

– Man, Woman And Sexuality: Human Roles And Goals –

1. Introduction: The Difficulty of The Subject

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

For this reason we will seek to treat the subject within the nature of God, man, and creation, referring to the goals God has set for man and creation. Doubtless a simpler method would be to examine Scripture, discover the patterns followed in sexuality, and set them as paradigms (or the paradigm) for sexuality for our day. Again this would be an over-simplification of the matter. Often sexuality is expressed in the cultural terms of the various eras covered in Scripture, e.g. polygamy existed in patriarchal times, as also within Israel's history, but does not obtain for Christians today.

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

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

Our treatment will be the simpler one, that is to set out sexuality as the Bible appears to treat it. Even so, this is, in itself, no simple task.

2. The Frame of Reference For Biblical Sexuality

(i) Introduction: The Larger Reference

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

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

(ii) Creation and Humanity

(a) Creation and Purpose

When asked about divorce Jesus said, ‘It (divorce) was not from the beginning’ (Matt. 19:1–9). In his discussion on marriage and divorce Jesus points back to the beginning. The inference is unmistakable. What happened then is both the paradigm and principle for all time. Creation then is basic to understanding all things.

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

(b) Creation and Function

What concerns us is to grasp **the doctrine** of creation, without which we cannot grasp the doctrine of man. In fact the two are mutually inclusive. Likewise without understanding the nature of God we cannot understand that of man, His image. First, then, we see that *creation is functional*. This is the message of the term used of the periods of creation, ‘God saw that it was good.’ Genesis 1: 31 expresses the climactic term, ‘...behold, it was *very good*.’ Creation is not merely *morally* good, but *functionally* good. Doubtless the terms mean the same thing, but the point is underlined in Ecclesiastes 3:11, ‘You have made everything *appropriate* in its own time,’ i.e. functionally useful, operative and purposive. This thought is borne out in Proverbs 16:4, Isaiah 43:7, 21, I Timothy 4:4, 6:17, cf. Psalm 104, and Ephesians 1:11–14. Function and purpose must also come together. This is expressed in Genesis 1:26–31.

- (a) Man² is made in the image of God. This image is expressed in *male* and *female*.
- (b) God blesses the man and the woman *together*.
- (c) Their maleness and femaleness are to be used for a number of purposes:

(i) Fruitfulness, doubtless procreation of children and the rearing of families.

(ii) Authority as man subjugates creation and exercises benign and useful control of it, including stewardship for creation.

¹ See LFS. 20, Creation and Reconciliation

² The term *man* is used to cover the male and female, in fact the whole of humanity. In Gen. 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.’ The use of the generic term *man* is not, then, sexist. Likewise all in Christ are called *sons* (or *children*) of God. See Galatians 4: 26, Romans 8:14-17. We will develop this in our notes.

Examined it must be seen that man works with God, for Him, and so for creation. Man, then, is an aide to God in the fulfilment of His purposes. This is clear from Isaiah 43:6–7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 1:11–14, 1 Peter 4:11b, and Zechariah 7:6. In this respect sexuality (maleness and femaleness) is used not only for procreation, but for all elements. This is seen in Genesis 2:15–25. In this passage man is a lone creature and is given a mandate to keep the garden, and to eat of all trees but that of the knowledge of good and evil. He is given, also, the task of nominating the creatures. These are male and female, but he has no mate. For what he is and for what he does God says he must be mated. ‘I will make him a helper fit for him,’ i.e. someone who is tailored to him, creationally and functionally. It is from within the man that God fashions the person. Hence some have said that man was androgynous, i.e. he contained within himself the characteristics of both sexes. That is an assumption which may or may not be true. What we do know is that he recognised that the woman was part of himself as he had been: ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Here the term man is *ish* and woman is *ishah*. The term used in Genesis 1 and 2 is otherwise *adham* from which, of course, the name Adam is derived. It is probably derived from the word ‘earth’ (*dhamah*), in which case there is a play on words in Genesis 2:7.

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

(iii) Creation, Humanity, and the ‘Telos’

(a) Creation and the Telos

In Genesis 1:2–31 God is creating man with a view to what he will do. God Himself reveals Himself as the One who does, i.e. works and acts, and fulfils His purpose. This is the over-all view of the Scriptures. Man, being the image of God, will reflect Him as He is. To ‘replenish, fill up the earth and subdue it’ in some sense points to a *telos*, i.e. a filled-up earth. There must be something terminal indicated in this. Humanity then is linked with the *telos*.

The fall of man, the intrusion of evil into creation, and the effects of such point to the necessity of redemption. At the same time redemption is not indicated as a mere expedient to meet a contingency, but is shown to be God’s plan and purpose for creation, formulated prior to creation (cf. II Tim. 1:9, Rom. 8:28–30, Ephes. 1:3–14, Rev. 10:1–7, etc.). All redemption has been purposed in and through Christ Jesus, and with redemption the new creation of man and the creation itself. Prophecies of this are given in both Old and New Testaments. (See, for example, Isaiah 65 and 66, Revelation 21 and 22, Matt. 19:28–30, Mark 13:26–27, Romans 8:18–30). The *telos* that redemption points to must relate to the

creational telos, for in II Peter 3 and Revelation 21 the new (renewed) heavens and earth are to do both with creation and redemption.

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

(b) Humanity and the Telos

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

Even so the doctrine of man has to be understood not merely in the light of man as created, but the purposes and end for which he was created. Man as created was a creature of the Creator, a subject of the King, and a child of the originating Father. He is correlative to God on these levels. They are of the one piece. That is man. Even so man was not complete. He was destined for the purposes set out in Ephesians 1:3–14, i.e. to be holy and blameless, a son (collectively, sons) of God, and to be to the praise of God's grace, and to the praise (wholly) of God. This includes him being glorified in the full image of the Son and (so) of the Father (Romans 8:18–30, 1 Cor. 2:6–10, I John 3:1–3, Phil. 3:21). Thus man—created was only the beginning of man—becoming and (ultimately) man—glorified. Hence man must be understood in his functional being but with that function related to God's purposes and the goals set for man.

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

3. The Meaning of Creational Sexuality

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

Modern treatments, though often pragmatically helpful, miss out on many of the richest dimensions in relationships and vocation fulness because they either are ignorant of, or fail to use, a true theology of man. We may better call it a Biblical anthropology, for this is centred in the heart of theology. What then is this theological treatment of man which is so indispensable to a knowledge of the truth of sexuality?

