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### An Exegetical Study of Marriage in Ephesians 5, 21-33

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AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF MARRIAGE

IN EPHESIANS 5. 21-33

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of New Testament Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1952

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The original intention of the writer was to make a thorough biblical study of all the passages in the letters of Paul which were concerned with his treatment of the family and its relationships. Material was gathered and the first chapter, which was to be a discussion of marriage, was prepared. However, it soon became apparent that the topic undertaken was entirely too large for the type of paper which was to be prepared. The first chapter of the original thesis covered approximately forty-five pages, and various problems in the text had been either treated lightly or completely ignored. Upon the advice of the advisor an exegetical study of the marriage passage in Ephesians, 5: 21-33, was begun. This thesis, then, is the fruit of such labors.

Very little attempt is made to correlate many other passages of Paul with regard to marriage in the paper. Therefore, it would be highly improper to maintain that one has considered Paul's view of marriage with a study of just this one section. The main sources of parallel concepts are in I Corinthians and Colossians. The passages in Colossians are very close parallels to this section which will be studied.

Because this paper concerns itself with marriage, and only that, and since to consider the doctrine of the church, as here presented, would again provide too much material to be adequately covered, it has



been necessary to completely omit any discussion of the church, except when it directly applies to marriage.

A few words are in order here concerning the background of the relation of the church concept to that of marriage. The relation of the spouses to one another in a comparison of Jehovah and His people was not in any way new to the Jewish mind. This concept did not have its genesis in Paul's mind. As E. F. Scott explains:

...we need to remember a peculiar conception which prevails in many ancient religions, especially in religions of the Semitic type. The relation between a god and his people was represented as one of marriage. Originally it was the land in which he was worshipped that was married to the god, but the relation was extended from the land to the people. Thus in the Old Testament Jahveh is frequently imagined as the husband of Israel. With the prophets the crude primitive conception became a purely figurative one, but in this form it is maintained, and appears in many striking pictures of national apostasy. Hosea, for example, thinks of Israel as an unfaithful wife who is still beloved by her husband and is forgiven and restored. Paul takes up the Old Testament idea and conceives of the relation between the Church and Christ as one of marriage. The conception, so far as we know, was first introduced by Paul, but henceforth became a favourite one in Christian thought.<sup>1</sup>

While one must disagree with Scott on his idea of the theology of the prophets, namely, that it was a development from a "crude primitive concept," yet he sees clearly the background in the history of Israel on which Paul's mind undoubtedly drew for his connection of marriage with Christ and the church. Lock also sees this tradition in Jewish belief and, in addition, correctly traces it through the preaching

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<sup>1</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), pp. 236-237.



of John the Baptist and Christ to Paul, and thence to the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, on the other hand, sees in the background as a minor additional influence "Bizarre Gnostic speculation about the marriage of Christ, as the male principle, with wisdom as the female,...."<sup>3</sup>

For Paul as a Christian this doctrine of marriage was the only logical consequence of his life in Christ. The introduction of such a view of marriage into Greek thinking was necessary for those who lived at Ephesus and who professed a faith in Christ.

The cultivated Greek took a wife for the production of children. ...Her body was at her owner's disposal. Nothing in Christianity appeared more novel and more severe, in comparison with the dissolute morals of the time, than the Christian view of marriage.<sup>4</sup>

For the husbands and wives who read the Epistle this section, 5: 21-33, was, over against their pagan past, entirely new. It will be seen that Paul places no limit on the importance of the matter.

A brief outline of the thesis indicates the various chapters and their content. Paul's suggestions to the wife (22-24) are followed by his exhortations to the husbands (25-28). He then introduces his theory of the relation of the church to Christ as an example of the relation of wife to husband, culminating in the great mystery (29-32). This mystery is, in turn, followed by his summarizing verse (33).

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<sup>2</sup>Walter Lock, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1929), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Karl L. Schmidt, The Church, translated and edited by J. R. Coates from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>G. C. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositors' Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 364.



## CHAPTER II

### PLACE AND MEANING OF VERSE 21

Prior to the discussion of verse 21, there must needs be a consideration of the actual possibility of attaching this verse to those which follow. Nestle, in his editions of the Greek New Testament, connects this verse with those previous in meaning and content. The questions which confront one from the beginning are: Just what position does verse 21 have in the chapter? Does it end the thought of the preceding section, verses 15-20, or does it introduce and head the section, verses 22-33, namely, that of marriage and spouses?

Much can be said for attaching this verse to those preceding it. It is introduced with a participle, *ἑποτασσομένοι*, thus connecting it with the earlier phrases, which are connected in like manner (vs. 18-20). Abbot quotes Ellicott with the following:

....the first three (clauses) name three duties, more or less specially in regard to God, the last a comprehensive moral duty in regard to man,...<sup>1</sup>

thus establishing the connection in thought. Some connect this verse with *πληροῦσθε* in verse 18. Others believe that it refers back to verse 15 and that is part of Paul's admonition to walk wisely. At any rate one must admit that it could logically belong to this section, both grammatically, the participial clauses being used to continue the imperative, and in content, the new life in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 164.



