally, God has visited this dread disease upon the modern-day human race as an evidence of His hatred of taking that which is holy and good and defiling it. As the gift of the body is good, so the use of that precious gift must be to do good. The human reproductive system being a part of that good gift must also be used to do good. But in the use of this body system, man knows no bounds in perverting the good to work that which is vile. A consequence of that wickedness is AIDS, a widespread deadly disease which knows no cultural bounds. God has used the little things of His creation — His unseen armies — to bring to naught the works of darkness. By God’s grace and love may the church be kept safe from the horrors of this dreadful disease.

Suction, dilatation and curettage, salt poisoning, and Caesarean section are the four basic methods of abortion. Some of these methods, we must remember, are used for purposes other than abortion. But when wicked men, who will not restrain their lust for power and murder, use these methods for an evil purpose, then the murderers are to be condemned, not the methods. D&C is sometimes performed after a child is born because the mother’s body is not able to discharge the placenta that is attached to the uterine wall, and therefore the placenta must be carefully scraped from the uterine wall by a doctor. But for a doctor to use the same method literally to cut into pieces a first trimester fetus is murder. The doctor, not the method, is to be condemned for his villainous actions.

The abortion moguls, who also include some geneticists, boldly assert that if there are serious defects in a fetus then the fetus should be aborted. Mongoloid fetuses must be aborted to save the parents and society from the hardship of raising a mongoloid child. Even the daughters of hemophiliacs must be aborted in order to keep the disease from being passed on to the daughters’ sons. And those fetuses that will develop cancer later on in life must also be aborted in order to spare the hardships of the eventual early death of a son or daughter. The reasoning in all of this comes down to a basic argument: in order to spare this generation and the next generation from the burden of genetic diseases or socio-economic ills, those who will be the cause of these burdens must be aborted now — even if they are normal fetuses! To continue the line of thought, the genetic jugglers reason this way: If we can alter the genetic code, and/or be selective in the moment of conception, then we must do this in order to rid the human race of a potential burden of genetic diseases. Presto! All of the methods that involve controlling human reproduction have been justified. God and man are served by killing fetuses, controlling conception, and manipulating the human genetic code. And let us not forget, after all, we are trying to make this world a better place to live in. With this reasoning the child of God will have no part.

As teachers, we recognize the evil intent of man, but we do not teach our children the details of the methods man uses to further his sin, because the explanation of details belongs to Christian parents. Instead, we warn of being partakers of the wickedness of

evil men and stress the need to live holy, to live a life of love, and to live over against the world of darkness until Christ's coming upon the clouds of glory to take His people, in order that the earth and heavens might be burnt with fire and made into a new heavens and new earth where Christ and His people may dwell for ever in everlasting perfection.

CLOSING REMARKS AND TABLE OF REFERENCES

There are other principles which I have not written about, e.g., God's covenant in the line of continued generations, the image of God in man, the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, and regeneration or being born again. Perhaps these could serve as a Part II to this system of the human body. But to my mind, these three principles are enough for us to use in teaching covenant children, whether that instruction is an introduction to a unit of study on the human body or as instruction whenever the opportunity arises. What follows now is a short concordance of sorts, providing you with Scriptural references to various words involving human reproduction.

CONCORDANCE

ADULTERY

(to commit)

Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:28, 32
Leviticus 20:10 (with another man's wife)
Leviticus 10:11 (with father's wife)
Leviticus 20:12 (with daughter-in-law)
Leviticus 20:13 (with two men)
Do not commit a. — Mark 10:19
Was taken in a. — John 8:4

(adulteress or adulterer)

Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:19
Friendship with the world — James 4:4

BARES — BEAR — BEGET

(to bear young)

Rebecca b. Jacob & Esau — Genesis 25:19-26
Tamar b. Pharez & Zarah — Genesis 38:2-30
Jochebed b. Moses & Aaron — Exodus 6:20
Manoah's wife b. Samson — Judges 13
Bathsheba b. a son — II Samuel 11
Jeremiah laments his birth — Jeremiah 20:14-18
Foolish son a grief — Proverbs 17:21, 25
Abraham laughs when God says Sarah b. a son — Genesis 17:15-19
Sarah laughs — Genesis 18:9-15
Christ's birth announced — Isaiah 7:14
Deuteronomy 28:53-58
Bear children in captivity — Jeremiah 29:4-7
Foretold for Ishmael — Genesis 17:20
Hezekiah's sons — II Kings 20:18
Son who is a robber — Ezekiel 18:10-18

BEGOTTEN

(only born)

B. of God — Psalm 2:7

Word b. of Father — John 1:14,18; 3:16,18

(procreate)

Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5

(firstborn.)