The truth lies not only in the second and third chapters of Genesis with the fifth tacked on, but in the first five chapters as a whole. In chapter one we see that not until man is created is the creation 'very good', and this not until man is commissioned as well as created. 'Each section (so to speak) of creation is

‘good’, but ‘very good’ when it is all put together, i.e. is entirely functional. It is within this functional creation that man is to be man. What then is it to be man? It is this:–

(a) *To be humanity in a sense of plurality.* God says, ‘Let us make man in our own image.’ This will create a corresponding plurality in man.³ That plurality is ‘male and female’. It may well be, textually, that that plurality becomes male and female in 2:18ff, but man is not androgynous per se. He is not intended to be as single man both male and female, but as true man with the interplay of the masculine man and the feminine woman together. Whilst undoubtedly a male person is a male person and a female person a female person, yet their masculinity and femininity are two essential expressions of humanity and total humanity. Whilst marriage of the male and the female create the ‘one flesh’ situation (which we shall later discuss), yet marriage is not the beginning and end of completeness for the male and the female. We mean that across the board, in the whole spectrum of humanity maleness and femaleness operate, cooperate, and form the one humanity. In this sense neither male nor female is superior or inferior the one to the other. That question cannot even arise, properly speaking. We thus need to be reminded, time and again, of Genesis 1:26–27, and Genesis 5:1–3, including, ‘Male and female He created them, and blessed them, and named them Man when they were created.’

Again, (b) *To be humanity is to be commissioned to a task.* Sadly enough, as we have said, sexuality has been regarded on its own.⁴ We might say, ‘Sex for sex’s sake,’ i.e. what is biological, relational sex for but to please and delight man, or, conversely to send him to the depths of suffering because of non-satisfaction or failure to be fulfilled by it? When we say ‘commissioned to a task’ we cover a vast area of human experience, namely vocation, purpose, travelling towards a goal or goals, work-satisfaction, and a sense of genuine being. Viktor Frankl⁵ has shown clearly that purpose and meaning are strong motivations to living and endeavour. Yet beyond these helpful elements is the richest motivation of all – to serve the Creator, and to work with Him. This is to believe His creation is truly functional, beautiful, purposeful and dependable. It is to believe in God, and adore Him for what He has created, and for His perpetual providence within that creation. All of this obtains without any mention of redemption.

We say, then, that sexuality is only known within the context of the whole task. If asked what that task is we quote again Genesis 1:28–30. The essence is, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over it.’ Some may be disappointed, thinking that the fruits of sex – children, families, nations – limit those who do not take partners. Such persons may feel they are not fully participating in the task. This is not the case. The mandate covers a wider area than simple procreation. Not all are called to procreate or raise families, but all are called to take some part in the whole action. ‘Fill up the earth,’ or ‘Replenish the earth’ carries with it all that man does, and perhaps much he has not yet done. Man adds to the earth. He brings elements not

³ When we use the term ‘plurality’ we mean that God is not monolithic in His being but social within the unity of the Persons. Love, of course, is the mode and essence of that unity. Man in reflecting God must also have social being. Hence the interchange of the terms ‘him’ and ‘them’. Man and woman are together MAN.

⁴ Out of a huge bibliography scarcely any book on human sexuality dealt with the doctrine of man in the light of that of God and creation.

⁵ Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (N.Y. Washington Square Press, 1963). *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York. Bantam Books, 1967).

yet formalised. He has done this with his inventiveness, his technology, i.e. his considered use of the elements contained within his world. He shapes up new patterns, devises new uses. To subdue his world presupposes he has forces with which he must contend, forces which are material, physical, moral, spiritual, seen and unseen. It is not without significance in Genesis 2:10–14 that the minerals are indicated which lie close to the centre of creation. Surely an industrial situation is envisaged.

Sexuality then must cover not only the biological act of marriage, cohabitation and reproduction of children, but the constant man–woman, male–female relationship across the whole mandate given to Man. In this sense it is sexual to be a babe, a child, a teenager, an adult. It is sexual to be a man or a woman; to be married or unmarried. Sexuality is the essence of human personhood, especially as it is directed to the goals God has set for His created and functional universe. It is plural in form – i.e. male and female – but the plurality forms the essential oneness of true humanity. The dispositions, direction and operations of this sexuality are so diverse as to defy full description, yet that diversity in fact constitutes the amazing unity which lies in the created human race.

Such a view dispenses with the idea that the male in humanity is the primary unit of humanity, and that the female simply fills out what is missing, or that which is required to make maleness full and complete. Others view feminity as lacking fulness if it is not joined (sexually) to its male complement. This view destroys the nature of full and true personhood, and limits personhood to sexual union with the complementary sex, i.e. male to female, female to male. Such a view cannot be accepted. Completeness of personhood is not denied to those not married, for married or unmarried completeness lies in relationship with God and in being obedient to His will and sharing in His plan and purposes. The person not married fills out his or her fulness in relationship with all other persons, i.e. both men and women, albeit that relationship is not conjugal. The person married fills out his or her personhood in relation to the spouse and all other men and women. All humanity is one as God is One.⁶ All humanity together has been called to fulfil the task of God, and only then is its sexuality in right context.

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

(d) *Humanity is living within the functional roles which have been set out for Man. In giving man the task of tilling and keeping the Garden, God then*

⁶ Of necessity we speak abstractly. Man is essentially one, but practically is divided because of the Fall and ensuing acts of sin

forbids him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under pain of death. Positively he is invited to eat of all other trees. These are good for food and pleasant to the eyes, i.e. functional within the creation. Right on the heels of forbidding man to eat of the certain tree, God says, 'It is not good for man to be alone.' This does not infer loneliness as such, or even incompleteness, but the need the created man has for a helper tailored to suit him.⁷ When all the animals are nominated there still is not helpmeet in sight, i.e. man, by nature of the case, cannot be helped by animals. God then causes man to go into a state of anaesthesia and produces the woman from him. She is his helpmeet. We need to understand that she is a whole person, that she is female as he is a whole person and male.⁸ They have affinity, but difference. The difference seals her off from being a male person, his difference from being a female person. Yet he says, 'She is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones.' There is affinity, difference, but unity. Unity is not in spite of the difference. In a way the difference makes the unity. Being naked they are not ashamed of being male, being female, being different, being one.

