

About this book . . .

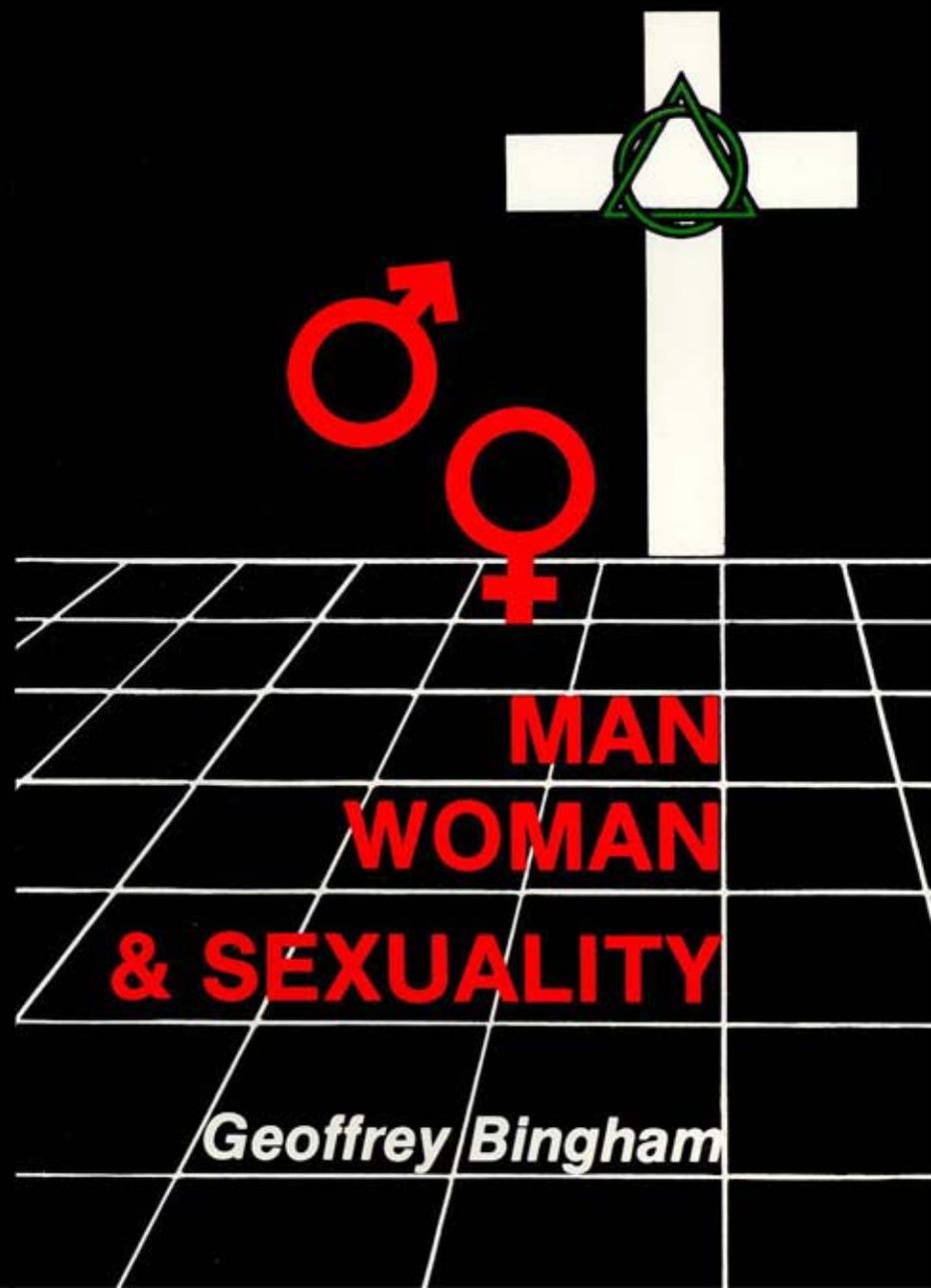
- What is the meaning of man-the-male?
- What is the meaning of woman-the-female?
- What is the meaning of Man the male-female?
- Is God masculine, feminine or masculine-feminine or none of these?
- In what manner does creation determine the relationship of man and woman, and how does Christ's salvation alter or transform man-woman relationships?

These are some of the questions raised by the writer of this book, *MAN, WOMAN, & SEXUALITY*. They are not the only matters raised. Printed some years ago this book has been partially revised and new insights added. The author has had plenty of experience, not only in the subject he treats, but in practical everyday counselling of men and women—especially those whose marriages have been breaking up.

Whilst the book is far from being a manual on sexuality, marriage and family life, it certainly can prove helpful in those areas.

Geoffrey Bingham is an Anglican minister. His experience as soldier, prisoner of war, farmer, writer, teacher and family man as well as theologian, has given him grounds for writing material which is Australian in tone, and relevant to the society in which we live. Some have found his books life-changing.

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MAN, WOMAN & SEXUALITY

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Foreword To The First Edition

Some years ago we wrote and published a volume, *The Role and Purpose of Man and Woman*. That volume sold out rapidly, and a further printing was proposed. People have asked for it continuously.

The decision not to reprint it was because of some fresh work which the writer had done on the subject. It was felt wiser to share this before the production of another sizeable book. This present volume was given as a topic in a series called *Living Faith Studies* before a studio audience. Two (90 minutes) cassettes cover that lecture and are available. The first printing sold so rapidly that we sent it to print again.

Without doubt, never so many studies on the roles of man and woman, as well as treatments of sexuality, have come off the publishers' lines as in this last decade. Some of these books are valuable, some of a certain value, and some quite puerile. What many, if not most, of them lack is the placing of the subject of sexuality within the widest perspective of the plan and purpose of God for man and creation. We believe that only in this panoramic perspective

can the subject be fully understood.

At the same time, it must be recognised that a volume as small as this limits much of the finer detail which is given in other treatments. We believe, nevertheless, that some of the insights and principles included here could go a long way to giving us a fresh and helpful view of this most related of all subjects.

We trust that those who purchase this volume, or have it come into their hands, will not spare a little energy of the mind to understand the basic points which are made. We repeat: they could be quite helpful.

Geoffrey Bingham
Coromandel East 1980

Foreword To The Second Edition

Since the first edition of this book the feminist-masculist debate has accelerated, and certain gains in the struggle for sexual egalitarianism have been made. In society, in sport, industry and the church the place of women has been more and more recognised, and legislation for sexual non-discrimination, and women's rights has successfully been passed. Lobbyists for both feminists and masculists continue to do battle for their respective positions. Some of the 'gains' and 'losses' may well prove valuable.

What is difficult to determine is whether all these so-called gains and losses will prove valuable. Certainly we all have 'hidden agendas' which greatly determine our attitude and actions in any sphere of life and practice.

Because we are in the vortex of the present debate and change, it seems that we are too close to the matter to evaluate it with objectivity.

Having read much more widely since the writing of the First Edition, I would like to make changes in the text of this Second Edition, but it would be better to write a new work altogether. In fact I am in the midst of doing that, but

the demand for this present title is such that I have thought it best to write a Postscript (see page 108).

In rereading *Man, Woman, and Sexuality*, I was surprised how little my mind had changed after so considerable an amount of reading and research. I would hold, therefore, substantially to what is in this present volume. The Postscript explains some of the things I would like to have said, modified or expanded.

I have also included Dr. Bryan Hardman's 1980 Preface because I believe the things he has said are helpful, and by no means outdated. I am especially grateful for his understanding of the approach I have taken. I trust that what is written in the Postscript will also be in line with what he has said in the original Preface.

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Preface

The past ten years has seen a veritable deluge of books, pamphlets and articles on sex, marriage, alternative lifestyles—often merely a euphemism for homosexual relationships—singleness, the family—nuclear and extended— while even hairdressers have long since climbed onto the bandwagon with their unisex styles and salons.

It is obvious that writers have struck a rich vein as they address themselves to a prominent felt need. The blatant hedonism of our society relates to this need in the barrage of girlie glossies that spill over our news-stands. More recently we have seen a similar appeal made to the animal instincts in women who can now have their regular undressed male pin-up.

Much of the Christian writing on these themes is a reaction to this hedonism. In-so-far as it is just such a reaction, it demonstrates sadly that once again the church has waited for the world to write its agenda. Instead of reading the signs of the times and providing a biblical anthropology which would have prepared its members for this gross assault upon our humanness, we have been

forced to gather up the casualties and work out our theology of man and woman amidst the cacophony of a carnival of carnality. The result has been, all too often, that we have resorted to mere pragmatism. We have too frequently rushed in with our first-aid without being able adequately to diagnose the problem. Sometimes we have been confused. Unable rightly to discern what is at stake, we have sometimes sold the pass and all unwittingly aligned ourselves with the 'body snatchers'. Embarrassed by the Word of God we have rationalised it away. Aware that practices may be cultural we have sometimes tended to dismiss principles under the same heading.

Let us admit it, we all like the pragmatic approach, and in this particular realm it is easy to read the biology and even the ethics, but don't ask us to read the theology behind both the biology and the ethics. The fact is that this is the prime reason why our self-understanding is often inadequate and frequently unstable.

The book now in your hand is one of the very few which interprets this vital subject deductively. What do I mean? I mean that instead of discussing the particular issue, such as sexuality or relationships within marriage, independently of Scripture and then bringing in Scripture to confirm an already arrived at position, this book starts from Scripture. The Word of God is not used as a mine for proof texts to condone or condemn certain lifestyles. Rather we find here that the role and purpose of man and woman is deduced from the Bible. This is a most important approach. It is the only safe approach; it is the only truly Christian approach. The presupposition is that the Word of God is the source for ultimate knowledge of our humanness. The

insights of psychology and sociology are not ignored. This book recognises that as man is truly man, and woman is truly woman, only as they are rightly related to God, so the social sciences can fully come into their own only as they recognise this prior reality. This inductive approach does not mean that the issues of life are not discussed and illuminated. It would be difficult to find any subject which is in current debate in this whole area which does not rank some mention. Indeed, in short compass we have here a handbook of theological ethics addressed to man in his relationships with his Creator and his fellow man/woman. Apart from being an excellent study in its own right, I venture to suggest that this book will set the reader on a straight course before he launches into much other material which, though helpful and stimulating, tends to be too subjective to be fully reliable.

I am glad and grateful to have this opportunity to write this brief preface. I have known Geoffrey Bingham for some thirty-five years and have followed his varied ministries with much interest and delight. It is heartening to know that the past few years with New Creation Ministries have given him the time and opportunity to multiply his usefulness in print. This volume which is before us will do much to give Christians a truly practical, because truly biblical, understanding of '*Man, Woman, and Sexuality*'.

Dr. Bryan Hardman

Principal

Bible College of South Australia Adelaide, 1980

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION: THE DIFFICULTY OF THE SUBJECT

Sexuality is *the* sensitive area of human life and relationships. It is natural, then, that it will be approached from many angles. For most, the practical angle (so-called) is the most favoured. Consequently most treatments of the subject seek to be practical even to the point of 'How To' Manuals. Unfortunately, however valuable such treatments may prove, the subject of sexuality has a wider frame of reference, and without this the theme is not fully treated.

For this reason we will seek to treat the subject within the nature of God, man and creation, referring to the goals God has set for man and creation. Doubtless a simpler method would be to examine Scripture, discover the patterns followed in sexuality, and set them as paradigms (or *the* paradigm) for sexuality for our day. Again this would be an over-simplification of the matter. Often sexuality is expressed in the cultural terms of the various eras covered in Scripture, eg. polygamy existed in patriarchal times, as also within Israel's history, but does

not obtain for Christians today.

There is also the wider question, one which is linked with hermeneutics. That is, 'Is the portrayal of sexuality in the Scriptures primarily a cultural one?' We mean, 'Do the pronouncements in regard to sexual matters spring from the culture of the day in which they are made? Are there sexual norms in behaviour which are related to functional principles, these in turn being related to creation, true basic morality and the goals which have been set for the human race in particular and creation in general?'

The question of course is a difficult one to resolve. Doubtless practice of sexual matters in any age has cultural connotation. Doubtless exploitation of basic functional principles (if there be any) would obtain in any age, and have the imprimatur of the current culture. It would be the task of a scholar to disentangle prevailing cultural practices from the basic principles set out for the practice of true morality. In one way, then, the task is a formidable one.

Because scholars keep changing and developing Biblical hermeneutics (ie. principles of Scriptural interpretation), and since many subjective elements and factors condition interpretation (eg. hidden human agendas) then hermeneutics tend to become a tyranny. One—so to speak—has to wait on the latest in hermeneutical research in order to make authentic Biblical pronouncements. Within the unity of the Scriptures there is an ontology of God, man, and creation. Some of its elements are clearly stated, some inferred or implied, and enough, anyway, to proceed with what we may call 'a Biblical ontology'. As I have suggested elsewhere in this book the ontology of sexuality has always expressed itself within the prevailing ethnic and cultural mores.

One problem we face is that man has rebelled against the ontological order (see Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 1:18-32), hence much in cultures and societies is anti-ontological or un-ontological. For example in I Corinthians chapter 11, Paul is discussing the ontological order of God being the head of Christ, Christ being the head of man, and man (the husband) being the head of woman (the wife). The matter of veiling of the head of the woman may have had cultural overtones, but the principle it demonstrated in the cultural milieu of the day was an ontological one. Paul was not primarily arguing from a cultural custom as from an ontological principle.

We see, then, that true hermeneutics must proceed—along with many other things—from the ontology that the Scriptures, as a whole, teach us. We must also constantly keep in mind fallen man's innate rebellion. Only then will we have a workable hermeneutics.

Chapter Two

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR BIBLICAL SEXUALITY—I

Introduction: The Larger Reference

Our contention is that sexuality is not limited to biological sex and its surround of emotion, physical action and feeling. Femininity and masculinity obtain in many persons who never experience sexual intercourse, yet they bring their femininity and masculinity to bear on many aspects of life.

The true reference for sexuality, then, is the widest frame possible, namely all of life. This life is set in the context of creation and its canvas covers that which is from eternity to eternity, from initial creation to the new creation. Only in that reference-frame can it be properly understood.

Creation and Humanity *Creation and Purpose*

When asked about divorce Jesus said, 'It [divorce] was not from the beginning' (Matthew 19:1-9). In his discussion on marriage and divorce Jesus points back to the beginning. The inference is unmistakable. What happened then is both the paradigm and principle for all time. Creation,

then, is basic to understanding all things.

Creation, in itself, is not a simple subject. Much in Scripture points to God's purposes which were formed prior to creation, but which were for creation.¹ Contained within those purposes is God's plan to redeem fallen man and fit him for the renewed heavens and earth. All of His creation must be renewed, and this by being unified in Christ. However, it is primarily the plan of God to produce His people, His redeemed, His elect. By this He is shown to be the God of grace and love. His Fatherhood is fulfilled, doubtless in His own Son, but in another sense is fully expressed in His sons or household. This is the rich product of His creation. Again, not only is Fatherhood expressed, but also Sonship, as the Spirit of Fatherhood, and the Spirit of Sonship in the Holy Spirit, 'the Go-Between-God'.

Creation and Function

What concerns us is to grasp the doctrine of creation, without which we cannot grasp the doctrine of man. In fact the two are mutually inclusive. Likewise without understanding the nature of God we cannot understand that of man, His image. First, then, we see the term used of the periods of creation, 'God saw that it was good'. Genesis 1:3 1 expresses the climactic term, '... behold, it was *very* good'. Creation is not merely *morally* good, *but functional*), good. Doubtless the terms mean the same thing but the point is underlined in Ecclesiastes 3:11, 'You have made everything *appropriate* in its own time', ie. functionally useful, operative and purposive. This thought is borne out

¹ See Living Faith Study No. 20, *Creation and Reconciliation*, NCPI, Adelaide. 1978.

in Proverbs 16:4, Isaiah 43:7, 21, 1 Timothy 4:4, 6:17, cf. Psalm 104 and Ephesians 1:11-14.

