

# I. Basic Principles

*Ephesians 5:22-33*

WE COME NOW TO WHAT I have been describing as the practical application of the principle which the apostle laid down in the twenty-first verse, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ'. There was the general principle, and now, as is his invariable custom, he comes to its particular application.

There can be no question at all that that is what the apostle is doing. We can prove it in three different ways. The first is, the word 'submit' which is found in the Authorized or King James Version, and also in other versions. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands'. Actually in the original the word 'submit' is not there at all, it is just 'Wives, unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord'. How do we explain the omission of the word? It means that the apostle is carrying over the injunction about 'submitting' from verse 21 into verse 22. The very fact that the word is not actually repeated is therefore a proof that verse 22 is a continuation of verse 21, and that he is still dealing with the same theme, the general principle of submission. He knows that that will be in the minds of his readers, and therefore he says: 'Wives (in this matter of submission) unto your own husbands'. So the mere absence of the word 'submit' in the original is a proof in and of itself that that is what the apostle is doing here.

But there is a second proof. It is found in the fact that he mentions the wives before the husbands. That is not accidental; neither is it done merely out of politeness or on the principle of

'ladies first'. The Bible never does that. The Bible, as we shall see, and as the apostle expounds, invariably uses the other order. Indeed the law of the land does so, and we all do so in general parlance. We do not say Mrs and Mr So-and-so; we say Mr and Mrs—, and so on. So when the apostle puts the wives first in his consideration of the relationship of husbands and wives he has a very good reason for doing so. The reason is that he is particularly concerned about this question of submission—'submitting'. That is the principle which he has outlined in verse 21. Now in the married relationship the aspect of submission, as he shows, applies particularly to the wives. There is another aspect that applies to the husbands—and he deals with that, because his statement is a full one and a balanced one—but as he is primarily concerned about the question of submission, he inevitably and quite naturally puts the wives first. So there we have a second proof of the claim that what we are dealing with here is an outworking of the general principle laid down in verse 21.

Another, and a third, argument for this is, that he uses the expression 'unto your own husbands'. Note the emphasis, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands'. In verse 21 he has laid down the general principle of submission on the part of all Christians to others—'Submitting yourselves one to another'. The argument, then, is this: If you do that in general, if you do that to everybody as it were, how much more so should wives do it to their own husbands in this peculiar relationship which has been defined so adequately in the Old Testament.

I am taking the trouble to emphasize this, because if we are not clear that verse 21 really is the controlling principle, we cannot possibly understand his detailed teaching correctly. Having cleared that point, let us now proceed.

Before we come to this vital and most important subject—especially so in these present days—it is most important that

we should first of all look at the apostle's statement in general. Let us observe his method. I have many reasons for doing this. What the apostle does here we shall find him doing also in the case of 'children and parents' and 'servants and masters'. You notice the order in each case. The children come before the parents. Why? Because he is concerned about submission. Children do not come before parents; but in this matter they do, because it is a question of submission. The servants come before the masters, again for the same reason. I am arguing that when we study a portion of Scripture such as this—and as I have said, I am concerned at the moment to treat the matter in general—we shall find that the apostle employs his customary method; and if we succeed in grasping his method in one particular instance we shall find a key to the understanding of his other writings. Not only that; if we study exactly how the apostle deals with any one problem, if we really have discovered his method, then when we are confronted by a problem we shall find that all we need to do is to apply the method, and as we apply the method we shall be able to discover the answer. What we are doing then, primarily at the moment, is to study the apostle's method. Having done that we shall come to the particular subject with which he is dealing.

There are certain things which stand out very clearly in this particular paragraph which illustrate the apostle's method. Here is the first: The fact that we have become Christians does not mean that we shall be automatically right in all we think and in all we do. There are some people who seem to think that that is the case. The moment a man becomes a Christian, according to them, everything is perfectly plain and clear. Evangelists are often responsible for that, because in their anxiety to get results, they make extravagant statements, and they thereby leave many, many problems for pastors and teachers. The impression is given that you enter into some magical atmosphere; nothing is the same, everything is different, no

problems, no difficulties! All you have to do is to take your decision, and the story will be, 'they all lived happily ever afterwards'—there will never be any problem or difficulty. Of course that is quite wrong. If that were true there would never have been a single epistle in the New Testament. The fact that we have become Christians, that the basic matter of our relationship to God has been put right, does not mean that we are now automatically right everywhere in all we think, and in all we say and do. The very paragraph we are looking at is proof, in and of itself, that we need instruction about particular matters.

The second principle of this: Not only is it true, as I have been saying, that the Christian is not automatically right about everything, because he is a Christian; we can even say that the fact that a man has become a Christian will probably raise for him new problems which he has never had to confront before. Or if it does not do that, it will certainly present to him problems that he has never faced before in this way. He now sees situations as he has never seen them before. Whereas he did not really think before, he is now compelled to think. And the moment he thinks, and because he thinks, he is confronted by new problems.

This was very much the case in the early church. It worked like this. Take the case of a wife. A husband and wife had been living together as pagans. Neither being Christians, they lived their married life as pagans did at that time. We shall have to refer to that later. But now the wife becomes converted and becomes a Christian. The temptation that immediately confronted such a wife was to say, 'Well now of course I am free. I understand things as I never understood them before. The gospel has told me that "there is neither barbarian, Scythian, male nor female, bond nor free." Therefore I do not continue to live now as I used to do. I have an understanding which my husband has not got'. The danger was for the wife to misinterpret her new life in such a way as to

upset the marriage relationship. It was the same with children and parents, and it still tends to be the same. Very often when children are converted, and their parents are not, and have an understanding which their parents have not got, they misinterpret the new situation, and are led by the devil to misuse and abuse it. So in the end they are to be found breaking the commandment of God which tells the children to honour their parents. Thus, almost inevitably, with the enlightenment that comes with Christianity, new problems arise which had never to be faced before. So we gather from this passage that the great change which takes place in regeneration has a tendency to raise new problems. The result is that we have to think very carefully, to discover exactly what is right in this new life, and how we are to apply this new teaching to the new situation in which we find ourselves.