It must be observed that functional roles will be different, i.e. those of male and female. This will not only be in regard to procreation, but in regard to many things. Certain functions are common to both sexes. Others are not. At the same time both sexes can be adaptive when necessity arises and circumstances are pressing. Hence forward a male child will have the relationships of son, brother, husband, father, and so on, and the female child corresponding relationships. What each will do each will do as male or female.

It is argued that the man is not in any sense the leader. Before the creation of woman, Man has lordship over creation. After the creation of woman, man and woman – together as Man – have lordship over creation. Nevertheless the concept of helpmeet gives some sort of priority to the one who is helped. Priority in time belongs to man (cf. I Cor. 11:7–8). Paul certainly argues that man is the head of woman. However, to be a helpmeet is not a position of inferiority. Peter calls the woman the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7), but notice he never calls her the weak vessel.

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

⁷ 'It is not good' tallies with use of good in Genesis 1, especially v.31. That is man cannot function fully and appropriately without the helper. Their 'loneness' and 'one-fleshness' then is functionally necessary, indeed, indispensable.

⁸ The term 'person' is generally understood as that human unit which has discrete being as a knowing, willing and feeling entity. However personhood, however much it may seem to indicate autonomy as one of its elements, is in fact denying its true being when it seeks autonomy. It is most dynamic when it relates to others. The more sincere, genuine and loving those relationships the more that person is person. These relationships must be with both male and female persons.

man when he/she exercises life and its creational gifts within the functional roles allotted to Man, i.e. to them as full humanity.

4. The Question of Roles, Functions, and Authority

(i) Introduction to Authority

Are we right in assuming the following:–

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

It is the last part of the question which worries many. It takes little to show there is an hierarchy of authority or authorities in creation. Not all who accept the fact agree with the principle. It is often said that because of man's rebellion there has to be such authority (or authorities). The Pauline and Petrine interpretation of the doctrine of man is that man as male is head over man as female. Paul speaks of an hierarchy in the terms that 'the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God¹ (I Cor. 11:3). In Ephesians 5:22–24 he says, 'Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject in everything to their husbands.'

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

(ii) Authority, Subordination, and Unity

The word authority⁹ derives from author. An author is one who increases, promotes or originates. Hence the right an originator has over his product. In Greek the word authority (exousia) has the meaning of 'rightful, actual, and unimpeded power to act or possess, control, use or dispose of, somebody or something.'

New Bible Dictionary, IVF, pp. 111–112). Without spending too much time on the subject, let us define the right and wrong uses of authority. Let us say that right use of authority is authority for others' sake, and the wrong use authority for its own sake. Authoritarianism is, strictly speaking, the espousing of authority. Today it has come to mean domination in the harsh sense, i.e. authority for its own sake. However, where authority serves it is performing its true function.

⁹ For a fuller treatment see LFS. 5, 'The Nature of Authority and Obedience', and CS. 6 (i) and (ii), 'Who's Boss? Who's Who?' (with notes). Both are from NCPI.

A glance at Scripture will show that God is authoritative as Creator, King and Father. At the same time these three offices are serving offices. Theology tells us God is (essentially) Love, and all His attributes are subsumed under Love which is at the same time Light, i.e. holiness. Thus He is Holy Love. (See I John 1:5, 4:8, 16). Hence when He creates He does this out of holy love, and His product must relate essentially to that Holy Love. Creation, however, has been affected by the Fall. God serves in creating it, and in upholding it (preserving it, sustaining it, providing for it). God is unceasing in His creating, sustaining and providing activities. More than that He works to redeem His creation. He is working towards renewing His creation and bringing it to eternal glory. God, the great Authority, is the One Who serves! This truth of serving can be shown to relate also to the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, 'My father is always working, and I, too, go on working.'¹ (John 5:17) Since this is the work of Holy Love then true authority is synonymous with Holy Love. Thus there can be no possible authentic objection to the true Authority, and the true principle of authority. We happen to know that it is endemic in all humanity to oppose authority. We take this to be a result of the Fall. Indeed it was what caused the Fall. Man wanted to be as God, and not merely like Him. To be as Him means, virtually, not to be under His authority but to be autonomous.

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

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

There are problems with the word 'subordination'. It implies superordination on the part of another. Precisely. Does it, however, imply inferiority and superiority? The answer must be a definitive, 'No!' Unfortunately not all agree. They demand equality in order to ensure the question of inferiority and superiority does not arise. This demand is a pity. It is also a mistake. It is a failure to understand the true principle of authority and function. It assumes what has to be proved, namely that egalitarianism is the essential form of relationships, living, and true creation. This is to be denied emphatically, not in the interests of authoritarianism, but in the interests of love.

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

authority have to exist because of the Fall (which is a possible inference from Romans 13:1ff), (b) Does authority exist in its own right, even if opposed by rebellious powers both celestial and terrestrial? What also must be considered is whether indeed the world could exist without authorities, and whether egalitarianism is a viable or even desirable principle.

A further consideration must be investigated. Given for the sake of argument that authority is a good principle, has it, in fact, ever been genuinely tried by humanity? We mean, has authority actually been obeyed in the spirit of true obedience, or as the Bible puts it, 'from the heart'? People of faith agree that God should be obeyed from the heart even if that action is rare. Should they agree that true authority coming from God, and being delegated by God, should also be obeyed – from the heart? This is the crux of our problem.

The Question of Equality

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

The Question of Not Seeking the Upper-Hand

The insistence that superordination equals superiority is a subjective assessment. Subordination and superordination relate to authority which relates to function and purpose, and is no indicator of anything essentially superior or inferior in the persons carrying out their tasks. That is why to some the two statements of Jesus, 'The Father is greater than I,' and 'I and the Father are one,' seem contradictory. In fact they are of the one piece. This problem will never be solved until human beings enter into the very ethos of Christ, or, as Paul says, 'Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus'. Following this (in Philippians 2) he speaks of the Kenosis or 'self-emptying' of Jesus. Unless the passage is studied closely, and obediently, its stunning message will be missed. The essence of what Paul says is this:–

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

Related to this is Jesus' act of feet-washing on the night of his betrayal. It was for others (culturally) a humiliating thing for a person to do. Jesus found no humiliation in it. He expressed love in it and by it. Love activated him. Further to this, Jesus said, on the same night, 'Which is the greater, one who sits at table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table?'

But I am among you as one who serves. ‘ He had said, ‘... whosoever among you would be great, must be your servant.’ To serve is greatness. Where, then, is the question of equality?

