

About This Book...

God's Glory, Man's Sexuality is certainly an unusual book. Many volumes have been coming off the press over the past three decades on this stimulating subject. Each makes its claim to a clearer-than-before presentation of the theme, and to having new and fascinating insights.

This book certainly has new insights, so new and different that one's first reaction is to dismiss its contents as merely innovative. Not so! For years we have assumed that we understand the nature of masculinity and femininity, and how these relate to the nature of God. From our former insights we have worked hard to resolve the impasse between feminist and masculist, and come to some working understanding of gender and sex, but our efforts have been largely fruitless.

In our present title we have a volume that approach the theme from a wholly new angle. We are shown what ultimate man and ultimate woman will be, and on the basis of this revelation we are enabled to discover the true nature of masculinity and femininity. How then did we miss this particular way of understanding? The question is not easy to answer.

For this reason we do need to read the book. As we have said, it is an unusual book-not avant garde, not boringly orthodox, and yet the very truth of God's glory and man's essential sexuality. Its pages are filled with wisdom, and this wisdom calls for joy---great joy.

New Creation Publications Inc.

GOD'S GLORY

MAN'S SEXUALITY

Geoffrey Bingham

GOD'S GLORY, MAN'S SEXUALITY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Man, Woman, & Sexuality
The Heavenly Vision
Oh, Father! Our Father!
Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind?
The Wounding and the Healing
Discovering Your Identity
Practical Christian Counselling
A Biblical Way of Counselling
Direct Biblical Counselling
I, the Man!
Man of Dust! Man of Glory!

Geoffrey C. Bingham

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FOREWORD

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KNOWING THE TRUTH OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Without doubt a spate of books on our subject has issued in the last three decades which has been unprecedented in the last 2,000 years of Christian history. Many of these books have been more concerned with the fact of human sexuality than with the truth of it. Of course a study of the phenomenology of man makes for a scientific approach to the matter of human sexuality, but it may add nothing much to research on the truth of the subject.

Our question is, 'Is there indeed an ontology of human sexuality?'. In other words can we get past our philosophies of sexuality to its created reality? In order to do this we must start with God, understand the reality of creation, and also of man as created by God. Immediately our subject enlarges.

It has seemed to me that when we research biblical anthropology we always commence with creation, and this is fair enough. However since God planned His telos of man and creation prior to the act of creation, we must go back to that wisdom and counsel of God in order to understand man. For example man as created was not total. He certainly was total as a created being, but not as

FOREWORD

a being for whom God had set a telos or goal. If what we suggest is true then man is always a becoming creature. He must never be regarded apart from the dynamic element of his becoming.

The ontology of humanity is linked of course with his creation. However it is no less linked with his telos, and this takes us into the realm of eschatology, i.e. the doctrine of the last things such as judgement, heaven and hell, eternal life, man's inheritance planned by God including his resurrection and glorification. We must look at man in the light of these, so that his sexuality can be more fully understood.

There is yet another element, namely that the Scriptures open the truth for us of God, creation, and man. The truth of Emmanuel, i.e. 'God with us' refers not only to creation with its doctrine of providence, but Christ's incarnation when God becomes man. The incarnation is not an end in itself, but is with a view to redemption, and this it accomplishes. Now that God and man are joined in Christ and the church becomes Christ's Bride, a new type of revelation of the truth comes to us. It is the opening up true femininity and true masculinity in the persons of the Bride and the Bridegroom, i.e. the Church and the Lamb.

We may care to treat this element under the terms of ontology, of archetypes and ectypes, something which in fact I have done in this book. Thus we are not dealing with analogy, but rather homology, and even more with distinct archetypes within ontology.

This then, brings us to examine masculinity and femininity as we discover them through the Bridegroom and the Bride, the relationships they exercise, and the goals (or goal) they have in view. We are then called to

draw upon all our understanding of God, man, and the telos, of eschatology and creational theology. Since all of this is oriented to redemption, we see we need an examination of all the biblical materials.

The result of my own research is found in this book, and according to the mind of any reader may have great value, or very little. It may, however, trigger off a fresh line of enquiry for some readers. For the reader who calls himself 'simple' and who reads this Foreword, this very introduction may put him off reading the book. Let it not do so. I have found that people who call themselves 'simple' simply have a distaste for the complicated. The book itself should not prove complicated. It may just be that it is unravelling ideas which have made understanding of the subject difficult.

I urge the so-called simple reader to read the book, as I do those who see themselves as wise and intelligent. I believe the book is quite useful for discovering and applying the truth of human sexuality, rather than merely the fact of human sexuality. The facts of sexuality may well be a useful addition to what is set forth in this book, but to penetrate the truth may prove immediately to be the most valuable of the two exercises.

When we keep in mind the fact that today we view our sociality mainly from a humanistic point of view, and assume that humanism is the new but true philosophy by which to live then we may not be seeing truth in its own right. To make humanism our measuring rod for the value of belief and practice may blind us to the reality of truth. After all, humanism began with the primal couple, and is by no means a new thing; nor has it brought much joy to human history.

I strongly urge the reader—whatever concentration may be required to obtain the insights of this book—to pursue reading this volume, for I believe this treatment of God’s glory and man’s sexuality could yield palpable and practical results.

Geoffrey Bingham
Coromandel East, 1988

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CHAPTER ONE

DISCOVERING GOD AND MAN

GOD IS INEFFABLE

‘Can a man know God?’ One of the ancients asked that question. He was really saying, ‘Can a man, by searching, find out God?’, i.e. discover who He is, what He does, and how He works. That would be quite an exercise, but it would be immensely valuable to a human being to make such a discovery.

Most of us start with the assumption that we can know God-if we will. This assumption has something bad in it, and, at the same time, something good. The ‘something bad’ is that it is all presumption: man has forfeited his right to know God, for reasons which we will later explain. The ‘something good’ is that man assumes God-in some way or another-is willing for us to know Him, indeed that He reveals Himself.

By ‘ineffable’ we really mean ‘indescribable’, ‘unspeakable’, and ‘unknowable’, and in such cases we

use the word 'transcendent' meaning, He is above where we are and what we are. Some say, 'He is "Wholly Other" ', i.e. so different from man, that man cannot know Him. History reveals that there has been a constant drive in man to know who God is, and even to approach Him.

God Himself claims to be ineffable. Look at the following statements given us by the prophet Isaiah:

'To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?'; 'To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One'; 'I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let him proclaim it'; 'I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God'; 'To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike?'; 'I am God, and there is none like me' (Isa. 40:18, 25; 44:6-7; 45:5; 46:5, 9).

The Importance of Ineffability

The reason we look at God's ineffability is to realize that we cannot know Him by starting anywhere in what is 'the known' to us. For example we cannot say 'God is Father' and start at human fatherhood, for God's Father-hood is unique, and He says, 'To whom will you liken me?'. For this reason we will not only get nowhere, but we will distort the true nature of God. If we have absolutely no point of starting to know God from the things we know, then how can we know Him? The answer is, 'We cannot know Him unless He reveals Himself'.

In trying to understand God we often use the principle

of analogy, i.e. we try to find some equivalent idea, and use it in relation to God. Again, the word 'father' is an analogy. But analogy does not work. It cannot help us: Isaiah has told us that. Our normal way of reasoning from precedents, known things and analogies will not help us. This is a good thing! It means that what we know of God we must know by revelation. Unaided human reasoning will never tell us who or what God is. In any case we cannot assume that man's desire to know who God is is necessarily a good thing. His motives may be wrong. He may have a bias in his thinking which would further prevent him from genuinely coming to know God.

The Value of Revelation

We come now to our main point. We must know God before we can know man. The Scriptures state that God made man in His own image and likeness. If this is so then we could only know truly who man is by first knowing who God is. If we only have guesses and reasoned concepts regarding God, then we will never know who man is. If we work back from man to God then we will err, because God is not made in the likeness of man. He is other than man, and, indeed, 'wholly other'. Even if He has given man affinity with Himself, He remains 'other than man'.

What then is the great value of knowing God? The answer is, 'By knowing who God is we can know the true nature of man. We can know what are God's relationships with man, man's relationships with God, and then man's interrelationships with man'. This is immensely important for our practical understanding of

God, man, woman, human sexuality, and all relation-ships.

What, Then, of Ineffability?

If God is ineffable, how then shall we know Him? We have already replied, 'By His revelation of Himself'. Has He, then, revealed Himself? The answer is, 'Yes, He has revealed Himself to that extent and degree that is needful for man'. Of course man-as-man could not know all of God, but then he has no need for such knowledge. The apostle Paul, in a famous passage put it this way, 'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgements and how inscrutable are his ways! . . . For from him and through him and to him are all things'.

How then does God reveal Himself? The Scriptures tell us that He has used various media such as the nature of creation, the prophetic word He has uttered, the law He has given, and the messengers He has sent both heavenly (angels) and earthly (human). He has sent His own Son to speak to us, and then His Spirit to make the truth known to us. He also uses His people in all ages to speak His word by the enablement of His Spirit.

We conclude, then, that whilst God remains ineffable -our language can never fully communicate who and what He is- He also reveals Himself. In our next chapter we will see the value of this.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REVELATION OF REALITY

FINDING OUT GOD AND MAN

'What is man, i.e. humanity?' 'What is a man (male gender person), and what is a woman (female gender person)?' When we ask these questions we realize that we do not know essentially who God is, or who and what man is. From scientific research we can find out nothing of God, but a lot concerning the phenomenology of man, i.e. through zoology, biology, psychology, and other scientific disciplines we keep discovering new areas of knowledge regarding man, but even so we find it difficult to know man as he is essentially-man-at-core!

We are now going to use a few words which are not in every man's daily vocabulary, and I trust you will not be put off by them. The first word is 'ontology' which the Oxford Dictionary defines as 'The science or study of being; that department of metaphysics which relates to the being or essence of things, or to being in the abstract'. The second word is 'archetype', defined as 'The original

pattern from which copies are made; a prototype'; and the third word is 'ectype', 'An impression of a seal or medal. A copy: especially as opposed to archetype or prototype'. What then shall we do with these words?

The answer to that question is that if we can see that all things created have ontological being and function, and that so far as man is concerned he is an ectype of the archetype God, then we have most useful information to work on in regard to God and man.

God Who is The Archetype of All Human Ectypes

We have seen that because God is ineffable we can only discover His nature through revelation. We call this 'God's self-revelation'. Only what is revealed will help us to form an ontological understanding. For example we find two statements by the apostle John in his First Letter: (a) 'God is light' (1:5), and (b) 'God is love' (4:8, 16). Strictly speaking we do not know what is 'light' and what is 'love'. God must reveal those things to us. We may say that He is 'the archetypal Light' and 'the archetypal Love'. If we could understand-at least to the degree that is needful-this Love and this Light, then we would be well on the way to understanding 'light' and 'love' as a human should understand it.

We said, above, that it is impossible for us to understand 'Fatherhood', i.e. God's Fatherhood. It is unique: it is ineffable, and so it eludes us. As sinful people we do not have a mood to understand, anyway. The levels of our intellect (whether high or low) do not advance or retard us in knowledge. Our point is that we

cannot understand human fatherhood (the ectype of the archetype) because we do not understand God's (archetypal) Fatherhood.

This point is very important. What right has a feminist or a masculist to say, 'This is what a man (male gender person) is', and, 'This is what a woman (female gender person) is'? If we do not understand the ontology of Man (corporate humanity), and so do not understand what is a man or a woman, then all our thinking regarding them will be in error. For example we think 'This is what a woman does or should do', and 'This is what a man does, or should do', and we may be wholly wrong. When we think about it we scarcely understand gender, although biologically, and behaviourally we may know a lot concerning femininity and masculinity.

We are going to try, in this book, to discover from the revelation of the Scriptures the ontology of God, Man (we here use the capital 'M' for the human race, both male and female, without reference to gender, as such), and man and woman.

CHAPTER THREE

MINI-THEOLOGY-I

LET GOD BE GOD

The Truth is 'Things as They Really Are'

We must not be put off by the word 'theology' for it simply means 'the study of God'. Of course we can make it very complex, but in the Scriptures there is rich teaching which is at the same time both simple and profound. To know theology is no burden to carry. It is like having a map or a street directory, which helps us to arrive where we need to go.

By 'ontology' or 'ontological reality' we mean 'things as they really are', i.e. as God created them. If we can discover things as they really are then that will be of great practical importance. We will know how to act truly in line with who and what God is, and who and what Man is, i.e. who and what is a man and a woman. We can only do that if we refuse all humanly conceived images or concepts of God, Man, man and woman.

Our primary place of revelation is Scripture. There is a reason for this, namely that the human race came into

error when it was tempted 'to be as God, knowing good and evil'. Man was already 'like' God, for God had said, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness', and in this way He had created Man. Being pure, unfallen, and in the likeness and image of God, Man had full affinity ('like calls unto like') with God. He did not need revelation, as such.

When he sought to be independent of God he lost his fellowship with the Creator, became alienated, and depended upon his own intelligence to judge what was good and what was evil. The apostle Paul said, 'He exchanged the truth of God for a lie'. Man, now, does not know the truth of God, of Man, and of man and woman. He cannot 'let God be God and man be man', but must make his own ideas about them, hence he must live in error. With false views of creation, Man causes himself and others much hurt, suffering, damage and evil.

Let God be God

God is God, and that is that! Our ideas of Him do not change Him, but if we have true ideas of God then they certainly help to change us! God has spoken His word to us, and that is His self-revealing word. We gather all we need to know for the simple matter of living, however, our human technology may make that living more easy, or-perhaps-more difficult. Science can provide extra aids for Man to live upon the earth.

The Scriptures tell us so much concerning God. Put simply they tell us He is the source of all life, and the sustainer of it. He is called 'the fountain of living waters'.

This means that all 'the issues of life' (Prov. 4:23) flow from Him, such as holiness, righteousness, truth, goodness and love. Whilst these may seem abstract to our thinking, they are dynamic to our true living. When Man refused these 'issues of life' and sought to handle existence by himself, he did so in the face of a great truth, namely 'that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps'. Man is both lonely and evil when he insists on living apart from God.

We have been given a further revelation of God, namely that he is 'the God of all grace' (I Pet. 5:10). We have seen that He is Light and Love. That Light and Love set out to save Man from the consequences of his (initial) wrong choice, and his continuing evil. God not only teaches the true way of life-'things as they really are, and things as they function'-by means of the prophets and the law, but He also sends His only Son to become a man, to suffer and to die, to liberate us from our guilt and evil, so that we can be renewed as human beings, and learn to live in the correct way. Grace means that God does not judge and destroy us, but frees us from our past, and gives us new life, and destiny of glory. Christ-the Son of God-was (and is) the living revelation of God.

(a) God is Creator

The apostle Peter said, 'God is a faithful creator'. This seems to mean that some of us have thought-from time to time-that He is not faithful, as a Creator. We have questioned His creation, and the happenings and patterns within it. Genesis Chapter 1 speaks of the stages of creation. At the end of each God 'saw that it was good'. Finally when He had created all things 'He saw that

it was *very* good'. 'Good' really means 'functionally good' and not only 'morally good'. 'Very' means 'wholly functional' such as Ecclesiastes comments, 'He has made everything beautiful [appropriate, functional] in its time' (3:11).

Creation is not like artwork which makes something different out of something already present. Creation was made 'out of things which do not appear' (Heb. 11:3). It was made 'by the word of God', for 'he commanded and they were created. And he established them for ever and ever' (Ps. 148:5b-6a). So then He is a faithful Creator.

(b) God is King

He is 'King over all the earth' (Ps. 47:2). The creation is secure because He is Ruler. In fact all the world is His Kingdom. Had celestial powers (angels) not rebelled, and had Man not fallen for the serpent's ploy (Gen. 3:1-6), then the universe would have been a gracious and serene 'Kingdom of God'. Its functional principles of life would be observed to the great enrichment and contentment of all.

(c) God is Father

This does not mean 'God is like a Father', but 'God is the Father', i.e. 'God is Father'. This simple statement is free-standing. Understanding of its truth required the Son of God to come into the world to reveal true Sonship, and by it, true Fatherhood. This is the reality which is hidden to self-seeking Man. No use of human analogy will communicate the truth of His Fatherhood.

CHAPTER FOUR

MINI-THEOLOGY-II

LET MAN BE MAN

The Problem of Understanding

Since none of us is innocent we cannot understand God or Man. The revelation given to us in Scripture helps us to understand both. Man, left to himself, does not seek to understand God, because to discover God would be fearfully confronting. David observed, in sadness, that fools say, 'There is no God' and went on to say that, 'No one understands [God, the truth], no one seeks for God' (Ps. 14; 53; Rom. 3:11). The prophet Jeremiah said our (fallen) hearts are incurably deceitful and corrupt (17:9). At the same time he urged humanity to come to know God, 'Let him who glories glory in this that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD . . . '.

When by grace we have a revelation of the truth then we see who Man really is. We work from God to Man, and not from Man to Man. We discover a number of elements:

(a) Man is a creature

By this we mean that since Man (man and woman) is made in the image and likeness of God he is 'creature' to God's 'Creator', i.e. he is correlated to God. As creature he is dependent, and not 'free-standing'. He is not his true self unless dependent upon God. It is rich for him to be creaturely. This is his functional freedom.

(b) Man is a Son

Again he is correlative to God's Fatherhood. We note that sonship is a functional (creational) necessity for him. He cannot be himself if he is not filial.

(c) Man is a Servant of the King

His being a subject is correlative to God being King. Again he cannot be functionally fulfilled unless he serves, and serves with gladness and gratitude.

(d) Man Being Man

As God is at once Creator, Father and King, so Man is at once, creature, son and subject. As he correlates with God so he is functionally complete. Thus a human being is a human-being! This is the nature of Man.

Not Letting Man Be Man

When Man will not let God be God, i.e. by denying Him, and refusing his correlativity with God, then Man does not let Man be Man, or a man and a woman be a man and a woman.

When Man (or a human person) seeks to be free-standing he comes into bondage. When he rests fully in being creaturely, filial and servantly, then he is at peace, and knows genuine joy.

CHAPTER FIVE

MINI-THEOLOGY-III

MAN'S REFUSAL TO BE MAN

The Great Upwards Fall

When the serpent tempted Man, it appeared that Man was bound on an exciting adventure. Leaving behind dependency upon God as a creature, son and subject, he could suddenly be on a par with God, and could make his own (moral) choices. If he was 'falling' then it was 'upwards'. Tragically and radically it was 'downwards'. God called it death (Gen. 2:17) and certainly it was a relational death. Man who had been God-oriented became ego-oriented. He found another self which was devious (Eccl. 7:29) and cunning, self-seeking, self-extending, and-so Man thought-self-dependent.

The Break-up of All Relationships

We now begin to see the whole matter of relation-ships. One with God, innocent Man was also one with himself (man-woman relationship), and one with his own

person, i.e. inwardly integrated, and serene towards God, fellow-man, and creation.

The woman was from the man, and was appointed his helpmeet (helpmate). They were both together in fulfilling God's great command to 'be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over it'. They were one, not just for each other's sake, but also for the sake of the mandate, i.e. the will of God. The union of man and woman ought never to be seen as a thing-in-itself, but as something designed for doing the will of God, i.e. being purposeful in the best sense of the term.

We need to understand that when woman was made from man he saw her as 'bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh'. They were one in spirit as they were one in body, though each was a person in himself and herself. They had, however, a 'one-flesh' union, i.e. their life was one. There was no division. Now this state of being is impossible for us to know, as it was present in the original state of innocence. Who, in these days, has 'one-flesh' union of the nature that the primal couple knew? In a secondary sense that, too, was ineffable. When the temptation came, then doubtless the woman ought not to have made a decision by herself to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She ought to have referred the matter to her mate. The decision to 'go it alone' meant she had already fractured the relationship of innocence. She broke relationship with God when she trusted the word of the serpent rather than the word of God. The man made his mistake in listening to the word of the woman rather than obeying the word of God.

The temptation was to 'go it alone', i.e. to achieve the place of being free-standing. However to break from God meant to break from one another, and even to break from oneself. If we could fully know the Godhead

we would know that the Godhead is a social Being, with a social unity, and that unity is because God is Love. For Man to be in God's image means he is in the likeness of Love. He loves. Hence he is-as created-one with God, himself, and with creation.

The Outcome of the Broken Relationships

When Man ceased loving God because he loved him-self, division came within humanity. Thus a new and sad situation took place. The woman blamed the serpent for the happening. The man blamed the woman, and God's judgement constituted the curse. This curse the creation had not hitherto known.

The woman's sorrow was to increase in relation to childbirth. The man was to rule the woman. The woman was to desire the man.* The man was to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow for the earth would bring forth weeds. It was not said that man and woman were cursed, but that the ground was cursed for their sake. Guilt was to be the experience of previously innocent humanity, and no one can compute the immensity, the tragedy or the radical change that guilt brought to Man.

Innocency is not the same as being justified. In justification one is said to be 'as though one had not sinned',

* In Gen. 3:16 the woman was told, 'Your desire shall be for your husband'. This could mean that the woman would desire him even though their fruitful union would bring immense pain at the time of childbirth. It could however mean that the woman would wish to rule the husband who-by right of the curse-was to rule her. In Gen. 4:7 sin is said to be 'couching at the door; its desire is for you', i.e. 'it wishes to rule you'. If this is the case then it explains the conflict that husband and wife generally know in their marital relationship.

but innocency means they had not sinned-an entirely different matter. Innocent relationships must have been inexpressibly beautiful. Parenthood would then have been of no offence had the children been innocent. Marital intercourse would have been the full expression of total union. Whilst human beings may come very close to this under grace, they cannot experience, in totality, that which was the primal union.

Relationships Throughout History

The break with God, with one another, and with one-self has caused humanity to come into the horrific state of suffering, anguish, anger, bitterness, hatred and violence. Cruelty, rivalry, suicide, homicide, patricide, matricide, fratricide and genocide have been witnessed throughout history, along with dreadful torture, rape and incest, to say nothing of emotional cruelty, gossip, and slander. The war against God has been an unending one. All this has been attended with a great yearning for love, a longing for emotional fulfilment, and grim anger and violence where fulfilment has not been reached.

All this is the fruit of Man's initial rebellion against God. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and death passed upon all men for all sinned', i.e. sinned in and along with the primal pair.

CHAPTER SIX

MINI-THEOLOGY-IV

THE NEW DEAL OF GRACE

Grace was always in the offing for God's world. He had always been the 'God of all grace' and had planned grace before time (Eph. 1:4-14; cf. 2:7; I Pet. 1:13). Grace is God's goodness given to an undeserving humanity, yet with love, and without haughty condescension or proud patronage. From the moment of Man's sin, God warned the serpent that its seed would be crushed by the seed of woman.

Grace was seen in many ways before the coming of Christ. Grace is the restoration to Man of what he has lost through his evil. There was grace at the time of Noah, and in the covenant given Man following the Flood. There was grace in all covenants God had made, because as we say, 'They were not bilateral (two or more agreed together on certain terms) but unilateral, i.e. God Himself initiated them out of pure grace.

There was also the grace of promise-the prophetic promises. We say grace is what can be seen of what God has done, but it is also of what God promises He will do,

and the prophets kept giving great promises of the total forgiveness of sins via 'the New Covenant', of the gift of a new heart through the coming of the Spirit, and of the establishment of a new, holy community. These were the promises of grace. They were really the promises of the coming Messiah who would rule the new Kingdom of God, who would liberate 'all those who were oppressed of the devil', and heal their broken hearts, and take from them their guilt, hatred, bitterness, anger, violence and ego-seeking bondage.

**'The Grace Of God Has Appeared,
Bringing Salvation'**

In due time, i.e. at the right time, Christ appeared, coming from the bosom of the Father to accomplish his task of liberation. All the prophecies were to be fulfilled in him, and so they were. A new era arrived through the Word, the eternal Son who had become flesh, and he was 'full of grace and truth'.

He not only fought powers of darkness, proclaimed the Kingdom with liberating exorcisms, healings, and forgiveness, but he went to the Cross and wrestled with powers of darkness that had held men gripped in and by their guilt. The Father 'abandoned him up for us all', and he also, 'abandoned himself up to death' for humanity, taking their sins into himself, bearing their griefs and carrying their sorrows, so that his wounds would be effective to heal the inner wounds of the human race.

He brought about reconciliation for Man, with God, and introduced a new unity of love, hitherto unknown

in its radicality.

This was the grace of God appearing bringing salvation, healing the human race, fitting it for entrance -and by that entrance-into a new community. This was 'the Third Race' in which all differences made no difference. In this community there could not be 'Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man', for in it 'Christ is all, and in all'. This was (and is) because 'by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-and all were made to drink of one Spirit'. This was the family under the Father, the community under the Elder Brother, Christ, and led by the one Spirit, as Christ the Son himself had been led. This was the community of love.

Something had happened in history-under grace-to form the New People. Relationships-even in this penultimate age of history-were meant to be, and enabled to be, different. If not as total as they would be in the ultimate age, the era of eternity, they were radically beyond anything history had known or witnessed.

It is these relationships-and indeed all relationships-which we now seek to examine and understand. Our research will lead us first to God, then to His plan for His people, then the ultimate climax of history and so back to creation so that we may learn how to live in this present age-the age of grace and love.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GOAL OF GRACE

'THE GRACE WHICH IS TO APPEAR . . .'

Grace has a goal in mind. Much of this is shown in Ephesians Chapter 1. God predestinates His elect to holiness (v. 4), to sonship (vv. 5-6), to sharing in the ultimate unity of all things (vv. 9-10), to glorification (vv. 11-14), to a great inheritance (vv. 14, 18).

Peter spoke of 'the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ'. Whenever any revelation of Christ comes to us we see the dimensions of grace, but Peter is speaking of a revelation that is coming at the appearance of Christ. The grace we will see then will be all those things which will come to sight such as resurrection, entering into eternal life, fully receiving the Kingdom, the inheritance of all things, and full glorification. We can by no means presently cope with these vast dimensions of grace.

What emerges, and is of practical benefit for us in the present time, is that our future is a perfect one. We will be perfect: we will be like him, i.e. the Son (Rom. 8:29; I John 3:1-3; cf. I Cor. 2:6ff.). In practice it means we

will reach full growth and maturity as human persons. It also means that whilst we cannot have the perfect now, we can at least grow towards it. We have grace now by which to grow until we come into the perfection which grace will eventually give us.

The Penultimate and Ultimate Ages

We live in the penultimate age, and will move-eventually-into the ultimate age. In the ultimate age everything will be perfect, all relationships true, all character grown to its utmost maturity. This is not the case in the penultimate age-the age before the ultimate one. It is called the 'old' or 'corrupt' age (aeon). It has sin in its system. Evil powers work in it. Redeemed Man is not yet perfect: he still sins, makes wrong choices, and does wrong things. His whole life is a battle of faith-faith to believe in God, in Christ and the work he has done, as also in the presence of the leading, guiding, and enabling Spirit.

In the ultimate, Man will be perfect. He will function correctly. Even so this does not mean that Man cannot discover what he really is, and seek to live out now-in the age in which we live-the very best of relationships with God and his fellow creatures. No one is primarily and only interested in what Man will ultimately be. We would all like to know how best to live now, to seek out the ways in which we can have the best relationships whether they be personal, marital, familial, communal, national and even international. The Christian knows he has to seek these relationships under grace. He who is not a Christian must seek to live the best relationships

within the limited capacity which is his.

Even so the goal is an incentive and an impetus for present living. If we know what we are going to be, we can set about being that now. This calls for 'great grace' because the handicaps of our past as a race are with us now. This we will see as we try to probe to what Man really is-to the man-ness of man, and woman-ness of woman, and even the family-ness of family.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDING OUT HUMAN ONTOLOGY

THERE IS AN ESSENTIAL HUMANITY

We have seen above that we discover much about Man through the account of his creation. Man as creature, son, and subject correlates with God as Creator, Father and King. Whilst he depends upon God, his humanity is authentic. If he tries to become more than what it is to be a Man then the burden of trying to be more than human is intolerable. In so-called 'god-ness' a Man loses his 'man-ness'. He is in great bondage through trying to overreach himself. Yet, when we have said all this, what have we said? What in fact do we understand by Creator, Father and King? Are these elements ineffable, i.e. unknowable, merely mental concepts of which we have not had revelation and (thus) relational experience?

Problems in Knowing MAN, and Man and Woman

We do not know what it is to be perfect, hence we do not know how a man would face the knowledge of himself as a man i.e. a male person, or a woman the knowledge of herself as a female person. For that matter how can we know what is sexuality, i.e. ontologically?

We have impediments to knowing. Primarily the impediment is that we are sinful, even if redeemed. A sinful male may be a masculist, i.e. the opposite to feminist. He may wish to be superior as a male in regard to a female. A sinful male may be homosexual in which case he will view sexuality in a different light from the masculist. He may be a Christian male, and see the Scriptures as though they give him superiority over those of female gender. Women too are sinful, and may have these varying views.

The deepest problem is that of our sin and guilt. Romans 3:23 says, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. If we fall short of the glory of God we fall short of the glory of Man. Hence human beings wish to justify themselves, to prove their worthiness in the eyes of others-if not in the eyes of God. Hence they will view the male-female from this standpoint: males will want to be superior to prove themselves. Females may equally seek to do so. Both may use Scripture to fortify their particular arguments.

Again, the problem of our worth is linked with the belief that we can 'be like God, knowing good and evil'. Every person is sure he (or she) can know what is good, and what is evil. At the same time the human race

does not wish to know God, for to be confronted by Him would mean Man's weakness and sinfulness would be highlighted. Man would be in deep shame, and even terror.

As a point of interest we observe that today some Christian scholars are at an impasse because they explain the same passages of Scripture to support their arguments for feminism, masculism, or (so-called) orthodox views of human sexuality. There must be a way out of this stalemate, and it must be the biblical way. However in order to begin to be biblical we must first be justified by God's grace, and human faith.

The Power of Justification

Justification is the great Christian dynamic which can lead us to be objective. It means God has accounted us as guiltless. It means God does not impute sin to us. We do not have to prove ourselves. We do not have to be right, either as males or females, feminists or masculists, or anything. We do not have to be cosmetic in living i.e. use 'make-up' or 'cover-up'. Once justified by God we do not have to justify ourselves. Of course we will be wrong many times, but, being justified, we are free to admit our sins and wrongdoings. If we are not wrong we do not have to leap into self-justification. We can remain calm. We do not have to win as masculists or feminists, or (so-called) orthodox debaters of true sexuality.

Justification goes even deeper. It deals totally with the past: all guilt is purged. Hence the elements which are emotive lose their dynamic. There is now no place for anger, hurt, resentment or bitterness. The acts which

provoked the negative reactions of their object have been neutralized, and the person involved is freed from old angers, hurts and resentments. In some cases feminists and masculists are people who have reacted to a person (parent, brother, sister, etc.) and have identified that gender as inferior, as cruel, as something to be hated.

Deeper even than these human reactions is Man's reaction to God, through the Fall, through guilt of sins. Guilt distorts Man's view of God. Man believes God to be grim, remote, detached, vengeful, judgemental, and the like. Justification-with its immense cost of suffering in the death of the Cross-shows God to be Redeemer, and Lover. Hence the justified person is guiltless before God-'There is no condemnation to them in Christ Jesus'. When a person loves God he (she) loves the fellow-creature.

We are able to conclude that the person who is justified is in the best position to examine the meaning of man and woman, without prejudice. Even so we must heed a warning. We are justified by grace, and faith appropriates what grace has done. If-somewhere along the line-we drop in faith, then the sight of grace will also drop. We will revert in part or whole to self-justification. Provided we continually live in faith we should be objective enough to examine the whole man-woman matter objectively.

CHAPTER NINE

MAN'S ESSENTIAL ONTOLOGY

WHERE WE BEGIN TO KNOW MAN'S ONTOLOGICAL BEING

Where do we begin, in the Scriptures, to discover the essential nature of Man? It would seem that we ought to start at creation. Certainly the account of creation and kindred passages should help us to understand Man. We will need, then, to use this material, but when we know the nature of the Scriptures we might start at the other end, i.e. glorified Man. Why should we do this?

Man as He Truly Was and Is: Knowing Man Via Creation

Man as created was perfect for created Man, but he was not matured, then, as glorified Man. That was in the future, purposed by God. Not even the Fall could prevent God from pressing on to glorify His elect, for that is what grace is all about. Man, then, is not fully Man until he is

glorified, and then he is fully Man. If we could know what Man is as glorified, then that would help us to know his essential nature. However, we have a problem. It is this: on the one hand we cannot know what created Man is, and certainly cannot know Man as glorified. This is because none of us are wholly as created, nor yet complete as glorified! Whilst it is true we can to some degree, intellectually, conceive what created Man must have been, and what glorified Man will be, yet because we have actually neither seen nor been either, we cannot truly know Man in these states.

When we have come to see true Man in the person of Christ, then we can return to Man as created, and understand him. Indeed His creation will also throw further light upon his ultimate-and complete-being.

Man as He Truly Is: Knowing Man Via Christ the True Man

The closest we can come to knowing true Man is to see Christ 'in the days of his flesh'. Since we were never- and are never-Christ, we can only know by observation and deduction. He was made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom. 8:3), but was (a) not in the likeness of flesh, but in flesh, and (b) not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh. He was truly Man, but Man who subjected himself to the elements of the Fall, without himself being fallen. On the cross he was made to be sin for us, without actually becoming sinful. He was tempted in all points such as we are tempted, but was without sin.

Yet when we see Christ risen from the dead we see his humanity in new fashion. His body was 'flesh and

bones', and he ate, but then it seemed that his body did not know the restrictions of walls and doors. In his resurrection he was beyond what is the being of mortal Man. We seem to be shown that whilst he was resurrected he was not yet glorified. Glorification could possibly be beyond his resurrection state. We cannot speak in this realm dogmatically, but Paul talks of 'his body of glory' (Phil. 3:21). He said we, too, would have 'a body of glory' which will not necessarily be insubstantial.

Having said this, how close are we to the True Man, the Complete Man? The answer must surely lie in the way in which Christ is represented to us by the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15), especially as he appears in the Book of the Revelation.

In this research we need to note that although we cannot know certain things by experience-i.e. God as ineffable, the created nature of Man, the nature of Christ as true Man, the nature of Man glorified-yet the nature of the Word of God is of such quality, and power, as to effect in us the degree of revelation which does not hold us limited to the ability of our intellects to comprehend what God is communicating. Whilst we cannot know in the sense that God is said to know, or to comprehend with all fullness ('we see in a glass darkly'), yet the comprehension we need is given to us by the Word of God which is itself powerful (Isa. 55:10-11; Heb. 4:12; Jer. 23:29). This is what we call revelation, i.e. the power of God to communicate by His own word, when because of our human inability to understand we could not comprehend. Our own intellectual research would prove fruitless because of the sinfulness which refuses entire confrontation by the truth. It is this word which overcomes our 'hidden agendas', our prejudices, and the bias of our fallen natures, especially in regard to the matter of sexuality.

When, by revelation, we come into knowledge of the truth

(cf. John 16:12-15; I John 2:22-27) we actually comprehend what we could not otherwise know, but by experience. Experience does not-of itself-give us true knowledge, because the very experience affects us, not allowing objective comprehension. Thus-for true knowledge-we are shut up to revelation. This should help us to realize that we cannot know the truth simply by research and intellectual ability: at least for spiritual knowledge-true knowledge of God and Man-we need God's revelation. That is why, at this point, we must respond to the revelation already given to us-by grace-in and through His Word.

Our method, now, will be to see Christ as the ultimate Man, the True Man, the authentic paradigm, the archetype of which we are the ectypes. When the word brings such revelation then we can turn back to Man to understand what he is, and how he should work. When we see Christ not only as Man, but as the True Male, then we can see also the True Woman, the Holy Bride, and the Holy Wife.

CHAPTER TEN

THE TRUE MAN AND THE TRUE WOMAN-I

THE PRINCIPLE OF ARCHETYPAL AND ECTYPAL BEING

Paul, in Ephesians 5:21-33, gives us the method of discovering the nature of the true Bridegroom, and, hence the true Bride. He speaks of what it is, humanly, to be a true bridegroom and a true bride. He draws these from 'Christ and his church'. He sums up his argument by saying, 'This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and his church'. In the language we have used this means, The archetypal marriage is that of Christ and his Bride, the church. The ectypal marriage- the true copy of the archetype-is that which derives from Christ and his Bride.

This principle of *derivation* is seen in Ephesians 3:14-15, 'For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named [i.e. 'is derived']'. There is no true (ectypal)

family apart from the (archetypal) Father. Thus when Christ calls himself 'the good shepherd', 'the true vine', 'the light of the world', 'the door', 'the true bread', he is saying, 'All genuine shepherds derive from my good (true) Shepherd-being; all vines have their authentic origin in me,' and so on. If we can understand this principle, then we may now turn to the revelation given us of Christ as the True Man.

The True Bridegroom And His Bride

A little later we will look at created Man and see that he is man-woman. For the moment it is enough for us to know that we cannot understand Man except as man-woman, and that means we cannot understand man-the-male without woman-the-female. We cannot understand the (archetypal) Bridegroom, without the (archetypal) Bride, i.e. we cannot understand Christ without the church. Just as man saw woman as 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh', so the church is to Christ. We must not think of them apart, each from the other. As the first man would have been incomplete without the woman, so-in a sense-Christ without his Bride, his Helpmeet. We may also note here that wherever a man is without woman (be it mother, sister, daughter, female friend, worker, or companion) there is something incomplete about that male.

For this reason we will look at the Bride as she is portrayed to us in both the Old and New Testaments.

The True Bride, the True Wife, and the True Mother

(a) The True Mother

In the Old Testament the Woman is Israel, the Spouse of God.* This point is taken up in Revelation Chapter 12. Here she is the woman who brings forth her child in anguish. This is the child who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron (v. 5; cf. Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 19:15). He is of course, Christ, and the woman is Israel, or 'the people of God'. Her offspring (v. 17) are the people, the church. These are those who 'keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus'.