The third principle is this: Christianity has something to say about the whole of our life. There is no aspect of life which it does not consider, and which it does not govern. There must be no compartments in our Christian life. Very often, as you know, there are. The danger to these early Christians was, that these persons—husband and wife, or children or parents—on being converted, and becoming Christians, should say to themselves, as it were: ‘Well of course, this is something that appertains to my religious life only, to the element of worship in my life; it has nothing to do with my marriage, it has nothing to do with my work, it has nothing to do with my relationship with my parents—and so on’. Now that is quite wrong according to this teaching. There is nothing so wrong and nothing so fatal, as to be living a life in compartments. Sunday morning comes and I say, ‘Ah, I am a religious man’. So I take up my religious bag. Then Monday morning comes and I say to myself, ‘I am now a businessman, or something else’, and I take up another bag. So I am living my life in compartments; and it is difficult to tell on Monday that I am a Christian at all. Of course I showed it on Sunday when I went to a place of worship. This conception is entirely wrong. The Christian life is a whole;

the Christian faith has something to say about every realm and department of life.

Every one of these points is most important and could be greatly elaborated. There are those who say—and up to a certain point I am prepared to agree with them—that the present state of our churches, and of Christianity, is very largely due to the fact that many of our Victorian grandfathers were excessively guilty of the particular failure to realize that Christianity governs the whole of a man's life, and not only a part of it. Many of them were very religious people; some of them had prayers in their works or in their office in the morning, and then, having had the prayers, they became hard and grasping and unkind and unfair and legalistic. Undoubtedly they antagonized many against the Christian faith, because, so often, there was this kind of dichotomy, this failure to realize the wholeness of the Christian life, and that the Christian must never live a life in compartments. My Christianity must enter into my married life, into my relationship to parents, into my work, into everything I am, and into everything I do.

I come now to a fourth principle, which is again a most important one from the standpoint of doctrine and theology, and because of that, in ordinary life also. Christian teaching never contradicts or undoes fundamental biblical teaching with respect to life and living. I mean that there is no contradiction between the New Testament and the Old Testament. This needs to be emphasized at the present time because of the common attitude towards the Old Testament. People say glibly and superficially, 'Ah well, of course, we are not interested any longer in anything said in the Old Testament; we are New Testament people'. Some are foolish enough to say that they do not believe in the God of the Old Testament. They say, 'I believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Christian preachers, so-called, say from their pulpits, and it is applauded, that they do not believe in the God of Sinai, the

God of the Ten Commandments and the moral law. They dismiss the Old Testament teaching and say that we must be guided by the New Testament teaching only. Some of them even go further than that, and say that we are not even to be governed by the New Testament, because we know so much more by now.

There is this tendency to dismiss the whole of the biblical teaching. My answer is this: that the New Testament, the specifically Christian teaching, never contradicts, never sets aside the fundamental biblical teaching with regard to human relationships and the orders of life. I am referring, of course, to subjects like marriage, as we shall see here. The apostle's argument is based partly upon what is taught in the Old Testament, even in the Book of Genesis. It is the same with regard to the family, it is the same with all these fundamental orders in life. The fact that you become a Christian does not touch those at all. What it actually does is to supplement the Old Testament, to open it out, to give us a larger view of it, to help us to see the spirit behind the original injunction. But it never contradicts it.

This is a most important and vital principle. I am emphasizing it because as a pastor I have so often had to deal with it. People somehow get hold of the notion that, because they are new beings in Christ, the old fundamental principles no longer hold. The answer of the New Testament is that they do. Notice how the apostle quotes the Old Testament in all these instances, in order to show that the original teaching came from God, and that it must always be observed, however much it may be supplemented by this newer teaching.

Let us go on to the fifth principle. The New Testament always gives us reasons for its teaching. It always gives us arguments and there is nothing about it that I rejoice in so much as just that. The New Testament does not merely throw a number of rules and regulations at us and say, Now then, keep those. No!

It always explains, it always gives us an argument, it always gives us a reason. The kind of Christianity that simply imposes rules and regulations on people is a departure from the New Testament teaching; it is to treat us as children. Alas, there are such types of Christianity! It becomes a putting on of a uniform; and all Christians are 'like peas in a pod'. There they are, just going through their 'drill'. That is not Christianity! We should always know why we are behaving in this way; we should always understand the reason for it. We should be clear and happy about it; and therefore there should be no contradiction, there should be no 'kicking against the pricks', or working against the grain, or feeling that I have to do it but wish I had not to do it, but rather wishing to get as far away as I can from it. That is not Christianity. The Christian is a man who rejoices in the way he is living. He sees it clearly, he does not want anything else; it is inevitable, his mind is satisfied.

That is why I say that a man who is not a Christian does not know truly what it is to be a man. There is no teaching in the world that pays us such a compliment as this Word of God. It does not treat us as children and govern us by rules and regulations. It puts it to your reason, puts it to your understanding. That is true holiness teaching—not something you receive in a packet, not something that comes when you are more or less passive and unconscious. It is reasoning out the teaching, taking a principle and working it out, as the apostle does here. That is the New Testament method of holiness and sanctification. Thank God for it!

The sixth principle which I observe here is a most glorious one. How wonderful is this Scripture! To me it is amazing that as you look at this teaching you think at first, O well, that is of course merely teaching about marriage, husbands and wives. But then you begin to discover the treasures that are here; you go from room to room and it becomes more wonderful as you go on. Have you noticed, as you have read this passage, the

intimate relationship between doctrine and practice? Doctrine and practice must never be separated, because each helps the other and each illustrates the other. There are certain respects in which this passage we are looking at is, to me, one of the most astounding in the whole of the Bible. I am not saying it is the greatest, but I say it is one of the most astounding. Here we are in this Epistle to the Ephesians in chapter 5, and towards the end of the chapter. What is happening in this part of the epistle? Well, says everybody, you are now in the practical section of the epistle. The great doctrinal section, of course, was chapters 1, 2 and 3. A little came into chapter 4, but now we have come down into the realm of practicalities and ordinary relationships, and most ordinary matters. Never was the apostle more practical than he is in your section—wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters—a purely practical section of his epistle. Yet you notice—and have not you always been amazed at this when you have read it for yourself, or when you have happened to be in a marriage service and this section of Scripture has been read—have not you been astounded and thrilled to the very marrow of your being as you find that the apostle in dealing with this most practical matter suddenly introduces us to the most exalted doctrine? In telling wives and husbands how to behave towards one another he introduces the doctrine of the nature of the church and the relationship of the church to Christ. Indeed I must go further. In this very section the apostle gives us his most exalted teaching of all about the nature of the church and the relationship of the church to Christ. This is something that we should never lose sight of. When you are reading this epistle be prepared for surprises. Do not say to yourself, ‘Oh well, I need not pay much attention to this, this is of course practical and simple and direct’. Suddenly, when you are least expecting it, he will open a door, and there you will be confronted by the most magnificent and glorious doctrine you have ever met with in your life.