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

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

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

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

(iii) Objections to Authority

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

The fact is that the command to honour one’s parents (i.e. esteem them highly) had little or nothing to do with their quality of character. It is primarily the office of the authority which is honoured, and not the person. The person will be judged for the manner of executing authority, and the one under that authority is not his judge. Only God is Judge. He must leave the judgement

due to God, and set about obeying where he should. The criterion for refusing to obey in any given situation can only be that what is commanded is in violation of that for which God has placed him there. Even then the subordinate must be sure of this, and his mode of refusal must be consonant with holy love for God and man. Unceasingly a person must ask why he is thinking of disobeying.

(iv) The True Purpose of Authority

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

Paul in Romans 13 tells us the purpose of the authorities placed by God. He says of the authority, 'He is God's servant for your good.' He also reminds them that he is there to punish evil-doers. His parting word is, 'One must be subject (to authority) not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. ' He enjoins, 'Respect to whom respect is due; honour to whom honour is due.'

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

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

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

5. Sexuality, Authority and Obedience

(i) Introduction: Human Problems Regarding the Subject

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

(ii) The Fact of Authority

We have seen that in the O.T. God is shown, variously, as Creator, King, and Father. These are all positions of authority, and in fact in the unity of God's nature are the one, or aspects of the one. Angels are above men, even if only for a time. In the life of Israel there were elders, and eventually a king. To these the people were, in some way, subject. Again, within families the father held the place of authority and the oldest son a leading place of authority under him. The children were subject to both the father and mother, i.e. the two parents together.

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

Within families wives must be subject to their husbands, and children to their parents. In the community servants must be subject to their masters, and masters to their Lord. The terms 'be subject' and 'be submissive' are found many times. This is how wives must be to husbands, children to parents, members of the churches to their elders. It is inescapable that there is authority. In fact in I Corinthians 11:3 (already quoted) Paul speaks of the order of headship, that of God over Christ, of Christ over the man, and the husband over the wife. All of these authorities are in the context of creation, of function, and of purpose. In I Corinthians 11:12 Paul finishes his statement by saying, 'And all things are of God.' He surely means that this is how things are, and how God made them. Nothing alters these facts. You must accept them, and live in them, and by them. He also says on occasions that 'nature teaches us' (I Cor. 11:14) and in Romans 1:26–27 speaks of sexual acts which are 'against nature'. Thus we see that man is expected to have some sense of the creational order of things, even if he rejects such an order.

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

What concerns us, however, is (a) The responsibility of all authorities to serve those under their aegis, and (b) The responsibility of those under authority to obey that authority.¹⁰ However we may interpret authority (i.e. as benign or dominant), the working out of relationships depends upon the proper exercise of authority and the right obedience of the authorities. This principle will naturally enough be received with scorn, ridicule and rejection, but it must be examined, nevertheless.

¹⁰ Revelation 12:3ff describes the rebellion of certain celestial powers. Presumably these are those mentioned in II Peter 2:4ff and Jude 6f. Being given authority they do not use it correctly. This also inferred in Daniel 10 and 11, and Ephesians 6:10-12, cf. Romans 8:38-39. God's principle of establishing authorities (Col. 1:15-17) is not invalidated by rebellion, even the very rebellion of those authorities themselves. Thus see I Corinthians 15:24-28 for their defeat and God's ultimate triumph.

(iii) The Fact of Love

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

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

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

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

(iv) Sexuality, Authority and Love

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

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

What concerns us, however, is how sexuality is used in our age. We saw in our introductory section that sexuality covers the whole range of human living. It embraces our functions and purposes here in the world both as persons and as the total race. Whilst rebellious man may refuse the mandate and even the redemption in Christ, that alters nothing. God has not ameliorated His demands, nor mitigated what it is to be human. We are to do as commanded. The immediate task of being fruitful and multiplying is doubtless limited to the ones who are married. The work of aiding and assisting the whole race to fill up the earth, rule it, and use it belongs to the entire human race. No family is without its dependence upon the whole of the race. It has its life

intrinsically and extrinsically. All are linked with family life in some manner or another. They are in families; they help families. All vocations go together to make up the totality of human existence, and all are participators and partakers, in some way or another, in the whole human scene. All this, as we have maintained, operates in the context of authorities. Ideally such authorities are the expression of function, and purpose, in love.

6. The Family, Authority, Purpose and Love

(i) Introduction: Sexuality and the Human Race

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

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

Primary to all our thinking is the Fatherhood of God. This is not merely analogical. God is Father. Primarily He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also He is the Father of His covenant people Israel, and then of His New Covenant people, the church. In fact He is Father of all His elect people, the community of God. The true nature of Fatherhood is found in Him, as the true nature of sonship is found in the Sonship of His Son. The true nature of the Bridegroom or the Husband is found in Christ, and the true nature of the Bride or Wife in the Church, Christ's spouse. Likewise the true wedding is that of the Bride and the Lamb, and the true Family within the Godhead, and expressed within the Family or Household of the Father.

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

Man, made in the image of God, being male and female, extends his gifts across the creation in love. That, anyway, is the creational idea. Also man and woman become one flesh. They do this primarily in marriage. They place this bond above the bonds with parents, although not contrary to those bonds. Marriage is essentially a 'one–flesh' relationship, but so intimate in that woman is man's bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Doubtless this is not confined to marriage in that the male and female persons in the body of humanity (and constituting it) work as one for the fulfilment of the mandate. We talk, of course, in principle.

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

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

It is these relationships which count so much. Were they wholly in the context of love there would be little to worry about. In a fallen world this is not the case. Thus we have many problems to face, and which we must seek to understand. It may not be surprising to find they primarily relate to authority, or rather our attitude to authority.

(ii) Fatherhood and Authority

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

If we accept that man as a whole was created in the image of God, and that this entailed the male and female elements, then it is logical to conclude that the two parents (husband and wife now father and mother) represent to the child the image of God, i.e. they image God through the parents. Not simply male and female joined together, but the social relationship of the two, for out of this love is known (or, denied) by the God they reflect. This meant that the children of the primal pair would have perfectly mirrored God. However, because of the fall parents do not truly image God. In fact they give a deficient, and even a distorted image. Hence the difficulties experienced by the child. Further to this, when the parents do not fulfil their true roles of leader-helpmeet in love, then further insecurity is born. That is, when the father-husband does not lead and take responsibility, and the wife-mother is not a helpmeet, then the interrelationship does not mirror the love-nature of God. This the child needs for security, encouragement and affinity with God. Thus an image of God is made which is unhelpful. It does not show the true nature as disclosed in Ephesians 4:6.