Paul refers to her in Galatians 4:21-31 where he says, 'The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother', which confirms the principle of the woman in Revelation Chapter 12. In calling her 'the Jerusalem above' Paul accords with the Bride of Christ who is 'the new Jerusalem, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband' (Rev. 21:2, 9-11). How then can the Woman be the mother of Christ (Israel) and yet be the Bride of her child?

The answer to this lies in the nature of apocalyptic symbols and language. For example in Revelation 6:14, we are told that 'every mountain and island was removed from its place', yet later in verse 15 we are told that

* Something of this principle may be seen in Isa. 9:6, where Messiah is said to be 'a son' and at the same time 'Everlasting Father'. Jesus said, 'He that has seen me has seen the Father'.

everyone sought to hide 'in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains'. How could this be? Apocalyptic sees no problem here. The Mother of Israel can thus be the Woman, the Bride of Christ. We note that in Revelation 21:9 she is 'the Bride, the wife of the Lamb'.*

In passing we may note the strength and power of the Woman as she is the Mother of Christ. In her there is no simpering femininity, but something of the strength of the woman of Proverbs 31:10ff.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE TRUE MAN AND THE TRUE WOMAN-II

(b) The True Bride

In the New Testament the Church is the Bride of Christ.* Paul states this clearly enough in Ephesians 5:21-33. In the Book of the Revelation we see her from two points of view: (a) herself as the Bride and the Wife; and (b) in contrast to her antithesis, the gaudy harlot who is Babylon, the unholy city. It will be useful for us to see these 'feminine' contrasts at a later point. Meanwhile we look at the character of the Bride.

(i) *The Bride is Virginal, Pure.* We see that she is pure, virginal, flawless, and clothed in an impeccable and beautiful wedding garment. Paul speaks of her purity in the passage of Ephesians 5:21-33. She is 'without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing'. She is adorned for the greatest moment of all history (Rev. 21:2). On the one

* Isa 54.5; 62:3-5; Ezekiel 16:8f; Hosea 2:19-20

* Cf. Matt. 9:15f.; John 3:29; Rom. 7:4; 11 Cor. 11:2; Rev.19:7-9; 21:2, 9, 10.

hand she 'has made herself ready' (19:7) and on the other 'it was granted her to be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure' (19:8). Here is both personal action and divine grace.

(ii) **The Bride is Beautiful, Having All God's Glory.** She is most beautiful, as the descriptions in Chapters 19 and 21 of Revelation show. She has 'all the glory of God'. From I Corinthians 11:7 we gain the thought that '[man] is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man', a point which we will later discuss. However as the Bride, the Woman has 'all the glory of God'. We need to realize that the Bride is made up of all male and female members of the Body of Christ, so that the whole glory will be present in her.

(iii) **The Bride is the Whole People of God, Christ's Body.** The figures (archetypal realities) that are used for the Church in the New Testament are Bride, Body, Temple, Vine, Family (house, household), Holy City, and New Jerusalem. These are the members of the Church, the people of the family, the elect of God's household. In the Revelation the archetypes of the Bride and the New Jerusalem, i.e. the Holy City, are both feminine, and probably, also the figure of the Temple must be seen as feminine.

In the Bride then are all members of Christ's Body, the Church. This means all women and all men. Men, then, have their 'masculine' in the 'feminine' of the Bride. At the same time because Christ's Body is the Church, then all women have their 'feminine' in Christ's 'masculine'. The 'multitude which no man could number' of Revelation 7:9-15 must constitute the Bride. Likewise

the 144,000 (Rev. 7:3-8; 14:1-5) constitute part-if not all-of the Church. In 14:4 they are called the 'first fruits', and may represent the Pentecostal offering-the first fruits-as against the whole harvest, i.e. the ingathering of the harvest, 'The Feast of Tabernacles'. (It is a matter of interest that the first two Feasts have been fulfilled- the Passover in Christ, and Pentecost in the coming of the Spirit).

(iv) **The Bride is the Holy City.** The Holy City has a long history in Israel. It is the place of the Temple, the dwelling-house of God amongst His people, first seen in principle in 'the camp of the saints', i.e. Israel's camp where the tabernacle was central, and signified God was present with His people. When the temple was built at Jerusalem it signified what the tabernacle had meant in past times. Its history is too long and detailed to be presented here but at least we know that the Jerusalem below-often called 'Mount Zion'-became a high and holy principle to Israel. Hence the statements like 'the new Jerusalem', 'Jerusalem above, the mother of us all'.

In the Book of the Revelation the Holy City is of immense importance. It has its origin in heaven (21:2, 10), but comes to earth. In another sense it has always been on earth (cf. 11:2). God dwells in it (21:3; 22:1-5) and its gates are open 'day and night'. All the nations shall walk by its light (truth, reign, 21:22-23; cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4; Isa. 65:17-25; 66:18-23), and the kings of the nations shall bring their glory into it.

The Holy City then embraces all things on earth and in eternity. When seen as 'feminine' then its feminity is most powerful, and all embracing.

(v) **The Bride is the Holy Temple.** If 'Mount Zion' is the same as 'the Holy City, New Jerusalem', then it is also 'the Temple' which was situated on Mount Zion. Its 'feminine' embraces the entire 'masculine' of God and the Lamb. Its significance for worship is rich. Christ insisted to the woman at the well that 'salvation is of the Jews', and that Jerusalem was the only place where true worship obtained (John 4:22f.). The temple at Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 by Emperor Titus of Rome, but long before that the 'New Temple' had been in building or built. This is seen in I Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 2:19-22, I Peter 2:4-10. The New Temple was Christ's Body (cf. John 2:18-22), and it was 'the house of prayer for all nations' (John 2:16-17; Matt. 24:2; Luke 19:45-46).

The term-quoted significantly by Christ-'The house of prayer for all nations' is from Isaiah 56:7. In Christ the true Temple, the house of prayer for all nations has been established. See also Isaiah 2:1-4, 65:17-25, 66:18-23. In Revelation 21:22 we read 'And I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.' This must mean that the Temple has become one with the Lord and the Lamb! That is God and His people have become one. This does not mean that God's people have dissolved into Him, but that they have become one with Him, as in John 17:21, 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us'.

Whatever these things may mean, they show again, the marvellous nature and power of the 'feminine', the City, the Bride, the Temple.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE TRUE MAN AND THE TRUE WOMAN-III

THE NATURE OF THE WOMAN, THE FEMININE

We need to remind ourselves at this point that we are looking at the true 'feminine', i.e. the archetype, in order to understand woman both in the abstract and the concrete. From our views of the Bride, the Holy City, and the Temple we can now come to some conclusions regarding true femininity.

The Feminine is pure, dynamic and strong, practical, and functional. She serves the entire human race, and has prior place of operation in eternity. She covers all the nations, all their glory, all life, all sustenance and all healing. This is all delineated powerfully when we look at False Femininity, i.e. the feminine as portrayed by the gaudy harlot, Babylon.

Babylon seeks to emulate and surpass the Holy Bride, but she fails. The Bride has virginal being, purity, and is

clothed in fine linen, bright and pure, which is the righteous deeds of the saints. Babylon is decked out in gaudy attire, a mixture of (pseudo) queenly purple and the red of harlotry ('your sins be as scarlet'). Her robes are composed of the evil deeds of evil men and powers. The cup that Babylon holds in her hands is golden, but is 'full of abominations, and the impurities of her fornication'. The Bride has 'the river of life' which proves fruitful and healing with its tree of life. Babylon has only the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil', which brings death and destruction.

The Bride is the Bride of love, for she is loved by her Lord and loves and obeys him. Babylon is headstrong and enrages her paramour-the beast on whom she rides -so that kings and the beast destroy her in 'the great divorce'. The Bride is 'one flesh' with her Bridegroom forever. The 'feminity' of the unholy city is macho and not womanly and truly feminine. The Bride, strong as she is and competent, has 'the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit'. Babylon is cruel, slaying the saints. The Bride is the means of life, and of lasting prosperity, for with her there is no 'mourning nor crying nor pain any more'.

These things and many more, show us the true nature of the Woman, and this Archetype is richly fruitful in showing us the paradigm for true feminity upon earth. True feminity cannot be understood apart from the true masculinity. The two must never be seen apart. All human feminity will ultimately be wedded-as indeed it really is now-to the true Bridegroom.

The True Woman With The True Man

The true Bridegroom-the true 'Masculine'-may not (and must not) be seen apart from the true Bride. When we look at the Bride along with the Bridegroom we see the following, namely that the Bride has all the glory of God, yet she is the glory of her Husband. She is his helpmeet, for she works with him in his present work, a work which is outlined in the four Gospels regarding the announcement of saving truth, and the action of proclaiming the Kingdom, and assisting in the defeat of all evil. See Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:19-23; and Acts 1:8; cf. I Corinthians 15:24-28.

If we take Ephesians 5:21-33 as the paradigm derived from 'the mystery' of 'Christ and the church', then we see the Woman, the Wife, is subject to her Husband. She has no identity apart from him, nor he apart from her. The wife respects (honours) her husband. We have seen that the Woman as the People of God, the Holy City, the Temple, is wonderfully operative and functional. She cannot be the true 'Feminine' without the true 'Masculine'. This, then, teaches us what 'flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone' really means. 'One flesh' is a state of utter union, disturbed by no disloyalty on the part of either spouse.

The woman, then, is never seen as being apart from the man, nor he apart from her. This explains 'and [he] named them Man', for together they work in the one vocation (Gen. 1:28). Whilst each has his or her identity,

they are one in the same vocation. This vocation is the very reason for their being.

The True Man Fully Seen

The materials of the Gospels, the Acts, and Epistles all tell us, 'Jesus is Lord!'. That was the cry of the early church. It needed the revelation of the Holy Spirit to see this (John 16:12-15), and to say it (I Cor. 12:3). Whilst we know that Christ was Lord prior to the incarnation, by virtue of his true and eternal being (John 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-17; I Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:1-3), yet the cry was 'Jesus is Lord!' meaning, 'This man Jesus has defeated sin and death and Satan, and is the Prince of life, by virtue of his work on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead'. This was not to deny his pre-incarnational lordship, but to emphasize that as a man he had obtained victory.

The True Man the Lord of All

This Man, as glorified, is no less active than when on earth. We have seen his programme in the commands to proclaim the Gospel, and in I Corinthians 15:24-28, and his operations are seen in the Acts and Epistles. They are strongly outlined in the Revelation where he is 'the Lion of Judah' and 'the Lamb of God'. As such he opens the seven-sealed book of history and proceeds with judgements on evil in the seals, the trumpets and the bowls of wrath. He is seen as Judge, as 'King of kings and Lord of lords', and

as the Warrior King who smites the nations with a rod of iron, and who defeats them by the sharp sword that goes out of his mouth, that is by the Word of God.

The True Man Lord of the Church His Helpmeet

Does he accomplish this all on his own? The answer is, 'No! He accomplishes all in conjunction with the church'. Ephesians 1:19-23 should be read in detail: '. . . he [God] raised him [Christ] from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all'.

This must mean that Christ is above all things with a view to the church, i.e. he is head of all things and head of the church. This, then, is his masculinity working itself out in history, but along with the church, and by means of her. He gives (or shares with her) his fullness, and by that fullness 'fills all in all' (cf. Eph. 4:10). Again we gather from Ephesians 3:7-11 that God's plan for history-'the plan of the mystery' (cf. Rev. 10:1-7)- is seen being worked out through the church, 'that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in

the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord'.

The True Woman Subject to Her Head, Christ, the True Man

The sum of this is that Christ is the head and Lord of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:5, 15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19) and the church is subject to him (Eph. 5:21). Yet these two must never be thought of as apart, but as 'one flesh', one entity, fulfilling the will of the Father. As we pointed out before in relation to I Corinthians 15:24-28 the church is Christ's helpmeet in fulfilling that plan. Marriage, then, is a vocation. This, of course, accords with Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:18-25. In the Revelation the True Man is the Lamb of God, seated in the place of authority with the Father. Here the church calls him, 'Lord!' and says, as the Bride, and with the Spirit, 'Come!'.

The Masculine Action of the True Man

Christ is the Warrior King. As such he battles against Satan, and the powers of darkness. Ultimately he defeats the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. He also defeats Satan and his cohorts, Gog and Magog. This Lord uses the weapon of the sword, the Word of God. He also gives weapons to his Bride, and she uses them. At first sight these seem quite mild-those nominated in Romans 13:12, II Corinthians 10:3-4, Ephesians 6:10-18, and I Thessalonians 5:8-for they are faith, hope, truth, peace, and the like, including the Word of God. We might say these weapons are not macho but rather weak,

and even feminine! However they are very effective. In the Revelation the church is not militaristic, but defeats and outfaces every form of evil by its humble and noble forms of battle. At the end all evil is undone in spite of its naked and unrestrained use of power.

The True Man and the True Woman are Wonderfully Fruitful

Christ is masculine in that he has union with his Wife, and they bring forth fruit. Passages in the Epistles such as Romans 7:4 and II Corinthians 11:2 show this. The Woman as she is portrayed in Galatians 4:27, and Revelation 12:4, and 12:17 is certainly fruitful. What issues from the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb is not explicitly stated but fruitfulness in eternity is implied. The principle of a married couple is taken for granted in Genesis 1:28, and fruitfulness as a principle itself is seen in such passages as John 15:1-8, Romans 7:4 and Galatians 5:22-23.

Conclusion To The True Man And The True Woman

We set out on our research by saying we wished to view the true archetypes of Bride and Bridegroom, Wife and Husband, i.e. of True Man and True Woman, even if only in the abstract, and these we have found. We also said it would not be immediately fruitful to start from Man-at-creation, i.e. the primal man and woman, since we could not fully comprehend their state due to our own

sinfulness and hidden prejudices brought on by human fallenness, and human experiences.

Having come to know-at least in some measure-the nature of the True Man and the True Woman, we can go back to the creational accounts of Man, i.e. the man and the woman, and use the insights we have gained to understand created Man. Of course the value of what we have seen above is the usefulness it serves as it supplies from the archetypes the true pattern for the ectypes, for we wish to be true ectypes, true human beings in warm living relationship with God, fellow human creatures, and our own selves.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN AT THE BEGINNING

UNDERSTANDING CREATED MAN

Previously we touched on the fact that because Man is fallen he has a problem going back to his origins. As sinful and not regenerated he cannot face the shame and guilt attached to his fall. Hence he has neither the will nor the power to go back to those origins. He does not want to 'pull up the blind' on his past rebellion against God. Sin has its own inbuilt deceit, so that were he even to try, Man could not come to a truly rational understanding of his creation.

Man's Problem in Facing Himself

Even when redeemed, Man cannot wholly objectively face those origins. The elements of flesh and sin that remain in his experience work against a clear view of the

brilliant creation of Man and his fearful fall. He is still likely to be affected by past experiences of 'maleness' and 'femaleness' which have not been personally helpful. Hence Man has what we call 'the hidden agendas'. Thus, whether male or female, a person will not wish to go through the painful confrontation of Man's past.

We have also noted that because Man has not yet experienced either resurrection or glorification these two events remain something of a mystery to him. The revelation of the Scriptures gives him some sense and knowledge of these things (cf. I Cor. 2:9-10) but, without an uninterrupted mind-set of faith, Man cannot see himself clearly either as originally created, or as ultimately resurrected and glorified. Yet he must seek to do so, in order to have a true view of his humanity.

Steps to Man's Understanding of Himself

Redeemed Man who has come into truth can at least say that he has the revelation of Christ's humanity, his death and his resurrection. He can study something of the way the resurrected Christ lived before he ascended to the Father. He also has some intimations of Christ's glorified body (cf. Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:35-57, especially verse 49). Christ's resurrection body had properties that our bodies do not have, and certainly a 'body of glory' will have properties our mortal frames do not possess.

The Word of God, as brought to us—who are created Man—by the Spirit of God, is the one means whereby we can read the accounts of creation, even though the materials contained in the Scriptures may cause us certain pain. Such pain need not be harmful in the light of God's

grace in redemption. We may not be able to trust our-selves to carry out research, but we can trust the Word. As we have said, the Word not only reveals the truth, but it imprints it upon us, so that to deny it is to deny the grace of understanding that has been given to us. Our insights (above) on The Man and The Woman, especially as seen in the New Testament, are certainly aids to understanding the creation accounts of Man. That is why we may now proceed to fill out our understanding.

Man and Woman at the Beginning

God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth' (Gen. 1:26). The account adds, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them'.

What does it mean for Man to be in the image of God? We have partly given the answer in a few of our earlier remarks. God is Father, Creator and King, and Man correlates with Him. The image, we could say, is a relational one. Man as son, creature and subject reflects the being of God as Father, Creator and King. Another way of saying it is, 'Everything that God is, Man is like that, but anything that God is, Man is none of that'.

Man, then, is a dependent creature. We continue to use the word 'Man' (with a capital M) to distinguish between Man as the male-female entity and man as a male person. Man, then, is wholly dependent upon God, hence Jeremiah's saying, 'the way of man is not in

himself . . . it is not in man who walks to direct his steps' (10:23). Nor must we think of this as a post-Fall phenomenon. It was always so. This is Man's creatureliness.

In line with this the psalmist cried to God, 'All my springs are in you' (Ps. 87:7) and the prophets called Him 'the fountain of living waters'. Man, then, is an under-fountain-'Keep your heart with all diligence; for from it flow the issues of life' (Prov. 4:23). Man flows out the great issues of life, as he receives them from God. Paul told the Athenians how dependent Man is upon God, 'He gives to all men life and breath and everything' (Acts 17:25) and the same Paul approvingly quoted a pagan poet who had said, 'In him we live and move and have our being', and, 'For we are indeed his offspring'.

Man Has Being In, Through, and For, Vocation

In our next section we will look at Man as a male-female entity, for we have seen that The Man and The Woman cannot be viewed separately, and be fully understood. Here we need to see that Man was created for a vocation, i.e. to be fruitful, to multiply, to have dominion over the earth, and to subdue elements which needed to be subject to him. We could call Man 'a steward of creation'. The mandate for this vocation was not given singly to the male but to 'them', i.e. the man and woman together, so that the whole human race has vocation, and cannot be understood apart from vocation. It has the incredible gift of being a fellow worker with God.

Man is a Male-Female Entity

There is much debate about the two accounts of creation, i.e. the first in Genesis Chapter 1, and the second in Chapter 2. The mode of creating Man is not discussed in Genesis 1. It is simply stated: 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created *him*; male and female he created *them*'. There is a similar statement in Genesis 5:1-2: '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'.

These statements-as we have said in our earlier chapters-seem capable of two interpretations. The first is that God made Man as male (Gen. 1:26), and later created the female from him (Gen. 2:20-22), and in so doing called them (man-woman) Man, i.e. mankind, as against a single male person.* The second is that him in both quotations refers to mankind as a whole, thus

* Some have sought to show that the man as created ('him', Gen. 1:27; SA) was androgynous, i.e. that he had the elements of both sexes. Thus, and so, man was man-woman within himself. The question of his being hermaphroditic is not raised by those who suggest he was androgynous. The point of such a statement is good, namely that male-female elements are one in God, indissolubly joined, and their separation in the creation of woman (the female, 'out of man'), is intended to show us that the image of God is the union of the male and female in a male-female entity. This is a fine concept but the account of Gen. 2:18-25 does not seem to support the androgynous claim. No animal is 'a helper fit for him [man]'. Woman is made by a special creative act of God for the man (male), to fit him in his maleness, as he fits her femaleness. That she is 'bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh' seems to point not to some kind of separation of Siamese twin-like male and female elements of the one being, but to a rich and new creative act. This not only gives woman dignity as a special creation, but it also shows that creation came not apart from the male (rightly called Man) but out of him, so that the indissolubility of the two lies in the creation of each, of the other from the one.

explaining 'he named them Man when *they were created*'. Whichever interpretation we choose we are forced to conclude that Man is a male-female entity, and that Man cannot be either male or female, or even an amalgamation of both male and female. When Man is not male-female, then Man is not Man, but simply (an aggregate of) men and women, i.e. males and females. In the first case we have a race-Man-and in the second case virtually two races, i.e. a race of men and a race of women! This certainly appears to be the case when we have the conflict of masculism and feminism.

If the reasoning of the above paragraph is valid, then we have learned a lot about Man. Across the board Man is an indivisible entity. In this way he reflects-as God's image-the nature of God.

We have an exegetical problem in Genesis 1:27, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them'. At first sight it would appear to mean that Man is the image of God, and that that image combines male and female elements, and these reflect the nature of God, i.e. He is male-female. The problem this kind of statement raises is that God is always masculine, for the pronouns 'he' and 'him' are used and feminine pronouns are never used for Him, although His love may be compared with that of a mother.

A number of questions are raised. If Man (male-female) is the image of God-and this appears to denote 'male' and 'female' elements in God which are the one and indissoluble-then is not God 'male-female', and ought not the gender pronouns be used interchangeably for 'Him'? Thus we could, presumably, at one time talk

of Him as 'Him', and another time as 'Her'. The problem is that the Scriptures never speak of Him as 'Her'. Either God is masculine only, or the feminine element of God-if such there is-is contained in, and subsumed under, the masculine pronoun, i.e. femininity is contained within masculinity and is part of it. Since God is ineffable, and because He can be compared with no other person or thing, knowledge of His unique Being cannot be drawn from (so-called) known elements and categories such as human 'male' and human 'female'. We cannot start at the 'likeness' and arrive at the reality. No ontology of God can commence on the horizontal level of creation and rise to the vertical level of God.

Our problem with a 'male-female' concept of God is the element of sexuality which is totally human, and not found-as we know it in the human creation-in God. For us the idea of 'male' and 'female' is irreversibly connected with sexuality, i.e. the powers and acts of physical union and intercourse between male and female human beings. We need to distinguish between 'creation' and 'procreation', between God as Creator and Man as 'procreator'. Man cannot create, for he is a creature, but he can procreate because of the power God gives him. The thrust to procreate is God-given. Man never creates in the primary sense, though we can speak loosely of him being 'creative', but such a 'creativity' is secondary, in Man, and never primary. It is the reflection of God's Creator-Being, but is not of the essence of it.

Thus when we speak of male and female elements in God the most we can say is that our male and female elements reflect what is in God, but they do not explain what and how they are in God. The masculist and the

feminist is so caught within the orbit of (so-called) gender-male and female-that these two have not really understood maleness and femaleness. There must be some irrationality linked with their masculism and feminism. Both masculism and feminism have a point to make, and this puts them into an 'ism' category.

The practical value of the study we have just undertaken can be summed up by, 'Let God be God and Man be Man', i.e. 'Never let Man think he knows God from the basis of humanity, nor ever let Man compare his humanity with God's Deity!'. The modern use of the word 'Parent' for God begs-or ignores-the whole question of true femininity and masculinity. Since fully functional parenting is male-female the use of the word Parent is simply an avoidance of saying 'Father' or 'Mother', and is an awkward sort of compromise, carrying unhelpful ambiguity when perspicuity is indispensable.

What then do we conclude? Simply this: God is always referred to as Masculine, but this category is beyond the human parallel of gender. 'Male' and 'female' elements, if present in God's nature, must not be understood by working back from human gender. Only by revelation can we understand God as 'Father', and only by revelation can we not understand Him as 'Mother'.*

* C. S. Lewis is one of the few who have tackled this extremely difficult subject. Two quotes are apt here:

'No,' said the Director, 'there is no escape. If it were a virginal rejection of the male, He would allow it. Such souls can by-pass the 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)

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)

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MAN'S FALL AND HIS RELATIONAL CHANGE

THE NATURE OF THE FALL

It is essential that we understand the nature of the Fall, i.e. that we understand what happened to the relationships between God and Man, Man and God, man and woman, man and man, woman and woman.

The temptation, by 'that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan' (Rev. 12:9), was 'You shall be as God [or, 'gods'-Elohim], knowing good and evil'. Man would be autonomous, having his own (autonomous) moral discernment of good and evil. This was tantamount to make man into God, or, at least, a god. It also meant that the woman chose not to trust the word of God, 'You shall surely die', and trust the word of the serpent, 'You shall not surely die'. Each of the two partners would have autonomy of choice, and of life. Thus there was the choice to do what was right or wrong, in the eyes of the person exercising choice.

What went by the board was Man's creaturely, filial,

and servantly dependence upon God. Man was virtually saying 'All my springs are in myself'. 'The way of man is in himself, it is in man who walks to direct his steps.' He now had no need to refer to God's knowledge regarding good and evil. He was free to make his own decisions.

THE RESULTS OF THE FALL

The Diminution of True Sexuality Through Broken Relationships

Man, in seeking his autonomy, was separated from God. The break had come between him and God. God had pronounced him 'dead'. This death was primarily a relational one—he was dead to God, and alive to himself. In fact such a state was (is) death.

Man—the male—was separated from the woman. The polarity of the male-female entity, and its harmonious relational rhythm was broken. Virtually two races emerged from the Fall: (a) man the male, and (b) woman the female. They were now divided. The male blamed the woman. Whilst 'two-bodies-in-one' relationship may well have continued, the utter 'one-flesh' union was disturbed. Man, i.e. man-and-woman, did not know love as they had known it, either with God or each other. This meant that true and full sexuality was disturbed. True sexuality depends on God's love to Man and on true wholesome love of the male and female to each other.

When male becomes male for his own sake, and female female for hers, and so each is an orbit in itself,

then the heart of genuine sexuality has gone. When the male has his masculinity for himself, and the female represents the object he is seeking for himself, then genuine sexuality is perverted and distorted. When male and female come together for the use of each other, procreation becomes a contract, and marriage has to be contained within the legality of a solemn commitment, and the awareness of relationships carried on under such legality. There is no ontological freedom here, no joyful mutuality, no healthy polarity of male and female, and so no integral unity, no true love.

With what we have said above-if it be true-then true sexuality in a world of fallen human creatures is rarely known and exercised. We may have to say-even at this point of our discussion-that sexuality may really only be known in rich and satisfying form under the grace of God!

The Curse and Its Effects (Gen. 3:14-19)

The reason for the curse was not an irrational anger on the part of God, but the result of Man's sin. We have seen earlier in our study that the man 'passed the buck' to the woman, and the woman to the serpent. There was a refusal to accept accountability, and responsibility. God said to the serpent, 'Because [explicit] . . .', and to the man, 'Because [implied] . . .', and to the woman, '*Because* [explicit] . . .'. The curse in its various forms came *because* . . .

Notice that the curse is not a command. God says, 'Because . . .' and tells the man and the woman how things will be. He does not say to the woman, '*Suffer*

in childbirth', nor say to the man, '*Rule* over your wife . . . toil . . . sweat'. The curse is a lessening of the utter peace, and Man must recognize that things have changed from the conditions of Paradise. The world is different: idealizing it, or setting hopes beyond the order within the curse is a fruitless, if not counter-productive, exercise. As we noted in our earlier studies, grace appears with the pronouncement of Genesis 3:15 that evil will be crushed, for the seed of woman will triumph over it. Grace is present to aid Man. Men and women of faith appear, even in the face of the curse, and they live through it all by the grace of God.

Sin and Its Effects

When we read Genesis Chapters 4 and 6 along with Romans 1:18-32, we see the effects of sin. Romans 5:12f. also highlights the domination of sin and death over sinful Man. Romans 3:9-18 helps to fill out this picture.

One of the most significant revelations is that when Man turns from God and refuses the knowledge of Him he has to (and does) change everything which we would call theology (our view of God), anthropology (our view of Man), and cosmology (our view of creation). The immediate result of this is that Man substitutes something for God, i.e. idols and idolatry, and this leads to deviant sexuality. Fornication and adultery are deviant sexuality, as we will see. More perverse forms are homosexuality and the crop of deviations such as bestiality, transvestism and other 'kinky' forms. Whatever is the functional way of life (God's supplied moral law) Man's sinful

perversity will oppose it as an unacceptable imposition, so that authority is wholly opposed.

In practice this means that the pure 'one-flesh' union such as we see in Christ and his Bride is rejected. Those who oppose seek to avoid the pure confrontation of wholesome sexuality. They seek out stimulation in illicit sex. They try to keep sexual practice within their own orbit (male or female orbits), so that genuine relationships will not obtain. All laws and principles are unacceptable but those Man deems to be 'good'. He believes he knows what is 'good' and what is 'bad'.

Sin also brings division of the race. This starts at man and woman (husband and wife), becomes rooted in the family, moves out into small (tribal) groups, and builds into international wars and genocides. That which is contrary to sheer peace, joy and unity gains ground in the horror of human selfishness and cruelty. Sexuality takes on these terrible forms by induction from perverse society.

Anthropology reveals many kinds of society, and we should not be surprised at this kind of report. Some societies are matriarchal and some patriarchal. We should not be surprised-or dismayed-at the variety presented. In the light of Man's rebellion we ought to expect variant societies. Nor do we condemn any of them, as such. If we do not find the ideal society then it should not surprise us. Perhaps there ought to be some amazement that in the world's history things have not been worse than they have been.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SEXUALITY IN NATURE AND GRACE-I

MAN LIVING IN NATURE AND GRACE

As we have noted before, we live in the reality of the Fall and the resultant curse. If that is 'spilt milk' then we ought to save our crying energies and use them-along with other resources-to come to terms with our human situation, and learn to live in it in the best way possible. Woman must learn to live within the fallen parameters and accept the principle of her husband ruling her, of sorrow in childbirth, whilst the male must accept the fact that he faces some hostility in the created order and will wrest his living from it by the sweat of his brow. To live in anger against God because of the change to the curse from Paradisical bliss is to deny our guilt and be thankless for the grace which did not allow us to be judged and de-stroyed for the heinous crime of our rebellion against God, and our self-wrought loss of the glory of created life.

The extraordinary thing is that grace began with Man's

fall. God's prophetic word to 'that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan' (Rev. 12:9) that he would raise up the seed of woman to crush the head of the serpent, was also God's evangelical prologue to Man. It was the promise of deliverance. The story of Cain and Abel is that the human race was-and is-divided by sin. The loss of primal innocence and pure union through sin brought tragedy to the first family.

Men and Women in Nature and Grace

Cain was the man of sin, and Abel the man of grace. Cain was the man of religion, and Abel the man of faith. 'By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking' (Heb. 11:4). Cain offered a sacrifice which was not accepted (Gen. 4:5), seemingly because it was offered in the wrong spirit which was that of self-righteousness. Self-atonement and self-justification are an affront to God because, firstly, it is presumptuous of sinful Man to think he can make atonement for the enormity of his sin and rebellion, and, secondly, because faith in God brings justification to Man (cf. Gen. 15:6).

The Principle of Grace and Faith

In history the principle of faith means that the person of faith believes God makes atonement for Man's sin.

Even if Leviticus 17:11 ('For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life.') was a promise given primarily to Israel, it was, and is, nevertheless, the principle of grace for all who were persons of grace. Men and women of faith were (and are) persons who believed in the God of grace and the grace of God, and lived within that understanding.

We have then a variety of men and women and human relationships. We have couples of faith, e.g. Abraham and Sarah, and couples without faith, e.g. Ahab and Jezebel. We have a spouse who is a person of faith, and one who is not, a brother (Abel) who is a man of faith, and a brother (Cain) who is not. The human race from the time of the primal couple onwards has been composed of persons living in (fallen) nature and persons who live in grace. Faith, through grace, has always looked to 'the grace that was to be yours', i.e. 'the grace that is [always] coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (I Pet. 1:10, 13).

The Scriptures then simply confirm the fact of the state of Man which we would expect to find, namely that human history is the story of men and women of faith, and men and women who live apart from faith. The former have 'the mind of the Spirit', and the latter 'the mind of the flesh' (Rom. 8:5-8). Whilst these variations across the human race may bring a smile sometimes to our lips, the situation is nevertheless as grim as we set it out in our last chapter. An extraordinary battle always goes on between the people of God and the people who reject the God of creation as the God of grace.

Sexuality in Israel

For many who see Israel as the paradigm of true godly living, the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) constitute for them the true view and resource materials of, and for, true human relationships. Certainly the laws which God gave to Israel are of great importance to our subject, but they are by no means simply Godly legislation. Ethicists see that the Law-the Torah-was primarily 'instruction' and not 'legislation'. It had what they call both apodictic and casuistic elements, i.e. absolute commands, and elements of amelioration when the apodictic was infringed. For example a man who killed in cold blood had to be killed, whereas a man who killed in hot blood-for matters of justice and genuine passion-could flee to the cities of refuge and not be destroyed whilst he remained under that protection. Israel, then, was given laws for its own economy, and these are not necessarily for all the human race, and for all time.

We do not find men and women living out ideal relationships in the kingdom and economy of Israel. Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and his wives and children all show the human frailties we, ourselves, know so well. When we recognize that all Israel lived under covenant, and that covenant is unilateral (i.e. one making the agreement) and not bilateral (two or more making the agreement), then we realize they lived under grace, even if it was not the fuller revelation and experience of grace which is open to those of the New Covenant, under Messiah.

Any attempts then to show on the one hand that

relationships were perfect under the covenant of Moses, and/or on the other hand to insist that Israel was 'a man's world', dominated by men who subjugated women to virtual bondage are simplistic. Israel lived in a sinful world, under the curse, and showed its frailties as being no less than in other nations. Even so the laws as given to them by God through His servant Moses, are quite remarkable, and we will have opportunity-and need-to examine them at a later point in our study. When we do we will compare grace and law under the Old Covenant, and grace and law under the New Covenant made by Christ (Matt. 26:28; cf. Jer. 31:31-34).

All, then, that we need to remark here is that the Ten Commandments (the Decalogue) are remarkable, and divided into two sections: (a) love to God, and (b) love to our neighbours. They certainly set out the way of true relationships. Also they are based not upon law as a thing in itself, but upon grace, for the significant preamble to them is (Exod. 20:2), 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'. On the basis of this grace of deliverance God commands them to (responsive) obedience. The Ten Commandments were broken down into detailed principles on how to live as man and wife, as families and as communities, even to the point of making provisions for strangers and sojourners.

A Preview of Grace and Sexuality

Before entering the next section of our research, namely God's grace and human sexuality, we need to achieve some kind of a perspective on 'law' and 'grace'.

When John states (John 1:17) that 'the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ', he is not demeaning the law, or even offering 'grace and truth' as an alternative to it. He is simply saying that whilst law can-and did-come through an intermediary who is a man, grace and truth had to come to us through Jesus the Messiah.

The coming of grace and truth was a radical and distinct happening in history. It spoke of a new era-the era of grace. Hence it would be most important, and would alter the way in which Man looked at all things, including his sexuality. Under grace a new world was to open up to him.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SEXUALITY IN NATURE AND GRACE-II

THE MAN OF FAITH LIVING IN GRACE

Grace is always prior to faith. That is to say that when a person has a revelation of grace-by the Word and Spirit of God-then he comes to faith. Grace consists of two things: (i) the acts which God has done, and is doing for Man, and (ii) the promises of God which are as good as done, for what He promises comes to pass.

(a) Creation is Not Grace

We do not speak of 'the grace of creation', for creation is what God has done out of His being of goodness, truth, holiness, righteousness and love. Whilst we may say we do not merit it, there is no question of merit in regard to creation nor-for that matter-unmerit, for the question of these does not arise. However when Man fell, he merited nothing but judgement and death. That God should have planned grace before creation

(Eph. 1:5f.; II Tim. 1:9; cf. I Cor. 2:6f.) is wonderful and bewildering to us, for Man has often thought that the fall of Man prompted God to grace, but grace prompted is no grace.

(b) The Grace of God Has Appeared in History

Whilst God undoubtedly began to bring grace to the human race at the Fall, yet in a critical, definitive and distinctive way He did this in the incarnation, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ, His Son. A crisis took place in human history when 'the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation', i.e. when 'the word became flesh . . . full of truth and grace', that is, 'when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared'. Grace appeared distinctively in the person of Jesus Christ, so much so that it can be called 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ', and since, as the Son of the Father he pointed to the Father, so that grace can come to us 'from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.

This grace has been named in the New Testament as 'great', 'glorious', 'abundant', 'overflowing', 'surpassing', and 'varied'. Terms such as 'the riches of his grace', 'the immeasurable riches of his grace', 'grace . . . which he lavished upon us', 'justified freely by his grace', 'abundance of grace', 'grace abounded', 'grace might . . . reign', and 'singing with grace in your hearts', all indicate the free flow of grace to the human race, especially to the 'remnant chosen by grace'.

(c) The New Humanity is Under 'Glorious Grace'

This means that Man-in-nature, especially fallen nature, has a different context and environment to that of Man-in-grace. Man-in-grace has gone through a life-transforming experience because of the person and work of Christ. He has been convicted of sin, righteousness and judgement, by the Word and the Spirit. He has had a revelation of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. He has received the gifts of repentance and faith, and so, the gifts of forgiveness, of regeneration, of purification from sin's pollution, of justification, of sonship, of (God's) love, and of the Spirit. This means that the new (regenerated) person is a new creation as against a created person who in his fallenness could not know God, Man or his fellow-man. Now he can relate vertically to God who, in fact, has related down to Man in His redeeming love. The new creation can also relate horizontally to all the human race. Whereas Man-in-nature could not truly relate to himself because any sustained attempt at self-consciousness was disastrous, he can now know himself as a calm and integrated being.

(d) The New Context and Relationships Which Man Has in Grace

We see then that he is reconciled to God, and so to his fellow-creatures, and has been put into a new community which is variously called the Body of Christ, the Bride of

Christ, the Temple of God, the Flock of God, and the Holy City. This is a community which is one of love and holiness. It has been called 'the prophetic, priestly and royal community' because its head is Christ who is himself the true prophet, priest and king.

Because Man's guilt has been taken from him, he is free towards God and his fellow-man. A whole and radical change has taken place in his life. To be placed in the new community is part of grace's miracle. It is the environment of grace. Instead of pursuing his way of independence he finds himself in a new and wonderful relation complex. As we have said, he simultaneously relates vertically (to God), horizontally (to the human race) and inwardly (to himself). He is a person who can now live in true human sexuality as a man, as a woman, i.e. as the male-female entity known as Man. Being Man transcends the barriers that had come into being when he rebelled against God. Paul expressed this new relational complex in the following statements:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-and were made to drink of one Spirit.