Function and purpose must also come together. This is expressed in Genesis 1:26-31:

- (a) Man² is made in the image of God. This image is expressed in *male* and *female*;
- (b) God blesses the man and the woman *together*;
- (c) Their maleness and femaleness are to be used for a number of purposes:
 - (i) Fruitfulness, doubtless procreation of children and the rearing of families;
 - (ii) Authority as man subjugates creation and exercises benign and useful control of it, including stewardship *for* creation.

Examined it must be seen that man works with God, for Him, and so for creation. *Man, then, is an aide to God in the fulfilment of His purposes.* This is clear from Isaiah 43:6-7, I Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 1:11-14, I Peter 4:11 b, and Zechariah 7:6. In this respect sexuality (maleness and femaleness) is used *not only for procreation, but for all elements.* This is seen in Genesis 2:15-25. In this passage *man* is a lone creature and is given a mandate to keep the garden, and to eat of all trees but that of the knowledge of good and evil. He is given, also, the task of nominating the creatures. These are male and female, but he, himself, has no mate. For what he is and for what he does God says he must be mated. 'I will make him a helper fit for him', ie. someone who is tailored to him, creationally and functionally.

² The term *man* is used to cover the male and female, in fact the whole of humanity. In Genesis 5:12, 'When God created man, He made *him* in the likeness of God. Male and female He created *them*, and He blessed *them* and named *them* Man when *they*' were created'. The use of the generic term man is not, then, sexist. Likewise all in Christ are called *sons* (or *children*) of God. See Galatians 4:2 6, Romans 8:14-7. We will develop this in our notes.

It is from within the man that God fashions the *person*. Hence some have said that man was androgynous, ie. he contained within himself the characteristics of both sexes. That is an assumption which may or may not be true. What we do know is that he recognised that the woman was part of himself as he had been: 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'. Here the term *man* is *ish* and *woman* is *ishah*. The term used in Genesis chapters one and two is otherwise *adham* from which of course, the name Adam is derived. It is probably derived from the word 'earth' (*dhamah*), in which case there is a play on words in Genesis 2:7.

If single man as created, androgynous or not, has a mandate for working as in Genesis 2:15, yet it is to both that the mandate for their creational vocation is given in Genesis 1:28 30 and is repeated (in part) in Genesis 9: 1-7. *We see, then, that maleness and femaleness is a combined, 'hole in operation to perform the purposes of God in the mandate He has set out for mankind.* It is self-evident that not in all cases will this call for the exercise of the gift of sexuality in co-habitation. although generally it will call for the use of the gifts of masculinity and femininity. Masculinity and femininity can be called functional even though in the case of some persons there is no sexual use of them, as such. Thus when we speak of 'creation and function', we simply mean that all creation is for the glory of God, for the fulfilment of the gifts He has given to them, and for the purposes (vocation) for which He created them. All creation is there with a view to the *telos* (the given *end*), the goal of God. Function, then, must be understood in the light of the *telos*.

Chapter Three

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR BIBLICAL SEXUALITY—11

Creation, Humanity and the Telos Creation anti the Telos

In Genesis 1:2-3 I, God is creating man with a view to what he will do. God Himself reveals Himself as the One who *does*, i.e. works and acts, and fulfils His purpose. This is the overall view of the Scriptures. Man, being the image of God, will reflect Him as He is. To 'replenish, fill up the earth and subdue it in some sense points to a *telos*, i.e. a filled-up earth. There must be something terminal indicated in this. Humanity, then, is linked with the *telos*.

The fall of man, the intrusion of evil into creation and the effects of such, point to the necessity of redemption. At the same time redemption is not indicated as a mere expedient to meet a contingency but is shown to be God's plan and purpose for creation, formulated prior to creation (c.f. II Timothy 1:9. Romans 8:28-30, Ephesians

1:3-14, Revelation 10:1-7). All redemption has been purposed in and through Christ Jesus, and with redemption the new creation of man and the creation itself. Prophecies of this are given in both Old and New Testaments. (See, for example, Isaiah chapters 65 and 66, Revelation chapters 21 and 22, Matthew 19:28-30, Mark 13:26-27, Romans 8:18-30.) The *telos* that redemption points to must relate to the creational *telos*, for in it Peter chapter 3 and Revelation chapter 21, the new (renewed) heavens and earth are to do both with creation and redemption.

What concerns us as humans is the particular goal for humanity that the Scriptures disclose, for that surely relates to all that we are as humans, and the purposes for which we were created.

Humanity and the Telos

We need to understand the doctrine of God. or the nature of God in order to understand man. who is His image, glory and reflection. To know God is to know man. 'The Fall, of course, has destroyed man's desire to know God as He is, and so the situation is complicated. Man needs *revelation* and this the Scripture by the power of the Spirit. provides. particularly where God has turned that heart to Himself.

Even so the doctrine of man has to be understood not merely in the light of man as created, but *the purposes and end for which he was created*. Man as created was a creature of the Creator, a subject of the King, and a child of the originating Father. He is correlative to God on these levels. They are of the one piece. That is man. Even so, man was not complete. He was destined for the purposes

set out in Ephesians 1:3-14, ie. to be holy and blameless, a son (collectively, sons) of God, and to be to the praise of God's grace, and to the praise (wholly) of God. This includes him being glorified in the full image of the Son and (so) of the Father (Romans 8:18-30, I Corinthians 2:6-10, I John 3:13, Philippians 3:21). Thus man-created was only the beginning of man-becoming and (ultimately) man-glorified. Hence *man must be understood in his functional being but with that function related to God's purposes and the goals set for man.*

If we understand this matter, then we see man as a co-worker with God as purposeful in his universe, as moving towards glorification and so, full manhood. Seeing this we may now proceed to examine sexuality in the light of these elements.

Chapter Four

THE MEANING OF CREATIONAL SEXUALITY

Many modern treatments of the subject of sex simply bypass the creational teaching. They miss the whole point of man's goals, and his related roles. Sex, they agree, is there for procreation. It is also there for enjoyed mutuality. Of course, marriage is good where sexuality seeks its right context, so it is better to marry than to burn with desire and perhaps wrongly anticipate marriage, ie. participate in immoral acts. Beyond these three elements of procreation, enjoyed mutuality and prevention of fornication, many are ignorant of the main purpose of sexuality which is *to do the will of God and have apart in His plan for time and eternity.* Seen out of this latter context, sexuality is mostly regarded as some kind of end in itself or useful for man in gaining his ends of pleasure, mutuality and fulfilment.

Modern treatments, though often pragmatically helpful, miss out on many of the richest dimensions in relationships and vocation fullness because they either are ignorant of, or fail to use a true theology of man. We may better call it

a biblical anthropology, for this is centred in the heart of theology. What, then, is this theological treatment of man which is so indispensable to a knowledge of the truth of sexuality?

The truth lies not only in the second and third chapters of Genesis with the fifth tacked on, but in the first five chapters as a whole. In chapter one, we see that not until man is created is the creation 'very good', and this not until man is commissioned as well as created. Each section (so to speak) of creation is 'good', but 'very good' when it is all put together, ie. is entirely functional. It is within this functional creation that man is to be man. What, then, is it to be *man*? It is this:

(a) *To be humanity in a sense plurality.* God says, 'Let us make man in *our* own image'. This will create a corresponding plurality in man.* That plurality is 'male and female'. It may well be, textually, that that plurality becomes *male* and *female* in 2:18ff., but man is *not* androgynous *per se*. He is not intended to be as *single man* both male and female, but as true man with the interplay of the masculine man and the feminine woman together. Whilst undoubtedly a male person is a male person and a female person a female person, yet their masculinity and femininity are two essential expressions of humanity and total humanity. Whilst marriage of the male and the female create the 'one flesh' situation (which we shall later

* When we use the term 'plurality' we mean that God is not monolithic in His being but social within the unity of the Persons. Love, of course is the *mode* and *essence* of that unity. Man in reflecting God must also have social being. Hence the interchange of the terms 'him' and 'them'. *Man* and *woman* are together MAN.

discuss, yet marriage is not the beginning and end of completeness for the male and the female. We mean that across the board, in the whole spectrum of humanity, maleness and femaleness operate, co-operate and form the one humanity. In this sense neither male nor female is superior or inferior the one to the other. That question cannot even arise, properly speaking. We thus need to be reminded, time and again, of Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 5:13, including, 'Male and female He created them, and blessed them, and named them *Man* when they were created'. Again,

(b) *To be humanity is to be commissioned to a task.* Sadly enough as we have said, sexuality has been regarded on its own.³ We might say, 'Sex for sex's sake', ie. what is biological, relational sex for, but to please and delight man, or, conversely to send him to the depths of suffering because of non-satisfaction or failure to be fulfilled by it. When we say 'commissioned to a task', we cover a vast area of human experience, namely vocation, purpose, travelling towards a goal or goals, work-satisfaction, and a sense of genuine being. Viktor Frankl⁴ has shown clearly that purpose and meaning are strong motivations to living and endeavour. Yet beyond these helpful elements is the richest motivation of all- - to serve

³ Out of a huge bibliography scarcely any book on human sexuality dealt with the doctrine of man in the light of that of God and creation.

⁴ Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to therapy* (N.Y. Washington Square Press, 1963). *The Doctor and the Soul; From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York, Bantam Books, 1967).

the Creator, and to work with Him. This is to believe His creation is truly beautiful, purposeful and dependable. It is to believe in God, and adore Him for what He has created, and for His perpetual providence within that creation. All of this obtains without any mention of redemption.

We say, then, that sexuality is only known within the context of the whole task. If asked what that task is we quote again Genesis 1:28-30. The essence is, 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over it'. Some may be disappointed, thinking that the fruits of sex - children, families, nations limit those who do not take partners. Such persons may feel they are not fully participating in the task. This is not the case. The mandate covers a wider area than simple procreation. Not all are called to procreate or raise families, but all are called to take some part in the whole action. 'Fill up the earth', or 'Replenish the earth' carries with it all that man does, and perhaps much he has not yet done. Man *adds to the earth*. He brings elements not yet formalised. He has done this with his inventiveness, his technology, ie. his considered use of the elements contained within his world. He shapes up new patterns, devises new uses. To subdue his world presupposes he has forces with which he must contend, forces which are material, physical, moral, spiritual, seen and unseen. It is not without significance in Genesis 2: 10-14 that the minerals are indicated which lie close to the centre of creation. Surely an industrial situation is envisaged.

Sexuality, then, must cover not only the biological act of marriage, cohabitation and reproduction of children, but the constant man woman, male female relationship

across the whole mandate given to Man. In this sense it is sexual to be a babe, a child, a teenager, an adult. It is sexual to be a man or a woman, to be married or unmarried. *Sexuality is the essence of human personhood, especially as it is directed to the goals God has set for His created and functional universe*. It is plural in form—ie. male and female—but the plurality forms the essential oneness of true humanity. The dispositions, direction and operations of this sexuality are so diverse as to defy full description, yet that diversity in fact constitutes the amazing unity which lies in the created human race.

Such a view dispenses with the idea that the male in humanity is the primary unit of humanity, and that the female simply fills out what is missing, or that which is required to make maleness full and complete. Others view feminity as lacking fulness if it is not joined (sexually) to its male complement. This view destroys the nature of full and true personhood, and limits personhood to sexual union with the complementary sex, ie. male to female, female to male. Such a view cannot be accepted. Completeness of personhood is not denied to those not married, for married or unmarried completeness lies in relationship with God and in being obedient to His will and sharing in His plan and purposes. The person not married fills out his or her fulness in relationship with all other persons, ie. both men and women, albeit that relationship is not conjugal. The person married fills out his or her personhood in relation to the spouse and all other men and women. All humanity is one as God is One.⁵ *All humanity* together has been called to fulfil the task of God, and *only*

⁵ Of necessity we speak abstractly. Man is *essentially* one. but *practically* is divided because of the Fall and ensuing acts of sin.

then is its sexuality in right context.

(c) *Humanity, or true human being, is to be in relationship with God and the neighbour, ie. with the whole of humanity.* Humanity, as we have said, is one. It is one only when it is in full relationship with God who is (the) One. There are many ways we can view this. God is self-existent, man is derived. God is eternal, man is the image of God. but not God. God is actional, and man is, in reflecting God's actions, actionally operative. Man is created *one* to relate to God his Creator and to His will. Hence anywhere that he breaks the oneness of the humanity (the human race) he/she is deficient as a human being. This is seen in the temptation of Eve. Her wrongness lay in being separated from God by doubting Him, and failing to fulfil her task in aiding her man to be obedient to God, ie. to fulfil the mandate. Her feminity was deficient in that she was not a helpmeet to the good (obedience), but a (disastrous) helpmeet to the evil Adam did. It is when this happens that humanity dies as humanity. It exists as a perverted created thing, but does not live as the full-orbed beautiful Man that God had created it to be. To be truly human, then, is to relate to God and all others. True being as a human *is* this experience of relationships.

(d) *Humanity is living within the functional roles which have been set out for Man.* In giving man the task of tilling and keeping the Garden, God then forbids him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under pain of death. Positively he is invited to eat of all other trees. These are good for food and pleasant to the eyes, ie. functional within the creation. Right on the heels of forbidding man to eat of the certain tree, God says, 'It is

not good for man to be alone'.⁶ This does not infer *loneliness* as such, or even incompleteness, but the need the created man has for a helper tailored to suit him. When all the animals are nominated there still is no helpmeet in sight, ie. man, by nature of the case, cannot be helped by animals. God then causes man to go into a state of anaesthesia and produces the woman from him. She is his helpmeet. We need to understand that she is a whole person,⁷ that she is female as he is a whole person and male. They have affinity, but difference. The difference seals her off from being a male person, his difference from being a female person. Yet he says, 'She is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones'. There is affinity, difference, but unity. Unity is not in spite of the difference. In a way the difference makes the unity. Being naked they are not ashamed of being male, being female, being different, being one.

It must be observed that functional roles will be different, ie. those of male and female. This will not only be in regard to procreation, but in regard to many things. Certain functions are common to both sexes. Others are not. At the same time both sexes can be adaptive when necessity arises and circumstances are pressing. Hence-

⁶ 'It is not *good*' tallies with use of *good* in Genesis chapter one, especially verse 3 I. 'that is, man cannot function fully and appropriately without the helper. Their 'oneness' and 'one-fleshness', then, is functionally necessary. indeed. indispensable.

⁷ The term 'person' is generally understood as that human unit which has discrete being as a knowing, willing and feeling unity. However personhood, however much it may seem to indicate autonomy as one of its elements, is in fact denying its true being when it seeks autonomy. It is most dynamic when it relates to others. The more sincere, genuine and loving those relationships the more that person is person. These relationships must be with both male and female persons.

forward a male child will have the relationships of son, brother, husband, father and so on, and the female child corresponding relationships. What each will do each will do as male or female.

It is argued that the man is not in any sense the leader. Before the creation of woman, Man has lordship over creation. After the creation of woman, man and woman—together as Man—have lordship over creation. Nevertheless the concept of helpmeet gives some sort of priority to the one who is helped. Priority in time belongs to man (cf. I Corinthians 1:7-8). Paul certainly argues that man is the head of woman. However, to be a helpmeet is not a position of inferiority. Peter calls the woman the *weaker* vessel (1 Peter 3:7), but notice he never calls her the *weak* vessel.

We now have to sort out the matter of the supposed inferiority of woman to man, which infers the superiority of man to woman. Before we do that let us sum up what true humanity is. It is composed of man-and-woman, for man-and-woman = Man. Each man and woman is an entity in his and her self. Humanity exercises its true self in the true role of working with God and fulfilling the mandate He has set out. This plan calls for the whole contribution of masculinity and femininity, with the use of (biological) sexuality only within marriage, and for procreation of children and families. Whilst within marriage the exercise of the sexual gift may be used for mutuality of persons in love and fellowship, yet its use is not essential in life to fulfil or complete personhood. True sexuality is masculinity and femininity used (across the board) in relationships with all men and women without, necessarily. the connotation of biological exercises of

copulative sex. Within human relationships man is truly man when he/she exercises life and its creational gifts within the functional roles allotted to Man, ie. to them as full humanity.

