Sexual Wholeness in Marriage: A Comprehensive Synthesis of Core Concepts

Adapted and Expanded from Busby, Leavitt, & Carroll's *Sexual Wholeness in Marriage,* and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's *Of Souls, Symbols, & Sacraments*

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Introduction

In *Sexual Wholeness in Marriage*, Busby, Leavitt, and Carroll (2022) present a deeply integrated and faith-centered framework for understanding sexuality within marriage. Rather than reducing sexual intimacy to physical function, performance, pleasure, or mere abstinence before marriage, the authors frame sexuality as a sacred, developmental, relational, emotional, spiritual, and embodied experience designed by God to foster unity, covenant connection, growth, and joy.

Their model emphasizes that sexual intimacy cannot be fully understood when separated into isolated parts. True sexual wholeness emerges when the spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of sexuality become integrated into one unified experience of covenant love. Sexuality is therefore not simply something couples "do," but part of who they are becoming together.

The book directly challenges fragmented approaches to sexuality that dominate both secular and religious cultures. On one hand, some religious approaches emphasize fear, shame, repression, or avoidance of sexuality. On the other hand, secular culture often reduces sexuality to pleasure, stimulation, experimentation, and bodily gratification disconnected from covenant meaning and emotional attachment (see Holland, 1988). The authors argue that both approaches ultimately diminish human intimacy because both separate important aspects of sexuality from one another.

Instead, Busby and colleagues advocate for a model of sexual wholeness grounded in: covenant commitment, emotional safety, spiritual meaning, mutual agency, vulnerability, personal growth, attachment and bonding, sacrifice and service, joy and flourishing, and Christ-centered healing and grace.

At the center of the model is the belief that sexuality is not opposed to spirituality. Rather, sexuality is one of the primary ways husbands and wives learn unity, selflessness, vulnerability, covenant fidelity, and eternal partnership.

The Holistic Model of Sexual Wholeness

The authors propose that healthy sexuality in marriage requires integration across at least three interdependent domains: 1) spiritual; 2) emotional; and 3) physical (Table 1). The model suggests that the healthiest sexual relationships occur when couples experience all three dimensions simultaneously.

Table 1

Spiritual Intimacy	Emotional Intimacy	Physical Intimacy
Meaning & Divine Purpose	Love & Emotional Bonding	Pleasure & Sensual Enjoyment
Covenant Commitment	Secure Attachment	Sexual Satisfaction
Eternal Identity & Worth	Unity & Connection	Desire & Attraction
Sacredness & Reverence	Safety & Trust	Arousal & Responsiveness
Growth & Spiritual Progression	Vulnerability & Openness	Affection & Touch
Christlike Love & Service	Empathy & Acceptance	Sexual Expression
Moral Alignment & Virtue	Communication & Attunement	Passion & Physical Closeness
Selflessness & Consecration	Comfort & Emotional Security	Embodied Intimacy
Shared Meaning & Vision	Mutual Validation	Physical Bonding
Hope, Joy, & Eternal Perspective	Belonging & Companionship	Reproduction & Creation

Spiritual Dimension

The spiritual dimension of sexuality involves meaning, covenant, eternal identity, discipleship, sacrifice, purpose, and alignment with God's design. Sexuality becomes sacred when it draws couples closer to God and to each other.

The spiritual dimension asks questions such as:

- What eternal meaning does sexuality hold?
- How does sexual intimacy deepen covenant unity?
- How does sexuality help couples become more Christlike?
- How can sexual intimacy become an expression of love, trust, sacrifice, and consecration?

The authors argue that sexuality is central to spiritual progression because it teaches individuals how to unite body, heart, mind, and soul in loving covenant relationships.

Emotional Dimension

The emotional dimension includes attachment, trust, safety, vulnerability, communication, affection, empathy, and bonding. Emotionally healthy sexuality requires: feeling emotionally safe, feeling valued and desired, open communication, mutual empathy, emotional

responsiveness, secure attachment, acceptance and trust. The emotional dimension is often the bridge between spiritual meaning and physical expression. Without emotional safety, physical intimacy may feel empty, mechanical, coercive, or disconnected.

Physical Dimension

The physical dimension includes arousal, desire, pleasure, touch, attraction, orgasm, and bodily responsiveness. The authors do not minimize the importance of physical pleasure. Rather, they teach that physical pleasure is part of God's design and serves important bonding, attachment, relational, and procreative purposes.