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

. . . you have put off the old nature [humanity] with its practices and have put on the new nature [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.

These references have often been thought to abolish the differences in 'male and female', 'Jew and Greek', and 'free and slave', so that an egalitarian situation is established. A deeper and richer theological meaning ought to be sought. 'Male' still remains 'male' and 'female' remains 'female', but the differences militate against neither salvation nor the utter oneness of those who are part of the Body of Christ, those who participate in 'the New Man', who is Christ himself. The 'differences' are held in unity, which is a very thrilling thing, and unique to the disparity and dissonance found in the body of fallen humanity.

If these three references (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-28; Col. 3:9-11) are seen in their contexts then the meaning common to them emerges, namely that the original (created) unity of the human race has been restored by the redemptive work of God in Christ. The significance of this is enormous. It means true sexuality has been restored to the elect people of God.

When we speak of a creational system being 'restored' we do not mean that the ultimate perfection of the new age (the age in, and of, eternity) has arrived. That unity ultimately will be flawless. We, however, are not in the ultimate age, but in the penultimate. When Christ prayed to his Father (John 17:20-26) 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me', he was not praying for an immediate and total oneness, but that the basic ontological unity of the human race be restored. Yet in his mind this would have to be 'in grace', i.e. unity can only be under grace, and not by human observance of a law or principle. Thus grace calls for (and normally evokes) the response of faith. That is, that unity and true sexuality are only exercised in grace, by faith, and not by sight. This means that whilst grace is never absent (i.e. God always works) yet where there is not the response of faith the grace of unity is not appropriated; hence relationships can fail,

i.e. distinctions of 'male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free' will again be observed. Everything in this penultimate age is of grace, and requires the response and obedience of faith.

(e) The Presence and Power of Love

Grace and love are closely linked. God has always loved humanity and His creation, but God's restorative (i.e. redemptive) love is expressed in, and executed by grace. Man does not merit any restorative act of God, nor is God compelled by His love (as though He were its object and not its subject) to act in grace. Grace is never an expedient to meet a contingency.

When we come to love, we see it is not simply an attribute of God, but His very being. 'God is love' is as definitive a statement as 'God is light', and both show us that God is holy love. The Triune Godhead is love, and Man is made in that image, hence true human love is the reflection of divine love on the human level. True sexuality cannot be understood or exercised apart from that love. Thus when grace restores Man to his true being, then true sexuality obtains, and with it true relationships in their vertical, horizontal and inner expressions.

The immense power of this love is really God working in the hearts, minds and lives of His people, hence true sexuality and relationships are not only possible, but are under that constraint which makes it impossible to live in peace if we do not fulfil them. Each failure or transgression of sexuality and relationships will bring emotional disturbance and feelings which we often call 'guilt'.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MAN AND WOMAN IN GRACE AND LOVE-I

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF MAN AND WOMAN

Our Method of Tackling the Subject

Our method of tackling the subject of Man, i.e. man and woman as a male-female entity and race, is as follows:

(i) We explore the creation accounts and other Scriptures to discover-as far as possible-the nature of Man, and so the nature of man and woman. We realize that we have 'hidden agendas', certain prejudices that spring from our experiences of sexuality (maleness and femaleness), and most of all we have problems with being confronted by what Man was as against what he is in his fallen state.

(ii) We recognize that because we have fallen short of God's glory we cannot understand essentially the nature of unfallen Man.

(iii) We also recognize that created Man was not

complete in the ultimate glorified fullness and maturity that God had planned for him. Whilst he was complete as created Man, he was not yet complete as ultimate Man. In that sense Man has always been about his destiny, and so in a state of becoming. Becoming is one of the elements we must understand if we would have a true biblical anthropology.

(iv) We recognize that the only true Man to have lived is Jesus of Nazareth, and that we could find the true paradigm in him. Man judges him 'after the flesh' (II Cor. 5:16), and cannot recognize him apart from personal spiritual regeneration (John 3:3ff.; cf. I Cor. 2:14; I John 3:1b; John 16:7ff.). Christ was made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Rom. 8:3), and although not in 'sinful flesh' must have taken on himself some of the effects Man knows from the Fall.

Christ was not made in 'the likeness of flesh', or he would not have been Man. He was not made in 'sinful flesh', or he would have been as all fallen human beings. He was made in 'the likeness of sinful flesh', and it is difficult-if not impossible-for us to understand what this means. We can only conclude that he was truly human, but not sinfully human, yet somehow having upon him the results of the Fall without them marking him out as sinful.

Even though Jesus was true and perfect Man, he had-by nature of his case-to come to resurrection, and then glorification. If we could know him as first resurrected and then glorified, then we would see Man as he is in his fulfilled destiny. This would give us great and useful knowledge. The only way we can have something of this knowledge is by the Spirit and the Word of God, and, of course we do have some of this knowledge-

'God has revealed [these things] to us by his Spirit' (I Cor. 2:10 passim). Even so with all that we know 'we see in a mirror dimly', for 'it does not yet appear what we shall be' (I Cor. 13:12; I John 3:2). Thus we are dependent upon what we discuss in our paragraph following.

(v) Throughout the Scriptures-as we traced the relevant material in Chapters Nine to Twelve-we have pointers to archetypal man and woman, i.e. the True Man and the True Woman. Christ the Bridegroom is Archetypal Bridegroom, and the Church is Archetypal Bride. We saw that whilst all this seems abstract, and even allegorical, yet the material is that alone by which we can see the ectypal man and woman, and so come to understand Man, i.e. man and woman as a male-female entity. We are in possession of invaluable data, i.e. of ontological categories, and so human functionality.

(vi) When, then, we return to creation, we can understand Man as created, and then the man and the woman, because out of the unity of the Scriptures we can see Man in his created and eschatological being. We can see his end from the beginning and his beginning from the end. Thus we have a full-orbed view of Man, and so of man and woman, and this is useful as we understand the ontology and functionality of the human race.

We need to see, in all this, that mere objective scientific research of the Bible (so understood) cannot, of itself, yield us a true biblical anthropology. Two elements enable us to understand such an anthropology, and they are the Spirit and the Word. The Word of God cannot be separated from Him, and be used as research material, as such. It is impossible to have the Word of God apart from the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of God not to be in, and with, the Word.

When Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life', he meant that they were the true words of God spoken through the Spirit, and so God's potent medium of communication. The words of the prophets were truly the words of God, but God spoke through His Son in a way that was unique, and even more immediate than by the prophets (cf. Heb. 1:1-2; Num. 12:6-7; Deut. 18:15-22; Acts 3:22f.; cf. Jer. 23:23-32). It is clear that the Spirit teaches (John 14:26; I Cor. 2:13) and that he does this primarily through the Word of God. Thus, although we cannot wholly comprehend what we have never seen or been, yet the Spirit can give us sufficient content of the truth-even truth which is to us at this point in time, eschatological-so that we can come to know as much of The Man and The Woman (the Archetypes) as is necessary for us to know. This seems to be the point in Paul's disquisition of the husband and wife in Ephesians 5:21-33. Something of this kind is indicated in I John 2:22-27, along with I John 5:7 and John 16:12-15.

Who, And What, Then, Is Man The Male-Female Entity?

With the biblical materials we have at hand, we can adduce much concerning Man. In Genesis 1:26-31; 2:9-24; 5:1-2; 9:1-6; Psalm 8:3-8 (cf. Job 7:17-18; Ps. 144:3; Heb. 2:6-8); Psalm 82:6; 103:15-16 (I Pet. 1:24; Isa. 40:6-9); I Corinthians 11:7 and many other places, we see his origin and nature. We have dealt more fully with this in Chapter Thirteen where we concluded that Man is a male-female entity, and has been created by God in His own image to live, multiply, and be His steward to, and over, the creation, subduing those dynamic elements which require a lordship over them.

Man, at the Fall, virtually abdicated this function God had given him. He was only truly Man in the light

of vocation. His male-female being and unity only had meaning and reality in the light of the God-given vocation. Even so the mandate was repeated after the Flood (Gen. 9:1ff.), and is clearly stated in Psalm 8:3ff., showing that it has never been rescinded. Man must have a drive to fulfil vocation, and must suffer guilt when he rebels against what he has been created to be, i.e. created to do.

Who and What Man-the Male and Female-Is

We have a problem in trying to view first man-as-male and then woman-as-female, for whilst each is a creation of God, yet they are created with mutuality. It is impossible to think of the male without the female, and vice versa. However the man-as-male and woman-as-female are discussed by Paul in I Corinthians 11:1-16, and in his discussion he points to the ontological order by saying, 'And all things are from God', so that he is not talking about what is 'convenient' or 'expedient' or 'cultural' but what is the true order of things.

Paul first of all states that 'the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God'. Some have here supposed a hierarchy of subordination and insubordination, but primarily Paul is pointing to that which is ontological, i.e. how by the being of God and the creation of man and woman, Christ is under the headship of God, man under the headship of Christ, and woman under the headship of man.

We have to realize that the word 'under' seems to imply subordination, and is, for human beings, an emotive word. A discussion of

subordination and superordination is a difficult if not an impossible task. The fall of Man means Man has rejected the basic authority of God, has placed himself on a par with God ('You will be as God, knowing good and evil'), and so will have nothing to do with subordination and superordination. Later we will try to view the subject, for unfortunately it seems to be impossible for many to see subordination as anything other than inferiority, or superordination as other than superiority when the whole genius of divine superordination is serving without any sense of superiority, and the beauty of subordination is that, too, of serving without any connotation of servility or inferiority. In any case the text of I Corinthians 11:1-16 is not speaking of subordination as such, but of the relationship of Christ to God as Head, the relationship of man (the male) to Christ as Head, and the relationship of the woman to the man (as head).

What is meant in the text by the term 'head'? It is a relationship in which Christ derives his being and action from God, the man his being and action from Christ, and the woman her being and action from the man. It is not simply a relationship which once came into being, but one which goes on being, i.e. it is dynamic, but then only dynamic because God gives, Christ gives, and the man gives. When we look elsewhere for the meaning of the term 'head', we see this principle holds. God as Father is the Head of the Son. The Son is the head of his church, and this is clearly so as she is his Bride. In our present text Paul is saying that what a woman does should make reference to the man as her head, just as what he does should make reference to Christ as his head.

Man's Being Prior to Woman in Creation Has Implications

He says, 'For a man ought not to cover his head since

he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man'. In Genesis 1:26-27 man and woman both appear to constitute the image and likeness of God. However man in this latter reference is not said to constitute the glory of God (cf. Gen. 9:6 and Ps. 8:5), but by being like God, he reflects His glory as directly derived from Him whilst the woman reflects the glory of man having been derived from him, although via God's creative act and not man's.

If the account of woman's creation in Genesis 2:18ff. is a commentary of Genesis 1:26-27, then it is all plain, namely that both the man and the woman (Man) constitute the image and likeness of God, but the man being prior to the woman is the glory of God, and the woman being derived from man constitutes his glory. Woman being man's glory must also have reference to the man being God's glory, for if she is the man's glory then he has no glory without her, i.e. without her he cannot be the glory of God! All of this may even refer to what we suggested earlier, namely that femininity may be contained within, and be part of, masculinity as it is in God.

Man and Woman's Relationship is Primarily Functional and Vocational

In Genesis 2:18ff. Man cannot be mated with the animals. In regard to their created affinity with each other, he is a solitary, not having affinity. Being in solitude he needs someone, not because he is lonely (this is nowhere suggested), but he needs functional and vocational help.

He is above the animals for he names them, but he needs a 'help meet for him'. We may change the words 'help meet' (first changed into 'help-meet' and then into 'helpmeet', which is not strictly correct), into 'helpmeet' but we cannot change this word into 'helpmate', even if that be a reasonable transition. The woman is there to help the man. There has been play on these words, i.e. 'She meets him to help him and becomes a mate, and they mate'. The word 'meet' (Heb. *kenegdo*) means 'fit', and this must mean primarily for the task he has been given, i.e. to tend Paradise, or to obey the mandate of 1:28f., or both. Thus in this Genesis passage there is nothing romantic about woman, for she is a functional help in the vocation the man has been given. As Man, they both work together at the task.

Masculists and feminists are anxious to draw conclusions which suit their predilections, i.e. the masculist wishes to see the man as superior, the feminist to deny superiority to the male. Again this question as such is not raised here. The question of two combining to do the task given to Man is the one that is raised. By saying this we are not skirting the issues the masculist and feminist raise. We are saying they are beside the point.

The Worker and the Helper are Created for Mating

When, then, the account goes on to show that the two become 'one flesh', the question of truly meeting and mating is raised. That each is a discrete person is not in doubt. When they mate, they may become 'one flesh' but they are still 'two bodies' and 'two persons'. The woman

has derived from the man, and so he is prior to her. She is dependent upon him for she-to him-is 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' and so must be seen in relation to him. At the same time both have been created by God and their primary dependence is upon Him, even if the secondary dependence of the woman is upon the man. Paul, having established this latter fact, then wishes to show man's dependence, also, upon a woman, and says in I Corinthians 11:11, 'Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman'. I Corinthians 11:1-16 is not so much speaking of authority as of relationship, and even of derivation with its consequent responsibilities. The question of authority may be present, but Paul does not explicate it here, as such.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MAN AND WOMAN IN GRACE AND LOVE-II

MAN AND WOMAN IN VOCATION

Any biblical anthropology will have to take into account Man in creation, Man the fallen, Man under grace by redemption, seeking to live in holiness, by faith, hope and love, and eschatological Man who has been resurrected and glorified, with his ultimate vocation as priest-king unto God and the creation.

None of this will make any sense apart from creation. Grace is not to be seen as an advance on creation, but a brilliant and radical restoration to true creation. The new heavens and the new earth are not so much different from the old as they are the old renewed, the curse having been expunged, evil having been defeated and destroyed so that Paradisical bliss again obtains. If we view creation merely as a backdrop or decor to grace, we will have missed the greatness of that grace. God's creation of Man is brilliant and beautiful, and his restoration to createdness is incredibly wonderful. Man was never the inferior

creature which his guilt has conditioned him to think he is or was.

When we use the term 'Paradisical bliss' we do not mean 'eating the lotus lily', but Man purposeful in vocation. As he had to 'till it and keep it', and he needed woman to help him, so Man will constitute a 'kingdom of priests unto God' and will 'reign upon the earth'. This will be a high vocation.

If then we view man and woman merely in regard to a romantic alliance or in procreation and the rearing of children, we will miss the fact that the point of their being and living was the vocation God gave them. Wherever we meet a man or a woman being autonomous and independent one of the other (i.e. males of females, females of males, right across the board of humanity), then we can attribute that to the fall of Man. It is impossible to think of man apart from woman and woman apart from man. This is seen clearly in The Man and The Woman-the Bridegroom and the Bride-who work together in the plan of God.

Functional Roles of Man and Woman

When we are suspicious of anything which impinges upon our (imagined) autonomy, we will be deeply suspicious of the suggestion that there are roles for men and women, yet if there are, then they can only be seen in the light of the man who has been given a mandate by God, and the woman who is his helper in executing it. In Genesis 1:26f. both the man and the woman are given the mandate to be fruitful, to multiply and fill up the earth, having dominion over it, and subduing dynamic powers

which need to be subjected to Man. In Genesis 2:15 the man first is given a mandate and then woman is created to assist him (share with him) in a work he is unable to do alone. It is not simply that woman is needed biologically to help him to 'be fruitful', but the whole task across the entire board requires all her feminity as also all his masculinity.

When Proverbs 16:4 says that God has created everything for its own purpose (cf. Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 3:11; Eph. 1:4-14; Isa. 43:7, 21), it shows that creation is first functional (cf. Ps. 148:5-6; Jer. 31:35-36; 33:20, 25) and then purposeful. The work, the mating, the family, and the action are all part of human sexuality. Sexuality which turns in on itself, or denies its true function and purpose will be unproductive, and counter-productive. It is important that we see this. This is why we must discover the ontological categories of man and woman. It is this matter with which Paul wrestles in I Corinthians 11:1-16.

If we are to understand that marriage is linked with vocation, then we must look at the roles of the Bride and the Bridegroom. We have seen, earlier, that the True Bridegroom is in the business of fulfilling the Father's will. He spoke much of this during his years of ministry, especially as it is recorded in John's Gospel. There is no question of Christ fulfilling that plan apart from his Bride. She is submissive to him as Lord, and shares with him in what he is doing. For this work and function, Christ has given her his fullness (Eph. 1:23; cf. Eph. 4:7ff.), and as she works in the power of the Spirit, she witnesses to him (Acts 1:8; Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 12:13, 17; 19:5). His plan as shown in I Corinthians 15:24-28 (cf. Phil. 2:9-11) is being outworked with the Bride, and it is from this that husbands and wives see their calling and responsibilities in life. The marriage that is going nowhere, goes nowhere. Human marriages are often pathetically pointless, apathetic, and lethargic, just because the

husband and wife (and, later, the children) do not understand that marriage is for vocation, and vocation with a goal.

The Husband and the Wife

There is no question that the apostles taught that a wife should be subject to her husband (Eph. 5:21-22; Col. 3:18; I Pet. 3:1f.), whilst the husband should love his wife (Eph. 5:25f.; Col. 3:19; I Pet. 3:7). We need to know what 'subject' means, as also what 'love' means in their relationship. Since the husband is the head of the wife, it means she is dependent upon him for life and leadership. Yet even this will be read amiss if we do not see them as 'one flesh', i.e. one in union, one in function, and one in purpose. Whilst we must idealize such oneness in the age of sinfulness and grace, we must insist on its ontological reality.

In Genesis 2:23-25 we see the creational unity of man and woman as she is taken from him, and he receives her to himself as 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'. We will not understand the reality of this unless we see that the church was 'born crucified', that is, she was created out of his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-10), and is 'bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh'. He loved the church and gave himself for her (Eph. 5:23; cf. Acts 20:28).

True Sexuality Can Only Be in the Context of Purity

Genesis 2:24 has it: 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become

one flesh'. This has to be seen clearly. True 'leaving' is the act of marriage, so that none leaves until that act has taken place. It may be that children go far from home, but they do not leave the parent-child relationship until marriage, and, presumably, with the goodwill and affirmation of the parents.

Cleaving must always follow leaving. Any cleaving before leaving is no true cleaving or leaving. The need for chastity is inbuilt for true relationships. True union in the utterness of 'one flesh' cannot be achieved if premarital intercourse has taken place. If one tries to get before marriage what one can only get in (and by) marriage, then one gets it neither before marriage nor in (and by) marriage. The wastage of chastity in illicit intercourse prevents the welding of a true union. A true wedding is a true welding.

It is essential that true cleaving take place. This union must be the highest and richest that human beings can know. If promiscuity or immorality cheat one or both of the partners then there is disappointment, frustration, and, often, a pressure to get what one has never received, namely emotional fulfilment and satisfaction. This may lead to the kind of sexual pressure called 'over-sexuality', and may induce self-protective frigidity and even impotence in the other spouse. Deep anger results when true sexual union is not achieved. By 'union' we do not mean bodily union, but that deep relational and spiritual union which constitutes true (but not necessarily ideal) marriage.

At this point we need to encourage those who have lived lives of illicit or deviant sex, if indeed they seek to have a good marriage

union. The guilt of illicit sexual experience is, generally speaking, the most potent of guilts. This is because the union of two people is the richest expression of human love. In the Scriptures, idolatry is the giving of worth and love to any object other than God. Hence covetousness can be called idolatry, and idolatry is so often called 'fornication' or 'adultery'. Idolatry is unchastity, and in fact much pagan idolatry was (and often is) linked with sexual practices. If married persons sense something of the damage that has been done by premarital or extramarital sex, then the way back to normality and true 'one-flesh' experience in marriage is via grace, i.e. the grace of the Cross, which is the grace of purification (sanctification) along with the assurance of justification (guilt erased), and the divine forgiveness of sins (the sin neutralized and remitted). Then the person or couple is as chaste, for not only is failure forgiven, but grace restores purity to the mind, heart and memory of the person or persons involved. They need not, therefore, think fatalistically that their marriage will inevitably fail.

Causes of Illicit and Deviant Sexuality

Romans 1:18-32 tells us bluntly that when Man rejects God, he rejects the good and true order of things (Gen. 1:31; Eccl. 3:11). Fornication and immorality are against the true functional (ontological) order of things, hence they are forms of rebellion against God, as indeed also are other things such as gluttony, gambling, theft, and the like. So are other deviant forms of sexuality. Those who indulge in these things generally claim they are 'looking for love'. Angry teenagers who feel insecure in their families (with or without genuine cause) seek comfort in the mystique of sex. Illicit sex is often spoken of, mistakenly, as 'love'. When people do not find genuine love in that encounter, they may press even more for it, and then be caught up in the complex of guilt

which further triggers off sin, and compounds the action and the problem.

The Responsibility of Sexuality

When we thoughtfully realize that sexuality encompasses the whole scope of masculinity and femininity, and not only the bodily acts of sexual intercourse, then we understand that the gift of sexuality is for all of life, and for all acts and relationships. As we keep saying, it is for the purposes of the mandate given to Man by God, and for the purposes of God's plan as it is outworked in history. Therefore the gifts of femininity and masculinity must be used responsibly. Promiscuity in the use of the gifts of God always brings tension, guilt, and complications to human living.

In a family, the husband and wife have responsibility, each toward the other. Parents and children also have responsibilities toward each other. Responsibility raises the thorny question of accountability, which in turn further raises the matter of authority in this world. It is noticeable that human beings often wish to be free of laws and principles so that they can pursue their own desires. Many children come to marriage unable to take up the responsibility of being parents. Perhaps they have witnessed this same pattern in their own homes, and so perpetuate it.

An unfaithful spouse may find a pleasurable kind of freedom in having an illicit sexual relationship with another person. Part of the enjoyment lies in the person's lack of responsibility. A divorce and remarriage may soon show that under new responsibility the person cannot

sustain the second (or third) marital relationship. All of this shows us that God's creational gifts carry with them responsibility which must be exercised under the authority of God. For this reason it will be good, at this point, to examine the whole matter of law, authority, accountability and responsibility.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

MAN AND WOMAN IN GRACE AND LOVE-III

THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

Because of the Fall, human beings do not take kindly to authority. Some theologians insist that it is only because of the Fall that Mankind has to have authority, and so rulers, laws and punishments. They claim that had Man not sinned, there would have been no law, no authority and no punishment. It is certain that there would have been none of these as we now understand them, but it is by no means certain they would not have existed.

For example, the statement of Genesis 1:16-18, prior to the completion of creation: 'And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night . . . And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night'. There was rule, all right, but ruling was for the benefit of the creation, and not merely to regiment it.

When creation took place, we are told (Col. 1:16-17) that 'in him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him'. Rulers and ruling, then, were part of the initial creation. We saw in Genesis 1:31, Ecclesiastes 3:11, Psalm 148:6, 7, and Jeremiah 31:35, 36 that a fixed functional order was created. By 'fixed' we do not mean a static, but, in fact a dynamic order, but then one which was not arbitrary. It is imperative that we understand the true order of rulers and rules, authorities and those under authority, and so, also the laws which are God's. For example, we see the law of ruling in Genesis 1:16-18, and note that when God saw that creation was 'very good', that this must mean 'functionally good', so that it-creation-can be morally good.

The Principle of Authority

If Man had not become a rebel, he could discuss the matter of authority quite objectively and rationally, but this cannot be the case, essentially, since sinful human beings cannot see authority as belonging to the original order of things. Some Christians claim that it is only necessary by reason of Man's sinfulness. They see it as transcended by the Gospel and ultimately abolished in Christ, if not wholly in this Christian era, then in the age to come. If that is the case, then we wonder why there are so many thrones in heaven, i.e. for God and the Lamb, and for the twenty-four elders, and—according to Daniel 7:10, 27 (cf. Luke 22:30; I Cor. 6:3)—for the

saints also, of whom it is prophesied that 'they shall reign forever'.

Whilst undoubtedly authority is difficult to accept by reason of our rebellious human flesh, yet there must be an understanding of the nature and purpose of authority. That God is King is never denied in the Scriptures. The Hebrews saw Him as 'King over all the earth', whilst they also recognized that the nations rebelled against Him. For them, God was the Father-King, the King-Father. Fatherhood without authority would be weak, and Kingship without Fatherhood would be hard and authoritarian.

A good place, then, to start to understand the principle of authority is Ephesians 4:6: 'one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all'. We see God's 'aboveness', i.e. His authority over all. Then we see His presence 'through all', i.e. integrating all things; and finally 'in all', i.e. present, personally, to everything, and indeed to everyone. All of this constitutes authority, which is not just benevolent dictatorship, but is His glorious Fatherhood which directs, protects, corrects, and which works to bring to maturity that which it has first created (I Pet. 4:19), and then redeemed (Isa. 63:16).

When we understand authority, we realize that it is a serving office. It is designed for the good of those under it. Parents bring their children to maturity; teachers seek to serve their students and bring them to the grade and maturity planned for them. Governmental authorities are there for the good of their subjects. Romans 13:1 says, 'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that

exist have been instituted by God'. The writer adds, 'For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad'. Authorities are not there simply to discipline and punish, though that may well be part of their work. Paul says, in effect, that if you do good you will receive the approval of the authority, and if not, then there is cause for fear.

Law and Authority

James said, 'There is one lawgiver and judge'. He meant, 'God'. The law is given by God. The creation is functionally good (Gen. 1:31) and the principles by which it operates properly constitute the functional law. Some have come to call this functional or moral law, 'God's law'. Israel's law was peculiar to its own being as a nation, the people of God, and the community of the covenant. Yet it enshrined the law which Abraham and others knew (cf. Gen. 26:4-5). Paul says it is the law which Gentiles-if they will-can know (Rom. 2:15). Israel enshrined this law, even though all Mosaic law was not the law that obtains for all Mankind, since it was law within a covenantal framework. The New Testament tells us that the Ten Commandments constitute love to God and one's neighbour and these two elements sum up 'the perfect law of liberty', i.e. the law given by the King, the true law of the Kingdom.

Authority and law go together, and that is why rebellious Man does not like authority. Rebellious Man is 'man in the flesh', i.e. one who is incorrigible. Paul says of the flesh, 'It does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot'. If we could understand that all God's law is summed up in one word,

'Love!' (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-14; James 1:25; 2:8-11), then we would also see that authority is that which serves in the name of love. True authority is true love, in action. This being the case, no one should rebel against authority, or refuse heart-obedience to the law.

By nature of the case, fallen Man dislikes the words 'law', 'command', 'authority', 'superordination', and the like. Hence he refuses to see their true meaning. For example, law is a beautiful and securitive element in human experience. To modern Man, law generally means legislation which seeks to keep society in reasonable check, but is still a legal demand. To the Jews, law (torah) primarily meant 'instruction'. Psalms 1, 19, and 119 speak of the beautiful and wholesome nature of law. Fallen Man does not see that. He seeks to walk his own path, but he who walks the path of law finds it wonderfully securitive. Not only does he know the mind of God, but he is kept from actions which will result in guilt and distress. Likewise true authority brings shalom to Man, i.e. peace of mind, security, assurance as to personal stability, and other helpful elements. He-or she-who is truly subordinate enjoys serving, as also the one who is superordinate can enjoy serving. Jesus' point that the Gentiles like to lord it over others has not always been taken well by Christians, who seem secretly to believe that to have a place of 'lordship' is desirable and enjoyable. It is doubtful whether those who do not 'have the mind of Christ' can really accept authority, law, and subordination. They seek to assert their (so-called) 'rights', to smart under injustice, and to oppose 'the powers [authorities] that be'.

Authority: Ordination, Subordination, Superordination

Paul said, 'The powers that be are ordained of God'. God, in His wisdom, creates certain orders amongst celestial and earthly creatures. In the Scriptures we find

various orders. In heaven we see authorities in the forms of the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and myriads of angels ranging from archangels, and 'mighty angels', down to 'regular' angels. On earth there are royal and/or governmental orders, orders of elders, and even orders of the people. In the commonwealth of Israel there were orders, and in the church there are also orders. We have already mentioned that some theologians see these orders as the result of sin and disobedience, but as angelic orders were prior to creation, we cannot be dogmatic on this issue. Man was told to be a lord over creation before he fell; creation was to be subject to him. Even if certain orders were imposed because of Man's rebellion, yet—for practical purposes—they are fixed there to rule, as certainly as the husband rules his wife. We are not permitted to ignore these orders even if we claim they arise from the fall of Man. At the same time we must not identify them wholly with the ontological order.

The principle of subordination and superordination commences in the Godhead. Fatherhood is prior in order, though not in quality ('substance' of being) to Sonship, since the Persons of the Godhead do not differ in quality of being. The Father, Son and the Spirit have deity, but the Son submits to the Father. He can say, in his incarnation, 'I and the Father are one', and so stress their utter unity. Yet he also can say, 'The Father is greater than I'. Philippians 2:1-8 and similar passages show how the Son became incarnate out of his servant heart, to serve Man by redeeming him. In Paul's language, 'he thought not only on his own things', but 'he considered us better than himself', i.e. he put us before himself, in the incredible voluntary incarnation he undertook. That is why he

could say, 'Let him who would be greatest amongst you be servant'. True authority serves because it loves, and shows its love in, and by, serving.

Subordination and Superordination Not Inferiority and Superiority

When it is said that to be subordinate is not to be inferior, and to be superordinate is not to be superior, this statement is often brushed off impatiently by persons who have already decided that to be subordinate is to be inferior. Nor is any reasoning likely to persuade them otherwise. Yet the whole matter of creation, functionality, purpose and goal-achievement lies in the principle that one who is superordinate is not superior in quality, character, work or substance to one who is subordinate. The Son, as we have said, is not inferior to the Father in quality or nature, but he is subordinate in regard to function, although his function is not inferior to that of the Father. When he says, 'The Father is greater than I', this does not conflict with, 'I and the Father are one'.

We say then that subordination—superordination is ontological, and so obtains where there is true creation. The fall of Man changed Man's attitude to subordination, but it could not change the essential nature of these two things. The 'office' is ontological, although the person in office may be inadequate to fulfil that office. We must then see the difference between the principle of authority and that of authoritarianism. 'Authority' is that functional office given to its recipient that he/she should adequately serve those who are subordinate, but 'authoritarianism' is the use of office for one's own sake at the

expense—emotionally and otherwise—of those who should be served.

What ought to be understood is that serving is the highest to which anyone can attain. Rightly understood it is the true source of joy and peace.

'These Things' in the Penultimate and Ultimate Ages

We live not in the ultimate but the penultimate age. That is why we must see that perfection cannot be attained in this era. Unrealistic idealism demands that the ultimate should be achieved in this penultimate age. Certainly some things in this age are occasioned or conditioned by sin, but others are not. They are just 'penultimate'. That would seem to be the case with marriage for there is none of it in heaven, apart from the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. If we speak of things being 'ontological', then we must see them as creationally functional and right, but this does not mean that they are as they will be in eternity.

It also means that what took place in Israel—its covenant, laws and systems—are not necessarily a portrayal of the ontological. In a sinful world, all that is of the truth must also be of grace. That which is functionally so may be distorted by anger and hardness of heart. Where these two are absent, much can be accomplished.

If then we can accept the authorities and laws, with their attendant offices—subordinate and superordinate—we may well be on the way to shalom and functional satisfaction, whereas if we reject them, we may well be on the way to intolerable guilt, distress, with consequent

anger, and insistence upon justice as the right of the individual.

The Theology of Authority, Law, and Love

A theologian once said, 'Love is the most theological thing of all'. John in his first Epistle makes two statements, namely, 'God is love', and 'God is light'. Holiness is no less theological than love, for indeed the two are one. Peter Forsyth constantly stressed the point that we should never preach the love of God: we should-he would constantly say-preach the holy love of God.

If we see God's creation as purposive, then function will be linked with the movement of history towards the goal of God. This goal is called 'the mystery of the plan' (cf. Eph. 1:9-10; 3:1-11; Rev. 10:1-7), and it involves not only creation, but also redemption, particularly 'the redemption of the body' (Rom. 8:23-24; 5:2; Phil. 3:20-21; I Cor. 15:35-56; II Cor. 4:16-5:5). The present working out of this plan is defined in I Corinthians 15:24-28, and the mode (or modes) of its working are seen in four elements: (i) the unifying of all things (Eph. 1:9-10), (ii) the 'filling up' of all things, i.e. the things that are 'empty' or 'futile' (Eph. 4:10; cf. 1:22-23), (iii) the reconciling of all things (Col. 1:20 passim), and (iv) the harmonizing of all things (Col. 3:14).

Doubtless 'unifying', 'filling', 'reconciling' and 'harmonizing' are all the one thing, since all things were unified, full, and harmonized in the creation. It needed redemption to release Man from judgement, and creation from the curse, thus harmonizing all things. It is the holy love of the atonement which brings about the ultimate

reconciliation of 'all things'.

Necessary to God's purposive action are law and authority. God's law (Rom. 8:4) tallies with His own righteousness (Rom. 3:20-21), and His law is primarily love. In the New Testament this is stated to be so: Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13; James 1:22-25; 2:8-13. The principle is richly developed in John's first Letter in 2:3-11, 3:11, and 4:19-5:3.

If then we see law as the functional way of life, and if we see Man's life as oriented to, and part of, the processive and progressive movement of God towards His goal—the triumphant eschaton—then we are bound to see that authority is not static, but dynamic, hence the authorities are also dynamic, and not merely authoritarian. The dynamic is extant and exercised in faith, hope, and love (I Cor. 13:13).

This leads us to see that Man's sexuality is powerfully purposive. We have already seen in Genesis 1:28f. that masculinity and femininity form the one male-female entity to obey the word of God and move towards 'filling up the earth'. Sexuality is not limited to social intercourse and procreative intercourse, but these-along with all the other elements of sexuality—are part of the wider operations of sexuality, namely Man's participation in, and contribution to, the fulfilling of 'the mystery of the plan' of God.

Thus 'law', 'authority', 'authorities', 'ordination', 'subordination', and 'superordination' are all essential to the functional order of creation and redemption. They are not merely expedients for a penultimate age, like so much scaffolding later to be taken down. They are of the essential order of things and ontological. The fact that

there are adaptations of these orders in the light of Man's fall, his sinfulness, the curse, redemption, and the penultimate historical situation does not mean they are transient. The fact that Man will reign forever-along with the appointed celestial creatures-gives us grounds for accepting the principle of law, authority, and orders of authorities. That acceptance, however, can only be in the light of holy love, and by participation in its action.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The subject of accountability is a vexed one. It is the principle of being called to account for what one does. Most of us recognize accountability on the basis of the principle of responsibility, and responsibility has to do with authority, law and order. Paul recognized this when he said, 'Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God' (Rom. 3:19). Romans 7:1 said, 'the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth' (AV). On this basis we take it that (i) every human being lives under the principle of law, and (ii) being under the law he is accountable for his actions. That is, an account is made out to him for his actions-whether good or bad. Hence Jesus said, 'I tell you, on the day of judgement men will render account for every careless word they utter'. This points us to the principle that we will be held accountable for everything we do.

There have been those who do not believe this fact. In Psalm 10:13 the wicked renounces God and says in his

heart, 'Thou wilt not call to account'. Against this Paul says (Rom. 14:12), 'Each of us shall give account of himself to God', and adds in Colossians 3:6, 'On account of these [evil things] the wrath of God is coming'. The writer of Hebrews urges his readers to obey those who have the rule over them 'as men who will have to give account'.

It seems reasonable, then, to say that universally Man has a sense of accountability, and accepts the fact of it, though he may fear what is coming to him. In Romans 1:24-31 Paul gives a long list of the sins that Men do, and adds, 'Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practise them'. They may not care about accountability but they do not deny its fact and reality.

Who Are Accountable?

We have claimed that all persons are accountable for their acts, but there is a universal protest which says that only when a person comes to the age of accountability can he be held accountable for what he-or she-does. What then is that age of accountability? It is difficult to give an answer to this question.

In Genesis 25:22 it is said that Esau and Jacob 'struggled together' within their mother's womb. It appears that the two were struggling for supremacy, the one over the other. In other words they were aware of life, and each sought to establish his supremacy. There is much spoken in Isaiah about Jacob and his mother's womb, but in 48:8 it is said, 'from birth you were called a rebel'. This recalls

Psalm 58:3, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies'.

On the positive side Jeremiah is told by God, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'. Paul claims that he was separated by God from his mother's womb to preach the Gospel to the nations. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit 'even from his mother's womb' (Luke 1:15, 41). On account of both good and evil it appears that the child is conscious in the womb and makes decisions which affect its life. Recent research into the pre-natal activity of the foetus in the womb seems to be supportive of these Scriptural accounts.

The answer to the question heading this section seems to be, 'All of us are accountable and from the womb if not within it'. Whilst many will debate such a statement, the truth is that we are often deceived by the smallness of a child, thinking its will is not developed, when in fact will is something which is asserted at all ages without variation in insistence. The further elements of Man being born in sin (Ps. 51:5), and being in Adam (Rom. 5:12ff.) have to be taken into consideration. Whilst we may argue for varying degrees of culpability we must recognize the accountability we demand of children, as well as of adults.

The Doctrine of Victimization

All human beings are prone to self-justification. When

we fail we seek to rationalize away our failure. We are prone to blame four things-amongst many others-for what is our seeming failure, namely, parental upbringing, heredity, environment and circumstances. 'These', we say, 'have conditioned me to be what I am'. In fact these four things, of themselves, have not conditioned us at all. It is our reactions and/or our responses to these four things which have brought us to our present frame of mind. We make our own decisions and choices, and must stand by them.

It is often common practice these days to pity folk whose parental upbringing, heredity, environment and life circumstances have seemed heavily adverse to them. We tend to treat them as victims of life, and this is not in the long run truly helpful. It more or less indicates that we think them to be flotsam and jetsam tossed to and fro on adverse tides. James Denney, in speaking of heredity said, 'Heredity fixes not our fate but our trial'. This would also apply to the other three elements we have mentioned. If we face the four things positively they may assist us in developing rich and strong characters. Joseph commented to his (formerly) persecuting brothers, 'As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good'.