Another problem arises, or rather all problems arise from this element, that is that all children born of Adam have rejection of authority¹¹ as their participation in Adam.

¹¹ We must keep reminding ourselves of the rich positive nature of authority, and of its service towards those for whom it is responsible. This is its *raison d'être*.

The first authority they meet in life is the parents, and in particular the father, so that their thrust to reject authority does not allow them to see clearly the parents as they really are. This further demeans the image of God.

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

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

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

(iii) Man, Woman, and Conjugacy

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

Genesis 2:24 mentions 'leaving and cleaving'. Leaving in modern times may be a matter of moving to another location other than one's own home. Technically a child has not left until the parent consents. Cleaving, of course, is physical, indeed involves intercourse. Thus should one 'cleave' before one 'leaves' then one neither cleaves nor leaves truly. This order set out in Genesis preserves chastity. Paul speaks of the bondage of wrong cleaving in I Corinthians 6:16, when he says that one joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her. He seems to refer to Genesis 2:24. Jesus' statement that divorce can only be for unchastity may mean adultery (or homosexuality and bestiality), but it may refer to a partner having sexual intercourse prior to marriage and so depriving the other partner of the utter purity of that initial intercourse when they become one flesh. In fact they do not become one flesh. Hence the wise saying, 'There is no such thing as sex. There is only marriage.'

Sexual intercourse prior to marriage is known as fornication, and extramarital intercourse as adultery. Both are forbidden because in fact they are not

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

(iv) Principles for Love, Courtship and Marriage

(a) Helps for Those who Need Them

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

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

(b) Preparation for Marriage

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

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

Those who approach marriage must work out their principles through what the Word teaches. There are at hand today many manuals which offer sane and helpful advice. There are also manuals which are not so sane and helpful and which should be discarded. The discerning person, without doubt can be helped through reading. However, this paper is concerned not so much for the niceties and particular details of sexuality as it is that we learn the wider view. We need to scan the

whole panorama of human sexuality in its great dimensions, and see sexuality (including maturation, courtship, marriage and family) in the light of God's plan for His creation. Sexuality in this setting will be valuable, healthy, will develop wisdom, and will be richly functional and usefully purposeful. Also it will not limit sexuality to marriage but spread the gifts of masculinity and femininity across a wide range of options.

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

It is true that almost all people come to marriage with residual problems. In all the counselling the writer has done he has traced back every broken relationship to the parental and family situation.¹² Here the child has reacted to the parents, and has failed to cope with certain factors linked with heredity, environment and circumstances.¹³ It is generally linked with non-acceptance of authority, and hence of the parents and God. It is difficult to know which comes first of these chickens and eggs! What matters is that the image the child has formed of God be transcended by the revelation of God's love. This must come through a revelation of Christ as Son, by the Holy Spirit, and so a revelation of the Father as Love, through the Son, especially in the work of the Cross and Resurrection. This is why it is essential that the person be a recipient of the Holy Spirit, and so be introduced to repentance, forgiveness and love.

What then do we mean by 'relationalising'? We mean that the sins, guilts, and destructive and hurtful memories which a person carries along with the prejudices (especially against authority) often linked with parents and God all be removed by the experience of God's love. Revelation brings repentance and faith, and the gift of the Spirit, and with these comes regeneration, leading into the fulness of life. Forgiveness received means the recipient forgives all others. Also he/she faces up to the fact that much has had to be forgiven by God which the person did not formerly consider to be sin, e.g. negative reactions to parents and other persons, rebellious views once rationalised and accepted as wholesome.

When this process of forgiveness and cleansing has taken place the idols and images are replaced by the warm view and image of the Father.¹⁴ This is the

¹² There is nothing new about this idea. Almost all research psychiatrists and psychologists have noted this. Their interpretation and handling of the matter differs across the board. Some see the influence of the parents as determining what the child will be. Others see the reactions and/or responses of the child as determining (amongst other things) what the child will be.

¹³ This matter of personal problems and counselling required by them is dealt with in LFS. 32, The Basis and Practice of Christian Counselling.

¹⁴ Notice even here that all of the Christian life is one of faith. It is lived in and by faith. Should one slip out of faith, the faith-images diminish and the non-faith-images threaten to return. There may be conflict in fact of the old and the new images. Nothing is guaranteed outside of faith, although objectively everything obtains as faith sees it. Its objectivity is not dependent on faith. Its subjective appropriation is dependent on faith.

genuine basis for true marital relationship. It is the basis for true fatherhood and motherhood. We say it this way, ‘He who is not the good son of his father will not be the good father of his son, but when he relates truly to the Heavenly Father, he will relate to the earthly father, and so to his earthly son.’

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

(c) Purposiveness for Marriage

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

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

The paradigm for family, as we have seen, is the Family or Household of God.¹⁵ Fatherhood, Sonship, Husbandhood, Wifehood, Childhood and Familyhood are the sources and resources for this Family. This Family is ‘going somewhere’. It is purposive, and all members share in that purpose. Even so, the primary purpose will be the creational mandate, the plan of God as set out in Ephesians 1:3–14, which itself includes what we may now introduce as the redemptional mandate, i.e. the proclamation of the Gospel to a world which has refused the authority of the Father–Creator, and so needs to be redeemed.

We are not setting out a detailed approach to that purpose, but suggesting that the couple align themselves generally with the will of God, and seek the particular participation God requires of them within that will.¹⁶

(v) The Principle of Marriage

Nothing could be set out better than Ephesians 5:18–33. Note that we commence with verse 18, ‘Be filled with the Spirit.’ This as against things which excite, titillate and debauch. Paul speaks of community relationships which flow from being filled with the Spirit, and the healthy thanksgiving to God for all

¹⁵ An understanding of Family/Household is indispensable to understanding the (so-called) nuclear family. It is in this context that the nuclear family flourishes. It both receives from and gives to the Household of God, of which it must be a dynamic part. For further reading see LFS. 34, The People of God: The True Community.