That leads me to make this practical comment. Beware of superficial analyses of Scripture. You know the type of person who says ‘Chapter 1—this; chapter 2—that. All so perfect and neat and tidy!’ If you try to do that with this chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians you will find yourself bewildered, and your little scheme upset. Here, in this most practical of sections, Paul suddenly introduces this tremendous doctrine of the nature of the church, and the relationship of the church to the Lord Jesus Christ. But what we must bear in mind—because it comes out of all that—is that doctrine and practice are so intimately related that they cannot be separated. Anyone, therefore, who says, ‘I am only interested in the practical’, is really denying the essence of the Christian message. This great passage demonstrates that in a perfect manner.

Having said those six things, I say in the seventh place: Obviously in the light of all this, when you are confronted by any problem, never approach it directly, never start by considering the thing *per se*, in and of itself. That is what we all tend to do. How often have I found this in discussion groups and meetings! A question is put forward—a practical problem in somebody’s daily life and living and I put it to the meeting. The tendency is for people to get up at once and to speak directly on the question, and to give their opinions on it. And for that reason, of course, they are generally wrong; because that is not the way to approach a problem.

The apostle does not approach this problem of husbands and wives, and wives and husbands directly, immediately *per se*, as if it were an isolated question. His method is this—you must always approach it indirectly. It is, once more, ‘the strategy of the indirect approach’. When I am confronted by a particular question I must not immediately apply my mind directly to it. I must first ask the question, Is there any principle, is there any doctrine in the Scripture, that governs this kind of problem? In other words, before you begin to deal with the individual

problem, as it were, that is in front of you, you say: Well, what family does he belong to? You might go even wider and say: What nation does he belong to? Get hold of a big classification, and having discovered the truth about the group or the class or the great company, you then proceed from that to apply the principle to that particular instance or example. That is what the apostle does here. He starts with the general and then comes to the particular.

I have often used the following illustration. Anyone who has ever done any chemistry and who has been asked to identify a substance will at once recognize the method. How does he proceed? He does the very thing I have just been saying. He starts with the most general tests, the big group tests. Thus he can exclude certain groups; and he narrows it down to one group. Then he has to divide it up into divisions, the subdivisions of the group; and then narrows it down and down and at last he comes to the particular individual substance. That is the apostle's method here as it is indeed his method everywhere. It is 'the strategy of the indirect approach', the movement from the general to the particular. Never jump at a problem, never tackle it in and of itself; get hold of the great principle or governing doctrine.

The last point I make is this, and again it is a very practical one. I deduce it from all that has gone before. Notice the spirit in which the apostle conducts the discussion. Here he is taking up the problem of the relationship of wives and husbands, and husbands and wives; but notice his method, notice the spirit in which he does it. This subject is one of the standing jokes of the world is it not? This is something that can always raise a laugh. The poorest comedian tries to make something of this when he has nothing else—marriage relationships, husbands and wives. I need not point out that the apostle does not handle it in this way. You cannot handle any Christian problem like that.

But there are other negatives also. Not only does he not handle it jocularly, flippantly and lightly, there is a complete absence of a partisan spirit here. There is nothing heated, nothing assertive, no standing for rights, no anxiety to prove that one is right and the other wrong. That is how matters are normally dealt with, is it not? And that is why there is so much trouble. The apostle evades all that, as I have been saying, by lifting it up and putting it into another context; and by doing that he avoids all these difficulties.

His method, positively, is this; it is the principle ‘in the fear of Christ’ that he has already laid down in verse 21: ‘Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ’. Then he repeats it: ‘Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord’. Before you begin to take your stand on the one side or on the other—and if you do, you are already doomed to failure because you are in a partisan spirit—he prevents all partisan spirit, he raises both immediately ‘to the Lord’. Every subject that is discussed by Christians should be discussed in that way. A Christian who loses his or her temper in an argument should not speak. Whether you prove your point or not you have lost everything by losing your temper. It is ‘in the Lord’, ‘in the fear of Christ’. Paul is talking about submission, and his point is that before we consider the merits of these two people, both of them must submit themselves unto the Lord, ‘Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ’. And as both do that, you will have your argument ‘on your knees’. What a difference that makes! If I may use a vulgarity, you must not get up on your hind legs; you must get down on your knees. If only we conducted these difficult matters upon our knees what a difference it would make!

This is not only true concerning the question of husbands and wives. Take the heat that is generated over the argument about pacifism, and the various other matters that are engaging people today—the heat, the partisan spirit, the animosity! The method,

says the apostle, the spirit, is that we must do it always in submission to the Lord, with a desire to please him, with a readiness always to be taught and to be led by him and by his Word.

There, we have seen eight general principles which not only govern this particular matter but govern every problem that can ever arise in your Christian life. Having done that, let us go on to the particular matter. All I have been saying is illustrated to perfection in the apostle's treatment of the Christian view of marriage, the Christian teaching concerning marriage. But, once more, we must follow the method. Before we come to the details let us look at what he tells us in general about this.

The first big thing he tells us is, that the Christian view of marriage is a unique view; it is a view that is entirely different from every other view; it is a view that you only find in the Bible. How does the Christian view marriage? What is the teaching? Let me start again with a negative. The Christian's way of viewing marriage is not the way in which marriage is generally viewed by the vast majority of people. Have you ever thought of this? What if I asked you at this point to write an account of the Christian view of marriage. Have you ever done that? Shame on us who are Christians if we do not have a clear and well-defined view. Have we discovered the uniqueness of the Christian view, have we realized how it differs so essentially from the general view? What is that general view?

Unsavory though it is, I must remind you of it. The common view of marriage is a purely physical one. It is something which is based almost exclusively on physical attraction, and the desire for physical gratification. It is a legalizing of physical attraction and physical gratification. So often it is nothing but that—hence the scandal of mounting divorce. The parties have not even thought about it, they have no view of marriage at all; they are governed entirely by instincts and impulses; it is all purely on the animal level, and never rises above it. There is no thought whatsoever about marriage in and of itself; it is but a legalizing of something that they are anxious to do.