Chapter Five

THE QUESTION OF ROLES, FUNCTIONS AND AUTHORITY — I

Introduction to Authority

Are we right in assuming the following:

- (a) The creation is functional and purposive;
- (b) Man as male and man as female constitute Man totally, ie. the human race;
- (c) Each sex (male and female) is functional within its sexuality;
- (d) Within the mandate the human race operates functionally and purposefully;
- (e) This entails male and female roles. It also involves a functional order of authority?

It is the last pan of the question which worries many. It takes little to show there is an hierarchy of authority or authorities in creation. Not all who accept *the fact* agree with the *principle*. It is often said that because of man's rebellion there has to be such authority (or authorities). The Pauline and Petrine interpretation of the doctrine of man is that man as male is head over man as female. Paul

speaks of an hierarchy in the terms that 'the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God' (I Corinthians 11:3). In Ephesians 5:22-24 he says, 'Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject in everything to their husbands'.

We need not, at this stage, examine the various passages which speak of the hierarchy of authorities, establishing the fact of authority in our world, and authority relating to function. Given (even for argument's sake) that such authority (and authorities) be in existence, what does this do in relation to inferiority and superiority? We mean does superordination mean superiority and subordination mean inferiority?

Authority, Subordination and Unity

The word *authority*⁸ derives from *author*. An author is one who increases, promotes or originates. Hence the right an originator has over his product. In Greek the word authority (*exousia*) has the meaning of 'rightful, actual and unimpeded power to act or possess, control, use or dispose of, somebody or something' (New Bible Dictionary, IVF, pp.111-112). Without spending too much time on the subject, let us define the right and wrong uses of authority. Let us say that right use of authority is

⁸ For a fuller treatment see Living Faith Study No. 5, *The Nature of Authority and Obedience*, and Cassette CS.6(i) and (ii). *Who's Boss? Who's Who?* (with notes). Both are from NCPI Adelaide.

authority for others 'sake, and the wrong use *authority for its own sake*. Authoritarianism is, strictly speaking, the espousing of authority. Today it has come to mean domination in the harsh sense, ie. authority for its own sake. However, where authority *serves* it is performing its true function.

A glance at Scripture will show that God is authoritative as Creator, King and Father. At the same time these three offices are *servicing offices*. Theology tells us God is (essentially) Love, and all His attributes are subsumed under Love which is, at the same time, Light, ie. holiness. Thus He is Holy Love (see 1 John I :5, 4:8, 16). Hence when He creates He does this out of Holy Love, and His product must relate essentially to that Holy Love. Creation, however, has been affected by the Fall. God serves in creating it, and in upholding it (preserving it, sustaining it, providing for it). God is unceasing in His creating, sustaining and providing activities. More than that He works to redeem His creation. He is working towards renewing His creation and bringing it to eternal glory. God, the great Authority, *is the One who serves!*

This truth of *servicing* can be shown to relate also to the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, 'My Father is always working, and I, too, go on working' (John 5: 17). Since this is the work of Holy Love, then true authority is synonymous with Holy Love. Thus there can be no possible authentic objection to the true Authority, and the true principle of authority. We happen to know that it is endemic in all humanity to oppose authority. We take this to be a result of the Fall. Indeed it was what caused the Fall. Man wanted to be *as* God, and not merely *like* Him. To be *as* Him means, virtually, not to be under His

authority but to be autonomous.

The biblical presentation of authority undoubtedly shows an hierarchy. This hierarchy constitutes, in the Book of the Revelation, four living creatures, elders, angelic powers and redeemed human creatures. Throughout the Scriptures celestial beings are higher than those of the earth. There are gradations of authorities amongst the celestial, and also among the terrestrial. The celestial have to do with the terrestrial. Without doubt there is subordination.

When it comes to the Father and the Son, there is also the question of subordination. Scholars debate whether the Son in his eternal being, before time, was in fact subordinate. They agree, many of them, that as *man* (or, Son of Man) he was subject to the Father, ie. subordinate. They see this as temporary, during his time of incarnation. However, since God created *by* a Son (cf. Hebrews 1:2, I Corinthians 8:6), then He must be Initiator, and the Son the Mediator. Here, then, is some sense of subordination. Both the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds guard the Persons against *inequality*, for inequality was the claim of the Arians. The Nicene theologians insisted on the Persons being of *the one substance*. They insisted on Father, Son and Spirit each being God (although not a God) equally. To the orthodox believer this is acceptable. Nevertheless the question of subordination still remains to be answered.

There are problems with the word 'subordination'. It implies superordination on the part of another. Precisely! Does it, however, imply inferiority and superiority? The answer must be a definitive, 'No!' Unfortunately not all agree. They demand *equality* in order to ensure the

question of inferiority and superiority does not arise. This demand is a pity. It is also a mistake. It is a failure to understand the true principle of authority and function. It assumes what has to be proved, namely that egalitarianism is the essential form of relationships, living, and true creation. This is to be denied emphatically, not in the interests of authoritarianism, but *in the interests of love*.

The basic problem relating to authority is what we have hinted at, the endemic rejection of authority which is innate in fallen man. He cannot even approach the subject objectively, let alone discuss it dispassionately. He cannot see he objects to authority as such, yet Romans 1:18-32 (cf. Genesis 3: 1-6) tells us man basically rejected the authority of God, and the order of creation. He substituted his own order, namely idolatry, and set about suppressing the true order (v. 18). What then we have to allow for is the *possibility*, indeed the *probability*, that man is unable to accept authority in any form. When it is pointed out that authorities do exist in the world, two questions may be asked:

- (a) Does such authority have to exist because of the Fall (which is a possible inference from Romans 13:11f.)?
- (b) Does authority exist in its own right, even if opposed by rebellious powers both celestial and terrestrial? What also must be considered is whether indeed the world could exist without authorities, and whether egalitarianism is a viable or even desirable principle.

A further consideration must be investigated. Given, for the sake of argument, that authority is a good principle, has it, in fact, ever been genuinely tried by humanity? We mean, has authority actually been obeyed in the spirit of true obedience, or as the Bible puts it, 'from

the heart'? People of faith agree that God should be obeyed from the heart even if that action is rare. Should they agree that true authority coming from God, and being delegated by God, should also be obeyed—from the heart? This is the crux of our problem.

The Question of Equality

Matthew 5:43-48 discloses that God loves totally, and not by degrees. By definition God's love must have no degrees, or it is not love. Responses to that love may, of course, vary. Yet God is Love. He gives life and breath and everything *to all men*, and likewise His sun and His rain. In that sense men have *equal* love. Yet are human beings either equal or unequal? The answer is, 'This measurement of equality, introduced somewhere by some persons, is irrelevant'. The beauty of mankind is its innate diversity, its multiplicity of gifts, its diverse talents and operations. No two human beings are equal pertaining to size, shape, abilities, etc. Why, then, should they be homogenised into equality? What, anyway, is equality? Equal with what? Unequal with what? Often the egalitarian thrust is really, 'Let no one be above me!' Rarely is it, 'Let no one be below me!' However that may be, the introduction of egalitarian ruling may be an attempt to measure where measuring is wholly irrelevant.

The Question of Not Seeking the Upper-Hand

The insistence that superordination equals superiority is a subjective assessment. Subordination and superordination relate to authority which relates to function and purpose, and is no indicator of anything essentially

superior or inferior in the persons carrying out their tasks. That is why to some the two statements of Jesus, 'The Father is greater than I', and 'I and the Father are one', seem contradictory. In fact, they are of the one piece. This problem will never be solved until human beings enter into the very ethos of Christ, or, as Paul says, 'Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus'. Following this (in Philippians chapter two), he speaks of the *Kenosis* or 'self-emptying' of Jesus. Unless the passage is studied closely, and obediently, its stunning message will be missed. The essence of what Paul says is this:

'Don't do anything in the spirit of competition or self-advancement. Be concerned primarily for others. Give them high place in your thinking and care. You will thus be as was Jesus. He was in glory with the Father, and in authority. He left this, surrendering not his essential being, but the prerogatives which came with that being, and so became man (forever) to serve humanity. Becoming a man was not humiliation but love, the care for others which I press upon you. To become man, I repeat, was not humiliating but *the very expression of his love*. To do such is to be truly God. This is true godliness, so you do likewise.'

Related to this is Jesus' act of feet-washing on the night of his betrayal. It was for others (culturally) a humiliating thing for a person to do. Jesus found no humiliation in it. He expressed love in it and by it. Love activated him. Further to this, Jesus said, on the same night, 'Which is the greater, one who sits at table, or *the one who serves*? Is it not the one who sits at table? But *I am among you as one who serves*'. He had said, 'Whosoever among you would be great, must be your servant'. To

serve is greatness. Where, then, is the question of equality? Further to this is the use of the words 'humiliation' and 'humility'. The truly humble is never humiliated. To be humiliated is not, necessarily, to be humbled! We see, then, that Jesus was truly humble, yet never servile. Men set out to humiliate him, but they could not because of his humility. We repeat—he served but was never servile. *He obeyed from the heart*.

The last word lies in his relationship to his Father. He said, time and again, that he did nothing of himself. He was wholly dependent on the Father. 'The Son does nothing but what the Father shows him. The Father loves the Son and shows him all things.' Here we see true superordination and subordination, which is co-operation in love for the purposes of love. Such is responsible leading and direction, and responsive acceptance and obedience. The goal in view is the good of creation, and the redemption of its fallen elements. On these scores who can object to authority, and was authority ever intended for other than what we have presented?

The paradigm for authority, if we may use the term, is the Father. In Ephesians 4:6, He is represented as *above* all things, *through* all things, and *in* all things. He is above in authority to direct, protect, correct, advise, provide for, and bring (the objects of His authority) to their appointed maturity. In this case the goal is full maturity in sonship. He is *through* all to relate to it, co-ordinate it, sustain and hold it together. He is in all things to relate intimately to them, and give them their true being by that relationship. 'Above' without 'through' and 'in' is remote exercise of impersonal authority. 'Through' or 'in' without 'above', is relationship without authority which is as bad as ('above'

alone) authority without relationship.

Finally, nothing will change man's attitude to authority but the impact of God's love upon him. This love must first be revealed, and, secondly, must make its full impact upon the recipient. Then love will be known; we mean God will be known. We mean that authority will shine in its glory, wisdom and purpose. Like the celestial elders who have thrones and crowns, these figures of authority will mean no more to them than to the Son who did the bidding of his Father, going forth in incarnation to redeem the elect and to transform the needy creation.

Chapter Six

THE QUESTION OF ROLES, FUNCTIONS AND AUTHORITY—11

Objections to Authority

We have said that there is universal objection to authority. Much of that objection seems valid enough. The typical objection is, 'I cannot obey an authority whom I cannot respect'. Another is, 'I cannot go against my conscience, and obey what I have been commanded'. These seem reasonable enough. However they need to be examined. How does one decide the authority is not respect-worthy? May we not be motivated by our innate objection to authority, anyway? May we not fail to see the authority wholly? Was there ever an authority we could wholly respect, given in we wholly lacked prejudice (*sic!*) Further, has there ever been an authority who carried out the exercise of his/her authority completely? Conscience, also, is no infallible guide. It may be dangerous to go against it, but that does not mean it is necessarily correct. The fact is that the command to honour one's parents

(ie. esteem them highly) had little or nothing to do with their quality of character. It is primarily the *office* of the authority which is honoured, and not the *person*. The person will be judged for the manner of executing authority, and the one under that authority is not his judge. Only God is Judge. The person must leave the judgement due to God, and set about obeying where he should. The criterion for refusing to obey in any given situation can only be that what is commanded is in violation of that for which God has placed him there. Even then, the subordinate must be sure of this, and his mode of refusal must be consonant with holy love for God and man. Unceasingly a person must ask why he is thinking of disobeying.

The True Purpose of Authority

This is a large question. Jesus was told by the centurion who had requested healing for his servant, 'I, *also*, am a man under authority, and [so] I say to one man, "Go!" and he goes, "Come!" and he comes, "Do!", and he does. You speak the word and my servant will be healed'. He meant, 'Being under authority I speak with authority. You also are under authority. Therefore you speak with authority'. Being under authority gives authority. Yet authority is related to function and purpose. It is related to the particular function of the authority, and the purpose for which he has been placed there.

Paul in Romans chapter 13 tells us the purpose of the authorities *placed by God*. He says of the authority, 'He is God's servant for your good'. He also reminds them that he is there to punish evil-doers. His parting word is, 'One must be subject [to authority], not only to avoid God's

wrath but also for the sake of conscience'. He enjoins, 'Respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due'.

The paradigm for subordination and all it implies functionally and purposefully is Christ the Son with God the Father. This is seen in Philippians 2:5-11, in extension in John's Gospel, and in the act of I Corinthians 15:24-28. In all of these cases what the Son does is 'for the glory of the Father'. He admits only those into his Kingdom who 'do the will of my Father'.

We need to remind ourselves of the innate rebellion of fallen humanity. Israel was to be the paradigm for obedience, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me', was God's constant command to Pharaoh. To Israel He said, 'And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live'.

Israel failed in obedience. Man failed from the beginning in obedience. No wonder creation needed a new view of true obedience, the meaning and significance of authority and a dynamic paradigm of that same obedience.

Chapter Seven

SEXUALITY, AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

Introduction: Human Problems Regarding the Subject

If it were possible to cleanse human ideas of authority as self-extending, dominating and exploitative, then we could proceed easily in this section. It is to be doubted whether an honest exegesis of Scripture could ever come up with any other idea than that there is authority in the order of creation. Of course anyone can be in error in regard to the *nature* of authority, but not, surely, in regard to *the fact* of authority. We have seen that our bias against authority will invest it with dominating elements. At the same time, an opposition against authority may also seek to emasculate it, that is to withdraw its rights to rule and govern, or suggest that it is not true authority when it rules. We have to contend, then, with a strong bias in ourselves, *no matter who we are*. Even so, we must press on with the discussion.

The Fact of Authority

We have seen that in the Old Testament, God is shown, variously, as Creator, King and Father. These are all positions of authority, and in fact in the unity of God's nature are the one, or aspects of the one. Angels are above men, even if only for a time. In the life of Israel there were elders, and eventually a king. To these the people were, in some way, subject. Again, within families the father held the place of authority and the oldest son a leading place of authority under him. The children were subject to both the father and mother, ie. the two parents *together*.

In the New Testament we find authorities in the churches. Members are to submit to those who have the rule over them. If the term 'leadership' is substituted that makes no difference. Members are to submit. The reasons for submission are of a high order, namely because they are set over them, and they do this willingly, eagerly, and not merely for money. Also they keep watch over the souls of their flock as those having to give account to God.

Within families, wives must be subject to their husbands, and children to their parents. In the community, servants must be subject to their masters, and masters to their Lord. The terms 'be subject' and 'be submissive' are found many times. This is how wives must be to husbands, children to parents, members of the churches to their elders. It is inescapable that there is authority. In fact in I Corinthians 11:3 (already quoted), Paul speaks of the order of headship, that of God over Christ, of Christ over the man, and the husband over the wife. All of these authorities are in the context of creation, of function, and of purpose. In I Corinthians 11:12, Paul finishes his state-

ment by saying, 'And all things are from God'. He surely means that this is how things are, and how God made them. Nothing alters these facts. You must accept them, and live in them, and by them. He also says on occasions that 'nature teaches us' (I Cor. 11:14), and in Romans 1:26 27 speaks of sexual acts which are 'against nature'. Thus we see that man is expected to have some sense of the creational order of things, even if he rejects such an order.

If we accept the fact that God is over all, that He disposes celestial and terrestrial authorities, and does so with a view to the operation of His creation and the *telos* to which it is moving, then we have a rich view of authority. If we take into account the rebellion against these elements by some celestial and terrestrial beings, then we can account for the rebellion obtaining in history.