If we persist in simply pitying people instead of encouraging them to face adverse elements and win through them, then we will be doing a great disservice to them. Probably it is because we would pity ourselves in similar situations that cause us to be this way. The example of the mute, blind and deaf Helen Keller should help us to see that a human being-if she wills-can be incredibly

resilient, and can win through under even enormous odds. We should drop the 'pity syndrome' for one of tenacity and encouragement. 'Hurt', it has been said, 'is a mixture of self-pity and anger'.

The Sins of the Fathers

In Jeremiah 31:29-30 and Ezekiel 18:1-32 we hear God telling Israel that the children cannot blame the parents for their present condition. Because God had said that He would '[visit] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but [show] steadfast love to thousands [of generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments', His word has been misread. As is universal, children blame their parents for their problems and states of life. In both prophetic sections God stated the principle of accountability, 'Only the person who sins will die. The child will not suffer because of the parents, nor the parents because of the children. The person who sins he shall die'.

It is to be noted that when a generation turns from hating God and loves Him, then the entail of sin ceases. Likewise when a generation turns from loving God to hating Him and worshipping idols, then 'unto the third and fourth generation' commences. In Deuteronomy 24:16 God stated, 'The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin'. The practice of this can be seen in II Kings 14:6 and II Chronicles 25:4, where the children of murderers were not killed for their fathers' sins.

The Practice of Accountability in Human Living

John the Apostle once said, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness'. That is, if we will accept our accountability for all that we have done, then life will be richer for it. When we try to rationalize away authority and law, it is so that we will not be convicted as sinners, i.e. of having sinned. If we take responsibility for all we have ever done, then-in the light of God's forgiveness-we can be free of it.

Again, if we abolish law, and refuse authority, then we are seeking to escape the need to fulfil the law of God. Micah said, 'He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'. Moses (Deut. 10:12-13) had talked with Israel, 'And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I command you this day for your good?'

No 'Needs' Therapy But a 'Deeds Doing' Way of Life

Much of our modern way of life relates to needs which are many in kind, such as emotional, relational, and material. We feel we should have our needs fulfilled, and that we should help to fulfil the needs of others. Whilst

there must be some truth in this approach, yet it is God who requires us to be faithful, obedient, and those who fulfil His requirements. We are to 'fulfil the just requirement of the law' (Rom. 8:3-4) which approximates to what Micah told his people.

We must be requirement-fulfilling people, for as such we have moral being, true dignity, and can see ourselves as participating with God in His work and plan. We are not weak, lazy, lethargic and purposeless beings. Fulfilling 'just requirement' we are living properly the lives God has ordained for us, and doing the works He prepared for us to walk in and to do (Eph. 2:8-10). In fact we are growing into true human maturity. We are not victims of various adverse elements; we are not those caught in self pity; nor are we those who stretch out our hands for spiritual welfare 'handouts'. We are those who seek to fulfil God's requirements of us.

The Value of Accountability

In the subject which is our main theme-God's glory and Man's sexuality-the matters of authority, law and accountability are all inseparably linked. If we are not morally accountable for every deed and action of our lives, then we are not truly in the image of God. We therefore lack dignity, and as a result cannot dignify God, Man, and the creation. If we face our failure as moral creatures who have not fulfilled the law of God then we are admitting our accountability, and for this confession and repentance there is the gift of grace. Being liberated from past failures means being free to live in integrity.

It is this integrity which assists us to be true men and women, and to enjoy the vast network of relationships which is ours in this world, not only amongst Christ and his people, but in the whole race of humanity.

CHAPTER TWENTY

MAN AND WOMAN IN GRACE AND LOVE-IV

HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN GRACE AND LOVE: MAN AND WOMAN

We have already traced something of Man's relationships in innocence, and the relationships of the True Man and the True Woman, and seen that these are the archetypal relationships from which come our ectypal relationships, and that Paul has outlined this principle in Ephesians 5:21-33. If our reasoning is correct then we can fairly understand the ectypes as present in the primal couple before the Fall.

At the same time we have seen that the entrance of sin brought division into all relationships, i.e. marital, familial, and community. Because God planned Man's glorification in the ultimate age, we have seen that the age before glorification is a penultimate. The ultimate is not merely a higher form of the penultimate, but contain elements which 'no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the

heart [mind, imagination] of man conceived'. The penultimate age then has two things which must always be taken into consideration, namely (i) we must not demand of one another, or ourselves, that perfection and maturation which can only be known in the ultimate age, and (ii) we must be realistic about the Fall, the curse, and those related elements which act as a brake on human accomplishment. This brings us, then, to the matter of the grace of God, for without that we cannot live in this age, or effect the relationships which we need to have, and which, in fact, are required of us.

The Grace of God Has Appeared In History

In Chapters Six and Seven, we traced the break-up of human relationships through the Fall, and the appearance of grace in Christ to rescue Man from the permanent affects and effects of the Fall. In the light of what we have said about vocation, the law of God, authority and authorities, ordination, subordination and superordination, we need to see the place of grace in regard to this penultimate age, and so in regard to human relationships. The ultimate age, Peter suggests, will bring an even richer sight, manifestation and experience of grace than, even, in this penultimate age. He says this will happen at 'the revelation of Jesus Christ' (I Pet. 1:13), an insight which Paul seems to confirm in I Corinthians 13:12. Thus the New Testament teaches that grace in this era is greatly effective, and in the age to come total in its regeneration and glorifying work. Because this understanding of grace

is of immense importance to our subject, we need to open it further for useful viewing.

'The Grace of God Bringing Salvation'

Titus 2:11 says, 'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation'. John 1:14 says 'The Word became flesh . . . full of grace and truth'. The apostles witnessed, 'And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace' (John 1:16). Paul said to his Corinthian readers, 'you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (II Cor. 8:9).

The early church knew 'the riches of his grace'. In Acts 4:33 it is recorded: 'and great grace was upon them all'. Grace was said to be visible, at least in its effects (6:8; 11:23). They thought of grace as the present effective action and presence of both Christ and the Father, hence the greetings in all Epistles, 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'. Throughout the book of Acts they commended one another to this grace (13:43; 14:26; 15:40; 20:32). Grace-the Gospel of grace-was God's redeeming power by which purification, regeneration, justification and sanctification came to believing humanity.

Without going into all the details of this grace and its power, let us see that it relieves fallen Man from his greatest problem-guilt. Man in guilt is always insecure, always open to idolatry, never clear on the will of God for himself, always seeking to justify himself in life-to God, to others and himself. Grace relieves him of all

these elements, at least whilst he lives in grace by faith. Grace is God moving towards him all the time to do him good, albeit he merits not one iota of this loving action. Grace moves on, and in, fallen Man to restore him to the full image of God. What he does not deserve, God does for him in Christ, and to him through the Word and the Spirit.

The rich outcome of grace is renewed relationships for fallen Man with God, with fellow-man, and with himself. It also means that whereas Man 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie', he now exchanges the lie for the truth of God. Hence he is able to come to terms with law, authority, ordination, subordination and superordination. He is able to know what function and purpose is, and to accept the electing, predestinating decrees and acts of God. When we say 'able to accept', we mean 'able to accept by grace, because of grace'. Without grace, Man must remain in his fallen state, and live with his prejudices, his 'hidden agendas', his angers against God and Man and himself.

When we say 'grace', we mean that God's grace- God Himself in action towards Man-takes the initiative in all things, and freely gives the gift of justification to Man (Rom. 3:24; 5:17). Whilst faith must receive such a gift, it has no part in the actual work of grace. It is the recipient but not the initiator. Faith follows grace, and in fact springs from it.

It is this grace which has to do with relationships. In Galatians 3:26-28 Paul speaks of us all becoming 'sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus', and explains that in baptism we put on Christ, 'in whom, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female'. He adds,

'For you are all one in Christ Jesus'. To this we should add I Corinthians 12:13: 'For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-and all were made to drink of one spirit'. The third reference to this corporate unity is in Colossians 3:10-11, '[you] have put on the new humanity [*neon anthropon*] 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'.

Paul is not simply saying-as many aver-that all who are men and women, Jews or Greek, slaves and free (etc.) are all made equal, but that all equally come to God, without any hindrance that might be seen to be in matters of gender, race, or vocational position. He is saying there is now a marvellous unity of the entire body, i.e. the new humanity, which is (corporately) 'being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator'. Notice that 'the image' is the corporate body of believers, the church. This is not speaking primarily of individual renewal in knowledge, although that is included.

What we need to realize is that redemption in the present age does not renew immediately to ultimate perfection. That perfection is eschatological. Yet we do need to realize that grace brings a radical change in the believing person. His sins are not only forgiven, but obliterated (cf. Isa. 1:18; 38:17; 43:25; 44:22; Ps. 51:7; 103:12; Micah 7:18-19; II Cor. 5:17; Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; I John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The 'washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit' is deep and effective, so that it can be said, 'old things have passed away, behold they have become new'. It is this radical renewal by grace which makes possible genuine relationships of love. There should be no pessimism about Man's depravity, but a

joyous recognition that all can be changed, granting the proviso that it must all be done by faith, under grace.

In another way we are saying that grace does not create a new order-i.e. an order other than what obtained in creation prior to the Fall-but that grace restores the original (ontological) created order, which, in its turn contains the human relational ectypes of the divine archetypes, that humanity which correlates with God the Creator, the Father and the King. Whilst the created order of the penultimate age is not entirely the same as that of the ultimate age (the eschaton, where glorification is completed), yet grace allows for renewed relationships in this age, relationships which were marred, if not entirely lost, by, and in, the Fall. Indeed grace sets about creating (or, recreating) them. This is seen from John 17:20-26; Acts 2:44; 4:32; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28 ('all one in Christ Jesus'); Ephesians 1:15; 4:1-6; Philippians 2:2; Colossians 1:8, 20.

The Relationships of Husband and Wife, in Grace

The apostolic injunctions of Ephesians 5:21ff., Colossians 3:18-22, I Thessalonians 4:3-7, Titus 2:4-5, and I Peter 3:1-7 all presuppose that grace is the aide to full relationships. We have already said that whilst the man was made prior to the woman this did not constitute him superior to the woman, or her ruler, as such. The result of the Fall was that the husband was to rule his wife, but the union and unity of the two had no place for 'ruler' and

'ruled' but for the man and his helpmeet, both one in the vocational mandate, the business and adventure of life. God ordained subordination and superordination but not as inferiority and superiority. What was ordained was for the matter of vocation. It was functional, if hierarchical, but hierarchical only as to nature of function, and not as to nature of being.

In all of this we have to take into account the fact that the curse is not yet removed. This is seen in Romans 8:18-25, in which passage Man is waiting in hope for glorification, and the creation likewise to be 'set free from its bondage to decay' so as to 'obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God', and hopeful Man is included in such deliverance. He longs for 'adoption of sons, the redemption of our bodies'. This, too, is the longing of Philippians 3:20-21 where Man waits for the Saviour to appear 'who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body'. This element of curse as well as deliverance from it is stated in Romans 8:10 (my translation): 'your bodies are dead (doomed to death) because of sin, but the Spirit is life-giving because of justification'. Verse 11 then follows naturally, 'If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you'. What we are saying is that because the curse has not been lifted, the husband still rules the wife, but that 'ruling' does not come as domination, but as functional leadership in the renewal of the creational mandate, and the 'plus' of the redemptional mandate to take the Gospel or redemption to the world.

Husband and wife, then, can live in those relationships outlined in the New Testament, i.e. the wife is submitted to her husband. He loves her, gives himself for her, and to her, cleanses her where necessary so that she is without 'spot or blemish', nourishes and cherishes her as

he does his own flesh, for she is 'bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh'. He calls her Woman, i.e. 'out of Man', and he calls her Eve, i.e. 'the mother of all living'. He sees her as 'the weaker vessel' but does not view her as 'a weak vessel'. Indeed he cannot see them apart, stand off and view her and regard her as separate from his flesh, or he, separate from hers. She came into being through him, but then he comes into being through her. Neither is independent of the other.

We say this kind of relationship is dependent upon grace. The man left to himself will be arrogant, and use the ruling of the curse to his advantage and to her hurt. He will regard her as separate. His sexuality will seek to use hers-for himself. He will hide his fallen nakedness so that she cannot know him. For her part she will desire him, i.e. seek to have him, even to rule him, and will exploit his sexuality, hiding within her own so that mutuality does not exist, but there is a warring of the genders, each sinfully hiding from the other but seeking to exploit the other.

The thing to be remembered regarding grace is that whilst it brings man-the-male and woman-the-female into the arena of liberation, there is no fixed renewal which cannot deteriorate. *Of himself and of herself*, both will be unable to cope with their sinfulness. That is the story of Romans 7:13-25. The good that they would do they will never execute of themselves, and the evil that they would not do they will not desist from doing of *themselves*. Always it will be by grace. This will explain sudden defections from loving relationships, unexplained failings and seeming reversions to the old Adamic state. Grace is there all the time, but it must be continually appropriated

by faith, so that Man must live in godly dependence, continually.

Both the man and the woman must recognize each other's sinfulness and not make an idolatry of the new heart or the new Man. They must desist from making images of what each ought to be. These images must be seen as perfectionist demands, and as deadly idolatry. Such images must be smashed and each see the other only through the eyes of grace with the constraint of love, of God's agape, i.e. His own love. When there is reversion from grace-'receiving the grace of God in an empty way' (II Cor. 6:1)-and defection from love-'you have abandoned your first love' (Rev. 2:4)-then the old ways will take over again. Man-as-Man is ever contingent on grace for the new relationships.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MAN AND WOMAN IN GRACE AND LOVE-V

SEEING MAN AND WOMAN IN RELATION TO THE TRUE MAN AND WOMAN

Ontological Man and Woman must be those we see in the eschaton. This is Man-in-grace, in this penultimate age of redemption growing and maturing (as man-the-male created and redeemed, and woman-the-female created and redeemed) to what God has planned for them to be. Whilst they live in the tension of the old and the new ages, yet, by grace, they can live in rich and wonderful ways. What they can be, and must be, will always be contested by the evil that hates the beauty of created and redeemed Man, but even that conflict will help to mature and enrich them. If we return to our initial study on The Man and The Woman, the Bridegroom and the Bride, then we can map out the new relationships and vocation of man and woman under grace.

**The True Woman, Bride,
And Mother**

In Chapters Ten to Twelve we saw the nature of the True Woman, the Bride of Christ, the Wife of the True Man. We saw that she is as the wife is described in Ephesians 5:21-33. She is submitted to her Lord, respecting him and working with him. She is the very temple in which the worship of the redeemed takes place. She is the Holy City, now being made in heaven, but eventually descending from there on to the earth, to be the holy dwelling place of God. As the city of God her gates are open day and night, and through them come into her the peoples of the earth, the kings of those nations bringing their glory into the universal city. In her is the river of life on whose banks is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Her femininity then, is not that of a simpering female, nor is it the travesty of true femininity such as shown by the harlot Babylon. The city of that scarlet woman is a trap for humanity, and seduction unto death. It has no river of life, or tree of life. In her there is no healing. There is only hidden cruelty, open lechery, and a deadly 'femininity' which destroys. The nations, too, have poured into her, but to their own destruction. This evil 'femininity' serves to show the reality of the True Bride. She-the True Bride -has adorned herself for her husband, so loving and submitted to him is she; and she has made herself ready for the richest and most fruitful union in all history. Her wedding garment is of linen bright and pure for it is the

righteous deeds of the saints.

Whilst she is a great person in her own rights, she insists on no rights. She is 'one-flesh' with the Bride-groom, and her eyes are only for him. She does not carve out a career for herself, yet all her gifts and powers are usefully used, and are employed in the plan of the Father who 'obtained [her] with the blood of his own Son' (Acts 20:28). As divine 'Father-in-Law' he loves her deeply (cf. I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1).

The archetypal Bride has 'the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit', but this has not come by nature-even if it were present prior to the Fall-but by grace. He-the Bridegroom-has brought her-the Bride-into union with him, that she might share 'the grace of life' with him, and be a joint heir of all that will be.

The True Woman As 'The Mother of us All'

Adam called his wife 'Eve', i.e. 'living' (Gen. 3: 20-21). The possibilities here, of interpretation, are that she would be the spring of life for all humanity, i.e. 'the mother of all living'. It may have been in Adam's mind that she would bring forth the seed which would destroy the serpent through whom death had come to the human race. In any case Adam would have had a high view of his wife, knowing the continuance of the human life would come through her, even if he were the procreative initiator of that life.

The two had been 'one flesh' and 'naked and unashamed'. Through their fall they sought to hide

themselves from each other. The dynamic of their sexuality had turned against them, in that each could not now stand with ease before the gaze of the other. By an act of grace, God had clothed them, allowing them by this means to live together. The principle of nakedness-shame nevertheless remained.

The tragedy of the first son being a murderer of his brother who-in his turn-was a prophet and a man of faith, must have brought terrible sorrow. Eve's delight, not merely of having a second son, but one who replaced Abel, namely Seth-'appointed one', 'compensation', 'substitute'-shows that her heart lay in the grace of God, in gratitude and thankfulness. There is a sense here-though we dare not be dogmatic about it-in which Eve was saved by child-bearing (I Tim. 2:15).

Sarah, 'The Mother of a Multitude'

Abram's wife was Sarai ('princely'). At the time when Abram's name ('exalted father') was changed to Abraham ('father of a multitude'), Sarai's name was changed to Sarah ('princess'). If Abraham was to be the father of many peoples, then so was Sarah to be their mother. Paul (Gal. 4:21-31) spells out in uncustomary allegory her being as 'the free woman', i.e. the woman of grace. He likens her to 'the Jerusalem above [which] is free', and adds, 'and she is our mother'. Sarah then-as a mother-is an ectype of the true feminine archetype. She shares with-draws from-that archetype of The Woman who is at once, Bride, Wife, and Mother. There can be no

question that the covenant people of Abraham owe as much in one way to Mother Sarah, as they do to Father Abraham.

Peter (I Pet. 3:1-7) points to her also as a true wife: 'So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord'. It is interesting to notice that this 'post-Fall' marriage required grace to make it work, for both Abraham and Sarah were people with noticeable weaknesses. Being people of faith they were necessarily people who lived under grace.

The True Bridegroom, Husband and Warrior King

The Woman is not seen fully as she is except in relation to the Bridegroom, and in union with him. It is his masculinity which etches her femininity, as her femininity delineates his masculinity. One cannot be viewed wholly apart from the other. The two, together, show the glory of God. The bride is the glory of her husband, just as he is the glory of the Father. In Revelation 21:11 she is spoken of as having 'the glory of God'. The true image of God is seen in them both, but properly as they are both together, both one. This constitutes true sexuality, and is the true showing forth of His image as He made them male and female, calling them 'Man'.

In prophecy and in the New Testament we see this Warrior King. His coronation took place simply at his baptism and yet was extended to, and completed at, his

ascension.* He is the King denoted in Psalms 2, 89, and 110, and these Psalms are plentifully used in the New Testament. He is King of the Kingdom, but with the Father, for the Kingdom is 'the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Eph. 5:5), as also 'the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ' (Rev. 11:15; cf. I Cor. 15:24-28), because 'the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come' (Rev. 12:10).

The Warrior King is the one who defeats the dragon, the beasts and the false prophet, and finally 'the devil that deceived them [the nations]'. He is the slain Lamb whose power and authority bring the three sets of sevenfold judgements on the earth. He is the one who leads the armies of heaven. He is one seated with God on His throne. As history comes to its climax he vindicates the martyrs, pronounces the righteousness of God, and brings about the triumph of God's judgements.

It is this one who is the Bridegroom, wedding his Bride in the climax of history in the great and Messianic marriage feast. Together her feminity and his masculinity demonstrate the true way of Man, man-the-male and woman-the-female. Even so there is nothing tough and

* Christ's baptism, transfiguration, death, resurrection, and ascension-as also his reigning-must be understood in the light of Psalms 2 and 110, with Psalm 2 being the primary one. Psalm 2 shows the nations opposed to God and 'his anointed' (Messiah), but God calls Messiah His Son, and promises him 'I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession' (c.f. Acts 1:8). In the New Testament, Psalm 2 is quoted of the baptism, the transfiguration (Matt. 17:3), the death (Acts 4:25-28), the resurrection (Acts 13:33), the ascension (Heb. 13-5), and the reigning (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 19:15). We take it that all these events constituted an 'extended coronation'. In any case they show the Warrior Son who becomes the Warrior King-with his Father-and by this (him) true masculinity is portrayed.

overbearing about these two. Hers is not a silly simpering feminity, nor his a tough macho masculinity. They represent the true archetypes of which man and woman are the wholesome ectypes. What Paul describes as 'the mystery' of the marriage, which is that 'of Christ and his church', we begin to understand, for human sinfulness has blinded our eyes to true purity. True knowledge comes in innocence, and not in sophistication.

We must see, too, that here is no transcendent eroticism, no human mystique of sexuality raised to lofty idealism, for this is the most dangerous of all fleshly rationalizations. Human sexuality in its fallenness is a travesty of the holy love of God.

The Man and The Woman In Relation To Each Other

We have guarded ourselves against feminism and masculism by showing that the ontological reality of man and woman is rooted in the True Man and the True Woman. Only by seeing how they relate, each to the other, can we see how a man and a woman can relate, especially as husband to wife, and wife to husband.

We can now see that (i) the ultimate glorified humanity will be beyond humanity in the penultimate age, (ii) created Man as male and female can be understood by eschatological Man, and (iii) Man fallen and under grace does not make for idealism in feminity and masculinity, but for life which must always be lived under faith, hope and love, and never without them! To look at the perfection of created and eschatological Man and feel

these are the demands for us, now, by a holy God, is to drive us into counterproductive idealism and perfectionist endeavour. Man and woman must see each other realistically knowing what man and woman are essentially, but also realizing their sinfulness and constant need of grace. Only then will we escape devastating guilt.

Man and Woman In Creation With The Eschatological In View

We now need to see what man and woman are, and their relationship to one another. We see man as created in the image and likeness of God. He is undoubtedly male and not androgynous. This can be seen by the fact that woman is created by a special act of God, and this out of the rib cage of man. The man's poem is,

‘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.’

If she is not taken out of the man, then she is not ‘one flesh’ with him, i.e. ‘bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh’. If she is not a special creation of God then she is not directly created from His hands. We have said above that the man created was not androgynous. This is seen by the fact that Adam says the woman is *Ishshah* because she is taken out of *Ish* (man). *Ish* designates a male in contrast to a female. The Lord took a rib from Adam (*ha-adam*) and made (built) it into the woman. The word ‘adam used in Genesis 1:26-27 has the generic sense of

Man, but the word *ha-adam* used in verses 21 and 22 of chapter 2 may well be the name of the man, but has exactly the same meaning as *Ish*. Hence Paul says, ‘For Adam was formed first and then Eve’. In I Corinthians 11:9 he says that the woman was created for man-‘a helpmeet for him’-and not the man for the woman. In verse 8 he had said, ‘For man was not made from woman, but woman from man’. All of this forcefully says that the man was male, and not androgynous, and that the woman’s creation was a special act of God deeply involving the man. Man-the-male was prior to woman-the-female, but they both constitute Man as a race (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-2).

Man-the-male then is prior to woman, and she is his helpmeet, but both constitute the one humanity, and their ‘one-flesh’ union welds them together, but this is primarily in the light of vocation. If they are not one in vocation, then they are not one at all. If they do not see vocation as the true purpose of marriage, then the marriage will always be deficient. If, in any way, sexual relationships take the place of loving God with all our being because we are loved by Him ‘with all His being’, then we will never view conjugal relations objectively. As in sexual deviations, sex and even gender-living will become a-thing-in-itself. Only God is anything in Himself.

The problem for us all is-as we have mentioned elsewhere-that because we are all sinful, and because we have had problems linked with sexuality, and may even have anger with the same, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to view the matters we are now speaking about with detached objectivity. Since sexuality is the most potent matter we know, we cannot easily view it without emotive stress.

What we must keep stressing, is that God's ordination of men and women, which involved the male being super-ordinate and the female subordinate, will be only a matter for anger, or a charge that this teaching is made falsely in the light of all the Scriptures, if we miss the 'one-flesh' union of the man and the woman. In innocence this was utter. If such a union is missing, then the 'mystery' of sexual being-true sexuality-is hidden from the eyes of the one who seeks to see and know it.

If we move out of the realm of idealism, or the perfectionist demands spouses make of each other, and recognize human origin in the image, human fallenness through sin, and human regeneration through the atonement and the Spirit, then we will see how foolish are the images that spouses have for one another, making impossible demands, and believing they have missed out on something extraordinary because of the shortcomings of one's spouse.

Partly to blame for this is the romantic view of sexuality which (i) sees sexual intercourse per se as the source of bliss and blessing, (ii) sees biological union of a man and woman as such a source of satisfaction whether in or out of marriage (i.e. whether intercourse is pre-marital, marital or extra-marital), and (iii) never having achieved a true 'one-flesh' union-i.e. union in, and from, chastity-, seeks to obtain that true satisfaction such a union would have provided by pressing its claims upon its partner.

Such pressure is counterproductive, may cause frigidity and even impotency in the other partner, whilst developing what is (wrongly) called 'over-sexuality' in the one demanding satisfaction. The tragedy of this latter drive is that it is based upon a universal belief that true marriage brings true bliss, and this is surely true. It is the Fall, Man's sinfulness, and his refusal to live under grace, that denies him the best opportunity to have fulfilment and true purpose in marriage. Whilst he refuses to see these things, he blocks himself off from the reasonable bliss he would have.

The Matter of Headship Under Creation (Nature) and Grace

We really need to resolve this matter if we are to see how man and woman live together. It involves not only the fact of subordination and superordination, but the nature of them both. A clue to the value of understanding lies in a powerful statement by Ray S. Anderson* when he speaks of 'the ontological joy of sonship', meaning that there is no less joy in subordination than there is in superordination, and that there is true joy in both. If we apply this to marriage, assuming for the moment that the woman is subordinate and the man superordinate, then we may speak of 'the ontological joy of submission', and 'the joy of headship', provided of course we understand the true meaning of 'headship' and 'submission'. I do not apologize for the long rubric which must follow this statement, because the matter has been debated at length and with great intensity over the last decade. We wish that we would all stand firm in justification, being afraid of neither masculism nor feminism, traditional nor non-traditional stances, and so stand firm in the love-constraint of Christ.

The debate on the word 'headship' (*kephale*) in the New Testament centres on what seem to be alternatives. Either we are to think of headship as the position of authority, or as 'the source' or 'origin'. The places in which the word is used in the sense of 'headship' are I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10; and 2:19. Let us see them in their own contexts.

* Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, U.S.A., 1982, p. 116.

Of I Corinthians 11:3-'But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God'-C. K. Barrett* says:

Man is the head of woman in the sense that he is the origin, and thus the explanation of her being. That God is the head of Christ can be understood in a similar way . . . There can be no doubt that Paul taught a form (we may call it an innocent form) of subordinationism . . . The Son would no longer be the kind of Son we know him to be if he ceased to be obedient to and dependent on the Father . . . Thus a chain of originating and subordinating relationships is set up: God, Christ, man, woman.

Colin Brown† adds:

Here head is probably to be understood not as 'chief' or 'ruler' but as 'source' or 'origin' . . . The creation narrative of Gen. 2:21 ff. assigns a priority to man . . . But the Christian knows that Christ has a greater priority as the archetypal man.

F. F. Bruce ‡ says:

As for the order of creation, there is a hierarchy of the order: God-Christ-man-woman. Each of the first three members of the hierarchy is the head of the member following. By head in this context we are probably to understand not, as has frequently been suggested, 'chief' or 'ruler' but rather 'source' or 'origin'-a sense well attested for Gk. *kephale* (cf. S. Bedale, 'The Meaning of *kephale* in the Pauline Epistles', J.T.S. n.s. 5, 1954, pp. 211 ff.). In the light of the account of the formation of Eve from her husband (Gen. 2:21-23) man is the source of woman's existence ('she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man') . . . it is better to translate . . . 'woman's head is man'.

* C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1978, p. 249.

† Colin Brown, 'Head', in Colin Brown (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, The Paternoster Press, Exeter, Devon, 1976, vol. 2, p. 160.

‡ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (New Century Bible), Oliphants, London, 1978, p. 103.

Bruce goes on to show that Christ is the source of Man's existence because he is the archetypal Man, and because he is the agent of all things. In turn Christ as Son derives his eternal being from God the Father.

J. B. Hurley* does not agree that *kephale* in this verse can be limited to 'source' or 'origin'. In fact he disagrees altogether with this concept being used in I Corinthians 11:3. He points out that in Ephesians 4:15, and Colossians 1:18 and 2:10 where the idea of 'source' is present, Paul does not use the marital image. He says:

The best conclusion seems to be that in I Corinthians 11:3 Paul was teaching that a hierarchy of headship authority exists and that it is ordered: God, Christ as second Adam, man, woman.

The question that faces us is, 'Given in that "headship" in some contexts may mean "source" or "origin", does that mean there is no rulership, or leadership given by the head?'. Are 'source' and 'origin' in no sense linked with rulership or authority, and is there authority without some kind of rulership? Is it that sinful Man simply cannot accept the principle of rulership and/or authority? As we will see shortly, Christ's subordination to his 'Head', the Father, meant that he received actual commands and obeyed them. At this point we are not suggesting that husbands necessarily give commands to their wives, but in the relationship of subordination one such as Christ did not see anything objectionable in commands from His Father (of which he often spoke), but experienced, in subordination, 'the ontology of joy'.

The one word in different contexts may have variant meanings, but that does not mean it has meanings wholly exclusive-each of the other-in various contexts. In I Corinthians 11:3 there is at least what F. F. Bruce calls 'an hierarchy of order', what J. B. Hurley calls 'a hierarchy of headship authority', and what C. K. Barrett says involves 'a form of subordination'. The man is accorded this headship because 'he is the origin, and thus the explanation of her [woman's] being'. In Ephesians 1:20-23 as in Colossians 2:10

* J. B. Hurley, *Man & Woman In Biblical Perspective*, W, England, 1981, pp. 165ff.

Christ is the head of all principalities and powers. Obviously in these contexts origin and source are not the primary ideas. He is Lord (kyrios) to these powers and in authority over them, directs them, giving commands. The New Testament shows us he is Lord by virtue of creating the powers (Col. 1:16), and as the incarnate Word (Jesus) he is Lord of all powers through redemption (Heb. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14-15).

The verb *anakephalaioomai* is used in Ephesians 1:10 which the Jerusalem Bible translates, 'that he would bring everything together under Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth'. The RSV has 'unite all things'. The unity of his creative Lordship is thus a recapitulation (one meaning of the verb) of all things which is at once the assertion, fulfilment and goal of his Lordship. He created the powers: he now recapitulates them into their ontological unity.

Speaking of Ephesians 4:15 (passim) Colin Brown* says:

In this picture, Christ is the head, and as head he sustains the whole body. Thus, in v. 15 the head determines the relationship of love and truth in the body of Christ . . . The relationship of kephale to soma [body] expresses the authority of Christ (cf. Col. 2:10) and the corresponding subordination of the church.

Schlier† comments ' . . . the headship of Christ is manifested in the fact that He directs the growth of the body to Himself'.

The importance of Christ's headship of the church, and so the church with him, is summed up by Schlier‡:

Christ is from the very first the Lord of the world. For from the very first (πρὸ πάντων) the world consists in Him. When as the risen Lord He takes control of the world in His body, He is simply actualising His real power over creation.

This comment takes us from mere discussion of 'authority' and

command' as being opposed to egalitarianism, into the purpose of 'head' and 'body' which is to effect Christ's Lordship in time, i.e. The Man and The Woman together triumph over that which would divide, fissiparate and destroy the true creation.

If we assume that in the relationships between man and woman that man is the head-the 'origin', 'source', and 'leader'-of the woman, without any sense of being dictatorial or dominating, but is head of the body, and utterly one with his spouse in their vocational action and goal of life, then we can now examine a little more the question of authority, leadership, subordination, super-ordination, and command.

Our point in doing this is to see what is the biblical ontological nature of the words or ideas expressed immediately above. Again we face our own sinfulness, our importation of adverse ideas into these very words. On the whole the human race finds them distasteful, having had what it calls 'bad experiences' of them. This is the 'flesh' of Man, which Paul says is incorrigible, 'it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God' (Rom. 8:7-8).

The key to understanding these matters of authority, leadership, subordination, superordination and command lies in Anderson's phrase 'the ontological joy of sonship', or as we might say 'the ontological joy of obedience and responsibility'. We have in fact looked at something of these themes in Chapter Nineteen. We will first look at Christ and his stance regarding sub-mission, subordination, authority, and the exercise of command.

* Brown, op. cit., p. 162

† Schlier, κεφαλή in Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965, vol. III, p. 680.

‡ *ibid.*, p. 681.

CHRIST, SUBORDINATION, AND THE EXERCISE OF LORDSHIP

The claim that headship (whether of the Father, the Son or the husband) does not involve ruling or commands cannot be substantiated. This can be seen from the following:

(i) The Father's Superordination in Regard to the Son

- (a) The Father commanded the Son to come into the world. Over 40 times in John's Gospel Jesus uses the verb for being sent-by the Father.
- (b) Jesus spoke of the Father giving him commands (John 10:18; 12:49; 14:31) and said, ' . . . I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love'. In John 12:50 he said, 'I know that his commandment is eternal life'.
- (c) The Father took the initiative in the incarnation and the atonement (Rom. 3:24-25; II Cor. 5:21; I John 4:9-10, 13). The Son was commanded to do these things.

(ii) Christ's Willing Subordination in Regard to the Father

- (a) Christ was under the Father's authority (see above, and also John 5:19-20; 8:28; 14:10).
- (b) The Father gave the Son authority (Matt. 11:27;

John 3:35; 5:22ff.; 10:27-30; Matt. 28:18; see also Matt. 3:17; Ps. 2:6-7; Isa. 42:1; Rev. 2:27; 3:21f.).

- (c) The Son learned obedience (Heb. 5:9-10; cf. 2:10) and was obedient (John 9:4; 10:17; 14:30-31; Phil. 2:8).
- (d) He rejoiced in the Father's will (Matt. 11:25-26; Heb. 10:7/ Ps. 40:8; John 4:34).
- (e) He said many times that he had kept the Father's will. See John 15:10: 'I have kept my Father's commandments'.

Note: Jesus could say, 'The Father is greater than I' (John 14:28), and, 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30).

(iii) Christ Gave Commands to His Followers

- (a) Matthew 7:24: 'Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them'.
- (b) Luke 6:46: 'Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and not do what I tell you?'.
- (c) John 13:34 (cf. 15:12): 'A new commandment I give to you'.
- (d) John 14:15: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments'. John 14:21: 'He who has my commandments and keeps them'.
- (e) John 15:10: 'If you keep my commandments', cf.

John 8:51: 'If any one keeps my word, he will never taste death'.

- (f) Matthew 28:20: 'all that I have commanded you'.
- (g) Acts 1:2: 'after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles', cf. Acts 10:42: 'he commanded us to preach to the people'.
- (h) See Christ's commands to Paul (Acts 9, 22, 26).
- (i) Notice that the Gospel is a command. To believe it is to obey this command and come to 'the obedience of faith'. (See Acts 6:7; 17:30; Rom. 10:16ff.; I Thess. 1:9; II Thess. 1:7-8; cf. Rom. 1:5; 15:18; 16:26.)

We can sum up these statements by concluding that the headship of the Father is one in which, and by which, He gives commands to His Son, and His Son likewise in his headship gives commands to his followers. What, then, is unacceptable in the giving of commands? Was not the essence of the Law (Torah) instruction, and not legislation? Is the Law not 'the Way' rather than 'the Legislation'? Would not we be without direction if there were no law? Is not the Law 'the outshining of God's nature'? Is it not holy, and spiritual, and good (Rom. 7:12)?

The question arises: 'Do his followers in any way give commands to others within the church? Do elders, for example, give commands, and in any sense at all do husbands-heads of their wives-ever give commands? If such are given, are they only "domineering over those in your charge", or are they protective directions by those

appointed "overseers of the flock"?. The answer must be, 'Yes!', but we need to check out this reply.

Submission, Subjection, and Submissiveness

One way of doing this is to examine the verb *hupotasso* which in its various forms-active, middle, passive, aorist, etc.-means 'to place, put, or arrange under', 'to subordinate', 'to bring under influence', 'to be subordinated', 'to submit oneself', 'to render obedi-ence', 'to be submissive', with the nouns 'subordination' and 'submissiveness' (*hupotage*). This will help us to see (a) ontological categories of authority which should be obeyed, and (b) categories given by God in a sinful world, and which, though temporary, are nevertheless binding and conducive to good order, harmony, and conduct. The **verb** is used of:

- Jesus submitting himself to his parents (Luke 2:51).
- The demons being subjected to the apostles (Luke 10:17-20).
- Principalities, powers and 'all things' to Christ (Eph. 1:21-22; I Pet. 3:22; I Cor. 15:24-27 [cf. Ps. 8:5; 110:1]; Heb. 2:5-8 [cf. Heb. 1:3; 10:13]).
- Christians to authorities (Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13f.; Titus 3:1).
- Wives to husbands (Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22-24; I Pet. 3:1; Titus 2:5).
- Children of God to 'the Father of spirits' (Heb. 12:9).

- Members of the body to each other (Eph. 5:21).
- The younger men to the elders (I Pet. 5:5).
- Members to 'good men', fellow workers and labourers (I Cor. 16:16).
- The church to Christ (Eph. 5:24).
- Spirits of the prophets to prophets (I Cor. 14:32).
- Servants to masters (I Pet. 2:18).
- Slaves to masters (Titus 2:9).
- The creation to vanity (Rom. 8:20).
- Sin (negatively) to the law (Rom. 8:7).

The **noun** is used of:

- Women as subordinate (I Tim. 2:11).
- Children as submissive (I Tim. 3:4).
- 'Obedience in acknowledging the Gospel of Christ' (II Cor. 9:13).
- Non-yielding where the Gospel is in peril (Gal. 2:5).