Then there is a second common view which rises a little higher than the first. It is a little more intelligent than that because it regards marriage as a human arrangement and a human contrivance. Anthropology teaches us this, they say. There was no doubt a time, they say, when human beings were more or less like animals; they were promiscuous and behaved as animals behave. But as man began to develop, and to evolve, he began to realize that certain arrangements were necessary, that promiscuity led to confusion and to excess, and to a lot of trouble; so after a long process of agonizing and of development, and of experiment, and of trial and error, human nature in its wisdom, that is, civilization, came to the conclusion that it would be right and well and good that you should have monogamy—one man marrying one woman. It is a matter of social development—that is the teaching of anthropology. But the whole time it is something that man has discovered. As he passes Acts of Parliament to control traffic and parking and so on, so he has discovered a way of solving this problem of man and woman and their relationships to one another, and to children. It is something entirely on the human plane. That is probably the common assumption which is made by the vast majority of people. Alas, I find it at times even among Christian people!

Another characteristic of this view—and it arises because it has not a fundamentally correct view of marriage—is that the whole approach to marriage is one which almost expects trouble. That was very true of the pagan world. Husbands tended to tyrannize over their wives and to make slaves of them, and the wives acted deceitfully. The atmosphere was one of jealousy and antagonism, leading to strife and quarrelling of necessity. Instead of this common submission to the Lord, each one stood for his or her rights. Not a true partnership, but a kind of agreement that for certain purposes they were going to do certain things together; but actually there

was an underlying bitterness and antagonism of spirit and sense of opposition.

Examine the commonly held view of marriage, and of the marriage state and relationship. You see it in the cartoons, you see it in the reports of the cases in the courts, you see it, I say again, in the popular jokes. Why should it be thus? How has this come to be so current? It is because of this completely wrong view of what marriage really means. Today the whole question has become aggravated because of the modern notions of equality between men and women resulting from the so-called feminist movement. This has aggravated the whole problem; and it makes the subject we are dealing with particularly urgent at the present time. There has been this modern movement of feminism which claims that men and women are equal in every respect, and that there should be no division or distinction at all, but complete equality. Now while, on the one hand, there are aspects of that teaching with which any Christian man, leave alone any sane intelligent man, must agree with the whole of his being, on the other hand, taking it in general, and as a principle, it goes against the plain teaching of the Scripture at this point. It is without any question the cause of much confusion, much trouble, and much damage, not only to the marriage state, but also to the family as a fundamental unit in life. The result is that discipline has gone, order has gone, and children are not given a chance. Why? Because their parents are not in the right relationship to one another; and the child is bewildered at seeing this competition, this conflict, where there should be unity. This modern feminist movement has tended to becloud the whole issue; and, alas! it seems even to be seeping into the thinking of many who call themselves evangelical, and who claim to believe in the Scripture as the infallible Word of God and our only authority.

We see at once here that that is not the Christian approach to marriage. The Christian view of marriage is governed entirely

and solely by the teaching of the Scripture—the Old Testament and the New Testament, both. The apostle derives his argument from the Old Testament as well as from Christ. So a man who claims to be a Christian does not say, ‘Now, well, what I think about marriage is this’. He says rather, ‘What does the Bible say about marriage?’ Thus, there is a complete difference at the very beginning—he ‘submits’ himself to the teaching of this book. He does not say, ‘Of course by now we have developed and advanced so much. Women were virtually thought of as slaves even by the Apostle Paul, you know. He was so right on the atonement, but not on the subject of women!’ The moment you say that, you no longer believe the Scriptures, and you have no right to say that you believe they are the infallible Word of God. No, the Christian says ‘I know nothing apart from what the Scripture tells me’. So he submits to the Old Testament and to the New Testament. His whole life is to be governed on that principle—in the matter of thought as well as conduct.

Secondly, we discover that marriage is not a human contrivance or arrangement, but God’s ordinance, something instituted by God, something that God in his infinite grace and kindness has appointed and ordained and prepared and established for men and women. It is of God and not of man. The teaching of the anthropologists is based on speculation and imagination; it is not true. The teaching of the Bible is the truth about this matter; it is God’s contrivance and God’s ordinance.

Thirdly, the terms of the relationship, as we shall find, are clearly and plainly stated.

Fourthly, marriage can only be fully understood as we understand the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ and the church. You notice that that is central; the apostle carries on the argument about Christ and the church right through the paragraph. In other words it comes to this; if we are not

clear about the Lord Jesus Christ and the church, and the relationship of the church to him, we cannot understand marriage. It is impossible because it is only in the light of that doctrine that we really understand the doctrine concerning marriage.

I therefore draw these two deductions. It is only the Christian who truly understands and appreciates marriage. That is one of the wonderful results of being a Christian. Christianity not only deals with your soul, and your final salvation, your avoidance of hell and your going to heaven; Christianity touches the whole of your life while you are still in this world. I think I can say honestly that in my pastoral experience, there has been nothing more wonderful than to see the difference Christianity makes in the husband/wife relationship. Where there was a tendency to part and to drift from one another, and an antagonism and almost a bitterness and a hatred, the two people on becoming Christians have discovered one another for the first time. They have also discovered for the first time what marriage really is, though they may have been married for years. They now see what a beautiful and what a glorious thing it is. You cannot understand marriage unless you are a Christian.

May I venture to put it like this? In the light of all this, the wonder is, not that there are so many divorces, but that there are not many more. Is it not amazing and astounding that in the general absence of thought, and even with wrong thinking when they do begin to think, marriages hold even as they do? No man, no woman has a true conception of marriage who is not a Christian; but if we are Christians there should be no difficulty about knowing what marriage is, and what it means. There should be no argument, there should be no disputation. If you believe the doctrinal teaching the view of marriage is inevitable. Not only is it inevitable, you are very glad that it is inevitable. It is so wonderful, it is so glorious, it

is so exalted. There is no difficulty, there is no haggling, there is no argument. You have submitted yourself to Christ; so has the other. And you have both submitted yourselves not only to one another, but to all the other members of the church, the community to which you belong. You are governed by a higher loyalty, by loyalty to him who did not consider his own rights and prerogatives, but who considered you only, and your desperate and appalling need. He humbled himself, laid aside his rights and prerogatives, and took upon him even the form of a servant, and even went to death, yea the death of the cross. Looking at him, and seeing how he came not only to save you from hell, but to give you life, and to give you life more abundantly, and to fill out your understanding of everything to his own glory—seeing that, you see marriage anew, you see everything anew. You do not object to the biblical teaching, you not only submit yourself to it, you rejoice in it, and you praise God for it.

There, then, is our introduction to the detailed teaching of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 5 with regard to Christian marriage. We can now go on to consider the teaching in detail.

## 2. The Order of Creation

*Ephesians 5:22-24*

WE NOW COME TO A MORE detailed consideration of the teaching of this passage, indeed the teaching of the New Testament and of the entire Bible with regard to marriage. We have looked at it in general, and have done so because of the way in which the apostle presents it to us; and it is essential that we should bear all that in mind.