Although much can be said to favor the above view, yet there are reasons, and more telling reasons, for connecting verse 21 with verses 22-33. The most prominent reason for this is the very probable absence of any verb in verse 22. The attestation of *ὑποτασσέσθε* is rather weak; that of *ὑποτασσέσθε*, still weaker. If verse 21 were to be attached to the preceding section, verse 22 would then be in the text without any verbal force, since verse 23 could not supply it, and the force of verse 24 would hardly be felt as far back as verse 22. However, if verse 21 is to start this new section, then the participle, *ὑποτασσόμενοι*, ties together these two sections, and it also supplies the verbal force necessary in verse 22 and repeated in verse 24.

Another reason for the inclusion of verse 21 in this section is the fact that Paul at this point changes his line of thought from the duties to God to the duties to man, as Ellicott says to supposedly prove the other possibility. It would be most natural to now start a new section with this idea, and at the same time establish the connection with the preceding by maintaining the construction of the previous section. The duties of God form the basis for the duties to man, which follow. The RSV attaches verse 21 in this manner.

Asmussen ties both sections together by this very verse. He says: "Dem Sinne nach gehört dieser Vers zum Folgenden, der Konstruktion nach gehört er zum Vergangenen."<sup>2</sup> He sees the con-

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<sup>2</sup>D. Hans Asmussen, Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser (Brekum in Schleswig: Christian Jensen, Verlag, 1949), p. 85.



nection which this verse has with both sections. Finally, after a candid survey of all the evidence, one must admit with Asmussen that verse 21 has something in common with both sections. For this study the important thing is its content.

When Paul makes the statement, ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις, he raises the question of the essence and manner of this mutual submission. Later in the section, verses 22 and 24, Paul mentions the woman's subjection. Here, however, he addresses this command to both parties. Does he contradict himself? By no means! The essence of this mutual subjection is the key-note for the rest of the chapter and the first part of the next (5, 22-6,9). E. F. Scott advances this idea when he says:

Before he enters on his discussion of how Christians should conduct themselves in the various relations of life he states the general principle by which they must be guided. Their attitude to one another is to be one of mutual service.<sup>3</sup>

Paul would hereby suggest that the subjection idea is not a one-way affair--namely, that of wife to husband; he here implies that for the husband, too, there is a 'subjection.' For a complete and whole understanding of human relationships, especially in marriage, the concept of mutual subjection must fully be understood, since

In mutual subjection all realize the joy of fellowship. Such harmonious subjection of one to another is the social expression of the personal feeling of thankfulness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), p. 236.

<sup>4</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 82.



Paul is in no way being arbitrary or legalistic in his approach since he grounds this command 'in the fear of Christ.' The RSV seems to attempt to tone down the word *φοβος* and translates it, 'reverence.' However, it seems best to leave it as 'fear,' since it has its origin in the OT concept of the 'fear of the Lord' or 'the fear of God.'

J. Armitage Robinson states the case thus:

In the Old Testament the guiding principle of human life is again and again declared to be 'the fear of the Lord,' or 'the fear of God.' This is 'the beginning of wisdom,' and 'the whole duty of man.' St. Paul boldly recasts the principle for the Christian society in the unique expression 'the fear of Christ.'<sup>5</sup>

The fear which the OT people had for their Jehovah is now transplanted to the new representative of Jehovah, namely Christ.

It is easily seen that the possibilities for the interpretation of the 'fear of Christ' are, in the main, two-fold:

- 1) Christ in respect to His suffering as the guiding motive
- 2) Christ as the Judge

Hodge admits both possibilities.

This may mean either that the fear of Christ at whose bar we are to stand in judgement, should constrain us to this mutual subjection; or that the duty should be religiously performed. The motive should be reverence for Christ, a regard for His will and for His glory.<sup>6</sup>

This motive is also expressed by Abbott. In the Westminster Commentaries Lock brings to the surface the idea of respect for Christ and His sufferings in this *φοβὴ Χριστοῦ*.

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<sup>5</sup>J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1922), p. 123.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1864), p. 310.



The thought is not so much 'the fear of a master who can punish,' but rather the fear of a Messiah, the fear of offending one who has made us his Body and thwarting his purpose for every limb of the body.<sup>7</sup>

The other possible motive is expressed by Findlay when he attributes this *phobos* to that of the fear of the final Judge.

'In the fear of Christ' the loyal Christian man submits himself to the community; not from the dread of human displeasure, but knowing that he must give account to the Head of the Church and the Judge of the last day, if his self-will should weaken the Church's strength and interrupt her holy work.<sup>8</sup>

Whether one places verse 21 with the preceding or following section there is evidence to show that the first interpretation, previously mentioned, is the most prominent. In verse 20 Paul exhorts the people to 'give thanks in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.' In verses 23-27 Christ's love for the church, evidenced in His redemption of it, is made the only basis for the husband-wife relationships. While no one doubts that in any action of a Christian there is the fear of judgment, the context here would rather certainly express the love and honor motif over against that of direct intimidation.