What concerns us, however, is (a) the responsibility of all authorities to serve those under their aegis, and (b) the responsibility of those under authority to obey that authority.⁹ However we may interpret authority (ie. as benign or dominant), *the working out of relationships depends upon the proper exercise of authority and the right obedience of the authorities*. This principle will naturally enough be received with scorn, ridicule and rejection, but it must be examined nevertheless.

⁹ Revelation 12:31'1'. describes the rebellion of certain celestial powers. Presumably these are those mentioned in I Peter 2:4ff. and Jude 61'. Being given authority they do not use it correctly. This is also inferred in Daniel chapters 10 and 11. and Ephesians 6:10-12, cf. Romans 8:38 39. God's principle of establishing authorities (Col. 1:15 17) is not invalidated by rebellion, even the very rebellion of those authorities themselves. Thus see I Corinthians 15:24 28 for their defeat and God's ultimate triumph.

The Fact of Love

It is curious that human romanticism demands love as the basic element in relationships, especially married relationships, and yet love is left out of the reckoning of the universe. In any discussion of authority and submission there must be the basic fact and power of love. God is basically obeyed because He is loved. All authority will appear as domination other than to love. The Son said, 'That the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father has *commanded me*, so I do'. He also enunciated the principle, 'If you love me you will keep *my commandments*'.

The creation is brought into being through love, sustained by love, and ordered in its functions, authorities and purposes in and for love. This is the basis of all authentic relationships, and creational operations. Where there is not love then all things go against that order. The basic moral law of the universe is love. Paul points this out when he says that the whole law is summed up in love, and this is to *serve* one's neighbour (Gal. 5:13-14, Romans 13:8 - 10, James 1:22 25, 2:8).

We have seen that love creates (Holy Love which is God's love, and His nature), but then love also redeems, and love ultimately renews and glorifies the creation. Hence the Authority over all is true to His nature.

We should then expect to see that love obtains in all the functional and purposive elements of the creation. This is exactly the case.

Sexuality, Authority and Love

When we come to God's mandate to man we see that

masculinity and feminity constitute the image of God, ie. total Man in whom are the elements of man as male, and the woman. When we say 'masculinity' and 'feminity' we do not mean that God is sexual, but that the elements of masculinity and feminity without sexual connotation are elements of God. Moreover sexuality will not be a gift that is exercised ultimately. It is penultimate. It is for the procreation of children, and these on the basis of election for the family of God. Then all will be *sons*, and this again without sexual connotation of masculinity. They will be as the angels, who neither give nor are given in marriage. Some debate whether sexes will be there in the resurrection, but the debate is pointless. 'the gift of sexuality will have completed its task. It will no longer be required.

In addition—all the elect are sons of God (Ephes. 1:4f., Gal.3:26, etc.). Again the connotation is not masculinity in the sense that we know it, but full being as is indicated in passages such as I Corinthians 15:51-56, Philippians 3:21, 1 John 3:1-3 and Romans 8:21-30. Already in Galatians 3:26-29 all are *sons*. Even in this age men and women are sons, which cancels imagined masculine chauvinism in the use of 'He' or 'Him' for God. It does not have the content merely of male-man, but embraces the concept of Man as we saw it in Genesis 5:2.

What concerns us, however, is how sexuality is used in our age. We saw in our introductory section that sexuality covers the whole range of human living. It embraces our functions and purposes here in the world both as persons and as the total race. Whilst rebellious man may refuse the mandate and even the redemption in Christ, that alters nothing. God has not ameliorated His demands, nor mitigated what it is to be human. We are to do as

commanded.

The immediate task of being fruitful and multiplying is doubtless limited to the ones who are married. The work of aiding and assisting the whole race to fill up the earth, rule it, and use it, belongs to the entire human race. No family is without its dependence upon the whole of the race. It has its life intrinsically and extrinsically. All are linked with family life in some manner or another. They are in families; they help families. All vocations go together to make up the totality of human existence, and all are participators and partakers, in some way or another, in the whole human scene. All this, as we have maintained, operates in the context of authorities. Ideally such authorities are the expression of function, and purpose, in love.

Chapter Eight

SEXUALITY AND THE HUMAN RACE

We now come to the more personal, intimate and domestic elements of our theme of human sexuality, and its roles and goals. We come to the human race in general and to the human family in particular.

If we regard Scripture as a unity then we will draw from its totality-in-unity. Whilst we must context any part of Scripture and not lay upon it a weight which it ought not to bear, yet certain principles emerge from its entire unity. One of these is the matter of the family or household. It may be true that local and cultural customs in regard to family differ from time to time and place to place, but certain invariables are also present, namely the facts of father, mother, children, or husband-wife, children-parents relationships, and then familial relationships extending backwards and forwards, as also outwards across the variety of relationships such as uncles, cousins, and so on.

Primary to all our thinking is the Fatherhood of God. This is not merely analogical. God is Father. Primarily He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also He is the

Father of His covenant people Israel, and then of His New Covenant people, the church. In fact He is Father of all His elect people, the community of God. The true nature of Fatherhood is found in Him, as the true nature of sonship is found in the Sonship of His Son. The true nature of the Bridegroom or the Husband is found in Christ, and the true nature of the Bride or Wife in the Church, Christ's spouse. Likewise the true wedding is that of the Bride and the Lamb, and the true Family within the Godhead, and expressed within the Family or Household of the Father.

It does not much matter what terms we use to describe these Realities. We may use the words prototype, archetype, original, exemplar, paradigm, or insist rather on the homological than analogical nature of the reality—it does not matter. We recognise that the God of creation creates from His own powers and purposes. Ephesians 3:14 15 says, 'the Father from whom all the Family [or families] in heaven and earth are named'. This, with Ephesians 4:6, insists that all relationships stem from the Father. Jesus says it is life to know the Father and the Son. and John in his first epistle says we have exactly that relationship (or fellowship) with the Father and the Son (1:3). and that this is life (5:20).

Man, made in the image of God, being male and female, extends his gifts across the creation in love. That anyway is the creational idea. Also man and woman become one flesh. They do this primarily in marriage. They place this bond above the bonds with parents, although not contrary to those bonds. Marriage is essentially a 'one-flesh' relationship, but so intimate in that woman is bone of his (man's) bone. and flesh of his flesh.

Doubtless this is not confined to marriage in that the male and female persons in the body of humanity (and constituting it) work as one for the fulfilment of the mandate. We talk, of course, in principle.

All arguments of moderns (and some ancients) to the contrary, both Christ and Paul base their arguments for one-flesh marriage, and the subordination of the wife on the first five chapters of Genesis. However, note the contexts—(a) man and woman in innocence, and (b) man and woman in the one-flesh experience and state. *Only in these states will such functional relationship cause no mutual offence.* Only in these states will the truth of marriage be lived out richly and relationally. Paul, in Ephesians 5:21-33 uses two bases for his argument (a) Genesis 2:18ff., and (b) the archetype, Christ. He weaves them together so that *the full relationship is the reasonable basis on which the practice may work out.* We mean that if the husband does not draw upon the resource of Christ the Husband, and relate in one-flesh union, then questions of subordination and headship will always be a source of anger, rejection and frustration. The same is for the wife as for the husband.

If we use the broadest concept of sexuality then we will see that masculinity and femininity (and not always with sexual connotation) will obtain across the whole spectrum of relationships. This will involve the special relationships of husband, wife, mother, father, parents, children, brothers, sisters, etc., and it will also involve all man-to-man, man-to-woman, woman-to-woman, woman-to-man relationships.

It is these relationships which count so much. Were they wholly in the context of love there would be little to

worry about. In a fallen world this is not the case. Thus we have many problems to face, and which we must seek to understand. It may not be surprising to find they primarily relate to authority, or rather our attitude to authority.

Fatherhood and Authority

Christ's will was to do his Father's will. He would admit none into the Kingdom who were not of that mind (Matt. 7:21-22~ cf. Matt. 12:50). He himself did that will perfectly. It was out of his relationship with, and love for, the Father that his obedience flowed. Romans 1:18-32 speaks of man's rejection of God. We may speculate whether man knowingly in rejecting God consciously rejected His Fatherhood. Paul seems to infer this in Acts 17:24-30. However that may be, man *rejected the authority of God.* This entailed rejecting His functional principles and the authorities under which He had set His creation.

If we accept that man as a whole was created in the image of God, and that this entailed the male and female elements, then it is logical to conclude that the two parents (husband and wife, now father and mother) represent to the child the image of God, ie. they image God through the parents. Not simply male and female joined together, but the *social relationship of the two*, for out of this, love is known (or denied) by the God they reflect. This meant that the children of the primal pair would have perfectly mirrored God. However, because of the Fall, parents do not truly image God. In fact they give a deficient, and even a distorted, image. Hence the difficulties experienced by the child. Further to this, when the parents do not fulfil their true roles of leader-helpmeet in love, then further

insecurity is born. That is, when the father-husband does not lead and take responsibility, and the mother-wife is not a helpmeet, then the inter-relationship does not mirror the love-nature of God. This the child needs for security, encouragement and affinity with God. Thus an image of God is made which is unhelpful. It does not show the true nature as disclosed in Ephesians 4:6.

Another problem arises, or rather all problems arise from this element, that is that all children born of Adam have rejection of authority as their participation in Adam.^{10*} The first authority they meet in life is the parents, and in particular the father, so that their thrust to reject authority does not allow them to see clearly the parents as they really are. This further demeans the image of God.

Paul's statement, 'Nature teaches', must mean that it is basic to man to know certain categories of truth and function, even whilst he may reject them. Furthermore, man has doom over him in the form of death and judgement which is upon sin (cf. Rom. 5:12-21). He is born into a race which is not God-loving.

C.S. Lewis in an essay on George MacDonald says, 'From his own father, he said, he first learned that Fatherhood must be at the core of the universe' (*Phantastes and Lilith*, p.5, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964). Christ, of course, came to show the Father, the ultimate revelation in history. We can see then that earthly fatherhood may do much to damage and limit the knowledge of God in children. On the positive side it may also be a help.

¹⁰ We must keep reminding ourselves of the rich positive nature of authority, and of its service towards those for whom it is responsible. This is its *raison d'être*.

This paper proposes the following:

'Sexuality relates to authority. True masculinity and femininity combine to do the will of God in His total plan. This presupposes acceptance of authority, especially as it works in functional creation. Rejection of authority must prejudice the proper outworking of true sexuality in husband-wife, children-parents, and all other familial relationships, and so affect all relationships within the community of man. If then we seek to know the problems of persons, we will look to this principle. On the negative side, we will see failure to know and love God, and so all others. On the positive side, we will see that the revelation of God as love, as the Creating and Redeeming Father, will be the greatest motivation to loving relationships in the domestic and community realms.'

Chapter Nine

MAN, WOMAN AND CONJUGACY

The normal conditions for marriage are for a man and woman to come together under a societal affirmation of their marital joining. The situation in Israel was that the woman belonged to her father, as indeed did the wife and the cattle. Although this appals some in Western civilisation, these have missed the truth that animals were held in high regard, loved, and often taken into the home. *Possession* by the father meant he had total responsibility for the care and protection of the person, as also for the bringing of that one to maturation. Thus the daughter was at all times secure. Difficult decisions were made by the parents in their experience and wisdom. When the time came for marriage, the woman was passed over to the care of her husband.

Genesis 2:24 mentions 'leaving and cleaving'. Leaving in modern times may be a matter of moving to another location other than one's own home. Technically a child has not left until the parent consents. Cleaving, of course, is physical, indeed involves intercourse. Thus should one

'cleave' before one 'leaves' then one neither cleaves nor leaves truly. This order set out in Genesis preserves chastity. Paul speaks of the bondage of wrong cleaving in 1 Corinthians 6:16, when he says that one joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her. He seems to refer to Genesis 2:24. Jesus' statement that divorce can only be for unchastity may mean adultery (or homosexuality and bestiality), but it may refer to a partner having sexual intercourse prior to marriage and so depriving the other partner of the utter purity of that initial intercourse when they become one flesh. In fact they do not become one flesh. Hence the wise saying, 'There is no such thing as sex. There is only marriage'.

Sexual intercourse prior to marriage is known as fornication, and extramarital intercourse as adultery. Both are forbidden because in fact they are not part of the functional order of life. In much the same sense homosexual relationships are also malfunctional acts. The guilt which accrues from illicit sex has its deadening effects on marriage. Holiness is part of true humanity. The guilt of pollution is powerful. it affects the relationship. It acts as an impediment to 'one-flesh' in fulness. The guilt must of course be dealt with through (a) the cleansing of the Cross. and (b) the forgiveness of the wronged partner. Then total 'one-flesh' relationship can ensue. In spite of what modern permissiveness says, often even within the church, sexual intercourse before marriage was unacceptable, as was adultery within marriage. Divorce, although permitted by Moses 'for the hardness of their hearts', was said by Christ to be against the ordinance of creation—'It was not so from the beginning ... what God has joined let no man put asunder'. Forgiveness can save a marriage, even where

there has been marital unfaithfulness. This theme is well set out in Hosea.

Chapter Ten

PRINCIPLES FOR LOVE, COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Helps for Those Who Need Them

A multitude of books—Christian and otherwise—have been written on this section of our subject. They urge us to realise that sexual love is a pure thing, and to discard Victorian and Edwardian ideas. Much of what they indicate is true. Many Christians do not see the faculty of sex as a gift from God, and a beautiful gift at that. They have guilt in regard to marital intercourse. There is no need for this if it is the expression of genuine love. If it is a selfish exercise in which one seeks pleasure for oneself and/or domination over one's partner, then some guilt will accrue. Other wrong approaches may also bring guilt. Such guilt is healthy and is intended to direct us to wholesome ways of loving.

Some books in their eagerness to indicate the joys of marriage have unconsciously become hedonistic in their

detailed accounts of how one can derive the most from the sexual act. Some are simply, 'How to ...' books. They have left out the splendid elements of the place of man and woman in creation and history. In their eagerness for joy and pleasure they have neglected the most important elements of all.

Preparation for Marriage

In regard to preparation for marriage, marriage and family, we have the paradigms presented by what we have called the Archetypes or Prototypes or Primary Sources, that is the Fatherhood of God, the Sonship of Christ, and so on. If we were to do what they are represented as doing and being, then excellent guidelines are ready for us. Of course these guidelines have to be translated into everyday principles, and find their application in our human situations.

The Song of Solomon is a genuine love-song, and not really an allegory of Christ and his Church. It is frank and beautiful and richly evocative. Married lovers may enjoy it richly, and not-yet-married lovers may learn from it, and also enjoy it. Those who will never be sexually joined may also drink at its fountain, knowing what love is all about. Because it is genuine love, it reflects Christ and his Church, and since true human marriage derives from the celestial marriage of Christ and his Church, it may then be called an allegory.

Those who approach marriage must work out their principles through what the Word teaches. There are at

hand today many manuals which offer sane and helpful advice. There are also manuals which are not so sane and helpful and which should be discarded. The discerning person, without doubt, can be helped through reading. However, this paper is concerned not so much for the niceties and particular details of sexuality as it is that we learn the wider view. We need to scan the whole panorama of human sexuality in its great dimensions, and see sexuality (including maturation, courtship, marriage and family) in the light of God's plan for His creation. Sexuality in this setting will be valuable, healthy, will develop wisdom, and will be richly functional and usefully purposeful. Also it will not limit sexuality to marriage but spread the gifts of masculinity and femininity across a wide range of options.

For this reason the best preparation for marriage is a full relationship with God. This relationship will fill out human relationships, and certainly with the one who will be the spouse. Going back to our thesis of God being *the Authority*, and other authorities being delegated by Him to form and carry a functional creation, it is wholly necessary that the intending couple for a marriage be wholly *relationalised*. *Relationalised* may sound in our ears a strange term, but then it really means that we must have come to know God and love Him, and so to have accepted the principle of authority, function and purpose in life. On this basis a marriage can flourish.