However, physical pleasure alone is insufficient for lasting intimacy when disconnected from emotional and spiritual unity.

Sexual Fragmentation

One of the book's most important contributions is its explanation of sexual fragmentation, explained as follows: "Sexual fragmentation occurs whenever the spiritual, physical, and emotional components of human sexuality are separated or devalued" (Busby et al., 2022, p. 41). In other words, fragmentation occurs whenever sexuality becomes disconnected from spiritual, emotional, and physical wholeness. Examples include: sex without emotional intimacy, spirituality without embodiment, physical pleasure without covenant meaning, desire without attachment, shame surrounding sexuality, lust without love, duty-based sex without mutual connection, performance-oriented sexuality, pornography-driven expectations, or emotional withdrawal during physical intimacy. The authors explain that fragmentation weakens attachment, diminishes intimacy, increases confusion, and often leads to shame, dissatisfaction, resentment, loneliness, or exploitation.

Type 1: Spirit-Only Fragmentation

Spirit-only fragmentation prioritizes spirituality while suppressing, fearing, minimizing, or distrusting sexuality and the body. This perspective often teaches—directly or indirectly—that:

- Sexual desire is dangerous
- Sexual thoughts are inherently sinful
- Good people should not strongly desire sex (physical passion threatens righteousness)
- Spirituality and sexuality oppose one another
- Sexual purity primarily means sexual avoidance

The authors summarize this fragmented belief system as: "Sex or salvation" rather than "sex and salvation." In spirit-only fragmentation, sexuality becomes associated with guilt, fear, shame, embarrassment, or silence.

Sources of Spirit-Only Fragmentation

This fragmentation commonly develops through: fear-based religious messaging, shame-centered chastity lessons, silence surrounding healthy sexuality, traumatic sexual experiences, negative body messaging, perfectionism, rigid moralism, poor marriage preparation, and lack of emotional education.

Consequences of spirit-only fragmentation may lead to: sexual anxiety, low desire in marriage, difficulty transitioning into marital intimacy, shame surrounding arousal, fear of sexual expression, difficulty communicating sexually, avoidance of intimacy, sexual pain disorders, emotional withdrawal, and inability to experience pleasure without guilt. The authors emphasize that many faithful individuals enter marriage highly spiritually prepared but profoundly underprepared emotionally and relationally for healthy intimacy.

Good Girl Syndrome and Good Boy Syndrome

Busby and colleagues discuss the phenomenon often called "Good Girl Syndrome" (or "Good Boy Syndrome"), where highly religious individuals internalize the belief that sexual feelings themselves are problematic.

Common beliefs include:

- "Good people should not feel sexual desire."
- "Sex is dirty or shameful."
- "Talking about sex is inappropriate."
- "Pleasure is selfish."
- "Righteous people suppress sexuality."
- "Sex is only for procreation."
- "Spiritual people should not strongly desire physical intimacy."

These internalized beliefs often create tremendous confusion after marriage because individuals are suddenly expected to embrace the very thing they spent years fearing. The authors emphasize that healthy marital sexuality requires not merely behavioral abstinence before marriage, but the development of healthy meanings about sexuality.

Type 2: Body-Only Fragmentation

Body-only fragmentation disconnects sexuality from emotional attachment, covenant meaning, spiritual purpose, and relational intimacy. In this model, sexuality becomes primarily about: pleasure, performance, stimulation, arousal, technique, novelty, physical satisfaction, and orgasm. The authors explain that modern secular culture frequently promotes this fragmented understanding of sexuality.

Body-only fragmentation assumes:

- Physical satisfaction equals intimacy
- Sexual chemistry determines relationship success
- Pleasure is the highest sexual goal
- Sexual freedom means unrestricted expression
- Desire should always feel spontaneous and intense
- Sex exists primarily for individual fulfillment

Cultural Reinforcement

The authors note that modern media, pornography, hook-up culture, entertainment, and even some therapeutic models reinforce body-only fragmentation. Examples include: pornography, casual sexual relationships, friends-with-benefits arrangements, situationships, hypersexualized media, performance-oriented sexual expectations, objectification, and consumer-based views of sexuality.