The spirit in which we approach this matter is most important. Everything that is done in the realm of the church is different from what is done outside. The world in its debating societies debates the subject of marriage, and does so in a particular way and manner—two sides, for and against, the supporters and partisans. But that is not the way in which the church faces the problem; it does not face any problem like that. Here, we are confronted by the authority which we have in the Word. We are not concerned to express our own opinions; our one purpose is to understand the teaching of the Word. And we do so together—not one group and another, opposition and government as it were, defence and attack. We all come together in order to discover the teaching of the Holy Scripture; and we have seen that certain great principles are laid down so clearly that all this is at once lifted up to the level of Christian doctrine at its highest. We are confronted by some of the most profound teaching found anywhere in the Scriptures concerning the nature of the Christian church.

Having looked at those general principles we can now proceed to the particular application. You notice that the first thing

is an injunction which is given to wives. You remember we saw that the wives are put before the husbands for one reason only, that the apostle is dealing with the question of submission. The principle is in verse 21: 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ'. In this matter of submission, he says, first of all, 'Wives, submit yourselves, or be subject to your own husbands, as unto the Lord'. The matter we have to consider is this 'submission' of wives to husbands. The apostle not only reminds them of that, but he tells them very plainly and clearly that it is their duty to do this—as it is the duty of all of us to submit ourselves one to another. This is a very special thing, he says, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands'. This is still more obvious because they are their husbands, their own husbands, and because of the teaching with respect to the whole question of marriage. The big point, Paul says, that emerges here is this question of submission—that is what he is emphasizing. We must therefore look into this; and fortunately the apostle helps us to do so. It is not just an injunction thrown out at random.

Paul gives us first of all a great motive for this submission: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord*'. We must be clear about this phrase because it can be, and has been, misunderstood. It does not mean, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands in exactly the same way as you submit yourselves unto the Lord'. It does not mean that, because that is going too far. The submission of every wife, and indeed of every Christian believer, male or female, to the Lord Jesus Christ is an absolute one. The apostle does not say that about the relationship of the wives to the husbands. We are all the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, the 'slaves' of Christ; but a wife is never told to be the slave of her husband. Our relationship to the Lord is one of complete, entire, absolute submission. Wives are not exhorted to do that.

What, then, does it mean? It means: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord'. Or 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands; do it in this way, do it as a part of your submission to the Lord'. In other words, you are not doing it only for the husband, you are doing it primarily for the Lord himself. It is a repetition of the general point made in verse 21, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ'. You do not do it, in the last analysis, for the husband's sake; the ultimate reason and motive does not rest there; the submission is 'unto the Lord'. You are doing it for Christ's sake, you are doing it because you know that he exhorts you to do it, because it is well-pleasing in his sight that you should be doing it. It is a part of your Christian behaviour, it is a part of your discipleship. 'Whether ye eat, or drink' says the apostle using the same sort of argument in writing to the Corinthians in the First Epistle in chapter 10, 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it as unto the Lord'. Everything we do is done for his sake, to please him, because we know that he would have us do this.

Thus at the beginning the apostle lifts this matter up from the realm of controversy and enables us to approach it in the right spirit. If, he says, you are anxious to please the Lord Jesus Christ, and to carry out his behests and his will, submit yourselves unto your own husbands. There can be no more compelling motive for any action than this; and every Christian wife who is concerned above everything else to please the Lord Jesus Christ, will find no difficulty in this paragraph; indeed it will be her greatest delight to do what the apostle tells us here. I would go further. Never, perhaps, have we as Christian people had a greater opportunity of showing what Christianity really means than precisely at this present time when the life of the world is showing itself increasingly in its true colours. Its life is becoming more and more chaotic in this matter of

the marriage relationship and in every other respect. Here is a glorious opportunity for us to show the difference it makes to be a Christian. So, Christian wives, says the apostle, you have a wonderful opportunity; you can show that you are no longer pagans, that you are no longer irreligious, that you no longer belong to the world. And these other people—living as they do, asserting their own rights, and displaying the arrogance which leads to all the chaos that characterizes life—when they look at you will see something so different that they will say, ‘What is this? Why do you behave like this? What is the reason for it?’ And your answer will not be ‘Well, I just happen to be born like this’, but ‘I am behaving like this because it is the will of my Lord’. So you immediately get an opportunity for preaching and stating the gospel.

That is why the apostle exhorts them to this. The point of his entire exhortation—as we see in the whole of this chapter and most of the previous chapter—is that these Christian people are to show in every detail of their lives that once you become a Christian you are different in every respect. So this great characteristic of the Christian life can be displayed by the wives submitting themselves to their own husbands. That is the grand motive; and unless we are moved by it, and animated by it, no other argument will appeal to us. If we are not already submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ, and concerned about his name and his honour above everything else, all other arguments will leave us untouched. The apostle puts that first; and we have to put it first.

But having said that, Paul then goes on to give us particular reasons, additional reasons. Here again we note the wealth and the glory of the Scripture. There are two great subsidiary reasons, he says, why every Christian wife should submit herself to her own husband. The first is what we may call ‘the order of creation’; the second, that this is something which belongs to the realm of the relationship of the church to the

Lord Jesus Christ. Both reasons are in the twenty-first verse: ‘For [because]’—here is the first reason—‘the husband is the head of the wife’. The second reason is, ‘even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body’.

Look at the first reason. It is that this is a part of the order of creation, a part of God’s ordinances, of God’s decree, of God’s will, of what God has stated with regard to this relationship between men and women. This is teaching which is to be found in various portions of Scripture. You find it first in the second chapter of Genesis right back at the creation; and you notice how the references in the New Testament all lead us back there. That is what I mean by saying that it belongs to the order of creation. Before you come to consider marriage from the specifically Christian standpoint you must go further back, because the New Testament sends you back. It sends you back to the Book of Genesis and to the whole question of creation. It also refers us to the question of the Fall. The account of that is found in the third chapter of Genesis. The crucial verse is the sixteenth verse, which tells us what God said to the woman as the result of her listening to Satan and his temptation, and her eating of the forbidden fruit. ‘Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.’ That is an addition to Genesis chapter 2, and we must pay careful attention to it.