It is true that almost all people come to marriage with residual problems. In all the counselling the writer

has done, he has traced back every broken relationship to the parental and family situation.¹¹ Here the child has reacted to the parents, and has failed to cope with certain factors linked with heredity, environment and circumstances.¹² It is generally linked with non-acceptance of authority, and hence of the parents and God. It is difficult to know which comes first of these chickens and eggs! What matters is that the image the child has formed of God be transcended by the revelation of God's love. This must come through a revelation of Christ as Son, by the Holy Spirit, and so a revelation of the Father as Love, through the Son especially in the work of the Cross and Resurrection. This is why it is essential that the person be a recipient of the Holy Spirit, and so be introduced to repentance, forgiveness and love.

What then do we mean by 'relationalising'? We mean that the sins, guilts, and destructive and hurtful memories which a person carries, along with the prejudices (especially against authority) often linked with parents and God, all be removed by the experience of God's love. Revelation brings repentance and faith, and the gift of the Spirit, and with these comes regeneration, leading into the

fulness of life. Forgiveness received means the recipient forgives all others. Also he/she faces up to the fact that much has had to be forgiven by God *which the person did not formerly consider to be sin*, eg. negative reactions to parents and other persons, rebellious views once rationalised and accepted as wholesome.

When this process of forgiveness and cleansing has taken place, the idols and images are replaced by the warm view and image of the Father.¹³ This is the genuine basis for the true marital relationship. It is this way: 'He who is not the good son of his father will not be the good father of his son, but when he relates truly to the Heavenly Father, he will relate to the earthly father, and so to his earthly son'.

So often the wife has learned of masculinity from her father—whether good or bad. The man has learned of femininity from his mother. Both spouses tend to see each other through the model learned, *even If they do not like that model!* Hence problems arise, thick and fast. The relationalising of the two brings liberty for a true marriage. This relationalising is, of course, wholly essential for true relationships between the parents and the children who will come, as also amongst or between the children themselves.

¹¹ There is nothing new about this idea. Almost all research psychiatrists and psychologists have noted this. Their interpretation and handling of the matter differs across the board. Some see the influence of the parents as determining what the child will be. Others see the reactions and/or responses of the child as determining (amongst other things) what the child will be.

¹² This matter of personal problems and counselling required by them is dealt with in Living Faith Study No. 32, *The Basis and Practice of Christian Counselling*, NCPI, Adelaide, 1978.

¹³ Notice here that *all* of the Christian lilt is one of faith. It is lived *in* and by faith. Should one slip out of faith, *the faith-images* diminish and the *non-faith-images* threaten to return. There may be conflict in fact of the *old* and the *new* images. Nothing is guaranteed *outside of faith*, although *objectively* everything obtains as faith sees it. Its objectivity is not dependent on faith. Its subjective appropriation is dependent on faith.

Purposiveness for Marriage

The marriage which is going nowhere is going nowhere. We mean there must be purpose for marriage. The Christian doctrine of God's plan for the ages, the prophetism and hope which accompanies it, and the fulfilment already of much of this plan, fortifies the thrust of purpose. We have already shown that Frankl sees much of neurosis springing from lack of meaning and purpose. It is healthy to have purpose. Again that purpose is the will of the Father.

Marriage is not an end in itself. If art for art's sake is ultimately unproductive of the best, so is marriage for marriage's sake, and if marriage is for the sake of sex, then it is appalling. By *sex* we mean its strictly limited use.

The paradigm for family, as we have seen, is the Family or Household of God.¹⁴ Fatherhood, Sonship, Husbandhood, Wifehood, Childhood and Familyhood are the sources and resources for this Family. This Family is 'going somewhere'. It is purposive, and all members share in that purpose. Even so, the primary purpose will be the relational mandate, the plan of God as set out in Ephesians 1:3-14, which itself includes what we may now introduce as the redemptional mandate, ie. the proclamation of the Gospel to a world which has refused the authority of the Father-Creator, and so needs to be redeemed.

¹⁴ An understanding of Family/Household is indispensable to understanding the (so-called) nuclear family. It is in this context that the nuclear family flourishes. It both receives from and gives to the Household of God, of which it must be a dynamic part. For further reading see Living Faith Study No. 34, *The People of God: the True Community*, NCPI, Adelaide, 1978.

We are not setting out a detailed approach to that purpose, but suggesting that the couple align themselves generally with the will of God, and seek the particular participation God requires of them within that will.¹⁵

¹⁵ Note the dreary purposelessness of many' Australian homes. Dad is often going nowhere except of course to the pub, the trots, the 'footie'. At home he finds it difficult to communicate to others. He is saved embarrassment by watching the replay, and the numerous soap operas which tell him of the problems families are facing today, ie. in their relationships!

Chapter Eleven

THE PRINCIPLE OF MARRIAGE

Nothing can be set out better than Ephesians 5:18-33. Note that we commence with verse 18, 'Be filled with the Spirit'. This as against things which excite, titillate and debauch. Paul speaks of community relationships which flow from being filled with the Spirit, and the healthy thanksgiving to God for all things. In this context the obedience of the wife is not an onerous matter, nor the love of the husband for her. They flow naturally. Doubtless, when one is devoid of the Spirit or has vexed or quenched him, then relational matters will be at a low ebb. As we have said before, sexuality only thrives in the great context of loving the Father and sharing in His will.

The marriage service used by most churches has been beautifully composed, and deals richly with the true principles of marriage. It has been hammered out, so to speak, on the anvil of time, experience and wholesome tradition. Couples need, time and again, to read that service, as they need time and again to read together the Song of Solomon, and the Ephesians passage we are considering.

In that service the principles for marriage are outlined. The giving of the bride to the bridegroom by the father should ensure total leaving, and so total cleaving. The bride now belongs to the bridegroom and not, primarily, the parents. The 'in-law problem' is thus minimised.

The acceptance of the leadership of the husband and the love of the husband for the wife is the basis of marriage. Note that the husband is one who gives *himself for* his wife, even, so to speak, before he gives himself *to* her. Each bride comes to marriage with certain residual problems. Doubtless a man cannot redeem his wife from her sins and guilt, since Christ does that. But a husband can be a redeemer in that he can (through Christ, the Father, the Spirit, the Word, and a lot of commonsense!) help to heal her of her residual problems, her problems from the past. If his mind is primarily towards her, she can be helped. Her response will be that of loving trust and glad obedience. Together, then, the two can fulfil the mandate innate in marriage.

Note, also, that Christ gives great gifts to his bride! There is the gift of life, the gift of the Spirit, the gifts (*charismata*) distributed by the Spirit. Also-the gifts of faith, hope and love. Indeed the gifts are given to the church to equip her for true service, co-working with her Spouse. In Ephesians 1:22-23 Paul makes the point that all that the Head of the church is, *is for the church*. She is his fulness, ie. *he has given her his fulness*. This alone makes sense of I Corinthians 11:7, '[the] woman is the glory of [the] man'. He has given his glory to her that she may be his glory. She glories in this glory!

To all of this is added the fact that the true husband 'nourishes and cherishes her'. Doubtless woman is functionally

built for nourishing and cherishing. Doubtless this increases her trust, completes any healing she may need, and edifies her for the life she lives as wife and (hopefully) mother. It would also fortify her for any widowhood that might come.

What has to be noted in these and other details is that whilst a paradigm for marriage is set before us, there is no legalistic system outlined. We mean that the husband cannot insist that the wife obey him, or the wife that the husband love her, simply on the basis of Ephesians 5:18—33. One tragedy which often results from the reading of books on marriage and family is that the readers set up images of what a husband and/or a wife should be, and how a family should be, and what it should do, until the images dominate as cruelly as any idol or image. All principles of Christian living are operative primarily under grace, and not as legalism. Grace is the element which makes deficient situations become buoyant. Love is not a legalism, although it is the greatest law (principle) of all life and being.

Further to this there is the rich setting of the love-play. The Song of Solomon is filled with this spirit. Without the setting of the love-play, marriage becomes a battle-ground of the sexes (a contradiction in terms), an endeavour to get one's rights, and an insistence on fulfilling one's self. It is doubtful whether Christians should think in terms of 'rights'. They would think better in terms of love, of giving, of function, of purpose, and *all these together*. To fulfil one's self seems a modern concept. To be man and woman, simply, not self-consciously, but assuredly, offers all the fulfilment a person needs. To do that together in marriage is true fulfilment.

Chapter Twelve

THE PRINCIPLE OF FAMILY

We have already seen that no nuclear family can be a unit contained within itself and be healthy. It must relate across the community. Christian families relate naturally enough to the Household of God. They must relate to the whole stream of humanity and in a proclaiming, giving, discerning, caring way. 'Do good unto all men, and chiefly to those of the household of God.'

We have said that families are truest when they are related to the will, plan and purpose of God. In this way they are more creational, more redemptional, more geared to the eschaton, to hope and to the goals of God.

Also we have seen that the Fatherhood of God, the Lordship of Christ, and the Leadership of the Holy Spirit are the three powerful determinants for rich family life. Morality must not be a goal in itself, nor must piety be an end in itself. We need to sense the greatness of the gifts God has placed within us as persons, and within humanity, especially redeemed humanity. These are for sharing, for use in love's purposes and actions.

It is significant that Paul does not commence his ideas of children's obedience until he deals with the husband wife relationship. If there is lack of love for the wife from the husband, and little of obedience by the wife, then the call for the children to obey their parents in the Lord will evoke minimal response. The parents are the paradigm of love and obedience for the children. In this regard, children learn from their parents whether things are good or bad, and tend to reproduce those patterns sooner or later. After all—one can only learn *directly* of parenthood from one's own parents. Hence the warning not to cause little ones to stumble.

At the same time we must remember that the age of *choice* does not necessarily parallel the age of *responsibility*. Certain Scriptures lead us to conclude that in some cases *choice* is made in the womb. This would be the case with Esau and Jacob, and probably John the Baptist. Psalm 58:3 says, 'The wicked go astray from the *womb*, they *err from their birth*, speaking lies'. This goes close to David's saying (Psalm 51:5), 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me'. It relates to Isaiah 48:8, '... from birth you were called a rebel', (cf. Deut. 7, 9, 24). Children, it seems, *choose* early in life. As for *taking responsibility for their choice*, that is another matter. Some never do. It is helpful then to read Ezekiel chapter 18 in which God rejects the false interpretation of Deuteronomy 5:9 in regard to visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. In that passage (Deut. 5:9) the visitation is for *continuing idolatry*. In Ezekiel 18 (cf. Jer. 31:29- 30) the *choice* is made by a child either to go the good (or evil) way of his father, or to go the opposite way. He is responsible for his choice and its consequences. His

father is not responsible.

It appears, then, that children make their own choice. Doubtless the conduct of the parents may be conducive in some ways to the choice of the child, but in the ultimate the child makes its choice, whether good or bad, negative or positive, and it seems it lives its life for the most part in accordance with that choice.

It can be seen that in Christian families a choice against godliness will bring the child into deep internal conflicts. These may issue in open rebellion or outward compliance with stored internal rebellion. This would account for the neuroses, psychoses, and personality states which eventually surface.

Without doubt families are concerned with the principle of authority. If it is authority without love and concern, it may produce rebellion or apathy. On the other hand, it may not. The mystery of why one child reacts negatively to the same set of circumstances and stimuli whilst another responds positively is beyond our analysis. We simply have to accept the fact. Yet it is also true that anger and disgust often move a child who desires honesty, wishes to know what life is about and to be given worthwhile directives. It is not always rebelling against authority but either the lack of it, or the wrong or inadequate use of it.

The positive principle of family we know, ie. living in purpose, usefulness, genuine vocation and all of this in the principle of love. In the human nuclear family, love-in-authority is there to protect, correct, direct and teach the children. It is there to provide for their emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual needs. It is there to bring them to maturity, accepting that they are growing creatures,

and their relationship to the parents changes in its expression with the changing periods of the children's lives. Parents also learn to be parents by the things their children teach them. They just do not know everything.

The first goal of family life is achieved when the children are trained to that point of maturity when they start their own family units, if that is the matter into which God leads them. Other goals are reached when the family grows more widely into its clan relationships, and members assist one another. The ultimate goal is that the children of the nuclear family become members of the ultimate family, the community which is the people of God.

Chapter Thirteen

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE (SO-CALLED) SINGLE PERSON

Misconception Concerning Single Persons

The use of adjectives can be misleading and even cruel. We speak of a 'big woman' or a 'little man'. Zacchaeus is said by some to be 'the little man'. In fact there is no such thing as a little man or a big woman, but only a man or a woman. The size of the body does not enlarge or minimise the person. The term 'man' is simple enough. 'Woman' is a word pointing to origin. She was out of man, yet primarily she was out of God. To call a person who is not married 'single' ought to cause us to call a married person 'double', which is patently silly. So a person is a person. In one sense all persons are single. Yet no person is single since most, if not all, persons *relate* to someone or other. Relating to others fulfils and even fills out our own personhood.

Doubtless we are stuck with the word 'single', and probably no one means anything demeaning by it, but it is

a pity we do not meet persons as people and regard them not as married or unmarried as though that categorises them. We just happen to know that some people who are married are unhappy and some who are single are happy, so that a person should not be designated or calculated by the state in which he/she lives.

Of course this general assessment comes out of the fact that many in the human race seem to take it for granted that to be married is best, and to be single is to be short of best. This is not the case. To be human and married and to be human and not married are both normal states within humanity. Because we are biologically structured to complement the other sex does not mean we have to. Whilst procreation is part of the mandate given by God, it is not the whole of it—not by a long chalk. Families do *not* grow up wholly within the confines of a home. They need every aid possible across the human race. Unmarried persons supplement the gifts of parents in a whole range of activities and vocations by teaching, training, providing for, and maturing other persons who are children, young people, middle-aged and adult persons. Doubtless certain cultural factors press people towards marriage, but that does not mean it is always the good or the right thing for everyone.

When we look at the creational and redemptional mandates we see there is enormous scope—scope for all persons within this world. In fact they have their richest being in the fulfilment of God's plan and commands. They have this in the context of life and peace and joy. They recognise the purposefulness of their life and vocation. Jesus sought no marriage and his life was accepted as right and normal. There is no hint of 'unnaturalness' about him,

nor was there. He accomplished more for the world than anyone. Likewise Paul saw the 'single' state as one of greatest usefulness. Like Christ, his conditioning theme was always 'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake'. How different this is from 'for pleasure's sake', 'for success's sake', 'for acceptance's sake', and so on.

We should not defend the single state. It is one state amongst others. We should accept it as such, and no one should be especially conscious of it. The acceptance of one's state liberates one to live positively. It has been pointed out that some males and females have a continuing awareness of a goal in front of them—marriage. Need this be so? Should not everyone live his or her lifestyle without reference, continually, to possibilities or even probabilities. Time enough for such things when they arrive! Surely this was what Jesus meant (amongst other things) when he said, 'Take no thought for the morrow... sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'.

What we mean is that life can be (and should be) wholly rich within both states, married and unmarried. This is made possible by the fact that we are all members of the human race. We primarily belong to God. Belonging is about the deepest need of a human being. To belong is to be secure. What we belong to, to a great degree, indicates who and what we are. If we belong to idols, we are of one kind. If we belong to a parent (or parents), we are of another kind. If we give ourselves to a receiving person, then we belong. In giving ourselves, we share the gifts which are ours with the gifts which belong to the receiving one. In this sense we belong. We are not, however, possessed. Only demons possess. To belong to God is to relate to Him and yet retain the sovereignty of our persons.

Likewise with others. The gifts of masculinity and femininity enrich receiving and belonging. Only in one case does the intimate biological element of sexuality become the gift received by the spouse. In other cases the question of giving it does not arise. This is the true order of creation.

For all persons, then, 'single', or 'double', the creation is a wonderful place. As Paul said, 'All things are yours'. There is no cause for pining, no point in setting the heart upon a special goal. There are persons, families, nations, gifts of nature and technology which can all be cared for and used in the enrichment of life. In the light of this, the questions of marriage or non-marriage need not remain as burning issues.