¹⁶ Note the dreary purposelessness of many Australian homes. Dad is often going nowhere – except of course to the pub, the trots, the ‘footie’. At home he finds it difficult to communicate to others. TV has arrived on time. He is saved embarrassment by watching the replay, and the numerous soap operas which tell him of the problems families are facing today, i.e. in their relationships!

things. In this context the obedience of the wife is not an onerous matter, nor the love of the husband for her. They flow naturally. Doubtless, when one is devoid of the Spirit or has vexed or quenched him, then relational matters will be at a low ebb. As we have said before, sexuality only thrives in the great context of loving the Father and sharing in His will.

The marriage service used by most churches has been beautifully composed, and deals richly with the true principles of marriage. It has been hammered out, so to speak, on the anvil of time, experience, and wholesome tradition. Couples need, time and again, to read that service, as they need time and again to read together the Song of Solomon, and the Ephesians passage we are considering. In that service the principles for marriage are outlined. The giving of the bride to the bridegroom by the father should ensure total leaving, and so total cleaving. The bride now belongs to the bridegroom and not, primarily, the parents. The 'in-law problem' is thus minimised.

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

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

To all of this is added the fact that the true husband 'nourishes and cherishes her'. Doubtless woman is functionally built for nourishing and cherishing. Doubtless this increases her trust, completes any healing she may need, and edifies her for the life she lives as wife and (hopefully) mother. It would also fortify her for any widowhood that might come.

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

Further to this there is the rich setting of the love-play. The Song of Solomon is filled with this spirit. Without the setting of the love-play marriage becomes a battle-ground of the sexes (a contradiction in terms), an endeavour to get one's rights, and an insistence on fulfilling one's self. It is doubtful whether Christians should think in terms of 'rights'. They would think better in terms of love, of giving, of function, of purpose, and all these together. To fulfil one's self seems a modern concept. To be man and woman,

simply, not self-consciously, but assuredly offers all the fulfilment a person needs. To do that together in marriage is true fulfilment.

(vi) The Principle of Family

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The positive principle of family we know, i.e. living in purpose, usefulness, genuine vocation, and all of this in the principle of love. In the human nuclear family love-in-authority is there to protect, correct, direct, and teach the children. It is there to provide for their emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs. It is there to bring them to maturity, accepting that they are growing creatures, and their relationship to the parents changes in its expression with the changing periods of the child's life. Parents also learn to be parents by the things their children teach them. They just do not know everything.

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

(vii) The Principle of the (So-Called) Single Person

(a) Misconception Concerning Single Persons

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

Doubtless we are stuck with the word 'single', and probably no one means anything demeaning by it, but it is a pity we do not meet persons as people and regard them not as married or unmarried as though that categorises them. We just happen to know that some people who are married are unhappy and some who are single are happy, so that a person should not be designated or calculated by the state in which they live.

Of course this general assessment comes out of the fact that many in the human race seem to take it for granted that to be married is best, and to be single is to be short of best. This is not the case. To be human and married and to be human and not married are both normal states within humanity. Because we are biologically structured to complement the other sex does not mean we have to. Whilst procreation is part of the mandate given by God it is not the whole of it – not by a long chalk. Families do not grow up wholly within the confines of a home. They need every aide possible across the human race. Unmarried persons supplement the gifts of parents in a whole range of activities and vocations

by teaching, training, providing for, and maturing other persons who are children, young people, middle-aged and adult persons. Doubtless certain cultural factors press people towards marriage, but that does not mean it is always the good or the right thing for everyone. When we look at the creational and redemptional mandates we see there is enormous scope – scope for all persons within this world. In fact they have their richest being in the fulfilment of God's plan and commands. They have this in the context of life and peace and joy. They recognise the purposefulness of their life and vocation. Jesus sought no marriage and his life was accepted as right and normal. There is no hint of 'unnaturalness' about him, nor was there. He accomplished more for the world than anyone. Likewise Paul saw the 'single' state as one of greatest usefulness. Like Christ, his conditioning theme was always 'for the Kingdom of heaven's sake'. How different this is from 'for pleasure's sake', 'for success's sake', 'for acceptance's sake', and so on.

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

What we mean is that life can be (and should be) wholly rich within both states, married and unmarried. This is made possible by the fact that we are all members of the human race. We primarily belong to God. Belonging is about the deepest need of a human being. To belong is to be secure. What we belong to a great degree indicates who and what we are. If we belong to idols we are of one kind. If we belong to a parent (or parents) we are of another kind. If we give ourselves to a receiving person then we belong. In giving ourselves we share the gifts which are ours with the gifts which belong to the receiving one. In this sense we belong. We are not, however, possessed. Only demons possess. To belong to God is to relate to Him and yet retain the sovereignty of our persons. Likewise with others. The gifts of masculinity and femininity enrich receiving and belonging. Only in one case does the intimate biological element of sexuality become the gift received by the spouse. In other cases the question of giving it does not arise. This is the true order of creation.

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

(b) Advice to Marrieds Who View Singleness Falsely

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

The whole human race must work together and forget its private predilections to this or that. That we do not work together, and that we make false images is part of our sinfulness. We are not called upon to have pity, let alone silent pity, for people not married. As we have said, all are together for the fulfilment of God's plan for the universe. The gifts of masculinity and femininity are indispensable to this task. People with wrong views of the married state need to change their ideas, and so to treat all with honour and dignity, knowing each belongs to the Creator, and each is created for His rich purposes, i.e. personal maturation and glory.

(c) The Reluctant Singles

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

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

There may also be the question of homosexuality, a subject which is beyond treatment in this paper seeing its elements are so many and complicated. Homosexuality, like other rejections of creational norms, is as much a form of relational dependency as persons find in alcohol, drugs, sexual promiscuity, masturbation, gambling, overworking and frenetic pleasure-seeking. The relating of two persons within the same sex, short of the biological exercise of sex is surely not wrong. Relating only to persons within the same sex is wrong. It denies the wholeness of the human race, and despises the functional difference between the sexes which is the gift of God to true humanity. The dependencies we have mentioned above are not innately wrong. Only their perverted use is wrong. The question is not that a homosexual must be cured in order to be married, but that he/she be released from a relational-bondage into full relationships with humanity as a body.

(viii) The High-Powered Doubles

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

Within marriage a partner often burns with desire because unfulfilled by the other. Manuals on sex and marriage convince them they have been cheated. Various emotions are fostered which increase the pressure

of that partner upon the other, often with the reaction of frigidity. Frigidity is not normal to the other person but arises as a form of self-defence. The disgust which often comes is not warranted, but a powerful factor in splitting the unfulfilled relationship. Without doubt this conflict often gives rise to relationships outside marriage by one or both of the unsatisfied partners. But with understanding, patience and corrective acts the marriage could be wholly rehabilitated.