In order to summarize the Scripture teaching concerning this most important matter of marriage and of the family, we may extract the principles that are put before us in these various portions of Scripture. Remember that we are dealing essentially with ‘marriage’ and not with the status of woman (or of all women) as such. Certainly we have to deduce from the Scriptures the teaching with regard to women in general, and such matters as the question of women entering the professions and so on. But I am not dealing with that, I am dealing only with

the question of marriage. That is what the apostle does here; he is addressing wives. He is not addressing unmarried women at this point. There is teaching about that, but it does not come within our province here except indirectly.

The teaching is the following: First, you notice that the emphasis is put constantly upon the fact that the man was created first, not the woman. So there is a natural priority for man. The Scriptures also emphasize the fact that woman was made out of the man, taken out of the man, and meant to be a 'help' for man, a help for man that was 'meet' for him. None of the animals could supply that need. 'Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.' And it was because there was no help meet for man amongst the animals, that woman was created.

That is the basic teaching, and notice that the apostles lay great stress upon it. Man was created first. But not only that; man was also made the lord of creation. It was to man that this authority was given over the brute and animal creation; it was man who was called upon to give them names. Here are indications that man was put into a position of leadership, lordship, and authority and power. He takes the decisions, he gives the rulings. That is the fundamental teaching with regard to this whole matter.

The Apostle Peter underlines all this in that significant phrase of his, where he tells the husbands to give honour to the wife 'as unto the weaker vessel' (*1 Pet.* 3:7). What does he mean by 'weaker vessel'? Clearly he means what is taught so plainly in the early chapters of Genesis, and, indeed, everywhere in the Bible. It means primarily this whole question of man's headship and leadership. Man, physically speaking, is naturally stronger than woman; he was made to be such, and he is such. I could enter into this in great detail. I could establish all this with extreme ease, not merely from the standpoint of anatomy,

but still more from the standpoint of physiology. Woman was not meant to be as strong as man physically, nervously, and in many other aspects. She is constituted in a different manner; and when the apostle says that she is the ‘weaker vessel’ he is not speaking in any derogatory sense at all. He is simply saying that she is essentially different from man, and that man must ever bear that in mind. He must not treat the woman as if she were his equal in these respects. He must remember that she has been made differently, and that he is to respect her and to honour her, to guard and to protect her accordingly.

Here, then, is this basic fundamental teaching—the man is to be the head of the wife, and he is to be the head of the family. God made him in that way, endowed him with faculties and powers and propensities that enable him to fulfil this; and so made woman that she should be the ‘complement’ of man. Now the word ‘complement’ carries in itself the notion of submission; her main function is to make up a deficiency in the man. That is why these two become ‘one flesh’; the woman is the complement of the man. But the emphasis, therefore, is this, that man is responsible not only for himself, but for his wife, and for his family in all ultimate matters. The wife is to help him, to support him, to aid him, and to do everything she can in order to enable him to function as the lord of creation, into which position God has placed him. She is brought into being in order to help man to perform that great and wonderful and glorious task. That is the basic teaching with regard to the relationship of husbands and wives as laid down in the very order of creation, the fundamental rules with regard to the life of man in this world.

But we must go further. That is how it was before the Fall. While man and woman were still perfect, while they were still in paradise without any sin, without any defect in them, that was how God ordained it. But unfortunately something happened—the Fall. Its importance is made very

clear, especially by the Apostle Paul in the First Epistle to Timothy, in the second chapter, verses 11 to 15, at the end of the section. Notice that the apostle makes a great deal of the fact that it was the woman who was deceived and fell first, and not the man. So the Fall has made a further difference—Genesis 3:16 establishes that. Here it is again: ‘Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception’. From that one can but deduce that childbirth would probably have been painless had it not been for sin and the Fall. ‘In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.’ But, for our purpose now—‘thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee’. Here is something additional. It not only reiterates the lordship, the leadership and the headship already established before the Fall; it underlines it—‘he shall rule over thee’. There is a new element here; woman’s subordination to man has been increased as the result of the Fall. Now it is arguable that God’s edict was promulgated for this reason—that the very essence of the Fall, of what happened to Eve, was that Eve, being confronted by the insinuation and the suggestion of the devil, instead of doing what she should have done, what she had done hitherto, and been taught to do, namely, to go to Adam and to consult him about the question, took the decision upon herself, and put herself into the position of leadership. She dealt with the situation, and as the result of her dealing with the situation, instead of taking it to Adam, as she should have done, she fell. She involved him in the fall likewise, and so the whole human race fell. So that, in a sense, the original sin was that woman failed to realize her place and her position in the married relationship, usurped authority and power and position, and thereby brought calamity and chaos to pass. That is not only stated in Genesis 3:16, it forms the whole basis of the apostle’s argument with regard to women taking authority, and teaching and preaching, in the First Epistle to Timothy, in the second chapter.

That is the teaching in its essence. But, at once, there is an objection, an objection that one reads and hears so frequently—and, alas, often from evangelical people who claim to believe the Scriptures as the infallible inspired Word of God. What one hears so often is this: ‘Ah, but that is only the view of the Apostle Paul. He was obviously an anti-feminist, a man who held the view that was so commonly taken of women at that time’. It is emphasized that at that time woman was in a very debased position. Everybody throughout the world then held that view; woman was but ‘goods’ as it were, a slave. And as this was true even of the Jews, the apostle was just a typical rabbinical Jew. So runs the argument.

It is not surprising that people who do not believe the Scriptures as the Word of God say such things. They do not hesitate to say, not only that Paul was wrong, but that the Lord Jesus Christ was wrong. They are the authority; they know, they understand. I do not argue with such people; I simply say that I cannot have any discussion with them at all, because it is not merely a question of putting up my opinion against theirs. There is nothing else to say about it—it is not Christian at all. The Christian is a man who submits himself entirely to the biblical revelation; he knows nothing apart from this. So when we hear this argument, we not only bemoan it and regret it, we have to answer it, and we answer it in this way. To speak generally, it is perfectly true to say that the view of woman at the time of our Lord and of the Apostle Paul was debased. But it was not the Jews’ view, for they had these Scriptures and believed them. And it most certainly was not the Apostle Paul’s view. Have you noticed what he says in 1 Corinthians 11:11? His words run: ‘Neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord’. This great apostle gloried in the fact that in Christ Jesus there was neither barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female. It was a vital part of his preaching of the gospel to say: ‘In this matter of

salvation men and women are equal, and woman has an equal chance in salvation with man'. He gloried in that, and there is no man who speaks more delicately or more gloriously about womanhood, and of the true glory of womanhood, than the Apostle Paul. Further, notice that he does not limit himself to giving us an account of the duty of the wives towards the husband only, he always tells us about the duty of the husband to the wife also; and he shows that the Christian husband's view of womanhood, and of woman, and of his wife, is more exalted than anything the world has ever known. He puts everything into its right position. He always gives us the two sides.