Consequences of body-only fragmentation often leads to: emotional emptiness, objectification, addictive sexual patterns, loss of trust, reduced attachment security, performance anxiety, escalating novelty seeking, infidelity, decreased emotional intimacy, and loneliness despite sexual activity. The authors emphasize that physical arousal alone cannot create deep relational intimacy.

Fear-Based Metaphors

The authors strongly critique fear-based sexual teaching metaphors commonly used in religious settings. Examples include: crushed flowers, dirty tape, tarnished wedding dresses, broken plates, chewed gum, unwrapped cupcakes, or permanently damaged objects. Although often well-intended, these metaphors unintentionally communicate:

- Sexual mistakes permanently ruin people
- Purity can never be restored
- Sexual sin destroys worth
- Individuals become “damaged goods”
- Repentance cannot fully heal
- Sexuality itself is dangerous

The authors warn that these metaphors frequently create long-term shame, fear, secrecy, and sexual anxiety. Instead, they advocate for grace-centered teaching that emphasizes: repentance,

healing, progression, redemption, worthiness through Christ, sexual growth, and healthy relational understanding. Some use *kintsugi*, to teach these principles. The Japanese word literally means "golden joinery" or "golden repair." Rather than hiding cracks or damage when something is broken, kintsugi highlights them, treating brokenness as part of the object's history and beauty. The philosophy behind it is often associated with resilience, embracing imperfection, healing through restoration, transformation through suffering, and the idea that something can become more beautiful because it was broken and restored.

Abstinence-Based Messaging

The authors also critique incomplete abstinence-only approaches that focus almost exclusively on avoiding premarital sex without adequately teaching: healthy marital intimacy, emotional connection, sexual meaning, covenant sexuality, attachment, communication, mutuality, desire development, and relational sacrifice. While abstinence before marriage is affirmed, the authors argue that abstinence alone does not prepare couples for healthy sexuality. They emphasize that chastity is not merely physical restraint, but:

- A condition of the heart
- A relational orientation
- An attitude of love
- A lifelong pursuit of virtue
- A way of honoring self and spouse

In summary, healthy sexuality in marriage is shaped far more by the underlying meaning, motivation, and relational purpose behind sexual intimacy than by the mere behaviors themselves. Sexual intimacy becomes deeply fulfilling when it is rooted in love, covenant commitment, emotional connection, mutual care, sacrifice, vulnerability, and unity rather than simply physical gratification or performance. In this view, sexuality is not merely about what couples do physically, but why they seek intimacy with one another emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. Sexual experiences motivated by connection, attachment, trust, tenderness, and covenant love strengthen marital unity, whereas sexuality driven primarily by selfishness, lust, obligation, escape, validation, control, or physical release often leads to fragmentation rather than wholeness. Thus, the deepest forms of intimacy emerge when sexual expression reflects shared meaning, emotional safety, spiritual alignment, and a sincere desire to bless, know, and unite with one's spouse.

Sexual Agency

A major theme in the book is sexual agency. Healthy sexuality requires: mutual consent, freedom, choice, respect, reciprocity, emotional safety, and shared meaning. Sexual agency means spouses freely choose one another emotionally, spiritually, and physically. The authors

reject coercive, manipulative, controlling, or duty-driven views of marital sexuality. Instead, healthy sexuality is characterized by: invitation rather than pressure, desire rather than obligation, service rather than selfishness, and mutual responsiveness rather than entitlement. Agency allows sexuality to become an expression of covenant love rather than control.

Attachment and Bonding

The authors draw heavily from attachment theory in understanding marital intimacy. Secure attachment develops when spouses consistently experience: emotional responsiveness, reliability, comfort, affection, acceptance, safety, and attunement. Sexual intimacy often becomes one of the deepest expressions of attachment bonding. Healthy sexuality therefore includes:

- Emotional availability
- Physical affection outside of intercourse
- Trust-building
- Non-defensive communication
- Vulnerability
- Empathy
- Consistency

The authors explain that many sexual problems are not purely sexual problems. Rather, they are often attachment injuries expressed sexually.

Communication and Vulnerability

Healthy sexuality requires open communication. Couples must learn how to discuss: desire, boundaries, expectations, fears, disappointments, preferences, insecurities, needs, fantasies, and emotional experiences. The authors emphasize that vulnerability strengthens intimacy. Silence, avoidance, criticism, defensiveness, shame, and secrecy weaken intimacy. Emotionally safe communication allows couples to:

- Heal misunderstandings
- Increase empathy
- Reduce shame
- Build trust
- Improve sexual satisfaction
- Strengthen emotional closeness
- Foster increased commitment

Healing Through Grace

One of the most powerful themes in the book is healing. Many individuals carry: sexual shame, trauma, abuse histories, addiction struggles, anxiety, misinformation, rejection wounds, body image concerns, and fear of vulnerability.