Chapter Fourteen

MORE ABOUT SINGLES AND DOUBLES

Advice to Marrieds Who View Singleness Falsely

What we have said above stands primarily as commonsense. Paul sees marriage as a calling, and also 'singleness' as a calling. The single Christian, especially in times of crisis, can operate better than the encumbered person, ie. the married one. That some people should regard the married state as the *natural* one, and the single state not *as natural* is quite foolish. Unfortunately many see it this way and press single people *as though they ought to be married!* Of all sexismisms this is the most sexist! When a woman is beautiful and accomplished or a man handsome and gifted, the pity for them—as single persons—increases. This, also, is bewildering. In fact the false bases on which many visualise marriage are so fatuous as to defy description.

The whole human race must work together and forget its private predilections to this or that. That we do not work together, and that we make false images is part of

our sinfulness. We are not called upon to have pity, let alone silent pity, for people not married. As we have said, all are together for the fulfilment of God's plan for the universe. The gifts of masculinity and femininity are indispensable to this task. People with wrong views of the married state need to change their ideas, and so to treat all with honour and dignity, knowing each belongs to the Creator. and each is created for His rich purposes, ie. personal maturation and glory.

The Reluctant Singles

There are single persons who could marry. We mean the opportunities arise. Many of them fear marriage. They feel inadequate for relationships. This in itself does not constitute a calling to singleness, any more than the ability to relate constitutes a calling to the married state. The basic matter is the will of God. Whether the reluctant single will marry or not, the relational problem must be cleared up. Help is needed. There may have been traumatic experiences in the past, shocks which have set a person against relating in marriage,

One problem arises from the rebellion a person may feel towards the parents. We have said elsewhere that this is also rebellion against the true Father, however unconscious it may be. Many fear marriage because they fear to be faced with handling children. Since authority and responsibility go together they feel threatened.

There may also be the question of homosexuality, a subject which is beyond treatment in this paper seeing its elements are so many and complicated. Homosexuality, like other rejections of creational norms, is as much a

form of relational dependency as persons find in alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity, masturbation, gambling, overworking and frenetic pleasure-seeking. The relating of two persons within the same sex, short of biological exercise of sex is surely not wrong. Relating only to persons within the same sex is wrong. It denies the wholeness of the human race, and despises the functional *difference* between the sexes which is the gift of God to true humanity. The dependencies we have mentioned above are not innately wrong. Only their perverted use is wrong. The question is not that a homosexual must be cured in order to be married, but that he/she be released from a relational bondage into full relationships with humanity as a body.

The High-Powered Doubles

Under our heading of human sexuality, we may relate the 'burning double' with the reluctant single. Married persons are often said to be on the one hand highly-sexed and on the other frigid or impotent. What has to be taken into consideration is that the gift in marriage *par excellence* is the state of 'one-flesh'. That is total union of the two persons, signified and actuated in sexual intercourse but not confined to it or primarily springing from it. One-flesh is a total cleaving, in every way, of the one to the other. This being so, sexuality will have its fulfilment; and this being not so, one or other of the partners will press for it, for it is instinctively felt to be the richest birthright of the marital state. Many single persons who have related to others without sex have achieved a high state of friendship—union. It is just that the context is different. Such are content with their states of life, whether in vocation.

relationship or achievement.

Within marriage, a partner often burns with desire because unfulfilled by the other. Manuals on sex and marriage convince them that they have been cheated. Various emotions are fostered which increase the pressure of that partner upon the other, often with the reaction of frigidity. Frigidity is not normal to the other person but arises as a form of self-defence. The disgust which often comes is not warranted, but is a powerful factor in splitting the unfulfilled relationship. Without doubt, this conflict often gives rise to relationships outside marriage by one or both of the unsatisfied partners. But with understanding, patience and corrective acts, the marriage could be wholly rehabilitated.

As we have pointed out, time and again, authority cannot be accepted within marriage if it is not already a principle of both partners prior to marriage.

Chapter Fifteen

TOSS UP—SINGLE OR DOUBLE?

What we have said in the previous chapter is simply pragmatic. It is insulting to patronise folk who have not married. It is in fact insulting their calling in life to pity them because they are not married. Worst of all it is a failure to understand the principle of *the image of God*.

When God said, 'Let us make man in our own image', then doubtless the person created, sometimes called Adam, was, as we have pointed out, man. The creation of woman from man did not make him *male-minus*, but in fact with her coming he was *male-plus*. *Male-plus-female*= *MAN*, ie. = humanity. Humanity is a dual matter—male and female. This, then, is humanity, right across the board. *It is also the image of God*. (For further material see Appendix One of this book, p.98.)

What concerns us is the misunderstanding many have of the image of God in man. In order to understand the image we first have to understand God whom the image reflects. A static image such as a physical idol or statue cannot be a true image of God. Hebrews 1:3 says that

Christ 'reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature'. Christ represents God dynamically, that is in attitude, action, operations, intentions and goals. None of this is static. He is *at* one with God: *is* one with God, ie. '1 and the Father are one'.

This is exactly how man should be; we mean man-woman (ie. male-female) equalling *Man*. He should be dynamic, actional, reflecting the true actional nature of God. Man, in the image of God, thus combines the male-female elements *in all that he does*. Hence when God gives the mandate to humanity (Gen. 1:28f.) He is telling the entire human race to be in the business of being fruitful, multiplying the human race, subduing the creation, and having (responsible) lordship over it. Where God creates, man procreates. When God creationally replenishes, man procreationally replenishes, and so on. Thus man is reflecting the action of God in His male-female elements.

The idea that a man is incomplete until married, and that a woman is similarly incomplete is an idea which fails to take hold of life in understanding the image of God. If God's plan for any man or woman is marriage, then surely they will be completed *in that area, ie. the area of marriage*. However, if, as Paul suggested, God's plan for some is not to be married, then those persons will be fulfilled in their unmarried state, for it is as significant as marriage is for others. Even more than this, every human being will be fulfilled, whether in marriage or not in marriage *according to the will, vocation and purpose* that God has for that one.

To amplify the idea: every person is whole and complete in himself or herself whether married or single, provided that one is doing the will of God. To understand

this we must first see that God is free in His actions, but that those actions are for others, for His creation, for us. In one sense He is not free to not serve. He serves by creation, providence, redemption and restoration (of His creation). To reflect Him we must likewise be free to serve others. When we are for others we are truly reflecting Him. One moment's consideration will show us that this is just how Jesus was—for others.

This, then, means that all the gifts God has given in feminity and masculinity are to be used for others. There are some gifts which are not innately either masculine or feminine, and there are some which are. Both must be used for others. This then means that *when anyone is living life for others then one is complete and whole as a person*. In this sense marriage adds nothing, and non-marrying takes away nothing.

A look at the life of Jesus confirms this. He was 'single' (as we say), and yet complete. This is because his life was used for others. Mary of Bethany is a similar case. Mary Magdalene served Christ and others (Luke 8:1f.), and to the point to which she went she was complete. The account of her visit to the garden on the resurrection morning tells us she did not wish to go beyond the point she had reached. The risen Lord had to shake her out of that set pattern, and introduce her to a richer, fuller mode of being for others. In this sense the image increased.

One problem with unthinking marrieds is that they are happy to have single persons attend on them in their magnificent task and state of marriage (*sic!*), as though they were graciously giving singles a share in their marriage. This patronising attitude is wrong. Singles might equally give marrieds a share in their fulfilling ministries.

In fact the truth is that all persons are created to share in the whole mandate, and to share in it totally. Whilst marriage may give special relationships to man and woman as husband and wife, all relationships are wholly important, and none above the other. The whole race is expected to use its entire resources for fulfilling the creational command given to it.

The principle then is that marriage does not really fulfil anyone *of itself*. One should be fulfilled in any state, in any task, because one is following the will of God. This means that no person should prepare himself or herself for marriage, more than that one should prepare for being single. One should just live in the will of God. Paul expresses this very beautifully in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, 'I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away'.

To sum up—every person should be free to marry, and free not to marry. Every person, whether married or not married, should join with all the human race in fulfilling the will of God. Paul has expressed it, 'The whole law is summed up in this one word, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself,"' and he proceeds to say, 'That is, by love *serve one another*'. This, then, is the true image of God.

Again Paul highlights this whole matter in Colossians 3:9-11, 'Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old humanity with its practices and have put on

the new humanity, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all'. The essence of his statement is this: 'You all, corporately, have put on the new humanity, Christ himself. He being the true image of God, you have now been incorporated into him, and so participate in this new (fresh) image. The more you know, the more you grow, and the more you grow, the more you know, ie. the truth of God, and the working out of that truth in action. This helps you to see that in him (Christ the true image), there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, for Christ himself is all these, and is himself all'. If we add to this Galatians 3:26-29 and I Corinthians 12:12-13, we reach the conclusion that God in His wisdom has created an immense variety within mankind, ie. 'all sorts and conditions of men', but that not one difference makes any difference! In fact the differences are necessary for the total unity!

Spoken out and worked out, this means, 'No matter what person, what state, what differences, what similarities and what gifts, mankind is one entity, one unity, one harmony, provided it is in Christ, and is therefore part of the new humanity (cf. Col. 3: 10, Ephes. 2:15, 4:24). Whilst sexual, ethnic, and other differences do not dissolve, *they cease to be impediments to unit*'.

We conclude, then, that anyone can be (and should be) whole and complete as a person provided he or she is constantly reflecting the image of God. That is he or she is for others. Since God has said, '*That which* God has joined together let no man put asunder' then masculinity

and feminity are joined, right across the board, and must not be sundered, or given autonomy as separate entities. Each needs to give and receive of the other, and both are one, and their oneness is essential to the fulfilment of man's vocation as a race created by God.

In practice this will mean that a man or a woman will need the gifts of other men and women to fulfil the vocation each has been given, and corporately the vocation the race (Man) has been given. A woman will need to relate to other women and men, and a man to other men and women. The only (biologically) sexual relationship will be the man -wife one. Yet such is only a portion of the entire network of relationships which are essential for the fulfilment (a) of the creational mandate, and (b) of the redemptional mandate.

No one then will be unfulfilled by not being married. Nor for that matter will a person be fulfilled by being married. The fulfilment will be effected either in the state of not being married, or in the state of being married. Marriage is not a bonus, nor is not being married a bonus. All life is God's grace. Fulfilment comes simply from seeing it that way, and using it that way.

Chapter Sixteen

SEXUALITY FROM THE WOMB

We have seen that choices are made very early in life and these choices seem to spring from basic attitudes. What is generally axiomatic is that sex is learned from the womb, that is the uses of masculinity and feminity. These uses pertain to many things, and primarily to relationships. A female child may be daughter, sister, cousin, wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, and so on, and a man corresponds within his sex. Doubtless there is a natural or desirable balance in these relationships. It is undesirable to have a child over-relate to one parent, and so underrelate to the other. A brother-brother or brother-sister or sister-sister relationship may be overly developed. It will have its wrong effects. And so on. I John 4:20 contains a powerful principle, for one cannot say one loves God if one does not love another person. Hence primary love to God will bring healthy love to others. Moreover family love should not dwindle with the marriage of the children. The reserves of masculinity and feminity need continually to be used in these relationships.

This, then, is the way sexuality is truly learned and practised. Often pre-marital sex is from the desire to get 'love'. It is wrong because the familial love cannot come from the man woman expression of sexuality. Hence where a home is secure, where there is purpose in life, serenity in faith, reasonable peace in relationships, then the truth of sexuality will be properly learned.

Of course Christians insist that the wider family, the entire household of God (even reaching back to Abraham!) is the richest context for learning life and sexuality. If the nuclear family even being Christian is exclusive, then it misses out both on getting and giving. Our Australian culture with its excessive urbanisation and sub urbanisation has poured its families into separated cubicles of houses and so relational patterns are not easy to learn.

The rich experience of Fatherhood, Familyhood with the presence of the Son and the Spirit and the prodigality of gifts is the ideal, indeed the authentic place of learning true sexuality.

Chapter Seventeen

SEXUALITY AND DIVORCE

This area is one to which many are especially sensitive. A direct approach to it will satisfy few.¹⁶ So far as Scripture is concerned, at least in the direct approach, there is little comfort for those who seek permission to divorce. The relevant passage of Malachi 2:13-16 contains God's statement, 'I hate divorce'. Christ's statement, 'What God has joined together, let no man put asunder', and his pronouncement on there being no divorce from the beginning seems clear enough. The one ameliorating clause, 'except for unchastity' poses a problem, but gives some escape route from marriage. His use, however, of the creational account of man and woman and their union is clear enough (cf. Matt. 19:4-5). The objection that Moses had given easy enough escape was rebutted with the statement, 'For the hardness of your heart', ie. 'If you

¹⁶ For a good treatment see INTERCHANGE No. 23. pp.131-174. Sydney. AFES articles by John Wade and B. Ward Powers. A different treatment is *The Right to Remarry*. D.H. Small. Revell. New Jersey. 1977.

were soft-hearted and loving there would be no divorce'. Passages in the Pentateuch which relate to divorce in some way or another are: Deuteronomy 22:13-21, 24:1-4, Numbers 5:12-31, Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18, Leviticus 20: 10. Other biblical passages are Ezra chapters 9-10, Nehemiah 13:23ff., Matthew 5:31, 19:6-8, Mark 10:2-12, Luke 16:18, Romans 7:1-3, cf. 1 Corinthians 7:10-16. None of these passages specifically forbids divorce. Nor for that matter is it anywhere encouraged. However, the dreadful penalty for adultery seems to erase the question of divorce. Adultery requires death! (see Deut. 22:22). Of course all such apodictic laws were not carried out perhaps ever. But the principle lies with them. There is no permission as such given for divorce, but rather the question of what happens in two cases when the one divorcing sets about to do it (Deut. 22:13ff. and 24: 1ff.). Romans 7:1-3 does not envisage divorce as such, even where there is adultery. It leaves the matter unstated. In Hosea, God likens Himself to one betrayed in marriage (ie. He and Israel the wife), but says He forgives even that. The 'Pauline Privilege' so called in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 is interpreted variously. Some insist that separation of the two partners is as far as this goes. Others maintain that Paul is indicating divorce.

The two views are maintained on the whole question, the first being that divorce is forbidden by Christ as being against the creational intention and norm. The other is that whilst divorce is undesirable there are ameliorating factors within Scripture, namely that grace covers irregular situations. Forgiveness comes from God for failure in marriage and consequent divorce.

A principle is that whenever the matter of the man-

woman relationship arises, few if any are ever wholly rational. The participants with great difficulty can be objective. In fact probably they never are. Even spectators seem emotionally involved, and so are also not wholly objective. This gives rise to strong feelings for and against the matter of divorce. These emotions have little to do with the facts. Jesus was wise when he said that the real question is, 'For the Kingdom of heaven's sake' (Matt. 19: 12). This puts the debate on another level, and introduces a new dimension. If it is 'for man's sake' or 'pity's sake', then anything may go. Much human sympathy and emotion may ameliorate the lot of a divorced person and urge remarriage, but this, in the ultimate, may not be the right decision. Such decisions should be made in the perspective of eternal things.

Is divorce then permissible? It would be good to be able to say, 'Yes', or 'No'. It is not as easy as that. One of the problems arises in the question, 'Who is the partner who has failed?' That, too, cannot receive a direct answer. The elements are so complicated. Is any partner wholly at fault or wholly unblameworthy? It is scarcely likely. In any case, divorce as such does not really depend on the fact that one has failed. A close examination of Matthew 19:3-12 really produces the following:

- (a) Marriage is rooted in creation.
- (b) It is instituted of God God has joined man and woman. Let no one destroy this ordinance (ie. 'what God has joined' rather than 'who God has joined'). Moses did NOT command divorce. He accommodated to the already present practice of divorce but limited its cause to one- unchastity (which is what Deut. 24:1 speaks of). In fact verse 9 of Matthew 19 reads, 'And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity and marries another,

commits adultery'. Ward Powers (op. cit., p. 163) paraphrases Jesus' answer thus: 'You appeal to Moses commanding you to give a wife a certificate of divorce, and then put her away? Moses did indeed allow a divorce because of the hardness of your hearts (though this was not God's original plan in the beginning). But you are divorcing your wives, not because of *porneia* (which was what the law of Moses allowed), but in order to marry someone else, and this is nothing but adultery'.