Also related to subjection and submission is obedience. In Titus 2:9 slaves are to be subject to their masters. In Colossians 3:22 they are to obey (vb. *hupakouo*) their masters. In this case, if we bring these two references together, subjection calls for obedience. In Hebrews 13: 17 (cf. 13:7) obedience (vb. *peitharcho*) and submission (vb. *hupaike*, 'to yield, give way, be submissive') are linked. In this case the church is to obey its rulers (elders?), and be submitted to them. Children are to obey (*hupakouo*) their parents, Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 (cf. Luke 2:51), and in the first case submission is enjoined (Eph. 5:21), whilst in the second case,

the children cannot be unsubmitted if the wife is called to be (Col. 3:18). In I Peter 3:5-6 the apostle describes 'holy women who hoped in God' as being submissive (vb. *hupotasso*) to their husbands, and says 'Sarah obeyed [vb. *hupakouo*] Abraham, calling him lord'. Submission and obedience are here joined.

These references referring to subjection, submission and obedience are set forth as objectively as possible to show that there is a divinely appointed order, and a demanded obedience. We will discuss the principles of subjection and obedience below, for they may well be different from what they seem as most of us view them. Certainly they must never be interpreted in a legalistic sense.

The Basic Principle of Submission and Obedience

At this point we need a short review and expansion of the theme of Chapter Nineteen, where we discussed the principle of Authority and Accountability. There we linked authority with God's 'authorship' of creation in His being as Father, Creator, and King. An author has copyright over his creation. He has 'authority'! He may do as he wishes with it, but in God's case He can only do with it that which is commensurate with His love, goodness, righteousness, holiness and truth. Hence true authority will be good, and it will be 'very good', i.e. linked with the functionality of His creation. Thus what we call His 'moral' laws, will be primarily functional, i.e. 'the way things work' because of 'the way things really are'.

We saw that the law is 'for your good' (Deut. 10:13). Man who lives in law lives freely, but as sinful Man only if he is freed from the condemnation of the law (Rom. 8:1-3; 5:1; 6:7; 7:6). Law is the way of love (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13) and Christ interpreted it that way (Matt. 22:34-40; 19:16-22), and himself gave the command to love (John 13:34; 15:12; cf. I Cor. 9:9-21; Gal. 6:2).

Not only is law the way of love, but without love's constraint it becomes a heavy burden to the human spirit. Christ's love is the great constraint to obedience (II Cor. 5:14; cf. John 14:15; I John 4:19), but we do not know such love apart from the atonement (Rom. 5:5-10; I John 4:9-10). The love that constrains us is not one that we come to simply by working out a proposition of the atonement, but by genuinely and relationally knowing the Father who atoned through His Son, His Son who was the propitiation in that atonement, and the Spirit who reveals the reality of it. God comes to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and so love floods our hearts.

Without this love, law becomes heavy. Such sub-mission is an enforced subjection to authority, and a conscripted 'toeing the line'. The experience of glad submission and loving obedience is absent. Without a biblical rationale of authority, law, submission and obedience, these four elements seem harsh, demanding, and forms which demean and enslave the human race. The submission of wives to husbands seems to take away dignity and human freedom. Obedience of children to parents seems unreasonable in a world where human freedom is given the highest priority. Law seems like miserable legalism, and authority seems to be a trick to

give some persons domination over others.

The basic drive behind authority and law is the good welfare of the human race, and the way to true human freedom. The true drive to submit and obey is the constraint of God's love.

A Good Spirit and Understanding for Submission and Obedience

When we looked at the use of the words for 'subjection', 'submission' and 'obedience' (above), we did not comment on how they operate in practice. Now we seek to do so. In Luke 2:51, where Jesus submitted himself to his parents, the submission was voluntary. Submission to parents is an ordinance of God, and Jesus was glad to do this. The context (cf. Luke 2:41-51) shows that the boy Jesus was not without strength of will and intelligence of spirit, for whilst not defying his parents, he spoke very sensibly to them.

The principle which we may call 'subjection' (see Ps. 8:5f.; 110:1f.; Eph. 1:19-22; I Cor. 15:24-28; I Pet. 3:22; with Heb. 1:3; 10:13; cf. Phil. 2:11) means that God will subject to Him that which He wills, and nothing will alter that. We must see that as 'very good', and accept it with a good spirit. We must also see that its outcome will be God's perfection for His creation, and so rejoice in it. What must be kept in mind is that God will in no way desist from subjecting all things to Himself. To refuse this subjection does not mean ultimate escape from it, and certainly not from the guilt that comes from refusing such subjection.

The principle of 'submission' is a recognition of a

(the) divine ordinance, an acceptance of it, an agreement with it, and a voluntary submission to it. Wives who recognize the place God has given the husband will accept and acknowledge it, as the church accepts Christ's own Lordship. This principle will follow in children submitting to parents; members of the body to one another, to good men, fellow labourers and workers; church members to elders; as also young men to elders; servants to masters; and Christians to 'the authorities that are ordained of God'. In none of this superordination- subordination context, is there the slightest hint of one being superior or inferior to the other.

'Submission' which is really acceptance of 'subjection' cannot be avoided without guilt or trouble. Behind its principle is the reality of the ontological. Given that some submission is in the context of a fallen humanity and the curse on the world, it is nevertheless God's ordinance, and may not be set aside for some humanistic concept of Man's autonomy, or any realized hurt because of the imperfections of those who have positions of authority, i.e. rulers, elders, husbands, parents or masters.

Submission's 'Ontological Delight'

The whole matter of submission must be understood in the light of 'ontological joy', i.e. the ontological joy of submission. Jesus' delight was to do the Father's will. Not only did he recognize the ontological nature of things, but he experienced the fullness of joy in being subject to the Father. The Father, for His part, was delighted with the Son, and with his obedience. Just as a

perverse sort of delight seems to come from sinners who subvert law and authority, so the true joy and shalom comes to those who obey 'from the heart'.

The Problems of Disobedience

There can be no question that there are problems when the husband, ruler, elder, and master do not fulfil their ontological task and responsibility, i.e. when they are weak and vacillating, or cruel and domineering, self-seeking, unjust and selfish. What is missing in these cases is the true union that should exist between those who are superordinate and those who are subordinate. The 'ontological joy' is greatly marred. Even so, the office of the authority has to be recognized, if not the person in his or her entirety, because disobedience (non-submission) to the office brings great problems. The person holding authority will ultimately have to answer to God. For that one, there will be judgements.

Strangely enough, there seems to be human thinking which puts varying values upon obedience at different levels. Perhaps this is the inbuilt 'deceit of sin' (Heb. 3:13). Romans 1:27 speaks of sinners 'receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error'. Hebrews 2:2 says, 'every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution'; I Thessalonians 4:6 that, 'the Lord is an avenger in all these things'; Hebrews 13:4, that 'God will judge the immoral and adulterous'; and Romans 2:8-9, 'for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil'. How then will any form of disobedience be

excused? If we are supposed to obey those in authority then we must do so, even if we think it is not a good idea! Obedience is enjoined: it must be carried out.

The Nature and Goal of Obedience

We have already noted that Jesus had great joy in doing his Father's will. Hebrews 10:5-7 quotes Psalm 40:6-8 of him: 'I delight to do thy will'. Because we often think of law as legislation and not as 'direction' or 'the way of life', we see no delight in it. We think of it only as precepts to be kept, morals to be observed, standards to be reached and maintained. The first command that God gave to Man was a mandate to a venture, and even an adventure! (Gen. 1:28f.; cf. Ps. 8:5f.). Law is the way of life we pursue as we move towards God's great goal for His creation, its wonderful end (telos) when redeemed Man shall rise from the dead, live in eternal life, be glorified, live in the inheritance of 'all things', and reign forever.

None of this has any appeal to the heart which doggedly persists on its autonomy and personal freedom. Rationalization of one's objections are sure to follow, but they will not stand in the light of God's word, His law, and the responsibility and accountability accorded by Him to humanity. From the cradle to the grave, this is the case with every human being.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE NEW CONTEXT OF SEXUALITY

MAN AND WOMAN UNDER REDEMPTION

Until Christ's coming and his act of redemption man and woman had lived under the curse, if indeed it can be called 'the curse'. We must take into account that there were always two streams within humanity, one which was composed of men and women, who, though sinners, were people of faith (see Heb. 11), and another composed of 'the children of the devil' (see I John 3:10-11; John 8:44), i.e. those who did not have faith in God. The Son of God came 'to destroy the works of the devil' (I John 3:8-9). He did this on the Cross and in his resurrection. As a result of that, men and women were regenerated, i.e. became 'new creatures' (II Cor. 5:17; cf. Gal. 6:15).

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD IS RECONCILIATION WITH ALL

To be reconciled with God through the death of the Cross, means we are reconciled to all men, whether they receive it or not. Christ, the Son of God, revealed his Father. This revelation brings us to sonship, so that we cry 'Abba! Father!' (Gal. 4:4-6). This means we are brethren, one family. John says, 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren' (I John 3:14). He says, 'We love, because he first loved us' (I John 4:19).

Reconciliation is not just individualistic. On the day of Pentecost the new people of God-the church-was born. This new community was one of love, sharing its resources, having a daily distribution to meet the needs of widows, orphans, the poor and other needy ones. Love was the keynote. This church was the new and greatest miracle of history. The unity was the true unity-the ontological unity of God described by Paul in Ephesians 4:1-6-which worked out in the internal relationships of the body, the church. Thus the true relationship of Christ as Head and the church as Bride manifested itself down into the whole body. Masculinity and femininity were united in a 'one-flesh' unity. The masculine side was headship in its true being, as also in being subject to its Lord. Femininity was its true self because issuing from the head. Thus it was submissive to the leadership of its Lord, Christ. This leadership, as we shall see, found its practical action in the presbyterate, or eldership.

The New Unity of the Body

In one passage explicitly (Gal. 3:28), and two others implicitly (I Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:9-11), Paul shows that nothing-such as being male or female, Jew or Gentile, slave or free-prevents a person receiving salvation, or having entrance into Christ's body, the church. The question of non-Jews not having salvation was a live issue. Jesus himself had said, 'salvation is of the Jews' (John 4:22), meaning that there was no salvation outside Israel until the new thing happened which he was at that moment predicting. Paul in many places talks about 'the Jew first and then the Greek [Gentile]', but also insists that the Gentile now has the offer of salvation through Christ. In the Old Testament the male Jew was accepted in the kingdom only through circumcision. The woman was not circumcised because she was under the cover of a male who was her 'head', whether father, husband, brother, or other relative. Slaves were without privilege, and often despised, but their status did not prevent them receiving salvation, and becoming part of the church.

In I Corinthians 12:4-31 Paul shows the utter unity of all members. He simply uses the natural (ontological) order of the human body to demonstrate that, by nature of the case, all members are interdependent. Each member is indispensable to the other. Hence the new innate unity of the people of God. No member is without honour, and without identity.

The statement of Galatians 3:28, that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female is sometimes used to

say that there are no distinctions in the body, and that the church is therefore egalitarian. This is scarcely likely, for Paul is not egalitarian in the sense that it is often claimed the church should be. Paul knew nothing of democratization, however much we know it today. The use of the word 'equal' (*isos*) in Matthew 20:12; Luke 20:36; John 5:18 (cf. John 10:30-33); Philippians 2:6; and II Corinthians 8:13-14 can mean 'as one', 'like' or 'equal in measurement'. Whilst there is a general sense in which all mankind is equal before God, yet this question, as such, is not raised in the New Testament so much as respecting and honouring every human being is strongly insisted upon. Literal equality of persons does not exist, for they are not 'the same', but each is unique, discrete, and different. The unity of Christ's body is in the diversity of its members and its gifts. The principle of complementarity in differentiation preserves the unique-ness and discreteness of each person but constitutes and maintains the unity. Paul still insists that the wife is subject to the husband, children to parents, women to men in worship, and even slaves to masters, although Paul does not necessarily make the last to be ontological, but rather provisional.

Because the term 'equal' is more a modern term, with a special modern connotation, it is doubtful whether we can find Paul using or endorsing this concept. It is certainly a concept of present humanism, but is not necessarily Christian. Of one thing we can be certain, and that is that Paul never thought in terms of inequality. It may well be that 'equal' and 'unequal' are

wholly irrelevant to Paul's proposition that 'We are all one in Christ Jesus'. He saw the unity of Christ as our unity, since in baptism we put on Christ. He saw the unity of the Spirit, and the unity of the family under the divine Fatherhood.

The 'New Creation' and the 'Old Curse'

Each person in Christ-because of redemption-is 'a new creation' (II Cor. 5:17). The church itself is 'the new humanity' (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10), i.e. the 'new man' who is Christ, who is head of his body, which is his church, which is the 'new humanity'. Each member is, of course, 'a new man', by virtue of participating in 'the new man, Christ'. This new creation is living in the 'old age' (Gal. 1:4), so that there is a constant tension between the old system, and the new. Some claim that the curse has been lifted because Christ was made 'curse for us' (Gal. 3:13). By this they mean that man does not still rule over woman. The curse, however, is not yet lifted. This is shown in Romans 8:18-25 where the whole creation groans, waiting for its liberation 'from the bondage to decay'. This bondage to decay is still present, not only in all creation, but even in the believer, for Paul says that, 'The body is doomed to death because of sin, but the Spirit is life-giving because of justification' (Rom. 8:10, my translation).

Another way of saying this is that man's rule over woman is not ontological but provisional. Her suffering pain in childbirth is not ontological but provisional. By

'provisional' we mean that which is temporarily brought about by sin but is not of 'the true order of things'. Christian women do not escape pain in childbirth, and Christians still know their bodies to be 'doomed to death'. So, likewise, the husband still rules over the wife.

What difference, then, does redemption make in the order of living, and of relationships? Simply this: the Christian man does not wish to 'lord it' over his wife, because he no longer sees himself as a 'god'. The Christian woman does not desire to rule her husband because she is no longer a 'goddess'. The fallen loves of the man and the woman are restored by God's love. True agape (God's divine love given as a gift) now rules

their lives. 'One-flesh' union now obtains. True vocation now constrains their marriage into positive and fruitful living. Their deficient or wrong relationships, back with their families, and with others, are now changed. Anger against authority, bitterness for bad experiences, and the desire to 'lord it' change to forgiveness and love for all. The love of Christ constrains the 'new creation' into different lines of action and living.

All of this is, of course, not automatically so. The 'old' contests the 'new'. Christian men and women are always tempted to go back into anger, to rebel, to divide, and to 'lord it' over others. Faith must always battle to believe and walk in the grace of liberation. It must always apply to grace to walk in God's true law. Only when 'the perfect is come' shall 'that which is in part' be done away with. Even so, the life of each personal 'new creation' in the corporate 'new creation', i.e. the church, is a radically different life, and one which can make continuing advance into maturity.

A Note On Fatherhood And All Relationships

It is simply not true, biblically, that God is ever other than masculine. He is only referred to by the masculine pronoun. This is not for lack of another and better word. He is masculine. We cannot even say, 'par excellence', for He is unique as God, as Spirit, and as masculine.

In the Scriptures He is never called 'mother', 'wife', 'daughter', or 'sister', although at times He is compared with such. At the same time we must never use human masculinity as an analogy of God's masculinity, or God's masculinity as an analogy of man's masculinity. God-if He does not reveal Himself-is ineffable (indescribable, unknowable). He says there is nothing we know to which He can be likened. Thus if we commence at human masculinity and human femininity, and think of God in these terms, we will end up in tragic misunderstanding. In other words, God's masculinity can never be under-stood by human beings, unless He were to reveal it: which of course He has. Once revealed, we see it is other than human masculinity, whatever elements the human ectypal masculinity may reflect of the archetypal masculinity.

Because God is Creator He has no need (or place) for sexuality. Because we are procreators we need sexuality. We do not know what masculinity is which is not sexual, although we do know that masculinity is not contained within sexuality. Nevertheless, with our human thinking centred about sexuality, we do not know what Fatherhood and Sonship would be without sexuality. Masculinity, then, to some degree, is a hidden thing.

If some become angry at masculinity, then they need to stay their anger until they understand what masculinity is, by having a true revelation of God's masculinity. When God made man and woman in His own image, and made them male and female, it may well be that God has what we would call 'male and female elements'. Our problem would be to know what these elements really are. For example, is all human masculinity and feminity sub-sumed (existent within) God's masculinity? Is that why Christ said that in heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage? Is that why all will be called 'sons of God' in eternity, even though on earth one is 'male' and the other 'female'? Will being 'sons of God' bring us into a category of non-sexuality which is not necessarily neutral in regard to gender, and in which, even though gender might remain, all will be without sexuality as we know it?

On these things we may not be dogmatic, but we must not shy away from the thinking they open up to us. It is not as though God does not exhibit a masculinity (male gender) which is without sexuality. This is what He does. So then, the concept of His Fatherhood does not derive from human fatherhood, although human fatherhood must be the ectype of the archetypal Fatherhood. This may also explain the Christian's reluctance to see any-thing of a sexual nature in the union of the Bride and the Lamb. Sexual union, as such, bewilders all but the erotically mystical Christian thinker.

On an even wider issue, when Paul says (Eph. 4:6) that God's Fatherhood is 'above all and through all and in all', he is surely speaking of God being the Head of His family by being 'above all', just as 'through all' means He is the Integrator of His family, and 'in all' that He is the

One who is intimately present to each of His family members.

When Paul says (Eph. 3:14-15), 'The Father, from whom all familyhood in heaven and earth is derived', he is averring that all relationships stem from the Father. All have-so to speak-an archetypal masculine origin. The ectypes emerge from this. These factors by no means put feminity down, but give it an integral place in the wider reality of God's (non-sexual) masculinity. To see God's Fatherhood through the Son, via the Cross and resurrection, is to lose all anger at all faulty human ectypes, be they masculine or feminine. It is to be caught up in His redeeming, loving Fatherhood. It is to be swept off our feet, constrained and gripped by love, and thus to be dynamically initiated into new, true relationships.

It is indeed to discover (or rediscover) what creation is all about, and how it is we can with joy, even glee, 'Let God be God, and Man be Man!'.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

MAN AND WOMAN IN FAMILY AND CHURCH-I

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MALE AND FEMALE

Reconciliation means Obedience to God's Order

Mankind lives not in the ultimate, but the penultimate age, the age before the age of perfection. Hence no one is utterly perfect. Sin broke the good order so that all Man's relationships became awry. In redemption these relationships can be restored. The ontological order, i.e. 'things as they are essentially', can now be pursued. Only in the ultimate age, however, will the true order be followed. It will be the age of glorification and perfection.

The Creational Order of Man and Woman

We have discussed the creational order of man and woman in a number of different contexts. We have come at the subject via the nature of the True Man and the True

Woman, and Man's ultimate glorified being. This has enabled us to see the true nature of man and woman, i.e. 'Man', at creation. A number of passages in the New Testament give us some information as to the creational order of man and woman. These-for the most part-are based on the creation accounts of the Old Testament and not upon contemporary cultural mores or norms. What we mean by this is that apostolics do not argue their case primarily from their contemporary culture and its mores, but rather argue ontologically, rooting their teaching, and injunctions in regard to the order of man and woman in Man created, Man in the penultimate situation, and Man in the ultimate situation, i.e. eschatological Man.

The passages that follow are divided into two sections:

(a) passages relating to man and woman in regard to marriage, and (b) passages relating to men and women in the life and order of the church. In fact both sets are really the one, for it is difficult to divide the nature and functions of men and women in the home, and in the church. Even so, we take these divisions for the purpose of outlining the situations of home and church.

PASSAGES RELATING TO MAN AND WOMAN IN MARRIAGE

Introduction

We have seen that the true creational order must be gleaned from the true order between The Man and The Woman. In Ephesians 5:21-33 Paul does two things:

he shows (a) the relationship of Christ the Bridegroom to his Bride, the Church, and (b) that this is the relationship the human husband and wife ought to have, here, on earth. His primary purpose is to speak about the Archetype (Christ and his church), as is shown in verse 32, and his secondary purpose is to speak about the ectype, i.e. the marriage of the man and the woman.

In considering the passages below, we are not talking about impeccability or perfection of relationships, but simply the principle of relationships, especially as we consider them in the light of grace. For example, in the passage immediately below, whilst Paul appears to be issuing injunctions to Christian husbands and wives at Ephesus, he is, in fact, talking about Christ and the Church. He says, 'This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church'.

In the language that we have been using, Paul is saying, 'Christ is the archetypal Husband, and the Church the archetypal Wife. Let all husbands be ectypal of Christ, and all wives be ectypal of the Church. Then their relationships will be truly ontological, and so authentic'. In line with this, then, let us see what Ephesians 5:21-33 is saying, in principle. We will not seek, here, to interpret it.

Passage 1: Ephesians 5:21-33

(i) The true wife is subject to her husband, and respects him (vv. 22, 33).

(ii) The true husband loves his wife, to the point of giving himself up for her. She is 'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones', so that he loves her as his own flesh, and nourishes and cherishes her (vv. 25, 28, 29, 31, 33).

(iii) The man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife.

(iv) The two have become as one flesh.

Passage 2: I Corinthians 11:2-16

(i) Man (the husband) is the head of woman (the wife).

(ii) As the man is the glory and image of God-his Head-so the woman is the glory of her husband. (Note: she is not the image of her husband.)

(iii) Man (the husband) was not made from woman (the wife), but the woman from the man.

(iv) The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.

(v) In the Lord the man and the woman are not independent each of the other, but as woman was made from man, so now man is born of woman.

(vi) Women pray and prophesy during the time of worship.

Doubtless in interpreting these points, scholars will differ, but an objective viewing of them will at least help to comprehend the thrust of them.

Passage 3: I Peter 3:1-7

(i) Wives are to be submissive to their husbands, especially in order to win them (the husbands) by

wifely obedience, so that they (the husbands) will come to obedience to the Word of God.

(ii) Women should not seek to do this only by dressing beautifully, but by 'the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit'.

(iii) Sarah is a good paradigm (example, pattern) of this 'gentle and quiet spirit', for she 'obeyed Abraham, calling him lord'.

(iv) Husbands are not to take their wives for granted but are to 'consider them, showing them honour [respect] as the weaker [not 'weak!'] vessel'.

(v) Husband and wife are 'joint heirs of the grace of life', i.e. they equally share the new life given by redemption and will inherit the legacy (i.e. inheritance) it will bring in eternity.

If we examine the above passages we can see their frame of reference is (i) the creation account, and (ii) the Abrahamic covenantal system, even though in passage 2 there is a contemporaneous cultural reference to the wearing of the veil during worship. The passages immediately below do not directly refer to creation, but seem to insist that the injunctions concur with the law. The law, of course, has its own links with creation.

Passage 4: I Corinthians 14:31-35

(i) Prophets must be subject to the (other) prophets, i.e. they cannot speak *ex cathedra*, i.e. with authority from themselves.

(ii) The custom of the churches is that women should not speak in the assembly but be subordinate in accordance with the law.

(iii) If women wish to know something they should not ask in the church, but of their husbands at home.

Note: Without seeking to interpret the above passage, may it be said that the two following points of explanation are possible: (i) women were not to be those to whose spirits the prophets were subject, i.e. they were not to assent or dissent to what (male) prophets prophesied, and -perhaps- even what the female prophets said (v. 32), or (ii) women were not to ask questions during teaching, but to leave the teaching to the men, asking their husbands at home what they (the wives) wanted to know. Teaching in the early church was often in dialogue (cf. Acts 17:2; 19:8), either in debate or discussion. Some suggest women were on one side of the meeting, and men on the other, and that it would have been indecorous of women to shout questions, especially if they were not edifying ones.

Passage 5: I Timothy: 2:8-15

(i) True womanly adornment is not primarily outward attire, but the 'good deeds' they do.

(ii) A woman should learn in silence, with submissiveness.

(iii) Paul permits no woman to teach or have authority over men: she is to keep silent.

(iv) Two things determine this demand: (a) Adam was formed first, and Eve after him, and, (b) Adam was not deceived, but Eve was.

(v) A woman will be saved through childbirth, if she continues 'in faith and love and holiness, with modesty'.

Passage 6: Titus 2:2-6

(i) Older men (not elders as such) should live sensible, mature lives.

(ii) Older women (not elders as such) should also be sensible and mature.

(iii) Older women through their lives (whether by example or direct teaching) will train young women to 'love their husbands and children' and be 'sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands'.

(iv) Younger men should be taught to control themselves.

INTERPRETATION OF THE ABOVE PASSAGES

The interpretations of the passages are many and varied. One school insists that Paul and Peter were either greatly influenced by traditional Jewish thinking, which they say was always male and patriarchal, or by the current cultural mores. Others say-as we said above-that the

apostles were simply pointing out what is ontological in relation to creation and redemption, and that they were seeking to teach these principles in the context of the culture of their day.

What issues from these passages is that the apostles saw wives subject to their husbands, and women subject to the male leadership of the church. They saw the responsibility of husbands to love and care for their wives, being considerate with them, and that husband and wife, being 'one flesh' and 'joint heirs', had what we call 'equality' of personhood, even if (sometimes) different operations within their functionality.

We must not conclude from these remarks that women did not have constant and dynamic ministry. As we will see below, they did. They had no less ministry than men. We shall also see that all believers are ordained to ministry, whether men or women. By ontological nature of the case the eldership is confined to men.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

MAN AND WOMAN IN FAMILY AND CHURCH-II

PASSAGES RELATING TO MEN AND WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Some of the passages above relate to the functions of men and women in the church, and we will need to refer to them. Because there are so many passages we will simply record the details, and as far as possible refrain from comments.

Scriptures Relating to Women's Ministry

Men and women both have ministry. All members of the church are ordained to ministry, whether they are men or women. This can be seen from the following references-Mark 10:45; cf. 9:35; Romans 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:12; Galatians 5:13-16; 6:10; etc.-but even these references do not compass the general ministry of women.

The fact is that women have always ministered, partly because they are one with men in fulfilling the mandate given at creation, partly because they have a rich serving capacity, and mainly because-like men-they are human beings. For this reason there seems to be little point in saying anything about women's ministry in Old Testament and New Testament times, since the principle of men's and women's ministry is the same, and, in fact, one. In outlining this ministry writers on the subject seem often to be congratulating women on what they have done. They seem to say, 'There! There! Look! Of course (you) women have done a lot'. This patronage may be unconscious, but is offensive. Neither men excel women, or women men. They are-or should be-together in the great adventure and task of life, i.e. working as one.

Even so we recount minimally something of what women have done.

Women in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament woman was to participate with man in fulfilling the mandate God gave at creation (Gen. 1:28ff.; cf. I Pet. 3:7). This would be a full-time work. Any vocation, of course, could be contained within the general vocation. Revelations from God came directly to many women, e.g. to Hagar (Gen. 16:7-8; 21:17), Rebekah (Gen. 25:23), and Manoah's wife (Judg. 13:3). They also came to prophetesses Miriam (Exod. 15:20f.; Num. 12:1-2), Deborah (Judg. 4:4), Huldah (II Kings 22:14-20), and the prophetess of Isaiah 8:3. Deborah was also a judge in Israel (Judg. chs. 4-5). Athaliah is the sole example of a queen ruling over Israel (II Kings 11:3). The prayers of Rebekah (Gen. 25:22f.), Rachel

(Gen. 30:6, 22), Leah (Gen. 30:17), and Hannah (I Sam. 1:11; 2:1-10) have helped to change the course of history. Hebrews 11:32-39 speaks of the great faith and suffering of both women and men in the course of the history of covenant and faith.

Women in the New Testament

In the New Testament Christ called all who obeyed his word his 'brother, and sister and mother' (Luke 8:21). Many women ministered to Christ (Luke 8:1-3; 10:38ff.; John 12:1ff.). They were at his cross when many of the disciples were not, were at the taking of him down from the cross, were first at the tomb, first to announce his resurrection, were present at Pentecost and received the outpouring of the Spirit, were at prayer for Peter (Acts 12:12ff.) and others (cf. Acts 4:23ff.). We saw in I Corinthians 11:5 that women prayed and prophesied in the church. In Acts 21:9 the four unmarried daughters of Philip prophesied (not only once, but, it seems, continually), and this accorded with the statement of Joel, repeated and amplified by Peter (cf. Joel 2:28f.; Acts 2:17ff.), that both 'sons and daughters', 'menservants and maidservants' would prophesy. In Romans 16:1-2 Phoebe is called 'a servant', or 'a *diakon*' (the word means 'servant', cf. Mark 9:35; 10:45), which some believe belongs to the order of 'deacons', and she is also called 'a prostatis', which can be translated 'guardian' or 'protectress'.

Women laboured in the Gospel-whatever that means in different contexts-for Lydia opened both her heart and home to God's messengers (Acts 16:14f.). Women at Thessalonica and Berea also accepted the Gospel,

searching the Scriptures, and doubtless were part of the witness of which Paul speaks in I Thessalonians 1:6-10. In Philippians 1:5 Paul speaks to the Philippians about their 'fellowship in the gospel', and in 4:2-3 nominates at least two of these women, Euodia and Syntyche. Couples such as Priscilla and Aquila, and those men-mentioned singly such as Mary, Junias and Julia (there could have, and would have, been numerous others) all attest to women in ministry. We repeat: all Christian women, as also all Christian men, were assumed to be in ministry or 'servantship'.

Women received what are called 'the gifts of the Spirit', for they prophesied. Apart from what we may call 'ministry gifts'-i.e. apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher-we have no need to doubt that all gifts at some time or another manifested the Spirit in both men and women. There is some debate as to whether women were given these 'ministry gifts'. It is argued that in Romans 16:7 the Junias mentioned is one 'notable among the apostles'. Some scholars see two meanings for the word 'apostle': (a) for those of the apostolic college, i.e. 'the Twelve', and (b) for anyone who was a 'sent one' or 'messenger'. Junias could not be included among the former, but there is no reason why she (or, he) should not be included among the latter. We have evidence that women prophesied, although we would need to be certain whether this was the gift of prophecy (which all had) or the office of a prophet, which was given only to some. In one sense all Christians are sent (are apostles), and all can prophesy (cf. I Cor. 14:1; Acts 2:17, 18).

We must draw the conclusion then that women carried out no less ministry than did men. It is better to say,

'Together all Christian men and women carried out a combined ministry under the Lordship of their Head, Christ'. There the matter of ordination to ministry should be left, provided the injunctions of Paul are kept in mind. All are ordained to ministry.

It ought also to be noted that all the New Testament Epistles, with their encouragements and injunctions were written to both men and women. Only in rare cases where there was a special point of order would women be addressed in particular, and likewise men were similarly addressed.

Scriptures Relating to Elders and Deacons

If we keep in mind that women's personhood and ministry is not inferior to that of men, and if we also keep in mind that when it came to headship-i.e. 'source', 'origin', and 'government'-in the home and the church that the headship was masculine, then what we are about to say will be intelligible. If it be said that this present writer is presupposing what has to be proved, then we must return to our study on headship and see the principles of 'headship' and 'body' relationships as they are with Christ and his bride, i.e. Christ and his church. He is without doubt masculine, so that headship is always masculine. In the case of the husband his headship too, relates to 'source', 'origin', and 'government'. In both cases the body cannot be the head, nor the head the body, but both head and body form the one unified entity.

Paul's and Peter's remarks in regard to headship confirm the fact that the husband is the head, and so the wife is the body. If it is true that the New Testament

Epistles confirm that there are leaders or rulers in the church, then we would expect them-on the basis of headship-to be male. It would not be congruous for the female to head up the leadership. Paul's injunctions would thus not be able to obtain. As with Adam and Eve, so with Christ and his church. Thus the body can never be the head. It is ontologically incongruous for such an attempt to be made. Whilst the wife can certainly effect lordship over her husband, and the husband can become submitted to the wife, such a changing of the ontological order must bring suffering and wrong in its wake. In fact the order cannot be essentially changed, but it can be changed de facto. With such a perverse change, the children of such an unontological husband-wife family will be confused as to the true nature of Christ, for it

is his headship which is called in question by the reversal of husband-wife relations. The church which feminates the head, and masculates the body will end with an emasculated masculinity and a masculated femininity.

There were—and are— Leaders and Rulers in the Church

In the following passages we are directed to the fact of 'leaders' in the church, i.e. 'overseers' (episkopoi) and 'rulers' (hegoumenoi), i.e. 'those over you' (proista-menous), and these terms would appear to be inter-changeable for the words 'elders' (presbuteroi) or 'bishops' (episkopoi), and, perhaps, 'pastors' (poi-menas), i.e. 'shepherds', see Acts 14:23; 15:6; 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:11; I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 3:1ff.; 5:17f.; Titus 1:5ff.; Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Peter 5:1ff.;

cf. Revelation 4:4; and the many other references in Revelation. There is also a sense in which younger men are under older men (I Tim. 5:1, and, perhaps, I Pet. 5:5), as also younger women are under older women (Titus 2:3f.).

When we remember that Christ under the headship of his Father not only drew his origin from Him, but obeyed His commands, and that Christ the head of the husband constituted not only the man's source and origin, but that he also gives him commands, and as head of the church gives it commands, then there can be no doubt that the elders represent Christ's government of the church, i.e. are his headship in practical fact and action, and therefore have a most responsible leadership and rulership role, as well as the role of shepherding the flock, and feeding it. This seems to tie in with the fact that Christ chose men to be apostles, and lead the church. In this sense Peter calls himself an elder (I Pet. 5:5).

One of the tasks of the elders and/or the bishops is to teach. I Timothy 3:2, 'an apt teacher'; I Timothy 5:17, 'who labour in preaching and teaching'; Titus 1:9, 'he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it'; Hebrews 13:7 (assuming the leaders are elders), 'who spoke to you the word of God'; whilst I Peter 5:2, 'shepherd [*poimante*] the flock of God' must mean 'feed them', i.e. with the bread of life. If 'pastors and teachers' (Eph. 4:11) are the one, as many exegetes think, and they are the elders (as this present writer feels forced to conclude), then Paul's talk to the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:17ff.) appears to make pastoring the flock (amongst other things) a matter of teaching.

If then we take ourselves back to I Timothy 2:8-12 where a woman is not permitted to teach, it would appear that teaching is primarily a directing by the 'head' of the 'body' since teaching is not merely the right impartation of information, but the dynamic revelation of 'the whole counsel' of God and has as much to do with life and its practice, as with faith, since exhortation is part of the teaching ministry. It requires the 'head' to impart to the 'body' that which it needs. This is not to say that within the body (member to member) there is not any teaching, for there is, but it is not of the kind that the elders-overseers-leaders-shepherds-rulers give, particularly in the context of worship.

The Nature of the Pastor

The term 'pastor' (*poimen*) is used only once in its English form in most translations of the New Testament, i.e. in Ephesians 4:11, 'pastor and teacher'. It means 'shepherd' and the word as 'shepherd' is used, or implied, a number of times. In Matthew's Gospel it is used three times in the pastoral sense. In John's Gospel Jesus uses it of himself five times in the one discourse (John 10:1-16), and once of the false pastors. In this passage he is referring back to Ezekiel 34 and kindred passages where the pastors are Israel's leaders-for good or for bad-and where God is the true Shepherd, and David His Messiah, the shepherd He will give to Israel to make them into a true flock (e.g. Ezek. 34:15ff.). Jesus compares the false shepherds and the true shepherds, as indeed does Ezekiel. After the resurrection he proves himself to be shepherd as he commands Peter to feed his

sheep and his lambs. He is the good Shepherd, i.e. the archetypal Shepherd and the archetypal Pastor.

The word is also used in Hebrews 13:20 where Jesus is called 'the great shepherd of the sheep', as he, coming up out of death by God's power, leads his flock through the valley of the shadow of death into the pastures of eternal life. Again, the word is used in I Peter 5:4 where he is called 'the chief Shepherd'. In I Peter 2:25 his true flock have returned to the Shepherd (*poimena*) and Bishop (*episkopon*) of their souls. In Revelation 7:17 it is the Lamb who is the Shepherd of the great multitude of the redeemed. He leads them 'to springs of living water'. The picture, then, in both the Old Testament and New Testament, of the pastor, is a rich one. Who could be a pastor unless the gift were given to him?

When we go back into history seeking out the origin and use of the word 'shepherd', we discover in so many situations that kings are called shepherds. So are the elders. 'Great David's greater Son' will be an even greater Shepherd than his famous father. In other words, far from being a humble lad hidden away in the hills minding a flock of sheep, the true shepherd is a king, or the Great King Himself, i.e. God (cf. Ezek. 34:15). Christ, when he comes, is the King-Shepherd, the Shepherd-King, and this Shepherd-in accordance with Zechariah 13:7-is smitten at the Cross where he is both Shepherd and Lamb (cf. Matt. 26:31). Thus the refer-ences to him in John 10, Hebrews 13:20, and I Peter 2:25, and 5:4 are all vindicated, and explicated.

Peter certainly links being an elder with being a pastor-shepherd (I Pet. 5:1-5). In Acts 20:28 Paul tells the elders of the church at Ephesus, 'Take heed to yourselves

and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [*episkopous*, i.e. 'bishops'], to care for the church of God'. He then speaks of wolves that will arise to devour the flock, thus reminding us of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. So high a calling it is to be an elder-bishop-pastor-shepherd!

The main point in this excursus is that the history of the word 'shepherd' ('pastor') shows the office and calling is to be that of a leader, and a significant leader, having responsibility of the flock, the people, the nation, and in the New Testament, the people of God, the church. We know that in history many a maid or a woman may have kept watch over a flock, but the true shepherd of the flock has to be a strong vessel. In Israel the shepherds were always kings. Only once was a queen ever a shepherd in that nation, and she was a murderess and no true shepherd (shepherdess) at heart. This leader-ship ministry is firstly that of the Father, God, and then that of the Son, Jesus the Messiah, and then it is given to the elders, to the pastor-teachers of the flock. Shepherd-ing the flock is a 'head' ministry. Being the flock is a 'body' ministry. This appears to be the ontology of the matter. May we let responsibility be taken by those to whom it is given, under the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd of the flock who loved his sheep so much that he gave himself up for them, at the instigation of the Father who is the Great Shepherd of His eternal flock.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
 he will gather the lambs in his arms,
 he will carry them in his bosom,
 and gently lead those that are with young.