But apart from all that, the apostle never puts these things forward as his own opinion; he always goes back to Genesis, and to the order of creation. He says, in effect, 'It is not my opinion, this is what God has laid down.' The apostle's only concern is that the truth of God should be known, and that what God ordained should be put constantly into practice. So this tendency to say that it is 'only Paul's opinion' is a denial of the Scripture. We must be quite clear about this. If you say you believe that the Bible is the infallible and inspired Word of God, then you must not speak in the world's way about the Apostle Paul; because when he writes he not only quotes the Scripture, he also writes as an inspired apostle. When he gives his own opinion he is always careful to say so, and if he does not say it is his own opinion, it is inspired. Remember how the Apostle Peter tells his readers to listen to the Apostle Paul. He says that some people wrest Paul's arguments and his writings to their own destruction 'even as they do also the other Scriptures' (2 *Pet.* 3:16). What Paul writes is Scripture; so the critics are not arguing with Paul, they are arguing with God, they are arguing with the Holy Ghost. At the same time they are putting themselves into the contradictory position of saying that they believe the Bible only as long as it does not contradict what they happen to believe as creatures of the

twentieth century. That is a denial of a belief in the authority of the Scripture.

Having dealt with that foolish objection—and there is nothing that is more foolish than such talk—let me sum up the position again. Woman, according to this teaching, the wife, is given a certain status. To be subject to her husband does not mean that she is the slave of her husband, it does not mean that she is inferior to her husband as such—no, not for a moment! We shall see this still more clearly when we come to consider what the apostle says about the duty of the husband to the wife. What he is saying is that the woman is different, that she is the complement of the man. What he does prohibit is that woman should seek to be manly, that is, that a woman should seek to behave as a man, or that a woman should seek to usurp the place, the position, and the power which have been given to man by God himself. That is all he is saying. It is not slavery; he is exhorting his readers to realize what God has ordained. Therefore the wife should rejoice in her position. She has been made by God to help man to function as God's representative in this world. She is to be the home-maker, the mother, the helper of man, his comforter, the one to whom he can speak and look for comfort and encouragement—she is a help meet for man. Man realizes the truth about himself, she also realizes the truth about herself, and thus she complements him and aids him; and together they live to the glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

An illustration may help at this point. The idea of leadership or headship stumbles certain people, because they seem to think that that of necessity carries the idea of an inherent and essential inferiority. But it is not so. This whole notion of the headship of the man, the husband, in the married relationship is comparable in many ways to that of troops to their leader. An army would be completely chaotic if each one had the right to decide what is going to be done next. As I have said previously,

the moment a man joins the armed forces he is subjecting himself, he is saying that he is going to obey the command that comes down to him, no matter what he may think of it; it is his business to do so. He is granting this right of command to the one who is set above him; and though he may have his own ideas and opinions, he now foregoes them; he submits and he is in subjection.

Or, if you like, think of a number of men in a team playing football or cricket. The first thing they have to do is to appoint a captain. They are not all captains; if they were they would never win a match. The first thing they do is to appoint one amongst themselves as a captain. He may not even be the best player in the team, but they decide that on the whole he has the greatest gift of leadership. So they put him into the position of captain, and having done that they have to submit themselves to him. If they fail to do so, chaos has returned again.

Or imagine a committee being appointed to consider a subject. A number of men are appointed. The first thing they do is to appoint a chairman. Of course! Why? Because you must have some authority. You cannot transact business unless there is a chair to address, and you have to abide by the ruling of the chairman. Here again the question of inferiority does not come in. It simply means that in order to do this thing efficiently you must have a leader. Take a new House of Commons. The first thing they do is to appoint a Speaker; and the business of the Speaker is just to sit in the chair and exercise control, and to give his ruling. Again, it does not mean that he is the greatest man in the House of Commons, and that they are all inferior to him. No! In their wisdom, and because business cannot be transacted apart from this, they set someone in this position of authority. Now the Bible teaches that God has set man, the husband, in that position. So the apostle says to the wives, 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands' for the reason that the husband has been appointed the head.

But a still greater argument is found in 1 Corinthians 11, where we are told that the man, the husband, is the head of the wife, that Christ is the head of the man, and that God is the head of Christ. This is an argument that cannot be disputed. In what sense is God the head of Christ? The answer is what we sometimes call the economic Trinity. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal. How then can the Father (God) be the head of Christ? For the purpose of salvation the Son has subordinated himself to the Father, and the Spirit has subordinated himself to the Son and to the Father. It is a voluntary subordination in order that salvation may be carried out. It is essential in the carrying out of the work. The Son said, 'Here am I, send me'. He volunteered. He lays aside this aspect of equality, he becomes a servant of his Father, and the Father sends him—'the head of Christ is God'. That is the way in which the apostle puts it: 'As the head of Christ is God, so Christ is the head of the man, and so the man is the head of the woman;' therefore 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord'.

That is the positive exposition of this tremendous teaching which alone gives us a true view of marriage. Incidentally, I have been dealing with an argument, a foolish argument again, that is so often brought forward. Somebody says, 'You know, this is quite wrong, I know many instances where the wife is a much abler person than the husband, much more gifted in every respect. Are you saying that such a brilliantly gifted woman has to subject herself to her husband, to a man who is altogether her inferior?' There is only one answer to that argument; the person who frames it is arguing against God. God knows all about such cases. What God says is that if that gifted, brilliant woman is not subjecting herself to her own husband she is sinning. Whatever her gifts she is to submit to her partner in marriage.

At this point I would make two comments. No woman, whatever her gifts, has a right even to contemplate marrying a given individual unless she is prepared to submit in that way. It is a voluntary submission, it is the way in which Christ submitted and subordinated himself. She is to behave in the same way, and unless she is prepared to do so, unless she is convinced that she can submit herself to this man, she should not marry him. If she enters into marriage with any other idea, it is against the will of God, and she is committing sin.

