

The First Human Pair and Their Redeemer

Then God said:

*Let Us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*¹

In the beginning God created Adam and Eve. He uniquely fashioned them in His own image and likeness and placed them in Eden on the sixth day. The human pair discovered themselves in the midst of a network of intersecting relationships. They were given a profound relationship with God their Creator who personally appeared to them in the cool of the evening. They also had a wonderfully fulfilling relationship in kind with each other as fellow image bearers. In addition, they were given a relationship with the creation all around them. Their vocation was to represent the Creator's presence and purpose toward the creation they found themselves in. Having been created in the image of the personal Creator, the human pair were thereby capacitated for their various relationships and vocations. By virtue of that image, they could relate responsively and responsibly to God, to other image bearers and to the creation. What a high calling God had prepared mankind for!

The one condition required for them to be rightly related to this network of responsibilities and to transact as divinely intended, was for them to trust their Creator with all their being, even beyond their understanding. As long as they kept faithful in this divine vertical-relationship all the other relationships would be healthy and fulfilled. Sadly, both Adam and Eve fell prey to the creation-saboteur and all their relationships dis-integrated. The walking 'serpent' led the image-bearer Eve astray. Eve in turn enticed the man, her leader, into sin. Adam in turn chose to follow the creature rather than the Creator. In response God handed them over into the power of this de-creation disorder: the woman was to be dominated by her husband and the man was to suffer under to the Creator's world that he was originally designed to rule over. Thus sin came into the world and produced, in a word, *death*. All the wonderful relationships were consequently corrupted by sin.

However, God immediately promised to send a Deliverer who would save men and women from their chaos and alienation. The seed of the woman was to crush the serpent! A future image bearer would re-align creation and the saboteur-animal would be at man's feet as originally intended. This Deliverer would rectify the fall and superlatively rehabilitate everything. He would bring peace and life. God would send a Saviour to save mankind and the world from the destruction of the deadly virus of sin as it mortally ate away at the core of its hosts. This Saviour would succeed where Adam and Eve had failed.

This Deliverer would have to be a man and yet more than man. If he were not human, he would not qualify to act in man's stead. If he was not more than man, he would not be able to act in their stead. Mere solidarity would not be enough. The Redeemer would have to take upon himself all the consequences of man's failed relationships, and experience their death and alienation in all its dimensions. God's kind intention was that as the Restorer took their sin and its consequences on himself, so he would take away and bury the whole old order and introduce a new order of life and salvation: a re-creation under a new Adam. All this Jesus Christ did! By obeying God in a garden and saying 'not my will but Your will be done', and by taking on the sin, failure and guilt of the human race, Jesus decisively dealt with the tragic and wrath-deserving malady of mankind. What Eve and Adam lost at a tree, the Saviour won on a Tree. Rising from the dead and having been seated at God's right hand as sign of the completion of this work, he won for all who believe in him full restoration in all the relationships. He accomplished for all humanity comprehensive salvation. As second Adam he ushered

¹ Genesis 1:26-27.

in the new creation in the midst of the old. With sin having been decisively and effectively dealt with God placed all things in creation under the second Adam's feet. God's original purpose for the human pair had now been fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Yet Jesus Christ did more than restore what Adam and Eve had lost. He did not merely undo what Adam ruined and corrupted. He gave more than Adam lost. When Christ took on our human nature and rose again he transformed that nature in himself. God's restoration outstripped the original! More than this, Jesus gave us access into something of the quality of what he himself had in God from before the foundation of the world. He gave us what Adam never had. He came to take man into the very life of the Trinity, the divine society – of a quality that Adam and Eve had never known. He became like us so that we could become like him! He entered into our relationships so we could enter into his! Come to him now, and find the beginnings of God's great restorative salvation.

Paul Harwig 2012

[This glorious inheritance that God has now given us in Christ Jesus is the subject of my booklet *Experiencing the Trinity*. In Christ we are positioned once again in the midst of a whole network of relationships that constitute the content of our glorious inheritance. There are many facets to this inheritance, yet I focus mainly on those relationships that we now have with the Trinity. So, I invite you to join me as we unpack these glorious riches and, through faith, let us enter more fully into what is ours *only in and through Christ the Lord, the Deliverer and Restorer of all!*

See paulhartwig.weebly.com/articles for the booklet]