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

(ix) Sexuality from the Womb

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

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

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

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

(x) Sexuality and Divorce

This area is one to which many are especially sensitive. A direct approach to it will satisfy few.¹⁷ So far as Scripture is concerned, at least in the direct approach, there is little comfort for those who seek permission to divorce. The

¹⁷ For a good treatment see INTERCHANGE No. 23, pp.131-174, Sydney A.F.E.S. articles by John Wade and B. Ward Powers. A different treatment is *The Right to Remarry*, D.H. Small, Revell, New Jersey, 1977

relevant passage of Malachi 2:13–16 contains God’s statement, ‘I hate divorce.’ Christ’s statement, ‘What God has joined together, let no man put asunder,’ and his pronouncement on there being no divorce from the beginning seems clear enough. The one ameliorating clause, ‘except for unchastity’ poses a problem, but gives some escape route from marriage. His use, however, of the creational account of man and woman and their union is clear enough (cf. Matt. 19:4–5). The objection that Moses had given easy enough escape was rebutted with the statement, ‘For the hardness of your heart,’ i.e. ‘If you were soft–hearted and loving there would be no divorce.’ Passages in the Pentateuch which relate to divorce in some way or another are:– Deuteronomy 22:13–21, 24:1–4, Numbers 5:12–31, Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18, Leviticus 20:10. Other Biblical passages are Ezra chapters 9– 10, Nehemiah 13:23ff, Matthew 5:31, 19:6–8, Mark 10:2–12, Luke 16:18, Romans 7:1– 3, cf. I Corinthians 7:10–16. None of these passages specifically forbids divorce. Nor for that matter is it anywhere encouraged. However, the dreadful penalty for adultery seems to erase the question of divorce. Adultery requires death! See Deuteronomy 22:22. Of course all such apodictic laws were not carried out; perhaps never. But the principle lies with them. There is no permission as such given for divorce, but rather the question of what happens in two cases when the one divorcing sets about to do it (Deut. 22:13ff and 24:1ff). Romans 7:1–3 does not envisage divorce as such, even where there is adultery. It leaves the matter unstated. In Hosea God likens Himself to one betrayed in marriage (i.e. He and Israel the wife), but says He forgives even that. The ‘Pauline Privilege’ so called in I Corinthians 7:10–16 is interpreted variously. Some insist that separation of the two partners is as far as this goes. Others maintain that Paul is indicating divorce.

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

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

Is divorce then permissible? It would be good to be able to say, ‘Yes,’ or ‘No.’ It is not as easy as that. One of the problems arises in the question, ‘Who is the partner who has failed?’ That too cannot receive a direct answer. The elements are so complicated. Is any partner wholly at fault or wholly unblameworthy? It is scarcely likely. In any case divorce as such does not really depend on the fact that one has failed. A close examination of Matthew 19: 3–12 really produces the following:– (a) Marriage is rooted in creation. (b) It is instituted of God. God has joined man and woman. Let no one destroy this ordinance (i.e. ‘what God has joined’ rather than ‘who God has joined’). (c) Moses did NOT command divorce. He accommodated to the already present practice of divorce but limited its cause to one–unchastity (which is what Deuteronomy 24:1 speaks of). In fact verse 9 of Matthew 19 reads, ‘And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity and marries another commits adultery.’ Ward Powers (op.cit. p.163) paraphrases Jesus’ answer thus:– ‘You appeal to Moses commanding you to give a wife a certificate of divorce, and then put her away?’

Moses did indeed allow a divorce because of the hardness of your hearts (though this was not God's original plan in the beginning). But you are divorcing your wives, not because of porneia (which was what the law of Moses allowed), but in order to marry someone else, and this is nothing but adultery.'

Another text has it that if one divorces his wife after unchastity he makes her commit adultery. Yet another says that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The debate over the passage in I Corinthians 7 is not an easy one to solve. Some see it as only separation. Some see that Paul is in fact speaking to people who for good or bad reasons have divorced (cf. I Cor. 6:9–10), and Paul is suggesting they desist from marriage (vs. 25–31), but if they cannot then let them marry.

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

The Real Questions Surrounding Divorce

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

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

Summary on Divorce

It seems clear that God hates divorce – on any grounds. It is also clear that marriage is a creational matter and so truly functional: two become one. None must injure this ordinance; none must seek escape from it. Tender-heartedness preserves the union. Breaks in union do occur. Other sins also occur. God forgives all where there is repentance. The break having occurred one should leave it there – forgiven. What one does following that should be under the principle, 'For the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.' What this is will work out in many

different ways. Remarriage in the light of the Kingdom should not be contemplated. Certainly one should never divorce in order to marry another. That is adultery per se and marrying the other likewise involves them in the same. In some cases not to marry would be to so burn with passion as to fall into the sin of unchastity. Let that one marry.

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

(xi) Sexuality and Remarriage

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

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

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

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

(xii) Sexuality, Divorce, Remarriage and Children

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

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

7. Sexuality and The Christian Church

(i) Introduction: Total Sexuality and the Goals of God

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

(ii) A Window on Male–Female Relationships

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

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

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

(iii) ‘Neither Male nor Female’

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

In I Corinthians 11:3 Paul states the ontological order:– God is the Head of Christ, Christ is the head of (every) man, the husband is the head of the woman (his wife). His statement which follows reinforces this order. However,

Paul is also concerned with how that order is handled. He has no worry in regard to God or Christ, but he has worry in regard to the man who may think the onto– logical order means superiority, and the woman, inferiority for her. He shows the interdependence of both. His final statement, ‘And all things are from God’ must mean that the order is God–given and must not be subverted. See II Corinthians 5: 18 where the principle is also ‘All this is from God.’

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

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

(iv) Men, Women, and the Redemptive Mandate

We are now free to see that men and women work together to do the will of God. The Acts and Epistles abound in this fact. As in Hebrews 11 both men and women are mentioned as persons of faith, so also the N.T. speaks in similar vein. In Acts both men and women receive the Spirit (Acts 2:14ff) and tell ‘the wonderful works of God’. In the new era women receive the Holy Spirit as do men. They also are in the prophetic ministry.