My second comment is this. I sometimes think that one of the most wonderful things I have ever been privileged to witness was a case of this very thing to which I am referring actually being put into practice. It was my custom for a number of years to go and preach in a certain church in the provinces, and after preaching to spend the night in the manse with the minister and his wife. It was always most interesting for this reason, that it was so obvious to me on the first visit, that from the standpoint of sheer ability there was no comparison between the husband and the wife. The wife was an exceptionally able and brilliant woman. The husband was not without his gifts, but his main gifts were in the matter of personality—he was an exceptionally nice and friendly and kind and gracious man. But as regards sheer intellectual ability there was no comparison. Indeed their academic record—they were both graduates—had proved this. The wife had a degree in a subject that very few women took up at that particular time, and she had taken first class honours. The husband, taking a much easier subject, only had a second class. There was no question, I say, as to the ability—her grasp of intellectual matters, her understanding, struck me immediately, and became more and more evident as I got to know them. But what I wish to say is that I do not know that I have ever seen anything more wonderful than the way in which that woman always put her husband into his true scriptural position. She did it in a very clever and subtle way.

She would put arguments into his mouth; but she always did so in such a way as to suggest that they were his, and not hers! There is an amusing aspect to the matter, but I am reporting it as one of the most moving and tremendous things I have ever experienced. She was not only an able woman, she was a Christian woman, and she was putting into operation this principle that the husband is the head. He always had to state the decision though she had supplied him with the reasons. She was acting as a help meet for him. She had the qualities that he lacked; she was complementing, she was supplementing him. But the husband was the head, and the children were always referred to him. She was guarding his position.

Let me show the importance of realizing and grasping and understanding this teaching. Why is all this so important, and especially today? Why is it more important that I should have been doing what I have been doing rather than giving my opinions on politics or some international problem? It is because the failure to understand and to implement this very teaching is the cause of most of the problems in the world today. The basic problem in the world today is the problem of authority. The chaos in the world is due to the fact that people in every realm of life have lost all respect for authority, whether it be between nations or between parts of nations, whether it be in industry, whether it be in the home, whether it be in the schools, or anywhere else. The loss of authority! And in my view it all really starts in the home and in the married relationship. That is why I venture to query whether a statesman whose own marriage has broken down really has a right to speak about the world's problems. If he fails in the sphere where he is most competent, what right has he to speak in others? He ought to retire out of public life. The real breakdown starts in the home, and in the married relationship. I am asserting that the appalling increase in divorce which has taken place since the Second World War (I am told it is coming down a little at the moment,

but I suggest that that is only temporary and can be explained) is due to one thing only, namely, that men and women do not understand this scriptural teaching about marriage and about husbands and wives.

The same lack of understanding is also the explanation of the breakdown in family and in home life, which is again so obvious at the present time. The family is ceasing to be the centre that it used to be. The members of the family are always out somewhere, and often out at all hours of the night. Family life with its wonderful cohesion—this fundamental unit in life—is disappearing. We find here, too, the explanation of the unruliness and the indiscipline amongst children, and therefore the main explanation of juvenile delinquency. This can be proved even from statistics! Children who have become delinquents are almost invariably the children of broken homes, broken marriages. They have never been given a chance, as we say. They have been brought up in an atmosphere of uncertainty, indecision, and conflict, where wife is against husband and husband against wife, and they become cynics in their tender years. They have no respect for either father or mother, or for anybody or anything. The place where a child should have confidence, and should be able to look for authority and leadership and guidance has gone; there is nothing there, and so the poor child becomes a delinquent. He has been brought up in this atmosphere of conflict between father and mother, husband and wife.

Indeed, there are other aspects of this trend that seem to me to be even more sinister. Is it not a fact that, increasingly, men have been abrogating their position and retiring out of it, and not doing their duty as husbands and as fathers as the result of sheer laziness and selfishness? Husbands are increasingly leaving the discipline of home-life to the wives, to the mothers. They cannot be bothered; they come home tired from work and ask their wives to keep the children from them, and to

answer their questions. Is not this happening increasingly? The husband is deliberately vacating the position in which God has put him. It is happening among Christian people, but it is happening still more among non-Christians. The husband is evacuating his position, and leaving it in his laziness to the wife.

This is happening today in many other directions also. So many Christian people today will not touch politics because they say it is a 'dirty game'. But what an appalling argument! It is their duty as citizens of the country to be interested and concerned. But, here, we are particularly concerned with this realm of marriage.

Then, on the other side, feminism has led to aggressiveness on the part of the wife, the mother. She is setting herself up as an equal, and undermining the influence of the father in the minds of the children. The unhappy result is the totally false and wrong approach to the whole question. I do not say this in a spirit of criticism. We are seeing this increasingly in this country, but to nothing like the extent to which they are seeing it in the United States of America. There, you have what may more or less be called a matriarchal society, and the man is becoming increasingly regarded merely as the one to provide the dollars, the wage-earner, the man who brings in the necessary money. The woman, the mother, is the cultured person, and the head of the home; and the children look to her. This false unscriptural view of man and woman, and father and mother leads to a matriarchal society, which, it seems to me, is most dangerous. The result is, of course, the growth of crime and all the terrible social problems with which they are grappling in that country. Then, because they influence every other country through their films and in various other ways, this attitude is being spread throughout the entire world. A matriarchal society with the woman as the head and centre of the home is a denial of the biblical teaching, and is, indeed, a repetition of the old sin of Eve.

The problem is being recognized increasingly. That is why marriage guidance councils and suchlike bodies have been formed. But, alas, they generally approach the problems in terms of psychology. Yet if you examine the married life of many of these psychologists you get a shock. These people who give advice as to how marriages are to be entered into, how they are to be preserved and kept, cannot apply the teaching in their own marriages. Of course, they cannot! It is not a matter of psychology. What is needed is not just a little common sense and wisdom and the spirit of comradeship, and give and take. Men and women know all about that, and have known all about it always; but they cannot practise it. No, there is only one hope. Until God is the authority, and man and wife submit themselves to him, until they do all things 'as unto the Lord', and realize that it is the same sort of headship as that of God over Christ, and Christ over man, there is no hope. It is as men and women in the last hundred years have increasingly departed from the authority of the Bible that this terrible social blight and problem has become more and more evident. I know that I shall be told, 'You obviously want to go back to that stern, repressive, autocratic Victorian husband and father'. That is quite wrong! I know that much of the modern problem is due to a reaction against Victorianism, and I condemn Victorianism as much as the present position. We must come back to the Bible. I am not advocating a return to the Victorian idea. I say, Come back to God, come back to Christ, come back to the revelation in the authoritative Word of God. Look again at his perfect plan—man, and the woman by his side complementing him, his help meet; loving one another, revering, respecting, honouring one another, but never confusing the two spheres.

May God in his grace enable us not only to see the teaching, but to submit ourselves to it, and thereby bring honour and glory to the name of the blessed Lord. 'As unto the Lord'.