First begotten — Hebrews 1:6

of dead — Revelation 1:5

(regeneration)

in Christ b. through the gospel — I Corinthians 4:15

(bear again)

b. unto a lively hope — I Peter 1:3

BORN

(be born)

Christ b. king of the Jews — Matthew 2:2, 4

Christ b., Satan seeks to devour — Revelation 12:4, 5, 13

(to bear)

Isaac — Genesis 21:2

Leah's children — Genesis 29:31

Children of Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah — Genesis 30:1-24

Boaz goes in unto Ruth, Obed is b. — Ruth 4:13

Josiah's birth foretold — I Kings 13:2

David tells Solomon of his birth — I Chronicles 22:9

Job laments his birth — Job 3:3

(procreate, regenerate)

Angel tells Mary of Christ's birth — Luke 1:26-38

Paul is freeborn — Acts 22:28

Moses hid three months when b. — Hebrews 11:23

Man b. into trouble — Job 5:7

Nicodemus' question, b. again — John 3:3-8

Christ tells Pilate His purpose — John 18:37

Purpose of God according to election — Romans 9:11

Free vs. bondwoman/promised vs. flesh — Galatians 4:22-31

B. of Christ — I John 2:29

(born within)

Wicked go astray as soon as b. — Psalm 58:3

Children know God's truth which should be b. — Psalm 78:4-8

Brother born for adversity — Proverbs 17:17

CHILDBEARING

Saved in c. — I Timothy 2:15

CONCEIVE

Undefined wife c. seed — Numbers 5:11 In sin — Psalm 51:5

(pregnancy)

Multiply sorrow and conception — Genesis 3:16

(conceive)

Sarah c. seed — Hebrews 11:11
(pregnant, conceive)
Knew, conceived, bare Cain — Genesis 4:1-26
Knew, conceived, bare Enoch — Genesis 4:17
Knew, conceived, bare Seth — Genesis 4:25
Hagar c. — Genesis 16:4, 5
Sarah c. Isaac — Genesis 21:2, 3
Rebecca c. — Genesis 25:21
Hannah c. — I Samuel 1:11, 20
Shunamite woman c. — II Kings 4:14-17
Prophetess c. — Isaiah 8:3
Gomer c. — Hosea 1:3

FORNICATION (harlotry, adultery, incest)

Abstain from f. — Acts 15:20, 29; I Thessalonians 4:3, 4
Filled with f. — Romans 1:29
F. between son and mother — I Corinthians 5:1, 9
To avoid f. let everyone have his own wife — I Corinthians 7:2
Let not f. be named among you — Ephesians 5:3

FRUIT(FUL)

(reward)
Fruit of womb — Psalm 127:3 (bear, bring forth)
Be f. — Genesis 1:22, 28; 4:1, 7; 35:11
Make exceedingly f. — Genesis 17:6
Ishmael made f. — Genesis 17:20
Jacob to be f. — Genesis 28:3
Joseph is a f. bough — Genesis 49:22
Made f. in the covenant — Leviticus 26:9
F. vine — Psalm 128:3

GO IN (to go in)

G. to his brother's wife as a duty — Deuteronomy 25:5
Solomon went in to many strange wives — I Kings 11:1-3

JOINED

(in marriage)
What God hath j. together — Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9
(cleave)
J. unto his wife — Ephesians 5:28, 31

LOVE

(affection)
Ravished with her l. — Proverbs 5:19
(affection for, sexually or otherwise)
Isaac takes Rebecca and l. her — Genesis 24:67
Samson l. a woman — Judges 16:4
Mical l. David — I Samuel 18:20

ONE (to unify)

Cleave to his wife and they shall be o. flesh — Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:8; I Corinthians 6:16

TRAVAIL

(to bear)

Tamar's time of her t. — Genesis 38:7

Kings of earth fear and pain as of a woman in t. — Psalm 48:6

Zion fears the people of the north — Jeremiah 6:24

Judah sorrows in God's punishment — Jeremiah 13:21

Rachel t., and she had hard labour — Genesis 35:16, 17

The wife of Phinehas t. — I Samuel 4:19

(in travail)

Zion cries as a woman in t. because of murderers — Jeremiah 4:31

(be born)

Woman hath sorrow then joy — John 16:21

WOMB

(the womb)

Firstborn openeth the w. is mine — Exodus 13:2

Bless the fruit of the w. — Deuteronomy 7:13

Job questions why he is brought out of the w. — Job 10:18

Did not one fashion us in the w. — Job 31:15

David taken out of his mother's w. — Psalm 22:9, 10; 71:6

God formed Israel from the w. — Isaiah 44:2, 24

The Lord hath called me from the w. — Isaiah 49:1, 5

Jeremiah before he came forth of the w. — Jeremiah 1:5

(cherishes the fetus)

God carries the remnant from the w. — Isaiah 46:3