It would be a pathetic attempt to prove woman’s usefulness by pointing out the stories of Mary (Jesus’ mother), Elizabeth (John’s mother), Anna, the women who served Jesus (Mark 8:1–3), watched him at the Cross, helped place him in the tomb, came to his resurrection and believed where men did not. It would mean that we were – so to speak – drumming up evidence of how useful a woman can be! All of this is surely presupposed in the doctrine of creation.

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

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

If the roles or relationships have no ontological basis, but arise simply from the cultural mores¹⁸, then of course the idea of function disappears. Hence the essential 'all things are of God' needs to be recognised. The more positive thing is to conceive of all the church working together, not developing a tyranny of roles, but rather a liberty of service and obedience. Paul speaks freely of the women who have helped him (Romans 16:1–2, Phil. 1:5, cf. 4:2–3, Romans 16: 3–15). We need then to see I Timothy 5:1–3 again to realise the harmonious working of true sexuality within the family.

(v) Orders Within the People of God

Hierarchies continually appear. In I Corinthians 12:28 (cf. Ephes. 4:7–11) there is an hierarchy of Gifts. In I Corinthians 11:3ff, there is an hierarchy of God–Christ, Christ–man, man–wife. In many passages there is the hierarchy of the family, i.e. husband–wife, father–mother, parents–children. Again there is the hierarchy of slaves–masters and Christ the Lord, the Master. There is the hierarchy of leaders or rulers (Heb. 13:7, 17, 1 Thess. 5:12–13). Notice, however, that in all these cases it is a serving hierarchy from top to bottom. If it be argued that often, in practice this is not the case, i.e. that the hierarchy does not always serve, then the answer must be that even so this does not invalidate the true order. In fact it calls for the order to be properly observed. Having said this we must keep reminding ourselves that the order is one of function and not of superiority–inferiority.

(vi) Problems Within Orders

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

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

8. Conclusion as To Human Sexuality & Its Roles and Goals

(i) Biblical Sexuality the Key to Understanding Humanity

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

(ii) Biblical Sexuality Cannot Be Imposed

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

What the Christian must do of course is recognise the fluctuations of his society along with its changing loyalties. This era has been (wrongly) called the 'post-Christian era'. Amos might well have called his age the 'post-Covenant era' but he refused to do so. The rise and fall of morality in human history is a fact to be considered. Western nations once called themselves Christian. Now they need to be recalled to that stance. The Christian then must seek to retain the Christian morality within his culture, and enlarge it through renewal of the past, and present proclamation of the grace of God in the Gospel. Basic Christian teaching on the nature of God, creation, true humanity, man's sinfulness and God's redemption should be pursued. Christ's warning of the end-times was not intended to inculcate despair of man but hope of the Gospel. Salt and light are needed penetrative elements within our current society. Hence the teaching of Biblical sexuality is an urgent need.

(iii) Summary of Sexuality

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

entities, although each person may be considered to be discrete.

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

Man, i.e. male and female, was created to do the will of God, the mandate as set out in Genesis 1:28ff. Man can only be understood in the following context:–

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

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

Failure to recognise the functional differences within the range of sexuality, as failure to recognise the similarities and gifts will deeply affect the necessary mutuality in human action. It will interfere with man’s essential created nature, his sense of needs, including his great need to be operative in satisfying vocation and moving towards the given goals of God. Any taking the part for the whole and worshipping it will bring destructive idolatry. Creation must be seen holistically, and lived in accordingly. Hence whilst true relationships have inclusivity they must not have exclusivity. One person must not love another more than the rest.¹⁹ Hence in familial relationships children will look to total love. Failure to give this will cause problems in reaction, sense of deprivation, loss of direction, and the like. It is from this source human problems stem.

Again, as we have said, the child derives its image of God primarily from the parents and especially from their relationship with each other and the children. Lack of direction, training, leading the family purposefully and usefully will complicate the matter. In every sense the gifts of femininity and masculinity must be used wholly. Yet they must be used wholly across the whole of humanity. In this way the image of God is seen and known, and the life of God, i.e. the life

¹⁹ Note that the term ‘more’ is an anomaly in love. God does not merely love equally but totally (cf. Matt. 5:43–48). He has not produced a creation which is egalitarian, but a creation of shared mutuality, i.e. a love structure in which all (should) love wholly. Partial love is not love at all. One does not love one more than another. If this were the case then one does not love at all.

of man in God, is known and experienced. This constitutes the truth of human sexuality, which is all of humanity, which is all of life.

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–APPENDIX ONE –

The Matter of ‘He’, and ‘She’

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

However, Scripture offers some contribution to the discussion. An examination of Genesis 1:26ff, 5:1–3 and 9:6 reveals the following:– (1) Man is made as male and female. That is, male and female together = man. (2) The term man is used for (a) Male and female generically, and (b) The male person specifically. There can then, be no objection to the generic use, seeing that includes the male and female persons. It is the confusion of the generic and the specific which presents the problem. If we accept the generic use and see that it includes both male and female, then no generic use derogates woman, but rather includes her fully. From that point onwards the use of specific ‘he’ and ‘she’ is simple enough and emphasises the difference in the sexes, and that is what is so rich.

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

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

–APPENDIX TWO –

C. S. Lewis On The Matter Of Human Sexuality

It is well known that C. S. Lewis in almost all of his writings made constant reference to human sexuality. Much of his thinking is original, although it seems orthodox enough in the final analysis. This appendix can by no means cover the vast scope of his contribution. The reader, however, is referred to a treatment of Lewis by Gilbert Meilaender, entitled, *The Taste for the Other*.²⁰ Under the heading ‘Eros and Marriage’ (p.140ff) Meilaender takes the theme of Lewis, ‘obedience is an erotic necessity’, and points out that Lewis believes in an hierarchy in marriage. This implies submission by the woman to the man, but not merely submission to the male element, but to the whole principle of masculinity which is in the creation. Two quotes are apt here:

(i) “‘Yes,’ said the Director. ‘There is no escape. If it were a virginal rejection of the male, He would allow it. Such souls can bypass the 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 the 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, pp.315–316)

(ii) ‘At all events what Ransom saw at that moment was the real meaning of gender. Everyone must sometimes have wondered why in nearly all tongues certain inanimate objects are masculine and others feminine. What is masculine about a mountain or feminine about certain trees? Ransom has cured me of believing that this

²⁰ Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978.

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*, pp.186)

Lewis sees the relationship between man and woman as the expression of the wider principle of masculinity and femininity constituting the whole of human experience. He sees hierarchy as practical and functional. Submission does not imply inferiority but a working within the true order of things.

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