Only he who is himself a lamb can know the ways of a flock, and the heart of a sheep, so that

‘For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water;
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’

‘The Priesthood of all Believers’

This great Reformation saying is not found-as such -in the New Testament. In the Old Testament Israel was called ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (Exod. 19:6) and the same term is given to the church in the New Testament (I Pet. 2:9-10; cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In Israel not all members were priests, though the nation was ‘priestly’. The people were represented by the priestly and Levitical order. In the church there are many presbyters (elders) but only one Priest (*arkierous*), i.e. Christ himself, ‘our great high priest’ (see Heb. 2:17; 5:1ff.; etc.). None of us is singly a ‘priest’ (*hieron*). The doctrine is not ‘the priesthood of every believer’, but ‘the priesthood of all believers’, i.e. a corporate priesthood. The question then of having male priests or female priests is a non sequitur.

Peter said, ‘. . . like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (I Pet. 2:5). In Hebrews 13:15-16 these sacrifices are ‘a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips’, and ‘to do good and to share what you have’. In I Peter 2:9-10 the function of the new priesthood is to ‘declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of

darkness into his marvellous light’.

What we have to understand is that the church is prophetic, priestly, and royal, because it is the body of Christ, and he is Prophet, Priest, and King. The body shares the life of the Head, and since there is the only one ‘mediator between God and men’ (I Tim. 2:5), the only way in which a mediatorial work can be said to be effected is by Christ, i.e. by his whole body directed by him as its Head. Because he is Prophet does not make us all prophets; because he is Priest does not make us all priests; and because he is King does not make us all kings, but it does make us the prophetic, priestly, and royal people.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MAN AND WOMAN IN FAMILY AND CHURCH-III

THE MATTER OF THE CHURCH, MINISTRY, AND SACRAMENTS

We know as a fact of history that the church in its universal nature was undivided until fragmentation came in the form of differences on two fronts: (i) doctrine, and (ii) variant views of the church, its ministry and sacraments. Undoubtedly politics divided (and still divide) the church, and politics have undoubtedly used these two elements we have named. These two problems are still with us. Keen scholars and theologians have sought to set forth and vindicate their systems of doctrine and practice, and their views of the church, ministry and the sacraments.

Because of the present debate regarding the place of men and women in the ministry of the church, many have become confused. As we have seen, ministry is for all, but headship is not ontologically women's function. We have also seen that there is, in fact, no priesthood, apart

from Christ's, and certainly no sacerdotal priesthood in which men or women can participate. So in that sense the debate about women being ordained to the priesthood is a non sequitur. It does not follow from anything.

I am aware, of course, that Catholic traditions believe their order of bishops, priests and deacons is to be found in Scripture and that the doctrine of apostolic succession is also proven by both Scripture and tradition. Many would say the threefold order is germinal in the Scriptures and became fully, naturally, and logically developed in the second century. I am also aware that Anglo-Catholics-a Catholic tradition developed in the post-Reformation era-are convinced their position can also be supported by Scripture, historic practice, and tradition. I am simply saying that from the Scripture it would be a difficult matter to establish a prima facie case for the Catholic tradition. It cannot, therefore, reasonably reject the onefold presbyterate, especially if a diaconate is linked with it. This paper is far too brief to allow us to enter into these questions. We must concede the positions others take, without necessarily endorsing or rejecting them.

Whilst the more Catholic traditions speak of the priesthood that has sprung from 'the apostolic succession', i.e. the authority and administration of grace given to a priestly order through Christ's vicar Peter, through successive episcopal ministry, Reformed thought in rejecting this sacerdotal order, is nevertheless insistent upon the presbyterate, i.e. the order of ordained elders. Most Protestant churches believe there have been orders of leadership, whether that of bishops, priests and deacons, or a presbyterate, or a pastoral leadership with the support of a diaconate, and insist that the leadership has always

been male, this being a mark of its validity, and insist that this is how it ought to continue. Some ground is given to the order of deacons in that many admit women to the diaconate because women can serve at a certain level, in certain functions, but always under the authority of male leadership which represents the headship of Christ. Some churches see the male diaconate of another order than that of the female diaconate.

We need also to remember that the churches' views of the ministry are linked with that of the meaning and administration of the sacraments. In fact an understanding of the church is primary to fully understanding both the ministry and sacraments. It is fair to say that many views of the church are taken from current ideas of organization in general, i.e. the church is one amongst many organizations. This, of course is not true. There is a great need today to study the nature of the church, its functional operations, and the goal God has set for His people. We need also to understand the relationship of the church to the Kingdom of God. Without such understanding participation in the sacraments may be without a biblical rationale.

To continue: some Protestant churches see the 'bishop' of the early church as synonymous with 'elder'. Of these some see the bishop as *primus inter pares*, i.e. 'first among equals' or the leader of the elders, i.e., 'chief elder' (cf. I Pet. 5:4). Some see the pastor (often called 'the minister' or 'the priest') of the church as the true elder, and whilst they may wish for a body of elders, often do not ordain such. In some churches which ordain elders, the elder is looked upon merely as an officer, though perhaps a higher officer than a deacon, who, in

his turn, is considered to be more of a church organizer, one attending to 'the nuts and bolts' of administration.

Whether the question is of bishops, priests, and deacons, or pastors and elders-whatever the form-it is clear in many cases that 'new presbyter is old priest writ large' (Hooker), and that there are many other popes (*pappas*) than the Bishop of Rome. A Protestant pastor can be as much *prostases* as any pope or bishop. Much of which goes to show that the leadership of the church is a long cry from contemporary humanism which sees no ontological differences in function between men and women, and which simply sees ability as the true qualification for any office. The larger ontological question has been bypassed or dismissed as irrelevant. Not, of course, that many have not diligently applied themselves to the ontology of the Man and the Woman, and so man and woman, by which they would see the functional nature of 'the head' and 'the body'.

The matter of calling or vocation, especially in regard to the leadership of the church is presently a problem. If ontologically the leadership is male, then the 'call' of women is a non sequitur. That women believe they are called to ministry must not be denied, for all are called to ministry. That they feel called to the leadership which has always been male raises other issues. How much has the primacy of clericaly affected people? How much does leadership itself attract many of us to a place of primacy? If power, i.e. authority and ability, is what we desire as sinful people, how much might we be conditioned by it? If the church is in no position to change the ontological order, then much will have to be rethought in regard to calling and vocation.

**A CONCLUSION REGARDING THE CHURCH,
MINISTRY, AND SACRAMENTS**

If the more Catholic churches concede to the present pressure to include women in the priesthood, then they do not merely give away their tradition on this score, but their whole structure. If the Protestant churches concede the claims of egalitarianism ('all are equal in all things' except certain biological elements), then they give away the whole ontology of 'headship' and 'body', of which we have been speaking. Whilst this short treatment of the subject does not enter into the wider world of secular government and vocation, yet its implications within contemporary society and its rapidly changing mores have to be considered. Indeed the whole matter of functional authority, God's ordination of 'head' and 'body', and the true ontological order if it embraces all the human race, cannot be ignored without great peril to the world, as well as to the church, to the community, and to Christian families. Ontology is not exclusively within the people of God.

**HOW, THEN, SHALL WE VIEW
ALL THESE MATTERS?**

'All Things are of God'

Paul, it seemed, often suffered anxiety regarding the churches he helped to found. Indeed this could form quite a subject for one caring to research it from his Letters. Without prejudice to women, it does seem there were

females at Corinth who had been captivated by their gifts. Some scholars-undoubtedly male chauvinists-have conjectured that women were seeking liberation from those over them. We certainly have no proof of this idea. There were, nevertheless, those who would wean away the church from 'a sincere and pure devotion to Christ'.

It seems that Paul recalled the scene of the Fall. In II Corinthians 11:1-15 he claims that he betrothed the church to Christ as a pure bride 'to her one husband'. Now he fears lest the church be led astray from its devotion to Christ.

Is he not making Christ the new Adam, and the church the new Eve? Is he not confronted with the old serpent in new garb seeking to get this new bride to listen to his -the serpent's-old ploy? Is Paul not afraid that history will repeat itself, and a bride (the church at Corinth, or anywhere) may listen to the voice that is other than her husband's and other than God's? What, then, was the essence of the old temptation? Surely that the human person would be free from the Lordship of God. He-or she-would find the way of Man in himself (herself), and be free to make personal choices without reference to Him.

There is a principle we can adduce from the first fall which may help us to guard against a second fall. It is this: when the woman was tempted it was not only to be 'as God', but in fact 'as gods', i.e. the human race would be a collection of 'gods'. More apposite, Adam and Eve would have each been 'gods', i.e. autonomous units, independent of God, and independent of each other. Where individuals are independent of each other there can be no talk of 'headship' and 'body', i.e. leadership and

submission. Nor can there be any thought of both working together in God's vocation. Each will have separate vocations and no 'master-vocation'. Every other human being will be a threat. If husband and wife are not in a 'one-flesh' union, then children will be threatened by their individualistic parents, parents by their (now individualistic) children, and so on. This could well be the way Satan attempts to bring about a second fall, the fall of the very church itself, the Bride of the True Adam. This would be for him a huge victory, outweighing even the first fall. The 'mother of us all' could end up by being no mother, but just a female moving within the orbit of her own egocentric designs.

A Second Fall? Surely Not!

Paul calls these agents of the serpent (Satan) 'false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ'. What we have probably never contemplated is that the church, Christ's Bride, could be deceived and beguiled, so that a second 'fall' could take place, and Christ's purposes in and for his church be thwarted. We ought to be wary lest such a thing happen in our day, and, if possible, even the elect be deceived by the arch-deceiver. We are not saying that the issue of the ordination of women to church leadership is what was troubling the church at Corinth. The church of the day -as throughout all its history-was beset by heresies and false teachers, i.e. 'by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles'. There were Judaizers at Galatia, Gnostics and Docetics at Colossae and Ephesus. There was the false prophetess Jezebel in Thyatira, and Nicolaitans at Pergamum.

The Ontological Order

Paul stands by his ontological understanding. When speaking of the husband and the wife in I Corinthians chapter 11, he says, 'And all things are from God'. He means in regard to creation, what he later means in regard to salvation, 'All this is from God' (II Cor. 5:18). In the Old Testament the writers spoke about God's 'fixed order' (Ps. 148:5-6; Jer. 31:35-36). Thus in Ephesians 5:21-33, when speaking of the order of marriage, leadership, and submission of the wife, he says he is only giving helpful advice in regard to ectypal husbands and wives by referring to the archetypal marriage of Christ and his church. Current cultural mores and practice are irrelevant to him, and humanism has no place in his schema.

Postscript To Man And Woman In Church And Family

Today many scholars, feminists, masculists, humanists and others have been writing on the matters of feminism, masculism, egalitarian and hierarchical systems. Most of these folk just mentioned have gone through the subject quite thoroughly, and many of them painstakingly, though naturally enough, each from his, or her, own point of view. I have sought to treat the subject from within Scripture itself, believing as I do that the principles of truth-as also much of their practice-can be found in these Scriptures. Some of the those mentioned above would say that is what they, too, have endeavoured to do,

so that many using the same principles of exegesis and interpretation have come to different conclusions.

Much is at stake in the current debate. Congregations can be divided, denominations can be split, union within Christendom-as envisaged by many-can be delayed: indeed a whole host of things may well result. Paul made it clear that spiritual immaturity is being caught up in party spirit, in which one says, 'I am of this one! I am of that one! I am of this, and of that!'. I have noticed that when it comes to knowing what is right and what is wrong we are again back in the Fall. We know what is right and wrong, we are sure it is that way, and we will not budge. We may appear most mature in some areas of life, but in being 'right' or 'wrong' we are so immature. So-called tolerant people become 'justice men and women' and get caught up in 'the great rage'.

The Headless Ministry

I am one who wishes we would recognize the ministry that is 'head-ministry', distinguishing it from that which is 'body-ministry'. Of course the two should work functionally as one. This they will be unable to do if one usurps the function of the other. I realize in practical fact that within many families women are the 'heads', as in many churches women have taken on 'head-ministry'. This is generally due to many factors such as indolent husbands, previous family conditioning, separation, divorce, and other elements.

No doubt the days which seemed to emphasize a 'head-ministry' which might have been termed 'bodyless head-ministry'-i.e. when the pastor or minister or priest

conducted the entire service, preached the word, and gave the benediction-were days when little lay or people ministry obtained. Those days have passed. What concerns at least some of us is the inordinate emphasis being given on 'body-ministry'. Sometimes it seems that all the ministry is only that of the body, it being shared out almost feverishly and yet meticulously so that no one miss out. From an era when almost all the ministry was conducted by the pastor, now everyone has a part in it. Whilst ministry of, and in, the body is certainly apostolic, yet sometimes we could be pardoned for thinking the church is a headless body.

The humanism which has spread through our society is doubtless an influence which comes through unconsciously into the church, for many who press for 'body-ministry' are aware of the dangers of humanism. The same humanistic principle is growing in industry, and not without some value, for in industry and bureaucracy 'fat cats' are not absent. In many cases the critical faculty of Man can prove to be valuable, but in some cases it is just a battle for personal supremacy.

In the same vein we find families which would be happy-it might seem-to do without the parental heads. The Holy City is not a city on its own. Its Head (or, Heads) is God and the Lamb, together. There can be no Temple (the church) without its own High Priest, i.e. Christ, who is the 'source' and 'origin' of all true priest-hood. Again the church could have no prophetic ministry without the head, source and origin of all prophecy, Christ himself, the archetypal Prophet. This also goes for the 'kingdom of priests'-the church. It is Christ the King who gives his royal leadership to his true community:

there is no Kingdom without the King, whether it be the Father as King, or the Son as King, since both are the Royal Head-together-of the Kingdom into which they have called us, having transferred us from the powers of darkness (Col. 1:13-14).

Ministries of Value

On mission fields, and in some Third World countries, there are more women pastors than men. Here no criticism of women is intended: if men will not hear God's voice and take up their responsibility, then women will. That does not invalidate masculine headship or feminine 'bodyship'. Nor does it validate the ministry these women are carrying out. Perhaps we are short on valid action, and long on invalid action, but we note that something gets done! Somewhere along the line men have not responded, and it may well be that the preaching of the Gospel has been deficient, weak, and so, ineffective. There could be many reasons. Nevertheless it must be said that if all headship were held by women in many or most situations, and if this state were a fait accompli, this would nevertheless not reverse the irreversible, i.e. God's ontology of His creation. Sooner or later certain consequences would inevitably ensue. It would be terrible to contemplate a world which is so unontological if God's grace were absent or inoperative.

The Orders are Not Plastic: We Dare Not Seek to Reshape Them

It is the way we go about things which matters. If we breach the ontological order we may find the new form

attractive, and presently beneficial. We will live, nevertheless, to regret it deeply. The breaching itself may be the very judgement of God upon the sloth of men, the ambition of women, the abdication of our true functional beings, and our participation in God's mandate.

May bitterness, anger, the desire for revenge, the triumph of attaining what we have desired not be present in all that is happening. In honesty I cannot see how that can be in a world where anger is never found absent from any human creature-of whatever gender it may be. What we need so much today are those who are 'humble and contrite in spirit, and tremble at my word' (Isa. 66:2). May our human emotions, passions and desires not lead us against that Word, nor make us (imagined) lords over it. What advantage then will there be to feminists and masculists, those who 'lord it', and to those others who are too weak in their servility and fear to raise their voices, as indeed to all who do not 'tremble at His Word', walk in His ways, i.e. who do not tread the path of peace?

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

LOVE AND COURTSHIP-I

THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF LOVE

The practice of love, courtship and marriage varies from culture to culture and even within any given culture. Christians in general, however, have historically developed a certain basic agreement regarding the nature of courtship, marriage, and divorce, and have derived its principles from the Jud³/₄o-Christian writings, i.e. the whole Bible. Laws for human relationships were set out for the people of the Mosaic covenant, and covered most exigencies found in regard to men and women: illicit sexual action, rape, normal marriage, and the life of the family. Whilst these Mosaic injunctions are not 'law' for Christian people, yet they are closely examined and even utilized when problems arise regarding the relationships of husbands, wives and families.

The law in Israel was more 'instruction' than it was 'legislation', and in this sense was guidance to the best ways of living. So, too, the New Covenant of Christ has

brought Christians under the richest way of living by the help of grace, and the way of love. We have already seen that the principles of man-woman relationships under Covenant are rooted in creation, and not, primarily, in culture. That is not to say that elements of tradition, and pre-Christian cultural practices have not been incorporated within ethnic groups which have been Christianized, for the variety in courtship, wedding customs, and family life is self-evident.

Today many Christians have lost touch with the Judaic way of life, and differ in regard to the values for human relationships as they are set out in the New Testament. The leadership of the husband is questioned, and a new Christian egalitarianism is expounded. Whilst most customs relating to wedding ceremonies remain, almost all the sanctions in regard to divorce have disappeared. Marriage-to use P. T. Forsyth's words-has become 'leasehold marriage' and can be terminated with ease when it does not seem to work.

At the same time many Christians adhere to what they believe is the biblical way of love, courtship, marriage and family life, and it is this way we want to examine now. Of course we need to keep in mind that much which we have always thought to be 'Christian' is in fact cultural, though without prejudice to true Christian principles. For example we assume that it is 'Christian' to be married in a church, under a celebrant who is a minister. Whilst that is a Christian custom it is not enjoined in Scripture.

Even so the Christian heritage-both biblical and traditional-is filled with many beautiful things, most of which are worth preserving. The Scriptures are filled with

stories of romances, along with helpful advice for love, courtship, marriage and family living. Particularly important is the biblical understanding of love, which we will now examine.

The Scriptural View Of Love For Human Relationships

I John 4:19 puts it plainly: 'We love, because he first loved us'. This means that because God first loved us we have responded with love. In fact God's love has been poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5) and so we love not only God but others, and also ourselves. This means that God's love has come upon us (the vertical relationship between God and Man) and so we love all others. Love to Man from God, love to God from Man, and love to others from Man all happen simultaneously. Functionally all this love is God's, and is known as agape, i.e. divine love.

We often think of God having divine love, and Man having human love, but true human love is divine love operating through Man. This accords with the fact that Man is made in the image of God, hence his love is genuine, the reflection of God's love, and the human expression of it. Whilst the fall of Man changed the use of that love, it did not change the essential nature of the love. That is why Paul and John can use the verb *agapao* when talking of people wrongly loving the world. (II Tim. 4:10; I John 2:15-17). This is a wrong use of the right love.

When it comes to the love of man for a woman the Greek word *eros* is often used. This is not used in the New Testament where, in fact, *agape* is the word.

In John 21:15-17 the verbs used for loving, *agapao* and *phileo*, are used interchangeably. The verb *phileo* is 'to love', 'to have affection for'. Often *agape* is looked upon as divine love, *philos* as brotherly or friendly affection, and *eros* as sexual love. This, strictly speaking is not how the words were used in New Testament times. *Eros* was used for high, selfless and altruistic love, *philos* for affection, and *agape* was a little-known word, but one which the Christians took and used, vitalizing it with Christian teaching. What we should understand is that true *eros* and *philos* are contained within *agape*, at least in Christian understanding. The purpose of this little exercise in word meanings is to show that all true love is *agape*, whatever forms it may take, such as relational and sexual love. Strictly speaking what we call erotic love should be 'agapitic', i.e. the love which proceeds from God and works through a man to a woman, and a woman to a man. That is, for the man-woman relationships in courtship and marriage the love of both should first be *agape*, and this being so, sexual intimate love will then proceed from its true ontological source. Only *agape* 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things', and such love is indispensable for marriage.

Child Training And Preparation For Adult Love

Training within the Womb

All training for human love must lie in the truth that God loves mankind, that He loved human beings prior to

creation (cf. Eph. 1:3-5). Man as he responds to this love, loves. Psalm 139:13-18 shows that God knows each child before its birth, and is concerned for the outcome of its life.

The child's training begins in the womb. The love of the parents is greatly influential on the unborn child. The story of Esau and Jacob in their mother's womb (Gen. 25:21-26) speaks of choice and attitude within the unborn children, whilst John the Baptist being filled with the Holy Spirit even in his mother's womb tells us of God's sovereign action. Psalm 58:3 says, 'The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies', and God tells Jacob that he was a rebel from his mother's womb (Isa. 48:8). Both Jeremiah and Paul know of God's calling from even before the womb (Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15). Modern research claims that the unborn child can pick up the moods of its parents, can record conversations, and show its likes and dislikes for certain kinds of music. Certainly training for life begins in the womb. If it begins in the womb then it must begin before the womb, for the lives of the parents lead up to the events of the womb.

The Training of Birth

The way a child comes into the world must have effects on its life and attitudes. To be surrounded by love and to feel that love must be helpful. Likewise the absence of love would not be helpful. Keeping in mind the depravity of the human race, and the innate egotism of all humans, even love per se will not necessarily induce a good attitude in the new-born child, but it is

surely entitled to the utmost of love. Sooner or later it will have to face the reality of human sinfulness, whether this is in the parents or a jealous brother or sister!

It is at this point the great truth of God's ontological Fatherhood, the Son's ontological Sonship, and the Father's Family becomes essential to know, and to understand. Because all relationships issue from God's Fatherhood (Eph. 3:14-15; 4:6), so Christian parents can relate properly to each other and their children.

The Security Of Family For Growth And Maturity

All human beings have a consciousness of God, and whilst unbelievers strive to rationalize God either by idolatry or atheism, people of faith relate to Him through grace. All children have some God-consciousness, but since all are born in Adam, they are open to all the fears, disturbances and distortions that belong to us as sinful persons. At the same time parents, being made in the image of God as male and female, together represent the image of God to their children. Where faith is present the parental image of God is helpful to the child, but where faith is absent the child has guilty sights of God, and lives in fear, with a certain anger at both God and parents.

When security is lacking in the home either because it is absent (for the most part) or because the child has reacted negatively, then insecurity to a great degree determines the actions of the child. Where parents are open in their affection for each other, are not self-conscious about their sexuality, and encourage affection

in the family, then the atmosphere of security is present. Where the children share family affection the need and desire to find it elsewhere is minimal. This is particularly so where there is a rich surround of a full household. By this we mean when there are grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins, for each of these is supportive and encouraging, as the child is made secure by the contribution of each. Good interrelationships make for less navel-gazing and self-introspection. The child's view of so many successful marriages encourages it to a good view of marriage itself. Of course the opposite is sadly true, for inadequate family relationships, and selfish relatives will make it more difficult to mature. At the same time a child who grows up under adverse conditions may be quite secure, and even more matured through suffering, especially if it has a positive attitude to its family situation.

Training For Puberty And Youth

The books of the Law, and the writings of Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes all stress the need for parental training in righteousness and the love of God. This is because the Scriptures have a realistic view of youth. Genesis 8:21 says, 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth'. The writer of Ecclesiastes says, 'youth and the dawn of life are vanity' (11:10). David prays, 'Remember not the sins of my youth' (Ps. 25:7), and Paul advises, 'shun [flee from] youthful passions' (II Tim. 2:22). These Scriptures are all saying that the years of youth whilst being wonderful on the one hand,

are also dangerous on the other.

These are the years when parents and mentors need to exercise both discipline and understanding. Natural youthful immaturity and the inner drives of sexual growth can cause basic conflicts. Psalm 119 asks, 'How can a young man keep his way pure?' and gives the answer, 'By guarding it according to thy word' (v. 9). Likewise the Preacher advises, 'Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth' (Eccl. 12:1). This time of great joy, eager anticipation of maturity, and of deep emotional conflicts calls for parental understanding and guidance, with firmness but without any authoritarian domination. This is the time when mistakes can be easily made, and some of those mistakes may determine either the success or failure of a marriage.

Teaching Regarding Sexuality

Often well-intentioned teaching regarding sexuality can be unhelpful. The mere presentation of the biological facts, dangers and fruits of biological sexuality fails to grapple with the matter of human relationships. The myth that sexual intercourse is something of itself is perpetuated by the Hollywood myth of love. Singers and music, particularly of the 'pop' variety, give the impression that sexual experience per se will give true love and security. This of course is not the case.

In much of modern society there is obscene reflection upon the human body. Bawdy comedy ridicules the body and its sexual organs. What is most sacred to true human living becomes the object of demeaning humour. Names

are given to the genitalia which virtually ridicule this beautiful functional creation of God for intimate sexuality. Dirty minded mockery demeans the beauty and joy of genuine sexuality. Sincere chastity and reverence for the most intimate of all human unions are scorned by bitter minds and cynical critics. This sort of thing is, in fact, part of the human rebellion against God. It is difficult for Man to believe that God has created humanity in all purity and for all peace and joy. Rebellious Man dare not confess that God is wholly good and has made all things well!

It is in this realm that open mutual affection by the parents, suitable demonstrations of their love, and a quiet and reverent teaching regarding the nature of man and woman, human sexuality and wholesome relationships will greatly benefit children in their training.

One thing must be taught, i.e. that the body is holy and true functional sexuality is pure. Prurient minds smirk at sexuality, and people obsessed with sex invest it with unwarranted-and uncalled for-mystique. They hope to gain rich experiences of a heady nature, sufficient to supply all their emotional needs, and whilst it is true that humans require emotional fulfilment, yet sexuality, of itself, cannot provide this. Many elements combine to bring emotional fulfilment, but the richest of these is God's love for Man and Man's total response to that love. If we try to find such fulfilment primarily in sexuality then we make it an idol which will eventually destroy us.

These, then, are some of the things we should teach our families. They are things we should keep teaching our own selves.

Courtship

All we have said above constitutes training for courtship. A healthy family training regarding sexuality sets the background for wholesome relationships between man and woman. Ideally the two persons who have been taught by both example and precept should have a warm and useful courtship.

A Time of Preparation for Marriage: Reconciliation

Courtship is a time for the two persons to come to know each other, and also to prepare themselves, together, for marriage. If both partners have good home relationships then the union ahead will be on a good basis. If not, then each of the couple should seek to have reconciliation with forgiveness where it is needed. Children often fail to see their parents clearly. The human problem of authority and submission is involved. Because both parents and children are not perfect, some experiences may have caused anger on both sides. Forgiveness in the Christian sense should heal relationships, particularly when all take responsibility for failures and wrongs, not placing the whole blame on the other. It is imperative that the partners should make the move for such reconciliation. Even if parents do not respond, the guilt of separation is cleared.

The matter of good relationships back to the parents and family is most important. A partner may have had bad experiences with the masculinity and/or the femininity of parents, and will tend to see most masculinity and

feminity in this light. Hence a wife may see her husband in the light of her father, and so on. Spouses may be looking for a mother or a father in the other, which is unhelpful. Courtship is a time for dropping ideals and images, and coming to terms with the realities of each other.

Preparation by the Parents

The courtship period should also be a special time for the parents. They should be preparing to allow the children to leave them, cutting the cords which bind them, so that a new set of relationships may obtain. At this time, too, they should be learning to accept the incoming member to the family, dropping their own ideals and images of what a son- or daughter-in-law should be.

The Preparation of Purity

We have said that if both members of the courtship are secure in their family life, the danger of giving over to passion will be minimized. When love and security are known at home a more mature approach to marriage can be expected. Pre-marital intercourse should be avoided like the plague. It takes chastity on both sides to weld a marriage through the 'one-flesh' union. Genesis 2:18-24 is the pattern for both courtship and marriage. If the couple try to get before marriage that which they can only get in marriage, then they get it neither before marriage nor in marriage.

The reason for this is that if the two 'cleave' before they 'leave', then they neither 'leave' nor 'cleave'.

The true order in the Scriptures is 'for this cause a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife'. True union-sexual and relational-can only come when a true leaving of the parents takes place. When cleaving takes place after leaving, then it is truly functional and the 'one-flesh' union happens, and it is this which powerfully launches the marriage. Where it has been interfered with by pre-marital sexual union then it is not a powerful union. Without doubt the marriage is a marriage, but it will take the total forgiveness, cleansing and justification of the Cross to release the partners into a new purity, so that-although late in time-a 'one-flesh' union can be effected.

Another problem from seeking to cleave before leaving is that the giving by the parents of their daughter to the bridegroom will be handicapped. Only where there is true chastity can leaving and cleaving be whole. The male does not 'take' his future wife, but waits for her to be given. Then the parents of both the new spouses can relinquish their children and let them set about their new unit of living.

We sum up this section by saying that pre-marital or extra-marital sexual intercourse is not ontological. It does great harm, brings much suffering, and since all forms of promiscuity can become habitual, promiscuity may recommence after marriage.

Preparation for The Roles of 'Headship' and 'Bodyship'

We have already discussed the ontological order of The Man and The Woman, where the Husband is the true

Head, and the Wife the true Body. Courtship, then, is a time to come to understanding of these things, a preparation for the new roles, and a time to have some practice in them. In the light of this we need to see that Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. This was prior-so to speak-to giving himself to her. The Bride, seeing his love, responds in loving submission and personal obedience. Since this is the archetype of which the earthly bridegroom is the ectype, he too should give himself for his wife. How, then, would he do this?

Head and Helpmeet

It could be done in many ways, but mainly by always placing his wife before himself-in everything. This is the essence of Philippians 2:3-4. Because of past experiences, reactions to life, angers and resentments, each partner comes to courtship and marriage with residual problems. It is the task of the man-as the head-to heal his wife, i.e. to 'save' her from what she has been. His love, his compassion, and his concern along with, and by means of, the gifts God has given him can help to heal her of the past. This can only be by the work of the Cross, i.e. by showing how Christ has dealt with her problems, so that now she is freed from them, by grace.

He also will have residual problems that need to be dealt with, and she-as 'helpmeet'-can help to heal him of his problems. This makes for a wonderful union prior to marriage.

As we have observed, fallen human flesh does not take

kindly to subordination-superordination roles, to 'head-and-body' relationships. When the husband as head is not only 'source and origin' but the one who takes responsibility towards all of life for his spouse (and, later, his children), then she respects him. The 'one-flesh' union does not take place prior to marriage, but accepting the true roles before marriage is excellent preparation.

Romance and Reality

These two words are not opposed, one to the other. Romance is part of the reality of man-woman love. The Scriptures are filled with stories of real-life romances: those of the first couple, of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and so on. Most prominent is the beautiful 'Song of Solomon'. It is no wonder that many have thought it to be an allegory of Christ and his Bride, but almost certainly it was a song of true romance. Even so it conveys the same love and adoration known by Christ and his Church.

We have said that there is no mystique of sex, but there is certainly plenty of mystery in the man-woman love experience. The writer of Proverbs 30:18-19 said:

*Three things are too wonderful for me;
four I do not understand:
the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a serpent on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a maiden.*

The expressions of love in courtship are all part of training-very pleasant training at that!-for marriage. This is not, however, a lead-up to sexual union. What

is often called 'petting' is in fact preliminary sex-play, and must be kept to the marital arena. Couples put themselves under the pressure of passion. In courtship there is 'meeting' but not 'mating'. 'Meeting' ends at the marriage service, and 'mating' begins. 'Helpmeeting' and 'headshipping' precede marriage but do not come into full play until marriage. Where passion is aroused the man must use his preliminary 'headship' to prevent them both succumbing to passion, and the woman must use her preliminary 'helpmeetship' likewise. Passion has a habit of sweeping people away, so that preliminary sex-play before marriage is best left well alone! This does not mean that affection cannot be expressed.

If the partners have any doubt as to the course they are taking in their passionate love, they ought to think of The Man and The Woman, and ask themselves how those Two would act in their courtship for here is the true pattern and model.

Courtship and Vocation

Whilst courting is the time for exploring each other, as also for mutual adulation, it should also be spent discussing the future which will follow marriage. 'Vocation' is one of the key themes to consider. In one sense Man was created only for vocation. True vocation is doing the will of God, both in the personal sense, and in the corporate and collective sense, for the human race has been created and called to serve God in His plan for His universe. This is seen in Genesis 1:28f., 9:1-7, and Psalm 8:3f.

The text of Genesis 1:28 is 'And God blessed them,

and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ' Without God's blessing Man could not do this task. With the blessing he must do it. Marriage cannot be thought of apart from God's vocation.

In I Peter 3:7 the writer speaks of the couple as being 'joint heirs of the grace of life'. They have a second mandate from God, namely to preach the Gospel to all the nations, and to bring them to the obedience of faith to Christ. So then these two vocations must be in mind. If a marriage is only for procreation and 'the mutual companionship, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other', then it stops short of vocation and will never be wholly fulfilling.

The vocations each has taken up in life must be considered in the light of the primary vocation. They may easily be part of it. Also the vocation of being both a husband and head, a wife and body, must be taken into consideration. Courtship can be a time when both pray together and come to know God's will in the matter.

The Time of Courtship

We suppose that courtship is mostly associated with the time of engagement, yet many couples commence their relationship even years before that official event. As always a good guide to length of courtship is that of the True Man and the True Woman. The Father planned their courtship before time. It was an 'arranged' marriage, and worked out very well. It certainly was not a hasty thing,

or precipitated by passion. In one sense it will have taken all of time for preparation of the 'marriage of the Bride and the Lamb'. True love was proved, long even before the engagement brought about by the Atonement and the outpouring of the Spirit. Courtship then should be 'long enough'!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

LOVE AND COURTSHIP-II

INTRODUCTION

We now come to the practices of the relationships between man and woman. What we need to see is that the Christian view of marriage is derived from the Hebrew-Christian writings, and has to be understood in the light of centuries of tradition, and culture, much of which it has itself created. For example, Christian weddings are generally held in churches, and this is a tradition. So, too, is the use of the celebrant who is a pastor or minister.

Marriage, The Parents, The Breaking Of Old Ties, And The Making Of New Ones

The wedding day is when the parents, having agreed to the union of their children, now affirm that at the ceremony. A western custom has been for the father of

the bride to bring her and give her to the bridegroom, and this is witnessed by the bridegroom's parents. There is a sense in which the bride and bridegroom have cut their ties with the parents, but this must not be understood as having severed themselves from their parents, but as setting off on their own venture, i.e. setting up their own home, and, hopefully, family unit. This is a relational event rather than something of distancing themselves geographically from the parents. The parents must see it this way also, and not seek to hold or direct the new couple. Where this is done the parents of both can be helpful to the new couple, but such help has to be invited.

If the parents insist on treating their married children as immature, or refuse emotionally to let them go, then they interfere dangerously with the maturing of the new marriage. It will be certain that somewhere back in their own marriage a parent refused to let one (or both) of them go. This shows immaturity in the parents, sadly enough. It not only causes misery to the married children, but also to the parents.

Courting, Love, and Adoration

Modern cynicism says, 'Then they were married, and lived happily ever after-for a while!'. Modern deterministic psychology has sent us into terror telling us that unhappy events in our childhood will have blighted us, and make it nigh impossible for our marriage to succeed. In an age when almost one out of every three marriages ends in divorce, separation or in continuing misery, this seems to be the case, even though we doubt

that childhood events necessarily have a lot to do with it (human beings if they wish can be very resilient). Genesis 1:28 says, 'God blessed them, and God said . . .'. God's blessing is upon coupling, upon marriage. His blessing is bliss. Given in the fact that we live in a world where all are sinners-to one degree or another-marriage opens up joys and riches of living that are indescribable. When the man cried, 'She is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones!', he knew the joy of utter union.

There can be no question about what is the richest basis to courting and marriage. It is the love of God which, when it comes to human beings, is 'the expulsive power of a new affection' driving out former bitterness, hatred and anger, the things which endanger marital union, even though they did not arise within the marriage itself. To come to marriage being cleared of the past, cleansed from guilts and failures, is to set a good foundation for married love. Love not only clears the past from a person, but it also is the power to help overcome the hurdles which confront all marriages.

On the positive side of active love he (or she) has not lived who has not revelled in 'The Song of Solomon'. What a story for young lovers-those who are courting, and those who are married. Nor is it for young lovers alone. It is for all who would love. No wonder commentators have said 'It is the bliss of The Man and The Woman', as though such joy and rapture could not be for common or garden Man, or for a man and a woman who are sinners. It may well apply to The Man and The Woman, but, in fact, it was written of a man and a woman, and written by them for all who would have

true bliss. How these two adore each other! How free they are in their love! Yet their love is not sheer lustiness; it is admiration, adoration, 'one-flesh' union. The statement 'He blessed them', will mean 'He blessed them with the gifts which make for such enriching union'. These are the elements which can be present, especially in a godly marriage.

Sexual experience has too often been associated with impurity. Chastity is not dissolved by the act of marriage. Indeed marriage helps to preserve it. What we call 'virginity' is not synonymous with chastity. Chastity is simply purity, and married couples can have the richest satisfaction in sexual experience without losing purity. Unfortunately it seems endemic in human beings to identify the sexual act with some element of impurity, and so to see abstinence or asceticism as highly spiritual. This is not the case. The body was created by God and is not impure per se. Dualism, as it is found in many Eastern religions and Greek thinking, has persuaded human beings to see sexuality as human impurity. This accounts for the disgust some spouses experience in marriage.

It needs to be noted again that bawdy humour, and a dishonouring of the genitalia by giving them obscene or undignifying names is an extremely harmful practice. This sort of thing may well be an expression of anger against God as He has created the universe, and an attempt to denigrate Him. Those who practice obscenity and pornography are undoubtedly striving to find fulfilment in illicit experiences, but are simply compounding their problems. The purification of redemptive love can set the human race back upon its original course, and lead it to true shalom and marital bliss. It can regenerate a

marriage, and equip a family to face the difficulties that confront it in an imperfect world.

These are the given riches which true humans explore whether they are in Christ or not. If in Christ then so much the better! There is no essential need for any two to fear their union may fall apart. Those in Christ have been blessed by the love of God which He has poured into their hearts by the hearty Holy Spirit, who brings the reality of that love. Sexual happiness can be the experience of those who live in the love of the Father.