The authors repeatedly emphasize that healing occurs through: Christ-centered grace, honest communication, patience, compassion, repentance, emotional safety, therapeutic support, and covenant love. Sexual wholeness is not perfection. It is progression. The goal is not flawless sexuality, but integrated, loving, covenant-centered intimacy that develops over time.

Marriage Preparation

The authors strongly advocate for improved preparation for marital intimacy. Healthy preparation should include:

- Accurate sexual education
- Emotional development
- Communication skills
- Understanding attachment
- Doctrinal understanding
- Healthy body beliefs
- Understanding desire differences
- Discussion of expectations
- Understanding consent and agency
- Realistic views of intimacy

Marital preparation should move beyond: “Just don’t do it before marriage.” Toward: “How do we build healthy covenant intimacy throughout life?”

Sexual Wholeness as Lifelong Development

The authors repeatedly emphasize that sexual wholeness is developmental. Healthy intimacy evolves over time through: experience, growth, communication, sacrifice, parenting, aging, healing, adaptation, spiritual maturity, and deepening attachment. Couples must continually learn from one another.

Sexuality changes across: life stages, pregnancy, illness, stress, aging, parenting transitions, emotional seasons, and spiritual development. Thus, sexual intimacy is not static. It is an ongoing relational journey.

Core Principles of Sexual Wholeness

Busby, Leavitt, and Carroll present sexual wholeness not as a narrow discussion about physical behavior, but as a broad and sacred process of relational, emotional, spiritual, and personal development within covenant marriage. Their framework teaches that healthy sexuality is deeply connected to God's divine purposes for love, unity, growth, attachment, joy, and eternal partnership. Rather than reducing sexuality to pleasure, performance, or abstinence alone, the authors emphasize that true intimacy emerges when husbands and wives learn to integrate the spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of their relationship in ways that foster trust, vulnerability, mutual care, and covenant connection. The following principles summarize the core foundations of sexual wholeness and provide a framework for understanding how healthy marital intimacy contributes to both relational flourishing and spiritual progression:

1. Sexuality Is Sacred

Sexuality is part of God's design and central to covenant marriage.

2. Sexuality Is Relational

Sexual intimacy is fundamentally about connection, attachment, and unity.

3. Sexuality Is Developmental

Healthy intimacy grows gradually over time.

4. Sexuality Requires Integration

Spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions must work together.

5. Sexuality Requires Agency

Healthy sexuality cannot exist without consent, freedom, and mutuality.

6. Sexuality Requires Communication

Open, vulnerable communication strengthens intimacy.

7. Sexuality Requires Grace

Healing and growth occur through compassion, patience, and Christlike love.

8. Sexuality Is About Becoming

Sexual intimacy is not merely behavior. It is part of becoming united, whole, and covenant-centered disciples.

Conclusion

Sexual Wholeness in Marriage presents one of the most comprehensive faith-integrated models of sexuality available within contemporary marriage scholarship and Latter-day Saint thought.

Busby, Leavitt, and Carroll move beyond simplistic conversations about abstinence, purity, or physical functioning and instead frame sexuality as a sacred developmental process involving the integration of body, heart, mind, relationship, and spirit.

Their work challenges both shame-centered religious approaches and pleasure-centered secular approaches, arguing that both ultimately fragment sexuality. In contrast, true sexual wholeness emerges when spouses unite emotionally, spiritually, and physically in covenant love.

The authors ultimately teach that sexuality is not opposed to discipleship. Rather, sexuality is one of the central ways husbands and wives learn vulnerability, sacrifice, unity, attachment, covenant love, healing, joy, and spiritual progression. Sexual wholeness is therefore not merely about sexual behavior. It is about becoming whole together.

Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (1988) masterfully explained why it is critical to become and remain sexually whole, pure, and personally worthy. After setting the stage for the seriousness of sexual purity and sexual transgression in the Great Plan of Happiness, Elder Holland discussed the role of the spirit and body which constitutes the soul of men and women, and how any harm that we do to the body desecrates the soul. Because Jesus Christ offered His body and blood to save our souls, in desecrating our bodies and thus our souls, Elder Holland explained we make a mockery of His sacrifice for us. Here are some of Elder Holland's spiritually enlightened words.