Another text has it that if one divorces his wife after unchastity he makes her commit adultery. Yet another says that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. The debate over the passage in I Corinthians chapter 7 is not an easy one to solve. Some see it as only separation. Some see that Paul is in fact speaking to people who for good or bad reasons have divorced (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9-10), and Paul is suggesting they desist from marriage (vs.25-31), but if they cannot, then let them marry.

The whole question needs to be thoroughly aired. Nowhere is divorce set up as a pattern and nowhere directly forbidden. The principle of marriage is strongly enunciated. Let man and woman adhere to that. Let no one break up this principle. At the same time there are exigencies raised by the sinfulness of persons, just as there are other exigencies raised by other sins. Other sins are forgiven when other functional principles are broken. Forgiveness and justification also covers those failures. Doubtless the consequences that are native to these failures follow them, and one must live with the consequences, yet without guilt because of justification.

The Real Questions Surrounding Divorce

These are often neglected. It has been rightly pointed

out that the act of divorce is *only confirmatory of what has already happened*. Divorce does not break a marriage. It simply ratifies the break. Yet the general questions asked are, 'Is it right? Is it wrong? Is it permissible?' These questions should not be asked, but rather, 'How can one repair this relationship? Are any two people necessarily incompatible? In what ways may compatibility be achieved? Where do relationships go wrong? How may they be healed?' These questions are positive and open the way to reconciliation and renewal of marriage. Tragically enough they are neglected. The loose view of marriage and the availability of divorce set a pattern of indifference. If the marriage does not work easily then it is no marriage! So think many. The talk of an offending party or an innocent party is often made when in fact the matter is not so simple. It is wholly unlikely that one alone would be in the wrong. Even then 'the wrong' is not the point, hard as it may seem to make a statement such as this.

The wider matter is what we have stressed throughout our paper. Sexuality (ie. both masculinity and femininity) comes together in mankind to do the will of God in all aspects, and when a marriage is for this purpose—'heirs together of the grace of life'—then compatibility can flow naturally in the action of obedience. For some this may sound too airy-fairy, too general, and too abstract. In fact it has to work out concretely, for there is no alternative for human beings.

Summary on Divorce

It seems clear that God hates divorce—on any grounds. It is also clear that marriage is a creational matter and so

truly functional: two become one. None must injure this ordinance; none must seek escape from it. Tender-heartedness preserves the union. Breaks in union *do* occur. Other sins also occur. God forgives all where there is repentance. The breaks having occurred, one should leave it there—forgiven. What one does following that should be under the principle, ‘For the Kingdom of heaven’s sake’. What this is will work out in many different ways. Remarriage in the light of the Kingdom should not be contemplated. Certainly one should never divorce in order to marry another. That is *adultery per se*, and marrying the other likewise involves them in the same. In some cases not to marry would be to so burn with passion as to fall into the sin of unchastity. Let that one marry.

The difficulty in all this is that we are faced with heavy legalism on the one hand which totally opposes a break in marriage and a remarriage. On the other hand, we have a legalism which insists that it is legally permissible to divorce and remarry. Also there is a careless view of grace which says nothing matters anyway—why fuss? True grace spends labour on thought, examination and understanding to see what in these circumstances is most advisable and best in the light of the principles it knows within Scripture, but this is not argued on legalistic grounds.

Chapter Eighteen

SEXUALITY AND REMARRIAGE

We have dealt above, in principle, with this issue. Marriage is God’s creational ordinance, and there ought not to be divorce. Divorce happens; that is a fact of life. If it happens with a view to another marriage, Jesus sees it as adultery, and one partner involves the other in the same sin. What, then, of such a marriage? Where there is repentance surely there is a whole renewal of the persons and the marriage. Legalism would demand a dissolution of that marriage and an attempt to retrieve the past. This treatment is not recommended.

Most divorced persons have guilt about making a second marriage after divorcing or being divorced. The Law Bill of Australia has no causes for divorce other than incompatibility shown over a set period of time. Doubtless most of the guilt comes from having failed in the marriage. This may well be related to the knowledge that marriage ought to succeed because of its creational and functional nature. However, the question is whether such persons ought to marry.

This is where Christians, naturally enough, look for prescriptions. However, it is the principle of 'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake' which should be the deciding factor. Rightness and wrongness of remarriage is scarcely the question in a world of sinful people and where Christians need the grace of God to see any given day through to its end! So again we cannot make definitive pronouncements. The conclusions come to by various involved persons may differ.

What is very clear is that where remarriage is contemplated, the divorcee must have received counselling over the former failure in marital relationships. What we have said above about being 'relationalised' is necessary in this case. Causes for failure in a marriage must not be carried into the next relationship.

Sexuality, Divorce, Remarriage and Children

Without doubt in all these situations, children and their care, protection and guidance must be the primary consideration. Single parents, divorced and unmarried, know the deep emotional problems which can arise. They know that a mother cannot substitute for a father or a father for a mother. The imbalance must not be rectified by the parent of either the male or female sex. Initially the decision to divorce must also have the children in mind. It is rarely that it happens this way. Nevertheless the children learn their life-patterns from their parents, and it is sad if they have to learn the matter of divorce. Sometimes remarriage is even more painful for them than living with a single parent. Yet even in such cases remarriage may ultimately prove better than the coverage of a single

parent.

What is helpful is to know that children can be especially if they will be—incredibly resilient. Exposure to suffering does not necessarily mean exposure to danger or damage. The subject is so wide as to defy a quick treatment, especially in this paper.

Chapter Nineteen

SEXUALITY AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—I

Introduction: Total Sexuality and the Goals

We have seen that in marriage the failure to accomplish genuine ‘one-flesh’ relationship is at the basis of misunderstanding of marriage, and so the separateness of each partner. In this separateness each partner struggles to accomplish an attitude or relationship which will ensure true marriage. By nature of the case this is virtually impossible. Likewise in society, and especially the society of the church, unless the full idea of sexuality is understood, the situation will devolve into debates about roles, and will end up in legalism, or conflict for ‘liberty’ within each sex. God’s mandate requires the total exercise of sexuality in its broadest terms. Within the church this too is how it should be. The meticulous spelling out of roles may prove disastrous. At the same time there are certain roles, and these fit (a) male or female, and (b) the mutual exercise of masculine and feminine elements.

A Window on Male-Female Relationships

In I Timothy 5:1-3 Paul indicates what relationships should be.

‘Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity. Honour widows who are real widows.’

We can see that in these relationships there is recognition of age, dignity and the sexes. All the terms presuppose the idea of family. As we have seen in I Timothy 3: 15, Hebrews 3: 1-7, Numbers 12:6-7 and other passages, the church is the community of God. To develop this idea we should see the instructions given to elders and deacons, as they seek to lead the family of God. We should also see the instructions on ways of family living, both for the family, the church, and the families within the church.

‘Neither Male nor Female’

The basic passage of Galatians 3:29 is reproduced in principle in I Corinthians 12:13 and Colossians 3:11, namely that divisive distinctions are destroyed in the Christian faith and experience. So then, there is neither male nor female, just as there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman. The fact of life is that the masculinity and femininity of persons is no more obliterated than nationality and status of slave or non-slave. It means that what once divided no longer divides. It means that eternal life comes to all *irrespective of former distinctions*. It does not, however, alter ontological categories. A man is still a male, and a woman still a female. Functional principles are not changed, although the *expression* of

them may undergo a change.

In I Corinthians 11:3 Paul states the ontological order—God is the Head of Christ, Christ is the head of (every) man, the husband is the head of the woman (his wife). His statement which follows reinforces this order. However, Paul is also concerned with *how* that order is handled. He has no worry in regard to God or Christ, but he has worry in regard to the man who may think the ontological order means superiority, and the woman, inferiority for her. He shows the *interdependence* of both. His final statement, ‘And all things are from God’, must mean that the order is God-given and must not be subverted. See II Corinthians 5:18 where the principle is also ‘All this is from God’.

We have already seen that the ontological order is often exploited. That does not invalidate its authentic nature. All elements are exploited or distorted where man is sinful. That is no reason for seeking to change it or exchange it for another. Romans 1:18ff. shows man seeking to subvert the ontological order of creation, and so of morality.

When we turn again to Galatians 3:26-29 we see that all believers are ‘sons’, ie. not sons and daughters. This accords with Genesis 5:1-3 where ‘male and female’ are ‘Man’. Sexuality in its totality = sonship, but sonship without male sexual connotation. At the same time within the family of God sexual distinctions remain, and these also pertain to roles, provided we see male and female roles as complementary and designed to fulfil the full function of total sexuality, namely, the will of God. There are then ‘male’ and ‘female’, and there are also hierarchical orders.

Chapter Twenty

SEXUALITY AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—II

Men, Women and the Redemptive Mandate

We are now free to see that men and women work together to do the will of God. The Acts and Epistles abound in this fact. As in Hebrews chapter 11, both men and women are mentioned as persons of faith, so also the New Testament speaks in similar vein. In Acts both men and women receive the Spirit (Acts 2: 14ff.) and tell ‘the wonderful works of God’. In the new era women receive the Holy Spirit as do men. They also are in the prophetic ministry.

It would be a pathetic attempt to prove woman’s usefulness by pointing out the stories of Mary (Jesus’ mother), Elizabeth (John’s mother), Anna, and the women who served Jesus (Luke 8: 1-3), watched him at the Cross, helped place him in the tomb, came to his resurrection and believed where men did not. It would mean that we were—so to speak—drumming up evidence

of how useful a woman can be! All of this is surely presupposed in the doctrine of creation.

The Epistles spell out where a woman is useful and functional, and where, often, she is not, because that is where a male person is primarily functional. This is in the realm of teaching the church as a whole (cf. I Tim. 2:12-15). A woman prophesies (I Cor. 11:5), and that is teaching but then it is revelatory, ie. directly from God. If a woman is to be quiet in church it is primarily in regard to questions, which properly ought to be asked at home. Men also are asked to be quiet on certain occasions (I Cor. 14:28, 30), but being quiet for both men and women is only in regard to certain matters. It is not a general command.

In church relationships the elders and deacons are indicated as males. There may also have been an order of deaconesses and elders which was feminine. For the latter see Titus 2:3-5, and the former see Romans 16:1-2. The passages such as I Timothy 3:1-6, Titus 1:5-9 and similar passages indicate that men were the elders. I Timothy 3:8-10 indicates deacons are men, but I Timothy 3:11 could conceivably include women. Likewise Titus 2:3 could possibly mean women were elders, but 'then their ministry would be to women. However, as we have said, men and women together, as the sons of God, carry out the task of proclaiming redemption, and building up the people of God. We have already said that there is neither equality nor inequality, neither superiority nor inferiority, but only roles, these roles being functional, ie. corresponding to innate abilities, gifts and predilections. These roles, too, will generally require adaptation and variation by reason of circumstances.

If the roles or relationships have no ontological basis, but arise simply from the cultural mores',¹⁷ then of course the idea of function disappears. Hence the essential 'all things are of God' needs to be recognised. The more positive thing is to conceive of all the church working together, not developing a tyranny of roles, but rather a liberty of service and obedience. Paul speaks freely of the women who have helped him (Rom. 16: 1-2, Phil. 1:5, cf. 4:2-3, Rom. 16:3-15). We need then to see I Timothy 5:1-3 again to realise the harmonious working of true sexuality within the family.

Orders Within the People of God

Hierarchies continually appear. In I Corinthians 12:28 (cf. Ephes. 4:7-11) there is a hierarchy of gifts. In I Corinthians 11:3ff., there is an hierarchy of God-Christ, Christ-man, man wife. In many passages there is the hierarchy of the family, ie. husband-wife, father-mother, parents-children. Again there is the hierarchy of slaves-masters and Christ the Lord, the Master. There is the

¹⁷ When it comes to cultural mores we must recognise that ontological categories are worked out in cultural structures. Each *milieu* demands varying ways of working out these categories. Romans 1:20ff. shows that the ontological order was rejected. Hence we would expect to find radical departures from the ontological, and with these, cultural patterns which do not parallel the creational order. Likewise where the ontological order is recognised the cultural expression of that may be quite deficient. None of these elements invalidate the true order. At the same time where the true order is seen it must not become a legalistic tyranny. The principle of being led by the Spirit (Gal. 5: 16, 18, 25) means the order will be interpreted in practical terms which are the true expression of love, always remembering we live in a world of imperfect people, even imperfect Christians!

hierarchy of leaders or rulers (Heb. 13:7, 17, I Thess. 5:12-13). Notice, however, that in all these cases it is a serving hierarchy from top to bottom. If it be argued that often, *in practice* this is not the case, i.e. that the hierarchy does not always serve, then the answer must be that even so this does not invalidate the true order. In fact it calls for the order to be properly observed. Having said this we must keep reminding ourselves that the order is one of function and not of superiority-inferiority.

Problems Within Orders

We have noted that authorities are basically intended to be expressions of true love. They care for that for which they are responsible. Where authorities are deficient and even wrong, those under them disclaim the responsibility of rendering obedience. It is doubtful that this can be vindicated. Only when the authority is in diametrical opposition to God and His morality may it be disobeyed. The human subjective bias to rebellion and self-assertion (by reason of man's sinfulness) must always be taken into honest account, difficult as such an exercise may be. The truly co-ordinating power is the mandate and goal for which the people of God have been called. Love finds a way in the deepest difficulties (cf. I Cor. 13:7).

Chapter Twenty-One

CONCLUSION AS TO HUMAN SEXUALITY AND ITS ROLES AND GOALS

Biblical Sexuality the Key to Understanding Humanity

The treatment of human sexuality within this study is not intended to cover the *practices* of sexuality so much as it is intended to examine *the principles* of the subject. For this reason the related themes of pre-marital and extra-marital sex, the various sexual perversions, the exercise of mutual sexuality within marriage, the questions of masturbation, hyper-sexuality, frigidity, and impotence, along with birth-control, family-planning, and abortion are important matters of practices, and require examination. Many, if not all these elements are often examined outside the wider context of holistic human sexuality, hence diagnosis often remains at the symptomatic and not the causal level. Many problems associated with these matters arise from a refusal to accept the functional system of the universe, and to obey the moral order God has set out in creation. In fact the principle of love-obedience is set aside, often, for

either overt rebellion against the order, or the legalistic and tyrannous use of it.

Biblical Sexuality Cannot Be Imposed

We need, then, to recognise human sinfulness so that we may live in an imperfect world without rage or frustration which is damaging. God's demands upon the human race are total. Full obedience is required. Even so, rebellious humanity for the most part ignores the demands. The longsuffering, kindness and forbearance of God have not refused to destroy the race, but have provided the way of grace and love so that mankind may be redeemed. The redeemed find their way back to God's true order. Some of them, sadly enough, make it a tyrannous order. They fail to recognise the need of grace for human living. They legislate in the hope of conforming man to true morality. Autonomous human beings are enraged by the imposition of morality, especially where the will does not accept it. Christian and creational forms of sexuality are rejected and hence cannot be imposed. The Christian person perforce must live in the tension of seeing and knowing God's ordered creation whilst rebellious man rejects it. He must be light and salt in society in regard to true morality, yet must live without the police-like imposition of such moral law.

What the Christian must do of course is recognise the fluctuations of his society along with its changing loyalties. This era has been (wrongly) called the 'post-Christian era'. Amos might well have called his age the 'post-Covenant era', but he refused to do so. The rise and fall of morality in human history is a fact to be considered.