Marriage and Vocation

We have said that we must not think of God having gender with sexual connotation. He does not procreate, but creates. Man does not create-although there is a secondary sense in which he is creative-but procreates. The mandate God gave Man to be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it is the whole task for the whole humanity. Marriage is not something deigned for two to become one to the exclusion of other things. Procreation is part of marriage, and without it-when it is possible-marriage is contradicted in its reality. The selfish use of 'the mutual companionship, help and comfort' will ultimately turn to emptiness.

Even so, the vocational thrust of marriage is not fulfilled with having children. Marriage is linked with all elements of the vocational mandate. The marriage which is not going somewhere is going nowhere! To have a home, comfort, security, and mutual fellowship can be

most selfish. These things need to be shared. The gifts and talents, capacities for love and friendship, as also the caring for the human race are what a true marriage is all about.

Given this, if all this activity springs from, and ministers only to, Man on the horizontal level, then it is not good enough. Love comes from God to us, through Christ and his redemption, and it moves out, from God, through us, to the world. In one, both the 'creational' and the 'redemptional' mandates are fulfilled, and marriage is strengthened and gathers integrity. The vast resources God has given in His creation, and in grace and love, can be utilized in a most needy world.

What of the individual vocations of the two spouses? Does not a woman have as much a right as man to carve out for herself her own vocation? It is difficult to answer such a question if the prevailing mood of each spouse is, 'I have a right to this, and I have a right to that! Why should I sacrifice myself for him/her?'. Vocation is given to them as 'one flesh'. Doubtless each has vocation, but primarily they have it together. Human vocations can be blended where love and respect are mutual, but the moment the spirit of 'my rights!' enters, then the marriage union has a dark shadow across it. A dustman can be married to a queen, and both have joy though their vocations differ, but the question is not a matter of 'rights', but of knowing God has brought them together, and that personal vocations comport with the will and purpose of God for this couple. The individualistic carving out by each of 'my vocation' may bring division, separation and loneliness, for which success in that vocation may be little compensation.

JOINT HEIRS OF THE GRACE OF LIFE

Paul and Peter put forth similar ideas regarding marriage. Paul recommends wives to be subject to their husbands, and asks older women to help younger women to be submissive to their spouses (Titus 2:4-5). Paul lays primary emphasis upon the husband loving his wife, nourishing and cherishing her, and giving himself up for her, where that is necessary.

Doubtless husbands and wives bring to their marriages their residual problems, factors that have influenced them to take up certain attitudes, and experiences which have wounded them, some of which have inspired anger and bitterness. Ideally the true husband will help to redeem his wife from these, as part of his loving leadership of the pair. If the Husband is the redeemer of his Wife, so should all husbands be. Of course no human person can redeem another, but each can bring Christ's redemption to the needy situation, and take a part in healing the wife of her residual problems. Likewise, because the husband brings his residual problems, she, as his helpmeet, can help him to draw from Christ the redemption he needs for his situation. This mutual help increases the experience of love and respect, and greatly strengthens the marriage.

Peter speaks of the husband's care of his wife, saying, 'live considerately with your wives, bestowing honour on the woman as the weaker vessel, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life'. The biblical principle of honour is, 'Honour be to whom honour is due'. The wife is no less an heir to the grace of life than is the husband. She deserves full honour. Peter calls her 'the weaker vessel', but he does not call her 'a weak vessel'. For any

who think a wife is a weak vessel, then that one should read Proverbs 31:10ff.! Each human being is weak in that he or she needs to depend upon God, but the husband must not lose respect for his wife because in some things she is not as constitutionally strong as he is.

The phrase 'the grace of life' is a rich one. It does not mean, primarily, 'the grace of created life', for Man was given that without grace. We may call it God's gift of life, but it is eternal life which is 'the grace of life'. Whilst believers have eternal life already, they do not come into its full possession until they pass from this present world to be with Christ. Peter's statement 'joint heirs' or 'heirs together' must mean that they are now living the life that has come to them by grace, and not only by creation. It must then be the life that covers all things such as relationships, procreation and nurturing of children, participating in God's plan and His vocation for them. In other words there is no part of their joint life which is not under God.

It also means that they mutually live in hope, looking forward to inheriting all things, that which Peter has called 'the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (I Pet. 1:13), i.e. the great gifts of resurrection to life, full sonship of the Father, glorification and eternal vocation as 'kings and priests unto God'. Such a marriage is certainly oriented to the ultimate, which is most dynamic for present living.

Peter also says concerning true mutuality of living, 'that your prayers be not hindered'. He reveals that husband and wife live in the atmosphere of prayer. For the woman not being subject to her husband-having 'the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit'-and the

husband not being considerate to his wife-loving her and bestowing honour upon her-means prayer cannot flow or be effective. Prayer is indispensable to good married life.

MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION

We have mentioned this factor-procreation. The husband-wife 'one-flesh' union is with a view to the opening up of new life, and new relations. A couple may be selfish. They may fear the coming of a third-or more-into their relationship. Yet the first relationship will wither if it remains selfish. Of course where it is not possible to have children, the matter is not the same. Where it is possible to have children then this adventure should not be decided selfishly, upon purely economic lines. To be man and woman is to desire to procreate, and enter on the joy-and trials-of parenthood.

Some years ago in a university in Victoria, Australia, a number of avant garde staff personnel, including professors, had themselves sterilized for they said they feared to bring children into the frightening world of today. From the time of the Fall, the world of humanity has never been other than frightening. The horrific things of sinful human beings-'Man's inhumanity to man'-cannot be described, yet where is the courage and human grit when it gives away to hopelessness and despair and, finally, cynicism? Are children not worth battling for? Is there nothing rich in the cut and thrust of life, in the adventure of fighting evil elements for the sake of our children? Have we lost the capacity to suffer in and for love?

One wonders if terrible regret has not since visited some of those who saw life amongst sinners as only grim, and even despicable.

We have said that God is the archetypal Father. All relationships issue from the Godhead because God is love, God is Father, God is Son, and God is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Man in the image of God-and especially as he, through redemption, is baptized 'into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit', i.e. one Name-is greatly energized relationally. Fatherhood and motherhood which issue from God, and which result in family, contain the greatness of being truly human. Life is given, is brought into this world, is nurtured, nourished, cherished, and is brought to maturity, for the cycle to begin afresh in the children who have been brought to responsible adulthood. Only those who are parents understand the richness of this.

Nor is being parents all there is to life. Being brothers and sisters never ceases to be a rich part of vocation. Being aunts and uncles is also essential to the whole spread and complex of relationships. Being grandparents is another essential calling. This 'surround' of relationships is what fosters life and maturity in the children to which it ministers. Again, the couple which becomes exclusive within itself is denying itself the richest things of living. It also endangers its own relationship. Later it may be a sad matter to have no grown children to attend old age, and no less sad to be without the joy and chatters, the tears and tempests of grandchildren.

Most of all, those who deny the relational thrust within them of fatherhood, and motherhood-and for that matter the thrust of all other relational elements-fail to

understand what God is about in His design to make us His sons. The adventure of the True Man-Messiah-is never understood. The beauty and function of the, The Woman as Bride, Wife and Mother, does not touch the heart. So much of a human being slumbers when it denies the passions and pains of these vocations. When relational suffering is thrust away by selfishness then the spirit of human beings withers, and their great gifts atrophy, or become only the compulsive stuff of that ambition where 'fame is the spur'. Nothing great is left when the person withers in the death of personal selfishness.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE MARRIAGE- HUSBAND AND WIFE

THE WEDDING— ARCHETYPE AND ECTYPE

Normally the marriage ceremony is a time of joy. For the Christian community the climax of history is the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. It is also the pattern for the true Christian wedding. The Christian couple would desire their wedding to be the ectype of the archetype in that the Bride is adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). On the one hand she 'has made herself ready', and on the other 'it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure' (Rev. 19:7-8). This purity, of course, means she is chaste, virginal, and wholly pure. By grace she is properly adorned. Also she has all 'the glory of God' (Rev. 21:11). She is matched by the Warrior King who has subdued all the nations, has proclaimed the kingdoms of this world as having become the Kingdom of his Father. Man is about to be united with the Son of God, and through him, with

God Himself, the eternal Father.

The human wedding, when truly Christian, reflects the joy of the True Marriage. Indeed it draws its reality and power from that marriage. Two thousand years of rich Christian tradition have hammered out beautiful liturgies, which at once teach, instruct, and bind the two main participants to a life of irreversible union. The value of true love (agape) and preparation for the day of marriage is now seen. Its meaning, also, is caught up in the traditional liturgy.

THE MEANING OF THE CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE

In the western tradition the bridegroom, his attendants, and the ministering celebrant await the bride at the chancel steps. She, for her part, processes towards her partner, aided by her father and her attendants. She remains separated somewhat from him whilst there is-perhaps-an opening hymn, and the celebrant has addressed the congregation. Marriage almost universally is a societal affair, witnessed by the community. It is not something 'done in a corner'. It is public, for the community is affirming that marriage is part of its life and custom. It is significant before a witnessing and affirming congregation.

The celebrant explains the nature of marriage, i.e. 'an honourable state of life, instituted from the beginning by God himself, signifying to us the spiritual union that is between Christ and his Church'. It is then explained that Christ's presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, very

early in his ministry, represented his first sign of the Kingdom of God. Because of its nature, marriage must not be entered on mere impulse or passion, but thought-fully, and only when its significance is understood.

The celebrant then sets forth the three main purposes of marriage: (i) for the procreation of children, and for the caring and training of them 'in the Lord'; (ii) so that chastity might not be impaired by passion, but find its fulfilment within marriage; and (iii) for 'the mutual companionship, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity'.

When these three purposes have been enunciated, the minister adjures the couple not to be married unlawfully, and bids the congregation show cause-if there be cause -why the two may not be joined in holy wedlock. After this he addresses first the bridegroom and then the bride in almost identical terms.

The bridegroom affirms that he will live with the woman 'in the holy state of matrimony' and that he will 'love her, cherish her, honour and protect her, in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her' as long as they both shall live.

She affirms her intention in the same words, adding only that she will 'obey him'.

At this point, in reply to the celebrant's question, 'Who gives this woman to be married to this man?' the father (or his representative) gives the woman's right hand into the hand of the minister. In effect he hands his daughter over to this intermediary-the minister-to marry to the man whom he-the father-has received to be his son-in-law. The moment of the betrothal and wedding has come.

The minister, having placed the woman's hand in the man's, and later the man's in the woman's, leads both partners now to make their wedding vows, i.e. each takes the other

to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better for worse,
for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
until we are parted by death.

At the termination of these promises each says, 'And to this I pledge you my word'. Thus the honour of each participant is now at stake. Out of the constraint of love they have promised, and the constraint of love must keep them in union. The man says, 'to love and to cherish', and the woman says, 'to love and to obey'. In some services the word 'obey' is not used because it is thought to impair the equality of the two. Some see 'headship' and 'bodyship' as the truth, but do not see the need for a husband ever to give a command and for a wife to obey.

At this point the bridegroom, placing the wedding ring upon his bride's finger-the fourth of her left hand-, says,

With this ring I wed you,
with my body I worship you;
with all that I am and all that I have
I honour you:
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

If the ectypal ceremony points to the archetypal wedding, then the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb will be most moving. In any case the human wedding, wrought on this earth, amidst the congregation would not be more beautiful.

The celebrant now prays over the betrothal and wedding of the two. He prays down blessing upon the couple, taking the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca as a rich example, and prays for their continuance in marriage. Having done this he joins the right hands of the bridegroom and bride, saying,

*Those whom God has joined together
let not man put asunder.*

In solemn and joyful words he then proclaims the two to be husband and wife 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'. The two are now joined-for ever-in this world of time and space.

The rest of the service is taken up with the saying of a selected psalm teaching by means of the sermon, the reading of Ephesians 5:20-33, a short liturgy with the Lord's Prayer, then final prayers for the newly-wed couple, and the benediction. Whilst all this is primarily for the couple, it is also for the congregation, for in the service there is a reminder to married folk of their own vows and promises, there is an encouragement for those who live in hope of marriage, and-best of all-a reminder of the mind of the Father and Christ, of His gifts of creation and redemption, especially as they relate to love, marriage and family.

AFTER THE WEDDING

Weddings have always been the richest of social occasions known and practised by human beings. On the whole they are times of relaxation, joy, and conviviality. Whilst some wedding receptions are stiff, formal, and even a bit pompous, yet such are rare. It is the day of the bride and bridegroom, and-only a little less-the day of the parents who have spent years of training their children for such an event.

After the wedding there is the honeymoon. So many manuals have been written on the way the two should meet each other on the first night, how they should take into loving consideration their tiredness after months of preparation, consequent emotional exhaustion, and trepidation at the new event. Doubtless two sane people can benefit from such manuals, but common sense-along with romance-can generally prevail.

Someone has said that the honeymoon is the kindling which gets the fire going. Certainly it is a time when both can be generous, and allow their worship of each other to flourish and be free. The strong union of the True Man and the True Woman can be both the inspiration and source of the new marriage. Some of the richest memories for the years ahead can be built up in this time of true union. It is surprising how much can be accomplished in the period known as 'the honeymoon'.

It is also sad how much bitterness and anger can be generated by an inadequate honeymoon. Much of what we have mentioned in our section on courtship can explain

the reasons for deficient beginnings to the new marriage. We need not go over them, but they underline the need to be well set up for this most important time of life.

GETTING INTO MARRIED LIFE

As we have mentioned, marriage manuals may benefit some who read them. Most simple of all is the life of agape, that practical love that has redeemed us, which fills us with the Father (Eph. 3:19; 4:6), with Christ himself (Col. 2:9), and with the beloved Spirit (Rom. 5:5). Manuals often tell us-detail by detail-how to behave towards each other, until sometimes it might be thought that being married is not so much an adventure as the hazarding of one's life amidst the perils of two personalities!

The Practice of True Agape

If the courtship has been a practical course of true agape, and the wedding and honeymoon have been the consummation of this, then marriage itself must be a wonderful exercise. The new coming together of two people who have come through the regeneration of the 'one-flesh' union, opens up the vistas of the 'yet-to-be'. The two are 'joint heirs of the grace of life', i.e. they have a life together which includes not only the renewal of the original life given at creation, but the life of grace, the experience of redemption which sets them for an inheritance guarded and kept for them in heaven. They are legatees of eternal life! Knowing this is their identity they can tackle the business-together-of married life in this world.

Peter speaks of the wife's 'gentle and quiet spirit' which has a loving submission to her husband, whilst the husband constantly considers his wife, i.e. has her in mind perpetually, not seeing her as a servant, but giving her honour. The two live in the true practice of effective prayer.

Agape and Vocation

Paul sees the husband as loving his wife, 'nourishing and cherishing her' for she is in very fact his body, and only the morbid despise and neglect their bodies. This marvellous agape-mostly unknown to the world-is not just some high-flown and airy-fairy romantic love. It is love which gets down to the nitty-gritty of life. This is the true romance of life, where the Father is the Head of Christ, and Christ is the head of the husband. How much easier, then, for the husband to be the head of the wife, taking the responsibility which is his, loving her, caring for her, whilst she shares with him in the vocation God has given them, both for the created world, and for the lost who desperately need redemption. If a marriage-as we previously noted-is considered apart from vocation, then it is doomed to become less than a full marriage.

MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION

One of the things we did not mention under the heading of 'Courtship', was the preparation for having children. This, of course, ought to be considered at the time of courtship. The world about us swings from enjoining

'zero population growth' to urging 'population growth'. Often the considerations are economic, social, and even ecological. God's command was to 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth'. There is nothing of 'zero population growth' in this mandate, but then God also gave Man intelligence to use in His service. The fear of over-populating the world, and draining the resources available to mankind, often dictate caution. Some point out that it is not the resources which are lacking but the unselfish distribution of them.

Procreation was given as the prime purpose of marriage. There is a whole Christian philosophy behind this principle. Man and woman do not combine only for mutual love, sociality, and help, but to participate in the amazing miracle of birth. God is the God of creation: man and woman, made in the image of God, are called to be procreators. Every birth is a special miracle, and each birth is unique. The coming of a new human creature into the world is a marvellous happening. To be a father and a mother is the highest estate of human living that one can achieve. Sweetest of all sayings in our ears is the cry 'Mother!', the cry 'Father!'. It is the highest cry granted to human beings who can turn their faces upwards and say, 'Oh, Father!'.

Procreation and the Question of Security

When in marriage the new couple thinks mostly in terms of comfort and security, there can be many pitfalls. What is security? What is reasonable comfort? In many the unconscious fear of insecurity is really rooted in the fear of death. We battle all our lives to attain security

because of the dread of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 says this fear keeps us in bondage. Someone said, 'We fear death not because we have to die, but because we deserve to die!'. I John 4:18 puts it, 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love'.

When the having of children is put second to effecting security, then there is something missing in the marriage. One can never achieve security by amassing wealth and possessions or achieving goals in human vocations and skills. These are all part of life, but are not primary. Selfish couples who desire only each other may enter into an intolerable loneliness in middle age and later. We have already pointed out that the 'surround' of grandparents -and even great-grandparents-along with aunts and uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters, to say nothing of innumerable friends, makes for the warmest and most truly social of lives.

I have seen many marriages die and wither, when, after some years, a wedded couple has refused to have children. They have denied their deepest drive of natural life. Passion blows itself out where the procreative drive is denied. Doubtless there is a present fear of having children, a distaste for rearing them, and a deficient sociality. Most probably this is because of bad experiences with parents and others. Rebellion against authority deprives us of the ability to exercise it. Only the person who is under authority can speak with authority and exercise it, not for selfish reasons, but in the service of others.

Procreation, then, is God's most wonderful gift. Training children to be part of the ongoing plan of God, and bringing them to maturity is the richest occupation we can know.

The responsive love of the children, their upward growth to maturity, and the flow of grandchildren is reward indeed. Given in that there may be 'black sheep' in the family, and we may experience much anguish because of our own ineptness as parents, and the rebellion that is part of the human scene, the battle is still good. It is better than the sterility a couple may conscript.

THE MATTER OF NATURAL CHILDLESSNESS

No marriage necessarily suffers because of the inability to have children. Whilst modern medical research has made it possible to have children by in-vitro fertilization, and whilst other encouragements are in the offing, childlessness is no impediment to a true marriage. The opportunity to adopt one child or more is also a marvellous thing. The word 'adoption' (cf. Rom. 9:4 AV; Gal. 4:4-6) often seems somewhat cold to many ears, but it is the opportunity for parental love which is not one whit behind the parenting of one's own flesh and blood.

If adoption cannot be effected for any reason, the marriage of an unselfish couple can prove to be very rich. As with people called 'single', the couple can give their energies and gifts to the creational and redemptional vocations God has given them. For this we need every-one, whether married or not, for 'butchers and bakers and candlestick makers' are all required. Childless people can 'mother' and 'father', especially where parents look for such help. Our own children remember with affection their missionary 'aunts' and 'uncles' who cared for them in

schools, and even in the home when-for one reason or another-their parents had to be absent or busy.

THE MATTER OF 'HEAD' AND 'BODY'

Elsewhere in this book we have said that the terms 'equality' and 'inequality' are not applicable to relationships. As regards essential personhood, it can be said that all persons are equal before God. As regards the ontological nature and orders of the universe there is functional headship and subordination. Headship is not for itself, but for the 'body' for which it functions. The two are one, otherwise 'head' and 'body' are dismembered. The fallen human view that 'head' is superior, and 'body' is inferior is utterly false, and is born out of a hatred of essential functionality, or a desire to grasp authority.

The head and the body operate together, as one. Nothing is sadder than to see a head operate without oneness with the body. It constitutes a bodiless head-a hideous and unnatural monstrosity. Likewise a headless body is a repulsive entity. What we have called 'the ontological joy of true functionality' sets the couple on the road of joyful fulfilment, and purposeful vocation. Being one is a pleasant and fruitful operation.

CONCLUSION TO THE MATTER OF MARRIAGE

Endless manuals can be written on the matter of marriage. For the most part of human history the race managed

-amazingly enough-without them. Presumably it can still do so. The Scriptures are warmly helpful, and we can keep scanning them. On the whole marriages can be moderately successful when they are in Christ and his Father, and led by the Holy Spirit. Because Christian marriage is in the wider context of the Christian community-the church-then there is a rich sociality which can aid them.

If we are readers of manuals and even books such as this present one, then we had better beware of using models, or of being caught up in that kind of wariness which makes relationships in marriage look like cats treading on hot bricks! If we need patterns and paradigms then let us use the one of Christ and his Bride, the Husband, Wife, and the Family. They will be enough both as example and source. Far from being theoretical, merely theological, and highly idealistic, they constitute the true archetype of which we are by creation and redemption the natural ectypes.

Marriage can be a blessed thing.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

LIVING AS SINGLE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION: BEING SINGLE PERSONS

The term 'single person' can be applied to many, i.e. unmarried men and women, those who have been divorced and have not been remarried, and those who are widows or widowers. In the course of time young single persons may come to marriage, the divorced may remarry, widows and widowers may marry again, and older single persons, hitherto unmarried may come to marriage in middle or old age. It is difficult to say that any person will remain single permanently. In some cases persons have handicaps which seem to indicate they will not marry, and there are those who are sexual deviants and who do not seek marriage.

The term 'single' is inadequate. It seems to indicate that being married is the norm for humanity, and there is something lacking in the state of not being married. To have to say to people, 'I am not married', seems to imply

that one has missed out on what is best. It may even suggest, 'I have something deficient in me which is why I never made marriage'. Often people express open pity, saying with cutting encouragement, 'I can't understand how you never married. You are so attractive, such a wonderful person, and you would make a good wife (husband) for anyone'. The implications can be, 'You must have missed out by accident', or, 'You just didn't try', or even, 'Is there something missing, something lacking in you that you never made it?'. None of these statements is very helpful.

The term 'single' is also deficient because it implies that married persons are 'double'. Every person is a single person, even if united to another in marriage. David speaks of 'the secret heart' (Ps. 51:6), and seems to indicate that no matter how much we are joined to another, there is part of us which still remains private. In any case each person is 'discrete', i.e. is a person in himself or herself, and never merges with another so that nothing distinctly remains. Psalm 139:13-18, Revelation 2:17, and 3:12 indicate that both in time and eternity every person is distinctive and discrete and will remain so.

IS BEING SINGLE NORMAL?

Everyone is normal who is normal. Single persons can be normal, subnormal, or abnormal, and married persons likewise. The question is really asking, 'Is not being single a deficient state of being in some way? Is not the norm of life the married state? If one has not consummated a union in the sexual act, has not one

missed out on what it is to be truly human?'

The answer to this is, 'No! To be truly and fully human does not require one to be married, or to have had sexual experience at some point in life'. Sexuality, like everything else a person has, is a gift of God, and not all gifts have to be exercised only in one way. Whilst sexuality is confined to masculinity and femininity, masculinity and femininity are not confined to sexuality. Christ himself never married, nor did he have sexual experience, but his humanity as a male was most dynamic. History is packed with persons who never married but were no less masculine or feminine for that, and no less dynamic than the greatest who did marry. On many grounds we would have to conclude that one can be normal if married, and if not married. This is not to say that many who never marry would not like to marry, or many who have, have not wished it had never happened. As in all things the operation of principles can differ from person to person.

ON BEING A HUMAN

The whole question of being single or married is based on being human. When God said of the first man, 'It is not good for man to be alone,' he did not imply loneliness, for in fact the man was occupied with life richly, as he named the creatures. 'It is not good [*tob*]', virtually means 'It is not functional. It is not what is intended for the man'. It could almost be said, 'It is not ontological'. Man must have his mate, and they must meet. They must first meet, and then mate. To be alone is not, necessarily, to be lonely. God did not create woman for man so that

he would not be lonely, but that he would-with her-be functional in creation. Together they would have lordship over all things.

Being human is to be oneself first in relation to God, then with others, and oneself. Being human is to be a person in relation to other persons, part of the vast body of humanity. To be an individual is to be 'an island unto oneself', and to be a person is to be more fully what we are in the context of other persons, i.e. all persons insofar as we meet them and interrelate with them.

'Alone' is Not 'Lonely'

We are children of parents, parents of children; we are grandchildren, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, members of the body of the church, members of our community, children of the Father, God, related to Christ as Lord and the Holy Spirit as Leader. To say a single person is alone is to say that only those with a husband (or wife) are people who are not alone! All human beings-from the cradle to the grave-have vocation, and-along with others-ministry within the creation. How then can anyone be alone? Of course anyone can be lonely, for loneliness springs from failure to relate to others, and to think of them even before one's own self. Loneliness is trying to live within the orbit of oneself. One can have parents, be married, have children, and friends, and yet be lonely, for loneliness is an attitude of the mind. To be human is to be able to make choices, and to be responsible for them, i.e. to be constantly accountable. Hence life is so full that loneliness does not arise from any aloneness. Life will be as full as we who

are humans desire it to be.

Not being fully human is to be angry, resentful, hurt, wounded, self-concerned, and to feel that by being single God and the world has somehow neglected, or even worked against one. To be human is naturally to desire a partner, a spouse, and an intimate companion, yet that same humanity has built into it the ability to accept all the events of life, and not think that God ever works adversely, i.e. against us, personally. We know that God works in all things for our good, who love Him. The Judge of all the earth always does right.

What Matters Most is Vocation

In the matter of being human what matters most is vocation. That is from our point of view, but from God's point of view what matters most is His will. Our vocation is really, then, the work of fulfilling His will. Being married or unmarried does not prevent us from doing that will. We simply do His will in the context of our present state of being. Paul even suggests that the single state is best when it comes to certain circumstances (I Cor. 7:25-40), but he recognizes that both single and married states are valid.

What, Then, of God's Will?

What worries some single people is that they not only would wish to be married, but that there are many eligible males and females who seem to make no move towards marrying. They wonder how it can be God's will for all these folk to avoid marriage, when a change in attitude

could alter things radically! The matter of God's will is certainly difficult for humans to fathom. We see in the Bible that God desires the very best for all human creatures, but that Man's sin fights that will. His will is ultimately worked out, but human sin causes much misery along the way. Every single person must see whether or not he (or she) is fighting God's will in the matter of marriage.

Curiosity and speculation are human elements which God does not wish to satisfy. All of us are His servants, and He has put upon His people His marvellous constraint of love. Only this can make us wish to do His will, no matter how it seems to be working out for us.

The pain that some persons in the single state experience comes from seeing God as uncaring, and unconcerned at their state. God certainly cares, and is concerned. Those who see God as uncaring should change their minds, and drop their anger. There are many married folk who are angry with God for letting them marry! They would rather be unmarried than have their present partner. God is in a 'no win' situation.

Love and gratitude to God for creating, redeeming, and sustaining us should be enough for us to trust Him for our lives, however adversely they may seem to be working out. Hard as it may sound in our modern ears, the pot must not complain against the Potter.

**THE WAYS IN WHICH MARRIED PERSONS
MAY UNDERSTAND THE UNMARRIED**

Paul teaches that the single state is honourable, and no

less than the state of marriage. When it was said, 'in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them', then each is made in the image of God. When Paul said, 'woman [the wife] is the glory of man [her husband]', he did not say she was the image of her husband. The husband cannot be husband without his wife, and he is more husband-or less-through the measure (great or small) of her (wifely) glory. A woman in the single state is no less the image of God than the woman who is married. The married woman is in the image and glory of God, and is the glory of her husband. The single man is no less the image and glory of God, and the question of having the glory of a wife does not arise.

Even more, we all need to see that all masculinity is related to all femininity, across the board. Whilst marriage constitutes a special bond of male-female relationships, yet mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters, uncles and nieces, aunties and nephews, and cousins all have male-female relationships. In the vocation of the entire human race masculinity and femininity work with each other to achieve the mandate of God. There may be some hazards where sexuality obtrudes or intrudes, but apart from these masculinity and femininity together make the male-female entity a rich prospect and a functional operation.

Married persons who understand these things will not have pity for those unmarried; nor will they be condescending, or patronizing to them. That will allow persons in the single state to live with dignity. At the same time single people have so much to give to married couples and their families whilst married people can well

share their families with them. Together much can be accomplished, and rich sociality be enjoyed.

THE NITTY-GRITTY OF THE (SO-CALLED) 'SINGLES'

When we come to look at people in the single state we discover there is quite a variety. There are spinsters and bachelors, both young, middle aged, and old. There are widows and widowers. There are single mothers and single fathers, some resulting from not marrying, and some from divorce. Some are persons with deviant sexual attitudes and/or practice. Some have physical or cerebral handicaps which make marriage difficult to obtain, or inadvisable to happen.

It seems that almost none of these could not-one day-reach the state of marriage. Apart from heavily-handicapped persons marriage could happen at any time. Unless a person has been shown very clearly by God that marriage is not in His plan for him (or her), no one should conclude that is the case. The person who sincerely wishes to do the will of God will leave the matter with Him, and get on with the life of vocation. Some 'singles' meet together for fellowship and friend-ship, and this is surely a good thing. It does, however, have its problems. It may deflect people from realizing they are persons, and make them think of themselves only as 'single persons'. This could be unhelpful. Likewise meeting together for mutual condolence may change the single state into one of lesser dignity and importance than the married one. It may also induce mutual pity and lead

to liaisons that are not based in healthy love.

We need to keep seeing the nobility and dignity of both states, and to let them be, and get on with life, not seeing each other as 'singles' or 'doubles', or any such thing. What we can do or be goes far beyond our imagination.

CONCLUSION TO DISCUSSION OF THE SINGLE STATE

Since many of us have offended in not understanding those in the single state, some have written for it. It is to be hoped none of this writing is a guilt pay-off, nor that the idea should still linger that 'singles' are really of a lesser order-although we would not say so!-and we need to love them and help them compensate. It is best that we just see each other as persons, as humans, and as those equally under the good grace of God. For those in the married state, it is also not a matter for pity or condescension by persons in the single state. We all need carefully hear Paul's words: (i) 'let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him' (I Cor. 7:17), and (ii) 'I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content' (Phil. 4:11).

CHAPTER THIRTY

THE MATTER OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE-I

THE DEATH OF MARRIAGE— THE DYING TO DIVORCE

How does a marriage die? How can it be that two people can be so fascinated and entranced together, and the marriage wither away or even turn to great hatred and anger? The answer is that there can be many causes, and possibly none of them be clearly apparent to the persons involved.

INITIAL PREPARATION FOR A GOOD MARRIAGE

As we suggested in Chapter Twenty-six 'Love and Courtship-I', training for marriage begins in the womb of the mother, and the leadership of the father. The father

and mother represent the image of God to their children, and, in this sense, they communicate God. In reality He communicates Himself through them. Where mutual love and respect of the parents obtains, then the child can live in genuine security. It is met at the opening door of the womb with loving acceptance. This, of itself, does not guarantee the response of love, but it lays the foundation for such.

Where parents are at odds then the seeds of a marriage break-up are sown. These seeds do not inevitably germinate, take root, and result in a bitter harvest-but they can, and often do. The proportion of divorces of children from marriages where their parents have been divorced is large. Today the large number of divorces resulting from divorcees who marry again is also large. Obviously there are constitutional problems, including lack of opportunity to learn what good marriage and good parenting really is, as children tend to reproduce learned behaviour patterns.

In any given family one child may love its parents even where there are significant weaknesses and deficiencies in them, whilst another child may hate its parents, even if they are loving and warm towards it. That is the mystery of humans in a sinful world. Some seem positive, others negative. Some begin to store up anger, even in the womb, but the anger is not primarily against parents and family but-albeit unconsciously-against God. When one is angry with a fellow human being, then one is angry with God. As John would put it: 'If one can-not love the seen image of God, one's brother, then one will not love that which is reflected by the image, i.e. God'.

**SOME CAUSAL FACTORS
THAT CAN LEAD TO DIVORCE**

Anger increases with the years, compounding itself. There are four major elements which feed anger, and, for that matter, rebellion. These are parental upbringing, heredity, environment and circumstances. No person has control of these four things, but many angry people- consciously or unconsciously-see them as controlled by God, and ask why He has not controlled them better than he has! Anger with parents-as we have said-is virtually anger with the image of God. Likewise disobedience to authority is virtually disobedience to God, although it is rarely seen as such.

Anger, then, is vented against the functional order of the creation, i.e. the principles of law given for Man's good. Guilt begets sin, and sin guilt, and both compound themselves, bringing misery to the human spirit, turning the conscience into a tyrant. Law and authority further infuriate the person who is in anger, and so the cycle repeats itself drearily-sin, guilt, anger, frustration, the sense of injustice, and so on, and so on. In and from this, violence is bred, whether it be in the mind, or show itself in overt action. Out of such anger come specific forms of rebellion such as rejection of one's sexuality or gender, or the use of it to exploit creation. Out of such rebellion come deviant forms of sexuality, and other deviant forms of evil such as vandalism, compulsive thieving, gluttony, alcoholism, drug-taking, gambling, and the like.

How can a person who has this anger and bitterness within himself or herself even contemplate marriage? The

answer is some see in marriage a solution to their anger and confusion. Some hope all things will turn to bliss. Others have a hidden hatred against personal and spiritual union and use the marriage to work out their bitterness and rage. The spouse of one gender may have a fixed hatred of the other gender, or even his own gender. A woman who has had hurtful experience of fatherhood may develop a hatred of anyone masculine. She may transfer the things of her father to her husband, super-imposing them upon him, and so continue hatred of fatherhood in hatred of husbandhood. There are endless variations on such themes. There, then, are some of the contributing facts which make for a breakup of marriage. Some parents work out their anger against their parents by making their own children suffer. Even where feminism, masculism, and sexual deviations are not present-as such-anger can kill what love was once present. Sexual passion can turn to sexual hatred where marriage was founded only upon it.

That these things exist today no one can deny. The sad evidence stares us in the face. A vast army of counsellors seeks to be of help in these situations. Many-often most -of these counsellors have themselves been divorced, and so in many cases it is the blind trying to lead the blind or the lame the lame. The statement that those who have been through marriage that ends in divorce can now help others is not necessarily true. That many couples are incompatible is obvious, but in Christ no two human beings are necessarily incompatible. God's love can heal a person who has grown up in anger, hurt and confusion, and set him or her free to live in love with the partner of the marriage.

We have already observed that refusal of parents to let their children go can contribute to the breakdown in marriage. When the utter oneness of the couple is unable to be consummated because of the possessive love of a parent, and because that love may not be recognized for what it is, division can come, primarily because the other partner is looking for that 'one-flesh' union, and is not finding it. This factor has to be searched out and dealt with.

The present trend to have comfort and security as prime elements in a marriage may contribute to marriage breakdown. On the one hand both partners will work hard to ensure economic security and in the battle for it may well neglect each other, setting aside that intimacy which is the heart of marital joy and power. With it will often be the refusal to have children at the present-or ever-in which case the rejection of this primary functional element of marriage will bring a drying off of relationships, and the marriage will wither.

**DIVORCE IS NOT INEVITABLE:
IT CAN BE PREVENTED**

Where the truth and experience of grace is absent, it is difficult for couples to make their way through the adverse factors we have mentioned above. We repeat the proposition that until we see God as the God of grace our rebellion will not end, our dislike of authority will not cease, our submission to God's functional (moral) ways of living will not take place. If however we see God's grace we will discover it is enough for every problem.

In fact it is grace which reveals love. Love comes to us from God, and we love Him in return, at the same time simultaneously loving one another, including the partner in marriage. It is doubtful whether anything else will renew a marriage which is breaking up, except it be a good pagan form of enlightened self-interest! There is no question that often marriages of pagans do better than some Christian marriages. This is not a notch for paganism, and one against the Gospel. It is simply that many Christians receive grace, as Paul said, 'In an empty way'. They simply do not know it.

**IS DIVORCE PERMISSIBLE FOR
CHRISTIANS?**

The question itself is improper. God said to Israel, 'I hate divorce' (Mal. 2:16). Jesus said, 'It [divorce] was not so from the beginning'. The question in the last sense is asked in the same way as young people often say, 'How far can we go in petting?' meaning, 'What is permissible?'. That sort of question is legalistic. It is asking what are the limits to which we are permitted to go, when the subject should be approached from a different point of viewing it. The question ought to be asked in another way, e.g. 'Will divorce in some cases be inevitable, even though it appears that God does not favour divorce?'.
The answer to that question could well be, 'No, it is not inevitable, for broken marriages can be renewed where there is openness to God's grace, but since often there is not then marriages will break down, and the situation will appear irretrievable'.

What we have to recognize is that the Bible is not a handbook on marriage, that it does not contain legislation in regard to the marriages of Christians. It is not written specifically, 'You shall not divorce!'. It does not say, 'You shall remain married, whatever'. It does not say, 'Get divorced', 'Don't get divorced', 'Remarry', or, 'Don't remarry'. As we have said it not a law book. People who ask the question stated at the head of this section wish to find out what is permitted and not permitted. This may have an admirable quality to it, but it takes the questioner down the path of legalism.

What then-does the Bible not give information of marriage, divorce, and remarriage? It does not legislate, but it teaches the authentic principles by which we could and should-if we would-live out our lives. The positive side of marriage is the 'leaving' and 'cleaving', the 'one-flesh', the recognition that 'She is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones', the knowledge of vocation, the will of God, that two are joint heirs of eternal life, and so on. In other words the rich materials for a good marriage are present. Only the state and mind of the partners will militate against a good marriage.

If a Christian couple were to look clearly at The Man and The Woman, the true Bride and Bridegroom then they would see in a flash that divorce would be utterly impossible in the archetypal Marriage. Why then, should it not be after that fashion in the Christian marriage? Christian couples who are constituted the ectypes of the true Marriage should see that divorce must be utterly abhorrent to God. 'What therefore God has joined together let not man put asunder', is a stern a statement. Well may we ask whether, after all, this is not a piece of legislation.

The answer is, 'No! It is a warning. It is information that marriages are not created with a view to putting them asunder. They are there to be permanent in this penultimate age'.

THE CONSTRAINT THAT CONJOINS: THE CONSTRAINT THAT DIVIDES

When the Pharisees asked Jesus, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?', he answered 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so'.