> First, we simply must understand the revealed, restored Latter-day Saint doctrine of the soul, and the high and inextricable part the body plays in that doctrine. One of the 'plain and precious' truths restored to this dispensation is that 'the spirit *and* the body are the soul of man' (D&C 88:15; emphasis added) and that when the spirit and body are separated, men and women 'cannot receive a fulness of joy' (D&C 93:34). Certainly that suggests something of the reason why obtaining a body is so fundamentally important to the plan of salvation in the first place, why sin of any kind is such a serious matter (namely because its automatic consequence is death, the separation of the spirit from the body and the separation of the spirit and the body from God), and why the resurrection of the body is so central to the great abiding and eternal triumph of Christ's atonement. . . .
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> So partly in answer to *why* such seriousness, we answer that one toying with the God—given—and satanically coveted—body of another, toys with the very soul of that individual, toys with the central purpose and product of life, 'the very key' to life, as Elder Boyd K. Packer once called it. In trivializing the soul of another (please include the word *body* there), we trivialize the atonement that saved that soul and guaranteed its continued existence. And when one toys with the Son of Righteousness, the Day Star himself, one toys with white heat and a flame hotter and holier than the noonday sun. You cannot do so and not be burned. You cannot with impunity 'crucify Christ afresh' (see Hebrews 6:6). Exploitation of the body (please include the word *soul* there) is, in the last analysis, an exploitation of him who is the Light and the Life of the world.

> Our *soul* is what's at stake here—our spirit *and* our body. . . . The purchase price for our fulness of joy—body and spirit eternally united—is the pure and innocent blood of the Savior of this world. We *cannot* then say in ignorance or defiance, 'Well, it's *my* life,' or worse yet, 'It's *my* body.' It is *not.* 'Ye are not your own,' Paul said. 'Ye are bought with a price.' So in answer to the question, 'Why does God care so much about sexual transgression?' it is partly because of the precious gift offered by and through his Only Begotten Son to redeem the souls—bodies *and* spirits—we too often share and abuse in cheap and tawdry ways. Christ restored the very seeds of eternal lives (see D&C132:19, 24), and we desecrate them at our peril. The first key reason for personal purity? Our very *souls* are involved and at stake. . . .

Elder Holland then discussed the importance of the commitment necessary in God's eternal plan to unite ourselves wholly with another person in a "sacred bond" of trust, a bond of "human intimacy" that allows us to share in, and be blessed by, the eternal purposes and promises associated with being sealed together forever as an eternal family unit.

> Second, may I suggest that human intimacy, that sacred, physical union ordained of God for a married couple, deals with a *symbol* that demands special sanctity. Such an act of love between a man and a woman is—or certainly was ordained to be—a symbol of total union: union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything. It is a symbol that we try to suggest in the temple with a word like *seal.* The Prophet Joseph Smith once said we perhaps ought to render such a sacred bond as 'welding'—that those united in matrimony and eternal families are 'welded' together, inseparable if you will, to withstand the temptations of the adversary and the afflictions of mortality. (see D&C 128:18.)
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> But such a total, virtually unbreakable union, such an unyielding commitment between a man and a woman, can only come with the proximity and permanence afforded in a marriage covenant, with the union of *all* that they possess—their very hearts and minds, all their days and all their dreams. They work together, they cry together, they enjoy Brahms and Beethoven and breakfast together, they sacrifice and save and live together for all the abundance that such a totally intimate life provides such a couple. And the external symbol of that union, the physical manifestation of what is a far deeper spiritual and metaphysical bonding, is the physical blending that is part of—indeed, a most beautiful and gratifying expression of—that larger, more complete union of eternal purpose and promise. . . .

Next, Elder Holland called out the moral schizophrenia[1] and sexual, social, and spiritual fragmentation that can occur when we choose the counterfeit of sexual intimacy without its foundational components of commitment, trust, and unity being present in the relationship.