Western nations once called themselves Christian. Now they need to be recalled to that stance. The Christian then must seek to retain the Christian morality within his culture, and enlarge it through renewal of the past and present proclamation of the grace of God in the Gospel. Basic Christian teaching on the nature of God, creation, true humanity, man's sinfulness and God's redemption should be pursued. Christ's warning of the end-times was not intended to inculcate despair of man but hope of the Gospel. Salt and light are needed penetrative elements within our current society. Hence the teaching of biblical sexuality is an urgent need.

Summary of Sexuality

God created man in His own image. Man as created was a single entity, but the formation of *woman from* man meant that true man is now male and female, and the elements of masculinity and femininity form the oneness of the race, doubtless in a dynamic polarity. Male and female must not be thought of as separate entities, although each person may be considered to be discrete.

Masculinity and femininity, whilst having connotation with biological sexuality, are not limited to such. In fact the dynamics of biological sexuality belong to marriage alone. Even there they are primarily within the parameter of man-wife relationships. Man-wife relationships are not contained within the parameter of biological sexuality. Sexuality has as its parameter the entire range of relationships and activity.

Man, ie. male and female, was created to do the will of God, the mandate as set out in Genesis 1:28ff. Man can

only be understood in the following context:

He is man (they are man, ie. male and female) only in relationship to God. This includes the Creator-creature, Father-child, King-servant complex of relationships. Man is purposeful and functional, correlating with (a) God's goal for His creation, and (b) God's functional order in which creation was structured. Masculinity and femininity are essential for the completion of the whole task as they are also essential, each to the other, for true mutuality in accomplishing that task. Hence sexuality includes the entire range of man's functions and operations. Whilst each human person is discrete, nevertheless each has two basic dependencies, ie. dependency upon God and dependency upon others. The gifts of sexuality (masculinity and femininity) require to be used in that mutuality which is at the same time both unity and love.

Where this operative mutuality or dynamic oneness turns from its operative functions and its essential goal/s then disturbance results. Malfunctional (or dysfunctional) sexuality may be seen in the immediate area of biological sexuality, but in fact its widest disturbance is in the area of human relationships. The relational functions of husband, wife, father, mother, parents, children, brothers, sisters, familial relationships, community relationships, all suffer where human persons withhold, distort or misuse their gifts of sexuality, ie. masculinity and femininity.

Failure to recognise the functional *differences* within the range of sexuality, as well as failure to recognise the similarities and gifts, will deeply affect the necessary mutuality in human action. It will interfere with man's essential created nature, his sense of needs, including his great need to be operative in satisfying vocation and moving towards

the given goals of God. Any taking the part for the whole and worshipping it will bring destructive idolatry. Creation must be seen holistically, and lived in accordingly. Hence whilst true relationships have inclusivity they must not have exclusivity. One person must not love another *more* than the rest.¹⁸ Hence in familial relationships children will look to total love. Failure to give this will cause problems in reaction, sense of deprivation, loss of direction, and the like. It is from this source human problems stem.

¹⁸ Note that the term 'more' is an anomaly in love. God does not merely love *equally* but *totally*' (cf. Matt. 5:43-48). He has not produced a creation which is egalitarian. but a creation of shared mutuality, ie. a love structure in which all (should) love wholly. Partial love is not love at all. One does not love one more than another. if this were the case then one does not love at all.

Appendix One

THE MATTER OF 'HE' AND 'SHE'

In the current sexist debate there are those who take umbrage at the use of 'He' for God, and of course the suggested use of 'She'. Much of this springs from a philosophy of egalitarianism. This study paper views egalitarianism, at least in relationships, as irrelevant, and as introducing measurements which are not relative to the male female complex.

However, Scripture offers some contribution to the discussion. An examination of Genesis 1:26ff., 5:1-3 and 9:6 reveals the following—(1) Man is made as male and female. That is, male and female together = man. (2) The term *man* is used for (a) male and female generically, and (b) the male person specifically. There can then be no objection to the generic use, seeing that includes the male and female persons. It is the confusion of the generic and the specific which presents the problem. If we accept the generic and see that it includes both male and female, then it does not derogate woman, for it includes her. From that

point onwards the use of specific 'he' and 'she' is simple enough and emphasises the *difference* in the sexes, and that is what is so rich.

When it comes to the use of 'He' for God, then that use is *generic* and not *specific*. It includes 'male' and 'female', or, better, 'masculine' and 'feminine' elements. It is from these elements that the full image of God is derived. Without them the image cannot be. Hence the use of 'He' does not derogate femininity.

Finally the masculine and feminine elements of God which are reflected in man, ie. the image of God, are not sexual elements as such. If we take the broadest view of sexuality then in that sense man reflects sexuality in God. However, if we limit the term *sexual* to the biological-relational elements of marriage in procreation, then it must be seen that God is Creator, and man is procreator. Man and woman procreate; they do not create. God creates: He does not procreate. In what we call 'the creativity of man' there is no *essential* creation by man. In this sense (in art, literature, invention, etc.) he 'procreates'. When, further, it is seen that masculinity and femininity are of the one, not only in the 'one-flesh' union of marriage, but across the entire human race, then it can be seen that both masculinity and femininity are essentially one in the action of procreation, ie. in all human 'creativity'.

Appendix Two

C. S. LEWIS ON THE MATTER OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

It is well known that C. S. Lewis in almost all of his writings made constant reference to human sexuality. Much of his thinking is original, although it seems orthodox enough in the final analysis. This appendix can by no means cover the vast scope of his contribution. The reader, however, is referred to a treatment of Lewis by Gilbert Meilaender, entitled *The Taste for the Other*.¹⁹ Under the heading *Eros and Marriage* (p.140ff.), Meilaender takes the theme of Lewis, ‘obedience is an erotic necessity’, and points out that Lewis believes in an hierarchy in marriage. This implies submission by the woman to the man, but not merely submission to the male element, but to the whole principle of masculinity which is in the creation. Two quotes are apt here:

(i) ‘“No,” said the Director, “there is no escape. If it were a virginal rejection of the male, He would allow it. Such souls can bypass the

¹⁹ Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1978.

male and go on to meet something far more masculine, higher up, to which they must make a yet deeper surrender. But your trouble has been what old poets called *Daungier*. We call it Pride. You are offended by the masculine itself: the loud, irruptive, possessive thing—the gold lion, the bearded bull—which breaks through hedges and scatters the little kingdom of your primness as the dwarfs scattered the carefully made bed. The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it”.

(*That Hideous Strength*, p. 194)

(ii) ‘At all events what Ransom saw at that moment was the real meaning of gender. Everyone must sometimes have wondered why in nearly all tongues certain inanimate objects are masculine and others feminine. What is masculine about a mountain or feminine about certain trees? Ransom has cured me of believing that this is a purely morphological phenomenon, depending on the form of the word. Still less is gender an imaginative extension of sex. Our ancestors did not make mountains masculine because they projected male characteristics into them. The real process is the reverse. Gender is a reality, and a more fundamental reality than sex. Sex is, in fact, merely the adaptation to organic life of a fundamental polarity which divides all created beings. Female sex is simply one of the things that have feminine gender; there are many others, and Masculine and Feminine meet us on planes of reality where male and female would be simply meaningless. Masculine is not attenuated male, nor feminine attenuated female. On the contrary, the male and female of organic creatures are rather faint and blurred reflections of masculine and feminine. Their reproductive functions, their differences in strength and size, partly exhibit, but partly also confuse and misrepresent, the real polarity.’

(*Voyage to Venus*, p. 186)

Lewis sees the relationship between man and woman as the expression of the wider principle of masculinity and femininity constituting the whole of human experience. He

sees hierarchy as practical and functional. Submission does not imply inferiority but a working within the true order of things.

There is of course much more to Lewis than these fragmentary points. Lewis needs to be read in all his works. At the same time, Meilaender distils Lewis's view in apt manner.

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NOTE: In the past few years an unprecedented spate of books has poured on to the market. All too few are theologically oriented, seeking as they do to discuss practical issues without discussing the doctrine of man, especially as it relates to God and redemption. For this reason their usefulness is limited. The selection given below includes some treatments of (aspects of) sex which are interesting but not necessarily biblically based,

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Postscript

The initial treatment of the subject of *Man, Woman, and Sexuality* was an attempt to set out the Biblical matter of the relationship of God to Man (ie. man-woman as a single race and entity), and of man-the-male to man-the-female. I have no desire to be offensive in using the term ‘man-the-female’, but I believe the Scriptures portray the human race as male-female. This I have endeavoured to cover in Appendix One, *The Matter of ‘He’ and ‘She’*.

That first treatment was inadequate on many grounds. One was that I allowed for the possibility of the first man created as being androgynous, although I did not agree that he was so. Now I see clearly that he could not have been androgynous. This conviction—as well as other insights—arises from seeing that God is ineffable, that is both inscrutable and incomparable. Time and again God is represented as saying, ‘Who is a God like unto me, and to whom [or what] shall you liken [compare] me?’

If, then, we cannot know God we cannot know man, since man is made in the image of God, and for that matter we, also, can know nothing of creation. Things ontological

are hidden from us. It is God’s goodness that He has revealed Himself through many media such as His Word, creation, celestial visitants, the law, the prophets, His Son, His Holy Spirit, and His church. Fallen man is not anxious to listen to His communications, or see His revelations.

What concerns us is that since God is ineffable then we dare not reason analogically, for there are no materials or criteria in creation from which we can proceed to an understanding of God. It must work the other way. That is, when we receive God’s revelation (or revelations) of Himself we can proceed to understand man and the rest of creation. In other words, all ontology must be based in, and proceed from, God. Let us repeat: we cannot work back to God from our (so-called) knowledge of man. We cannot say that man as created was androgynous, therefore God is Male-Female. Since God is always—without exception—referred to by the male pronoun, then He must be masculine.

The only problem with a statement ‘God must be masculine’ is that we do not know what ‘masculine’ is in the Deity. In our Appendix Two we saw that C.S. Lewis struggles with the idea and nature of masculinity and femininity. One of the weaknesses of this present volume is that I think I conveyed the idea that God is both masculine and feminine, and that human masculinity and femininity, when joined, portray the full image of God.

Better than this approach is the fact that God is masculine only, but that femininity is part of that masculinity. If we reason from what we know of human masculinity and femininity, we will then have to say that God is Male-Female. If however we confess that we do not understand God’s masculinity, then we admit that understanding of

both masculinity and femininity on the human level is also hidden from us. In other words, whilst femininity (imagined and reflected on the mundane level by woman) may be contained within God's masculinity, we still cannot claim to know its true (essential) nature. We would have to say that any femininity on the level of Deity is one within His masculinity so that we could not view it apart from Him. In fact the 'one-flesh' nature of Man (male-female entity) as created *embodies* the ontological concept of God being One, and so Man (man-woman) is one on the human level.

Much of anger and puzzlement must derive from the fact that we cannot understand essential masculinity, ie. as it is *in* God and *is* God, or the femininity which is expressed on the human level by woman. What woman perceives (correctly or incorrectly) to be human masculinity, and which she then identifies with God's masculinity causes her—in many cases—to be angry with God as Masculine, and to seek to show that God is either Male-Female, or just Female. Likewise a male human may read his own masculinity back into God, become arrogant, and seek to dominate those humans who are female. We really must conclude that since we do not know God's Masculinity, we do not know man's maleness nor woman's femaleness. This limitation is not a bad one, and where humility exists is a good one. In any case males are males and females are females without full ontological knowledge.

If this is so, then the insight we have just examined would be of enormous value to us. Let us take one example, namely that God's Fatherhood is incomparable. It is unique. Whilst it may be the *source* of human fatherhood, and, of course, human motherhood, yet because of its unique nature, we could not work from

human fatherhood (or motherhood) to God's Fatherhood. In other words there is a mystery (*mysterion*) of true Fatherhood that we cannot know, even though to a great degree we may experience of it. The same principle would obtain for God's Sonship, and 'Spiritship'. This being so we have to confess that 'we see through [or in] a glass darkly'. Only later 'we shall know even as we also are known'.

We are then placed with a problem, namely that our only true knowledge of man is from our knowledge of God. If we are humble enough to confess that we do not know God in all His Being, and must not compare Him with (or to) anything created, and if—in addition—we admit that, as fallen human beings, we do not *wish* to know Him, then we can have certain knowledge regarding God and man which is probably *all we need to know*. If we were humble enough to think and act within these parameters, then we would surely be more contented, matured, and obedient people. We would not argue dogmatically about the nature of masculinity and femininity, plus the 'rights' of the same, or the injustices that seem to come from and within human relationships. This would put an end to masculism and feminism.

This thought stirs us to examine the origins of feminism and masculism. Are they things late in history, or have they always been? The act of man's ambitious endeavour to become 'as gods' or 'as God' seems to be the key to the mystery.

The Man and the Woman as 'Gods'

The serpent in Eden tempted the woman with the bait, 'For God knows that when you eat of it [the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil'. Since the man and woman were already *like* God, it must mean that they would be as God. The word 'God' is Elohim which can be translated 'God' or 'gods'. Obviously the woman saw that she—herself—and the man—himself—could each be 'as gods'. If this were the case, then the woman would be a god (goddess) in herself, and the man a god in himself. If each were a god then mankind would be basically egalitarian, and there could be no talk of 'headship' or 'origin and source' as such and certainly no talk of the woman being under a 'head' since to be a god is to be autonomous and self-existent. Any so-called union of the man and woman would be by mutual agreement, and entirely without reference to one of them being the 'head' or even to God as the 'Head' 'since God would then be only another god.

The result of the Fall was for the ontological joy of being and obedience, of headship and bodyship, to be lost. Hence the misery, and certainly the division, the result of which was that now 'they were naked and ashamed', ie. could not face their masculinity and femininity in innocence. In their guilt, masculinity and femininity were separated, and the lie of so-called 'godhead' was unmasked. The result of this was to alter the healthy polarity within the mutuality of the 'one-flesh' union of the two. God's statement concerning the 'rulership' of the man over the woman, and the woman's 'desire' for the man moved out of that which was ontological into that which was provisional until God's grace would restore the initial innocence, the true 'one-flesh' unity, ie. cause the 'one-flesh' to

be reinstated.

Some of the above thinking is underlined in II Corinthians I 1: 1-4 where Paul says to the church at Corinth, 'I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led away from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ'.

Whilst the passage gives us rich ontological revelations concerning a bridegroom and a bride, Paul is really saying that he is afraid that the Bride, the Body of Christ, will seek to be 'a goddess' in herself and not 'hold fast the Head' (Col. 2: 19), ie. the Bridegroom. In other words, the church will be a thing in itself, Headless as regard to its being the Body, and Husbandless as regard its being the Wife. In other words, the principle of the Fall could be repeated there, at Corinth, where they have become triumphalist, sufficient in themselves and have a 'different Christ' to the one Paul preached.

This statement of Paul raises, again, the whole matter of headship, its ontological reality and its functional necessity. It certainly confronts us with the issues of authority, function and purpose, and takes us from the pragmatic approach of how man and woman can 'make it' together, and the whole 'how to' of sex and sexuality which preoccupies us far too much. It means we must look afresh at the principles behind the Fall, the nature and intention of the serpent's temptation, the separation of man from God, and man from woman, the resultant division within the family, and universal rebellion against God and all authority which has brought humanity to its past and present sorry pass. The whole matter of husband and wife, parents

and children, the true nature and life of the church as well as that of the wider community of society is what is at stake.

A Conclusion to a Postscript

Readers of this Postscript may, by this time, have become weary. They will probably recognise that a large new area of thinking has been opened up, which raises, perhaps, more questions than it settles, and even questions which have not previously been raised within this present volume. I do not apologise for this for I think the material contained within the Postscript is valuable, and needs to be pursued. Indeed it is pursued in the book which will follow this one.

The question of ontology is the basic one. Only by this way can we move towards solving the impasse presented by masculism and feminism, and entering into the rich joys of true sexuality, and the fulness of human living under the headship of Christ and his Father.