Whatever the meaning of the discussion in Matthew 19:3-12, Jesus' answer makes one thing clear, i.e. that if men's hearts were not hard they would not divorce. Could it also mean that if their hearts were soft their marriages could succeed, or at least be tolerable? If the hearts of both spouses were soft, then could marriage be an excellent matter? Presumably.

If marriage is primarily a commitment, then it will always tend to legalism. True, agreement is a sensible thing. God had an agreement with Israel in the Mosaic Covenant as set out in Exodus 24. However the thrust of God's covenants-which are always unilateral-is a powerful constraint, namely love. God demands love from His people on the basis of His love to them. Hosea makes it very clear that God is married to His people on the basis of the constraint of love which he brings to that marriage. It is clear that Christ's marriage to his Bride is on the constraint of love, and this includes vocation.

It may be thought that an arranged marriage cannot be on the basis of constraining love. This need not be the case, any more than a marriage chosen by two people will necessarily succeed. Love is innate to created Man for he is in the image of God. If he will he can love, whether a marriage is arranged or not. In one sense Christ's marriage is an arranged one. Redeemed Man can love because of God's redemptive love. That love can lead down the path to blessedness, whilst hatred-the reverse of love-can equally lead down the path to dissolution of marriage. Paul's statement, 'Owe no one anything save to love', is a good maxim. Marriage can succeed. However where there is unremitting hatred, even if only on the part of one spouse, it can end in disaster. Legal divorce does not put a marriage asunder. It simply pronounces that it is asunder. Long before the divorce it may have been asunder.

Sometimes a spouse who is in the midst of marital strife discovers the grace of God in a dynamic way, and comes to understand love in a rich personal experience. Many times this has turned the tide in the relationship of the husband and wife, and the marriage has been renewed. In this sense divorce does not have to happen. Compatibility can be created by love.

IS THERE A PRINCIPLE OF DIVORCE FOR CHRISTIANS?

This is, of course, another way of asking, 'Is divorce permissible for Christians?'. Perhaps Christ would answer, 'Where hardness of heart exists divorce will happen'.

It may be as simple as that. In fact things which lead to divorce are not simple. This is shown by the fact that both spouses often argue regarding who is to blame. With them it is a matter of who is right and who is wrong. As we say, 'It takes two to tango!'.

The reasons for marriage failure may be many. The numerous facts we have mentioned above may combine to split the marriage. One may deny the other conjugal rights, mutual respect may be absent, anger and bitterness that existed pre-maritally may be dynamic emerging factors, especially if they turn to forms of cruelty of emotional and mental blackmail. Pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse (promiscuity) may overcome one or other (or both) of the partners. Deviant and perverted forms of sexuality may be present. The contributing factors may be many, so that to have to live together may be tortuous beyond toleration. When the last level of toleration has been reached then the situation is terminated. That marriage has broken, whether or not divorce has been sought or pronounced.

Where this has happened, retracing steps back through the agonizing maze is not possible. Only the miracle of grace can save and restore the marriage, and of course it can-and has, on numerous occasions. What then, of the partners in torture? Is not divorce permissible? The simple answer is that divorce is undesirable, it is unapproved by God, has always happened in history, and will go on happening whether it be 'right' or 'wrong' for it to happen.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE MATTER OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE-II

CHRIST'S MIND ON DIVORCE

The passages in which Christ discusses divorce are Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9, Mark 10:2-12, and Luke 16:18. In Mark 10:2-12 Jesus' words are unequivocal. The basis for marriage Jesus took from Genesis 1:27, 'male and female [God] created them', and Genesis 2:24, 'and [the two] become one flesh', with 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder'. Left only with that passage, divorce is unacceptable to Christ, as indeed in Matthew 5:31-32, and Luke 16:18. Whatever may be the case with non-Christians, Christians under the Lord-ship of Christ would need to submit to his will on the matter. Jesus only, ever, conformed to the word of God.

What we have to see is that God who made Man incorporated into Adam-and so humanity-the ontological principle that obtains

with The Man and The Woman, i.e. indissoluble union, calculated for the vocation of fruitfulness and that work which maintains the creation ('old' and 'new') in its true form. If we can conceive a breach with the true Bride and Bridegroom, and a renunciation of vocation, then it is possible to see marriage as temporary, or, to use P. T. Forsyth's phrase, 'leasehold marriage'. We may then, not only in regard to this ontological principle but to all ontology, negotiate with God the Creator and Lawgiver. On this basis all things must be negotiable. When we say (above) that God incorporated the ontological principle of 'one-flesh union', the text (Gen. 2:23) of the man's poem was his text, but it was only a recognition of the divine principle, not an invention of it. We then can only-if we will-recognize the principle. We cannot alter it, but we can espouse or subvert it. We are never then in a position to negotiate with God.

MARRIAGE FOR HARDNESS OF HEART IN ISRAEL

In Matthew 19:7-9, Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?'. Jesus answered, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except [not] for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery'. At first reading it seems that Jesus is saying that what Moses did was in order, but that he would not have had to have done it, had there not been hardness of heart. What Jesus is not saying is that divorce, under some circumstances is in order. Moses did not legislate for divorce: he legislated to protect the woman under the harsh custom of divorce which Jewish men had instigated and perpetuated.

Divorce is not the mind of God or Christ, and Moses' legislation was not to legislate for divorce at all, but to seek to control the nature of something which has always been, and will always be. Had there been no bill of divorcement, then women would have been in a worse situation. Not of course that they were in a good position, anyway, in regard to marriage and divorce. Even so the bill-at least partially-protected the woman as a Jewish document shows, part of which says:*

I . . . of my own free will . . . divorce thee, [name], my wife . . . so that from this time forth thou art in thine own power, and in thine own disposal . . . and mayest be married to whomsoever thou pleasest, without let or hindrance from me. So thou art free to all men. Let this be to thee a true bill of separation, an assertion of thy freedom, and a deed of divorce from me, according to the law of Moses and of Israel.

Such a provisional document was an advance on basic harshness of divorce, but it did not accord with the principle of creational union of man and woman.

‘NOT FOR UNCHASTITY’

We said (above) that if we take Matthew 5:31-32, Mark 10:2-12, and Luke 16:18, then, the mind of Christ is that there is no room for divorce. The creational ordinance does not make allowance for separation (divorce). What then of Matthew 19:9, ‘And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries

another, commits adultery’? The word except is not in the Greek text. The word is *me*, i.e. not. The text then reads, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, not for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery’. That is, if a man divorces his wife for other than adultery then he-not she-is an adulterer if he remarries.

The word unchastity (*porneia*) is not the word for adultery (*moicheia*). Jesus uses the word because the Pharisees have raised the question of Moses' provisional law for divorce on the grounds of *porneia* or ‘indecentness’, as written in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Jesus did not bring up this passage. Indeed if the Pharisees had not done so then Jesus would, presumably, never have mentioned it, as it is not in the other utterances he gave on divorce. The term ‘indecentness’ is not adultery-as such-but is the Hebrew equivalent (*ervath dabhar*) of the Greek *porneia*, and refers to sexual misbehaviour of any kind, and of all kinds. This could include adultery of course, but generally referred to such things as homosexuality, and other deviant forms such as bestiality. It could also include pre-marital sexuality, especially with a partner other than the spouse. This meant that the woman had not kept herself chaste for her true spouse, with all that such an act would mean, i.e. a cheating the other of the true ‘one-flesh’ union.

It is a known fact that the word ‘indecentness’ in Jesus' day was understood in different ways by different theological schools, those of three outstanding rabbis or teachers, Shammai, Hillel, and Akiba. The disciples of Shammai permitted divorce on the grounds of unfaithfulness which they classified as ‘indecentness’, the disciples of Hillel saw indecentness as anything displeasing to the

* See Surenhusii Mishna, *Pars iii. Prefatio*, and pp. 324, 325, quoted in James Morison, *A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, Klock & Klock, Minneapolis, 1981 Reprint, p. 332.

husband, and those of Akiba simply when a man saw another woman more attractive than his present wife. Jesus was not legislating regarding divorce. He was simply saying that apart from a wife being indecent, the man who divorced and remarried was committing adultery. He did not state at all that a man ought to divorce his wife for indecency, or that he had a right to do this if she were indecent. There the matter stands. Jesus neither affirmed or denied divorce as a happening. He did, however, state the ontological principle of marriage which found (finds) no place for divorce. Thus we cannot say the mind of Jesus was other than that marriage should stand: 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder'. The very statement affirms that it could be put asunder.

HARDNESS OF HEART

The term 'hardness of heart' calls for some study. Does it mean 'hardness of heart towards God's ordinance of marriage', or 'hardness of heart towards the spouse'? It would seem that both are included. If a man were to keep God's ordinance in mind, with a good heart, then he would develop the 'one-flesh' union, no matter what difficulties confronted him. If he were to be warmhearted towards his spouse, then the difficulties within marriage would not be the cause of divorce. In any case, in order to understand the true principle of non-divorce, we must look at the True Couple to realize that divorce is not according to creation and certainly not according to redemption, and does not comport with the union Christ has with his Bride.

THE MATTER OF BEING EUNUCHS

In the passage we are examining (Matt. 19:3-12), the disciples seem stunned by the stricture Jesus places upon divorce. They say, in effect, 'What good is it then for a man to marry?'. Doubtless they thought that if a man could not easily get out of a marriage union then one might be saddled with a perpetual problem. Something of that 'hardness of heart' was showing itself. They were not easily going to give up in the custom of divorce. In reply Jesus said that some were born eunuchs, some forcibly made eunuchs, but some-'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake'-voluntarily became eunuchs, i.e. celibate, never marrying. Jesus stressed the fact that being voluntarily celibate must only be for the Kingdom of heaven's sake. Elsewhere Paul suggests that the single state in a convulsive world situation was best for promoting the cause of the Gospel.

It has always puzzled me why commentators and exegetes have never linked this 'eunuchs for the Kingdom of heaven's sake' with the question of divorce and remarriage. The disciples were worried that men would lose their freedom if permission for divorce was not according to the mind of God. If being married was not primary in the matter of the Gospel, then surely remarriage even less so. If a man ought to consider being celibate, he ought to no less-and perhaps even more-consider not remarrying when a divorce has taken place.

This too is a good place to indicate something we will later discuss, namely why divorce should take place at all,

even in the case of porneia. Granted males and females are sexual creatures, and granted tensions for them both arise when relationships deteriorate and divorce is considered, why should not the healing of marriage take place within Christian marriages? Is not all marriage-as well as celibacy-'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake'? Do not Christian couples have all the resources of God for healing of hurts, banishment of anger and bitterness, and wholesome forgiveness? In using the term 'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake' Christ showed he was speaking about relationships in godliness, even if all marriages-Christian or otherwise-are valid because of the creational ordinance of God.

CONCLUSION REGARDING CHRIST'S MIND ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

It appears clear that Christ believed marriage was a permanent indissoluble relationship, based on the order of creation. For this reason he spoke against divorce without being asked regarding the matter. When asked about divorce he reiterated that a marriage was not to be dissolved. Anyone who dissolved a marriage 'not for porneia' and remarried was committing adultery. He did not state that adultery was necessarily grounds for divorce, but simply stated that in the legislation Moses had made this was the case.

He did not say Moses' legislation was a good or bad thing. In not speaking directly against it he was recognizing that due to human sinfulness marriages are broken. He would not have said 'What therefore God has

joined together, let not man put asunder' if, in some sense, man could not put it asunder! He was therefore realistic, recognizing some marriages do dissolve. He did not however either commend or forbid this. He was not legislating at all.

What, then, do we make of this mind of Christ? Surely that marriage ought never to be dissolved, especially in the Kingdom of God. If this shocks us-as it shocked the disciples-then so be it! It will reveal to us that we moderns are as far from the true understanding of marriages as were the men of Israel whose hearts were hard.

What we can do, and should do, amidst the problems confronting us today in marriages that are torturing and wounding spouses is something we have to face, and about which we must seek to do much. One thing that encourages us is that Christ did not legislate. He simply stated the nature of marriage, and that much, at least, we can learn from him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

THE MATTER OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE-III

THE MIND OF PAUL ON THE MATTER OF DIVORCE

Paul saw the whole matter of marriage rooted in creation, and in the ultimate archetypal marriage of Christ and the church. This is shown in Ephesians 5:21-33 where he points to the ultimate marriage and says, 'This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church'. He does not see human marriage as an analogy of Christ's marriage, but as the latter explaining the ontology of the divine marriage and so of the human marriage. In the light of this creational-eschatological marital relationship how does he approach the matter of divorce?

Paul Saw Marriage As Christ Also Saw It

We have already said that Christ did not legislate that

marriage should be, or how it should be. He upheld the will of God as he saw it revealed in creation, i.e. that the two became one flesh, so that 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder'. When one seeks to know the will of God in order to do it, then one follows it, not as a matter of legislation but as divine will. Paul undoubtedly sees it this way in his passages of Ephesians 5:21ff., Romans 7:1-4, I Corinthians 11:3, and I Corinthians 7:10-24. In the Ephesian passage he is revealing the marital ontology, in the Roman passage the irreversible nature of marriage, and in I Corinthians 11:3 the ontological hierarchy of God, Christ and the husband, all of whom have headship. This headship is unthinkable apart from the one who is subordinate to it, so that the husband and the wife are joined together as are Christ and the man, and the Father and Christ. In none of these passages is there the slightest hint of divorce.

PAUL ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE IN I CORINTHIANS 7:10-24

We should realize that in I Corinthians 7:10-24 there are two sections. In I Corinthians 7:10-11 Paul is dealing with the matter of a Christian couple. In verses 12-24 he is dealing with the case of the mixed marriage of a Christian and non-Christian partner.

In the first case Paul gives the mind of Christ as we find it in the Gospels, namely that there should be no divorce. The wife should not separate (vb. *chorizo*) from her husband, and the husband should not divorce (vb. *aphiemi*) his wife. To this point Paul is on the creational

grounds which Christ used, and upholds that principle though not magisterially but ministerially.

The second case (vv. 12-24) is that under certain circumstances separation can be envisaged. Paul does not urge separation, as though this were permissible and acceptable. If he says that separation can be operable where the unbelieving spouse deserts the believing spouse, he must have grounds for saying this. What, then, were the grounds which would seem to differ from Christ's view of marriage and divorce? In asking the question we must remind ourselves that where both partners are believers Paul gives no room for separation.

His grounds for possible separation are that the marriage is a mixed one. Even then, only desertion by the unbelieving partner sets the believing partner free from the marriage. Again we ask, 'On what grounds, and on what precedent?'. Part of the answer lies in the fact of a mixed marriage. In II Corinthians 6:14ff. Paul enjoins believers not be yoked together with unbelievers, i.e. having become a believer a person ought not to contract a mixed marriage. The mixed marriages described in I Corinthians 7:12ff. were not contracted as mixed marriages: that had happened with the conversion of one of the spouses after marriage.

The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Israel and the Church

In Israel mixed marriages were forbidden as is seen in Exodus 34:12-16, and Deuteronomy 7:1-3. Sexual intercourse with a foreign person resulted in death, Numbers 25:6-9. If a person of foreign origin wished

to marry into the covenant, then this was permissible (Josh. 6:23, 25; Ruth 1:16; 4:5-17). In Nehemiah 9:2, 13:23-27, foreigners had not married into the covenant, but rather had influenced those of Israel to sin in idolatry. Ezra chapters 9 and 10 are even stronger on this point. 10:44 says, 'All these had married foreign women, and they put them away with their children'.

Doubtless the law of Israel did not apply in the Corinth situation, but it would certainly be a guide in principle. Acts 15:10 makes it clear that the Jewish law, as such, was not applicable to Christians, yet II Corinthians 6:14ff. shows that its principle was to be carried out, i.e. that believers were not to become yoked with unbelievers. This did not apply where they had already been yoked when both were unbelievers. Paul points out that the believing spouse sanctified the unbelieving spouse and, also, the children, for they were included under the new covenantal situation. Hence the old law of putting away a (foreign) unbelieving spouse did not obtain. In fact Paul urges the believing spouse to do everything to maintain the marriage, and if possible bring the other spouse to conversion. Only when the unbelieving spouse deserted the other partner was that person 'free' from the marriage.

Separation and/or Divorce

Some scholars see 'separate' (vb. *chorizo*) as meaning a separation as we know it today, but not meaning a divorce, whereas other scholars see it only as divorce, insisting that such a thing as separation was unknown in the society of the day, whether Jewish or Gentile. This may well be the case, but then what is meant by verses

10 and 11: '. . . the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) . . .'? If the word 'separate' here means 'divorce', then is Paul saying, 'If he divorces then let her remain single [*agamos*, 'unmarried'] or else be reconciled to her husband', thus indicating remarriage (to her husband) after divorce, and this as desirable? Is it not possible, then, that separation is not, in fact, divorce? In verse 10 Paul says that the wife is not to separate (vb. *chorizo*) from her husband, and the husband is not to divorce (vb. *aphiemi*) his wife. There does seem to be a case for 'separation' not meaning divorce.

Divorce and Marrying Again

Does the second matter of 'not bound' (v. 15) mean simply that the partner is now free of the marriage, but ought to remain single-as indicated in verse 11, 'let her remain single'-or does it mean she is free to marry a different partner? Here scholars differ: some say it means 'free of the former partner', and others 'free of the partner, the marriage, and free to marry again'.

C. K. Barrett* in speaking on verses 10 and 11 'the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single [*agamos*] or else be reconciled to her husband)' says, 'For the woman in question this means that a second marriage, while her husband is living, is impossible. She must either remain unmarried, or restore the previous relationship'. The thought of remarriage seems absent here. Why then, simply because the unbelieving

partner has separated from the believing spouse (v. 15), should remarriage be envisaged? If verse 16 means that there is always a possibility of one spouse saving the other-whether unseparated or separated-then marrying another does not seem to be encouraged.

It does seem that when we come to examine Paul's view on separation, divorce and (if included) marrying again, none of us-scholars included-is necessarily free from 'hidden agendas'. How much human compassion on the one hand, or strong legalism on the other, may condition our thinking would be difficult to say. If we have never been through the traumas of separation and divorce then we may sincerely believe that Paul-at the most-permits separation on the grounds of desertion, i.e. 'if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so', but does not approve of divorce. If we have human com-*passion*, and if, perhaps, we have been through divorce we may see Paul permitting divorce and remarriage.

Whatever the case we must be clear: Paul is only raising the matter of separation or divorce in regard to a mixed marriage, where a Christian is married to an unbelieving partner. He is not speaking about divorce generally, but only of divorce in a mixed marriage, hence his words must not be interpreted as applying to all cases of (intended) separation or divorce.

THE MATTER OF DIVORCE IN TODAY'S WORLD

We have said that Moses had to face the fact that men will divorce whether it is the will of God or not, and what

* A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1978, pp. 162-163.

legislation he made was in order to protect the wife who was being divorced. Moses did not legislate divorce. Christ did not agree with divorce but he did not legislate regarding it. What he did was to answer a question concerning Moses' so-called concession. Paul-if he is indeed speaking about divorce-agreed that under one circumstance separation could result, and if that separation means divorce, then there was one circumstance under which divorce could be envisaged. We cannot be dogmatic in saying either that he envisaged remarriage, or did not envisage it.

Seeing all this, then, what may we think concerning divorce today? The answer, surely, is that people will divorce, whether it is permissible or not. As with Moses, Christ, and Paul, we must face the reality of divorce, and know how to approach those who have divorced or been divorced. If *porneia* relates to one partner committing fornication before marriage, this depriving the other partner of a true 'one-flesh' union, or is a matter of bestiality, homosexuality and other deviations, then technically there is no divorce, but annulment, in which case the offended part is not only free from the (so-called) union, but free to effect a true marriage.

If *porneia* is adultery then Christ is not saying it is grounds for divorce per se, but that the husband who divorces his partner 'not for adultery' (Matt. 19:9) will be living in adultery if he marries again. He does not say the person divorced for reasons other than *porneia* will be living in adultery if she marries again, but at the same time he does not say she will not be living in adultery. He certainly says that anyone marrying a divorced woman commits adultery, and we assume he means a 'woman

divorced because of unchastity (*porneia*)'.*

What is evident in the thinking of Moses, Jesus, and Paul, is that the marriage ought to continue, even under extremes, and that divorce ought not to be envisaged. It is possible that in I Corinthians 7:16† Paul is saying-as does Peter-that ultimately the woman may win the husband 'to the word without a word', and that is why she-or he-should persist in the marriage.

DIVORCE IN OUR DAY

If we concede that there is a divorce in the case of a deserted spouse in a mixed marriage, and that a new marriage is permissible, then we must surely accept the new marriage since there has been no sin on the part of the deserted partner of the mixed marriage. If we accept *porneia* as a correct ground for the dissolution generally, of any union, then we must accept the offended one, and envisage a new marriage as permissible. Yet when we

* If we ask, 'How can divorcing a woman "not *forporneia*" make her an adulteress?' the answer must be, 'Since *porneia* is the only Mosaic ground for divorce, then the one divorcing her is stating that she is an adulteress at least'. Even so we still have the problem that the penalty for adultery was death, so that-technically speaking-there could never be divorce for adultery. The death of the adulteress would terminate the divorce! The sense must then be that the woman divorced is seen 'as an adulteress' without necessarily being so. The problem is tied up with the meaning of the two words *porneia* (unchastity or indecency) and *moicheia* (adultery). The two are not synonymous.

† Some commentators claim that what Paul is saying is, 'you are free of your marriage, and free to marry again, for the Lord wishes to bring peace, not strife. Why persist with the marriage for, oh wife! how do you know whether in persisting you will save your husband, and, oh husband! how do you know that you will win your wife? Since you do not know it is better to get on now with a free life'.

have said that have we said all? What place is there for the persistence of Christian love-God's agape-in seeking to make the union a holy one, and in endeavouring to win the partner who is as yet not redeemed? Where is there belief in the power of the Gospel to win and redeem? What of the love which 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things'? No one, of course can legislate loving persistence, as such, but both Paul and Peter envisage cases where believing wives may win their unbelieving spouses.

CAUSES FOR DIVORCES

If we believe the Scriptures show that the will of God is for marriages to continue, then what of those situations in which marriage becomes intolerable for one or more strong reasons? The answer is, again, that we cannot legislate. Some spouses have endured great cruelty, ignominy, with mental and emotional pain, believing this was what they ought to do. In some cases the endurance has changed the other spouse, so that the marriage has been healed and renewed. In some cases it has not. Only the spouse involved may make the choice to continue the marriage or end it.

When it comes to the failure of a marriage a divorce does not-as such-put the union asunder. This has already taken place. It simply legalizes the shattering that has happened. Generally spouses argue as to who is (was) right and who is (was) wrong, i.e. the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of the case. They see injustices done, and are offended. One may claim to be the offended party.

Can this be said to be so definitively? One old Urdu proverb says. 'One hand cannot make a clap'. Counsellors are not perfect. They may have their own, personal 'hidden agendas' when it comes to advising a counsellee, even where they (the counsellors) are consciously sincere.

To take an example: one partner may not have been unfaithful sexually to the other partner who had been unfaithful. Does this mean the first partner is necessarily 'right'? If both have had pre-marital sexual intercourse, did they not by this illicit sexual act deny each other the true union which would have better launched their marriage? Who then was to blame? In fact-as we saw in a previous chapter-all partners bring to their marriage their residual problems such as conflicts with parents, hang-ups, prejudices, bitternesses, angers, and even broken relationships with others, all of which can be contributory to marital breakup. It would be difficult to rate one partner higher than the other. The intricacies of sexual relationships cannot always be understood.

In principle, many a marriage could be saved through true Christian understanding, forgiveness, and mutual acceptance. In what marriage is the 'wrong' ever wholly the action of one spouse? What of the matter of God's grace when two are seeking to live together, but find much in the other spouse which is irritating, and even offensive? Is not marriage a solemn undertaking in the eyes of God? Ought not at least one of the spouses seek unceasingly to save a union which is even close to shipwreck? Of course both ought to endeavour to save the marriage, but if one refuses, then what? These are matters we need to consider before we terminate the union, particularly on the basis of self-pity and self-protection.

**EASING THE APPROACH TO DIVORCE:
MELIORATING THE SANCTIONS**

P. T. Forsyth speaks about 'leasehold marriage', i.e. marriage which is taken on by partners who have already decided that if the union does not prove to be workable then it ought to be-and will be-terminated. It is fair to say that where these ideas are present prior to marriage they weaken the partnership considerably. Probably the latter decades of the twentieth century will go down in history as the most strange of all in the Christian era. If society takes a swing to a more responsible stand, then our descendants will ask how it was possible we could have become so lax, so careless about the sanctity of marriage, and so indifferent to the pain and tragedy that divorces bring to the children, and-later-to their marriages. They will ask, wonderingly, why we did not work at our marriages since marriage is the richest of all institutions, families the most powerful of all units, and children the most wonderful of all gifts.

**THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH
TO DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE**

Moses faced up the fact of divorce that issued from hardness of heart. So, for that matter, did Christ, although he did not see it as following the will of God. Paul spoke ministerially (not magisterially) on the matter of divorce in a mixed marriage. There is not encouragement from Scriptures for the practice of divorce. Even so we must all face up to the fact of divorce. It may come in

the experience of those who are vital members of Christ's body, the church. What then do we do in such cases?

If we accept the interpretation of Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12 (cf. Matt. 5:31-32) that divorce is permissible where there is porneia on the part of one spouse, and that the offended part may marry again, then there can be no question of a stigma being upon the divorce or remarriage. If the marriage is a mixed one, i.e. one partner has become converted to Christ after marriage, then there can be no stigma upon the person who was deserted. If we take 'is not bound' to mean 'is free to marry', then, again, there can be no stigma. Such divorced and remarried people should be welcomed and accepted without reserve.

Those who follow the above interpretations of Scripture ought to recognize that their interpretation ought not to be a dogma for all. Others who cannot accept this interpretation, will have reserves about divorce and remarriage. Those who differ in interpretation must make allowance for differences of understanding in others. This goes not only for the matters we are discussing, but for other theological differences of opinion, such as prophetic systems, covenant and believers' baptism, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Whatever our views we must seek to show and preserve the sanctity of marriage. Whilst we must have compassion and sympathy for marriages that have deep problems, and for marriage breakup and the suffering of single (divorced) parents and their children, yet we ought not to give advice on purely human grounds. By so doing we may contribute towards the breakup of relationships, hasten divorce, and help to accelerate movement towards

a second marriage. We may thereby cause damage that might not otherwise have happened. Sometimes we advise out of an outraged sense of justice or injustice. We may fail to see that a union can be saved through persevering patience and love. We may encourage a second marriage out of sympathy for a lonely divorced person, and that marriage may well end in disaster.

We must not play 'God' to people.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

THE MATTER OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

INTRODUCTION: SEXUALITY IS FROM GOD

We have already seen through a number of observations that sexuality is a gift of God. When He had completed creation He saw that it was 'very good' and by this we understand as 'functionally good'. What is good (*tob*) is also pleasure-giving. What is evil (*ra*) is malfunctional and non-pleasurable. When God said of the first man, 'It is not good for man to be alone', he did not mean that state was bad or evil (*ra*), but that it needed another act of creation to bring it into full functionality. The woman created from man was not created by man, but was as much a new creation as had been the man. The making of the man before the woman, and the making of the woman from the man must have been a significant act of God, and in the light of I Corinthians 11:3, where Christ is from God, and the man from Christ, so woman is shown to be from man. The hierarchical order, then, is the

ontological order, and it must, therefore, be related to function.

THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF SEXUALITY

Both the man and the woman were (and are) full persons, but a polarity existed between them. If we can speak of a male pole and a female pole, and of the complementarity - but not uniformity-of the two, then we arrive at what we can call sexual polarity, which constitutes unity in differentiation, the differentiation being essential to sexuality. Paul in I Corinthians 11:3ff. states that although the woman was made for man, and came from man, yet, in the Lord, the two are not independent each of the other, but interdependent, since man is born of woman. This essential unity exists in the fact that being made in the image of God they are made in, and for, love. Hence their polarity is dynamically unitive, and not separative, as we see from the statement, 'he . . . named them Man' (Gen. 5:2).

SEXUALITY AND LOVE

The fact that God is love, and God is holiness leads us to some understanding of sexuality. In the Old Testament the children of Israel were commanded to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love of an idol was called 'fornication' and 'adultery'. God said He was a jealous God, and could not abide their love for an idol. This tells us that God's love for us is pure, and is total.

Supremely it is seen in His forgiveness even where we have loved idols. If love of idols has deviant sexual connotation, then true love has normative sexual connotation. To 'know' God is to love Him (cf. I John 4:7-8; 5:20-21; John 17:3; cf. I Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9) and to have union with Him. Whilst this union is not sexual, nor its human counterpart in action (i.e. the union of any two humans in knowledge and love) always sexual, yet it shows that the authentic drive in human sexuality, especially in legitimate man-woman sexuality, is love.

In Genesis 4:1 it is written, 'Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain'. The word 'knew' is not merely a euphemism for sexual intercourse. It is telling us that in the act of intercourse a man and woman know each other. True intercourse is the experience and actuation of love. In true intercourse with God or another human, we know them, insofar as our limitations allow. Whilst sexual intercourse is unique in being the occasion of full union of the marital partners, yet true union with others is not limited to the sexual act. Love is not only sexual. At the same time sexuality without love is not true sexuality.

We conclude, then, that truly knowing God is having union with Him. Truly loving another human being is having union with that person, though not sexually. In truly loving maritally, the partners will know each other par excellence in the act of sexual intercourse. It will not make the spiritual union, but express it in this dynamic act. Other acts may well express love for one another, and perhaps on an even higher level, i.e. in laying down one's life for the other (John 15:13). The main point we

want to make in this section is that love is the driving and constraining force in sexuality.

SEXUALITY AND SENSUALITY

We have said before that sexuality is limited to (but not by) masculinity and femininity, but that masculinity and femininity are not limited to sexuality; not, anyway, to the meaning of sexual play between a man and a woman. Masculinity and femininity provide the polarity for all human relationships, and this is a statement which provides endless exploration of relationships. If Man's idolatry is spoken of in sexual terms, then it must mean that love is a powerful driving force.

This can be seen by the fact that when Man rejected the nature of God, and his union with God which had come by creation, he had to invent the idols. He had to have union with some surrogate equivalent of God.

He had to invent a new 'knowledge' or 'truth', and 'exchange the truth of God for a lie'. Because of the ontological order of things he could not exist without some equivalent, but false, ontology of 'love'. Romans 1:21-23 tells the story:

for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

The immediate result was unontological sexual operations:

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among them-selves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever!

The unontological deviation then became even more compounded.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

What principle lies in all this? Surely it is that the driving force in Man of love must have an object. When its true object is God, then sexuality will operate normally, and not even require-as such-a sexual object of worship (i.e. a woman for a man, or a man for a woman), and where true marital relationships exist, will express itself ontologically. Where the driving force of love is directed away from God it must find its goal in some substitute, some surrogate God, i.e. an idol (or, idols), so that sexuality will express itself in fornication and adultery and-whether then, or later-in deviant forms of sexuality. Sexuality-in these cases-is immediately sensual, and not simply sensible. The moral insensibility of many insists that pre-marital sexuality (fornication) and extra-marital sexuality (adultery) are 'normal' forms. This is not true: all sexual relations outside of marriage constitute deviant sexuality.

It is clear, too, that idolatry has sensual connotation. The five senses are the quickest paths to emotional

satisfaction. Thus seeing, tasting, touching, smelling, and hearing all offer quick ways of emotional stimulation. Of course true emotional satisfaction does not result, for that can only come where there is pure love. Hence, when the immediate use of the sensual does not bring total satisfaction, the enormous drive of (now perverted) love will not stop at anything. Hence the Don Juan, the femme fatale, the compulsive womanizer or manizer, the many forms of deviant sexuality, and the emotional expressions linked with sexuality such as cruelty, sadism, masochism, along with deviant forms of sexuality such as voyeurism, lesbianism, homosexuality, transvestism, and the like. It is interesting to note that deviant forms of sexuality have been linked, down the ages, with various forms of idolatry. The extraordinary drive of passion causes so many crimes, and is in itself a form of judgement.

**THE GLORY OF TRUE SEXUALITY:
THE GUILT OF DEVIANT SEXUALITY**

The Glory of True Sexuality

Because true sexuality is a gift of God, it is at the heart of all true relationships. When the image of God is seen in man and woman, and especially man and woman in union, then the child of such parents-with the surround of similar healthy relationships-has a good opportunity to have a rich image of God. The child can develop good relationships, and grow into useful maturity. The love that is not limited to sexuality-namely the love of God

and others-helps to build true personal health. It is also a barrier against the evil which, since the Fall, has been endemic in the human race.

None of this is possible without the redemptive grace of God being present to the person, and the person to it. Healthy sexuality should be found in the community of God's people, the church. Freedom from guilt is the essence of spiritual and mental-if not physical-health. The practice of true sexuality has its own inbuilt constraint, satisfaction, and healthy thrust for life.

The Guilt and Slavery of Deviant Sexuality

Deviant sexuality is not just something that 'happens'. It is-according to Romans chapter 1-the result of the rejection of God, and the consequent involvement in idolatry. It is in fact the outcome of rebellion against God, and the practical form or forms of that rebellion. Idolatry can take the simple forms of drug addiction, alcoholism, compulsive activism, fornication and adultery, and gambling. People are spoken of as alcoholics, work-aholics, food-aholics (compulsive compensatory eating), talk-aholics, and the like. It is interesting that all these things take the same pattern as alcoholism. There is the addiction without knowledge, the coming to realization and confession of the addiction, the consequent remorse, and the 'drying out', the pride of success over the addiction, and then the sudden 'binge', the consequent remorse, and the endless repetition of the cycle.

It might be well to note, here, the matter of masturbation. Some counsellors advise that there is nothing immoral in the act, and others place it with deviant forms

of sexuality. In fact it may be called 'closed circuit' sexual action. It is the sexual loving of oneself, the affirmation that one can be in union with oneself. It is a form of narcissism, and perhaps not worse than other forms of this addiction. When the ontological impossibility of it is recognized, and recourse is taken to loving the Lord with one's entire being, the matter should solve itself. Only more foolish than this is the use of artificial objects for sexual stimulation. To relate to an object is quite mindless, but can become addictive and nonproductive.

The more criminal forms of idolatry such as thieving and embezzlement are also forms of protest against the ontological order God has created. Much of what we have mentioned has its roots in covetousness, in seeking to establish one's own self in security, and proving oneself by accomplishment apart from God. Where humans do not relate in dependency on God some form of idolatry is sure to be present. Rebellion against God is present in every unredeemed human being, albeit many of its manifestations may seem mild, and almost totally passive. Perhaps deliberate passivity is the most terrible form of rebellion.

One way of testing the forms we have mentioned is to see whether the addicts accept authority in any of its various demands. Some counsellors say such people have never obeyed anyone 'from the heart'. They may have 'toed the line', i.e. may have outwardly conformed, but there has not been the acceptance of the principle of authority. Doubtless this can be traced to some bad experience the person has had with a parent or others, but the person himself (or, herself) is responsible for that reaction, even if not for the offence (true, or imagined)

of the authority. The acceptance of accountability (and forgiveness) is the only way to true freedom of life.

Non-acceptance of authority is behind sexual deviations. The expectancy of utter fulfilment in sexual relations leads to constant pressure-to the point of deviant uses of sex-to obtain what the whole human person longs for. Guilt results from being 'non-onto-logical', and guilt acts as a drive to try further for fulfilment. So the matter compounds. Some psychologists claim that the use of flagellation, cruelty, sadism and masochism in pre-sexual activity is to prepay for the guilt of having illicit sex, so that the act can take place without guilt. However that may be, we know that heavy guilt results because deviant sexual activity is a perversion and travesty of pure sexuality, i.e. God's pure love, as human beings can know it maritally.

LIBERATION FROM IDOLATRY AND SEXUAL DEVIATIONS

Much is spoken today about the impossibility of liberation from deviant forms of sexuality. Many orthodox Christians believe that all deviants-such as alcoholics-are doomed to remain thus all their lives, the grace of God simply counteracting the addiction, but never radically defeating or abolishing it. This is certainly not the language of the New Testament which says, 'If any man is in Christ he is a new creation: old things have passed away. Look! they have been made new'. Paul talks of 'the washing of regeneration and the renewal in the Holy Spirit'. After talking about adulterers, idolaters,

homosexuals, gluttons, thieves and robbers he says, 'And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God'. He means, 'You were one or other of these things, but you are now such no longer: your life has been radically changed'.

Many who were once idolaters, adulterers, fornicators, alcoholics, homosexuals and thieves have testified to the radical change in their lives, and their friends and even their enemies have agreed that the change has taken place. Those who think this kind of reasoning is simplistic may think so because they have not tried the radical way. In this case their insistence that many of these things are inherited, or a matter of hormones will seem quite reasonable. This, however, may not be all the story.

THE ULTIMATE SEXUALITY

We have seen that sexuality involving intercourse, procreation, and personal mutuality is penultimate in the scheme of things. In heaven there will be no 'marrying and giving in marriage'. It may be significant that all will be called 'sons of God', and all be conformed to the image of the Son. The marriage of the Bride and the Lamb will be a union in which all will be involved. In that sense-and in this is no intended humour-all will have been married.

The union will not be sexual as we know expressions of sexuality. It may, however be sexual in the essential sense and not the sense we humans know. The ultimate

expression of sexuality may involve femininity and masculinity, but scarcely as we now know them. That mystery we must leave with God, for we are not yet to know all things. The secret things belong to God.

What we do know is that everything that we now call feminine, such as the Church, the Bride of Christ, the Temple, the Holy City, the Vine, the Flock and such things as now have Christ as their Head, will be part of the eternal order of things. They show us the enormous power of the feminine, but at the same time the indispensability of their Head, Christ Himself. It may be that out of these things we will come to understand not just penultimate but ultimate Masculinity and Femininity.

Meanwhile we draw upon these things of Source and Origin, and are gladly submitted to God's true order.

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