> Can you see then the moral schizophrenia that comes from pretending we are one, sharing the *physical* symbols and *physical* intimacy of our union, but then fleeing, retreating, severing all such other aspects—and symbols—of what was meant to be a total

[1] Confusion between desires, motives, values, beliefs, and behaviors

> obligation, only to unite again furtively some other night or, worse yet, furtively unite (and you can tell how cynically I use that word) with some other partner who is no more bound to us, no more one with us than the last was or than the one that will come next week or next month or next year or any time before the binding commitments of marriage?
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> You must wait—you must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are at least legally and, for Latter-day Saint purposes, eternally pronounced as one. To give illicitly that which is not yours to give (remember— 'you are not your own') and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole heart and your whole life and your whole self is its own form of emotional Russian roulette. If you persist in sharing part without the whole, in pursuing satisfaction devoid of symbolism, in giving parts and pieces and inflamed fragments only, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, psychic damage that you may undermine both your physical intimacy *and* your wholehearted devotion to a truer, later love. You may come to that moment of *real* love, of *total* union, only to discover to your horror that what you should have saved has been spent, and—mark my words—only God's grace can recover that piecemeal dissipation of your virtue. . . .

Elder Holland placed the responsibility for both sexual purity and sexual transgression squarely on the backs of both genders, regardless of internalized cultural trends or norms, and then concluded his masterful discourse by comparing human intimacy with the word *sacrament*, an offering that aligns our will with God's will in receiving and expressing the powers of godliness.

> That leads me to my last reason, a third effort to say *why.* After *soul* and *symbol,* the word is *sacrament,* a term closely related to the other two. Sexual intimacy is not only a symbolic union between a man and a woman—the uniting of their very souls—but it is also symbolic of a union between mortals and deity, between otherwise ordinary and fallible humans uniting for a rare and special moment with God himself and all the powers by which he gives life in this wide universe of ours. . . .
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> . . . I wish to stress with you this morning, as my third of three reasons to be clean, that sexual union is also, in its own profound way, a very real sacrament of the highest order, a union not only of a man and a woman but very much the union of that man and woman with God. Indeed, if our definition of sacrament is that act of claiming and sharing and exercising God's own inestimable power, then I know of virtually *no* other divine privilege so routinely given to us all—women or men, ordained or unordained, Latter-day Saint or non-Latter-day Saint—than the miraculous and majestic power of transmitting life, the unspeakable, unfathomable, unbroken power of procreation. There are those special moments in your lives when the other, more formal ordinances of the gospel–the sacraments, if you will—allow you to feel the grace and grandeur of God's power. Many are one-time experiences (such as our own confirmation or our own marriage), and some are repeatable (such as administering to the sick or doing ordinance work for others in the temple). But I know of nothing so earth-shatteringly powerful and yet so universally and unstintingly given to us as the God-given power available in every one of us from our

> early teen years on to create a human body, that wonder of all wonders, a genetically and spiritually unique being never seen before in the history of the world and never to be duplicated again in all the ages of eternity—a child, your child—with eyes and ears and fingers and toes and a future of unspeakable grandeur. . . .
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> Surely God's trust in us to respect this future-forming gift is awesomely staggering. We who may not be able to repair a bicycle nor assemble an average jigsaw puzzle—yet with all our weaknesses and imperfections, we carry this procreative power that makes us very much like God in at least one grand and majestic way.

Elder Holland ended his treatise on *Of Souls*, *Symbols*, and *Sacraments* with a warning and a promise:

> Souls. Symbols. Sacraments. Does any of this help you understand why human intimacy is such a serious matter? Why it is so right and rewarding and stunningly beautiful when it is within marriage and approved of God (not just 'good' but '*very* good,' he declared to Adam and Eve), and so blasphemously wrong—like unto murder—when it is outside such a covenant? It is my understanding that we park and pet and sleep over and sleep with at the peril of our very lives. Our penalty may not come on the precise day of our transgression, but it comes surely and certainly enough, and were it not for a merciful God and the treasured privilege of personal repentance, far too many would even now be feeling that hellish pain, which (like the passion we have been discussing) is *also* always described in the metaphor of fire.
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> If some few of you are feeling the 'scars . . . that have come to you in places where you ought not have gone,' I wish to extend to you the special peace and promise available through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. I testify of his love and of the restored gospel principles and ordinances which make that love available to us with all their cleansing and healing power. I testify of the power of these principles and ordinances, including complete and redeeming repentance, which are only fully realized in this the true and living church of the true and living God. That we may 'come unto Christ' for the fulness of soul and symbol and sacrament he offers us, I pray. . . .

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