This interpretation places a great responsibility upon the husband and wife. They should not try to espouse their own cause over and above that of their spouses, but the whole relationship should be centered in 'the fear of Christ,' a submission grounded in love for

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<sup>7</sup>Walter Lock, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1929), p. 61.

<sup>8</sup>G. G. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositors' Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 354.



Christ and for the other person. As Scott says:

They are all to regard themselves as servants of one Master, whose interests must be dearer to them than their own. The fear of Christ is to keep them helpful and considerate to each other.<sup>9</sup>

This relationship will be more fully investigated throughout the paper.

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<sup>9</sup>Scott, op. cit., p. 236.



## CHAPTER III

### DUTIES OF THE WIFE

After Paul has given an admonition applicable to both man and wife, he now directs his attention to the wife and the part which she has in the union of marriage. Verses 22-24 contain this material.

While verse 21 has at least a participle, carrying the verbal idea of the phrase, verse 22 lacks any type of verb. However, most exegetes immediately see the connection, discussed previously, between verse 21 and verse 22. There is no doubt that Paul receives the idea of a verb in this phrase directly from his previous construction. In fact, Findlay makes this statement:

St. Paul passes on to the new topic without any grammatical pause, verse 22 being simply an extension of the participial clause that forms verse 21: 'Being in subjection to one another in fear of Christ--ye wives to your husbands, as to the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

Robinson expresses a similar view in analyzing the connection thus:

As a matter of construction this clause depends on the preceding participle: 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ: wives, unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.' *αὐ*  
*ὑμῶν* accordingly stands for the vocative....<sup>2</sup>

With respect to the insertion of *ὑποτασσέσθε ὡσαν* in some manuscripts, *ὑποτάσσασθε* in others, it is easily seen that a scribe would

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<sup>1</sup>G. G. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositors' Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 354.

<sup>2</sup>J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1922), p. 204.



naturally wonder if something had been omitted and thus insert one of the above verbs. Robinson brings weight to this argument.

When this section was read independently of the preceding verses it became necessary to introduce a verb; and this is probably the cause of the insertion of  $\delta\mu\sigma\lambda\omicron\sigma\sigma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota$  or  $\delta\eta\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\beta\theta\omega\tau\alpha\lambda\upsilon$  in most of the texts....<sup>3</sup>

Abbott expresses it clearer perhaps when he quotes Erasmus:

No reason can be imagined for its omission if it had been in the text originally, whereas the reason for its insertion is obvious, and was stated even by Erasmus: 'adjectum, ut apparet, quo et sensus sit lucidior, et capitulum hoc separatim legi queat, si res ita postulet.' The latter reason is particularly to be noted. The diversity in the MSS. which have the verb is also of weight. The shorter reading agrees well with the succinct style of St. Paul in his practical admonitions.<sup>4</sup>

Of particular value is Abbott's last statement concerning the short, concise style of Paul. We see this also in verse 18 and following.

What does Paul mean by 'subjection?' Paul's concept of subjection must never be discussed apart from his idea of subjection to God. It is significant that here Paul connects these two ideas.

We must always bear this in mind.

For Paul the subjection of the woman is not an arbitrary demand. He gives the basic reason for this subjection in verse 23. Yet that reason again is undoubtedly based on the phrase  $\omega\varsigma \tau\omega \kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omega$ . However, before a more complete discussion of the phrase, Findlay sees something inherent in the subjection concept:

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<sup>3</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 165.



Such subordination implies no inferiority, rather the opposite. A free and sympathetic obedience--which is the true submission --can only subsist between equals. The apostle writes: 'Children, obey; ...Servants, obey'(vi. 1, 5); but 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.' The same word denotes submission within the Church, and within the house. It is here that Christianity, in contrast with Paganism, and notably with Mohammedanism, raises the weaker sex to honour. In soul and destiny it declares the woman to be man, endowed with all rights and powers inherent in humanity. 'In Christ Jesus there is no male and female,' any more than there is 'Jew and Greek' or 'bond and free.'<sup>5</sup>

Findlay differentiates the submission of wife and that of children and slaves, which follows the section under consideration. His conclusion is rightly taken. In this submission the ultimate result is not a humiliating subjection, but an honorable self-subordination.

Ultimately the whole basis of submission is contained in the phrase, *ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ*. There are apparently two major ideas contained in the phrase.

Primarily, the idea is one of a guiding motive; the submission of wife to husband is a submission of a Christian to her Savior.

Das Untertansein, Gehorchen kann den christlichen Ehefrauen nicht zu schwer fallen, wenn sie bedenken, dass sie eben damit ihren Gehorsam gegen den Herrn betätigen.<sup>6</sup>

She is not submissive to just another human being, "but her obedience to her husband is to be regarded as part of her obedience to the Lord."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 357.

<sup>6</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), p. 239.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1864), p. 312.



This does not make the husband God, nor does he become infallible.

To avoid the danger of an overemphasis of such a motive, namely, that of making her husband a minor god, another aspect of the idea present in this phrase, *ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ*, should be noted. Findlay has carefully analyzed and stated the situation:

'As unto the Lord' gives the pattern and the principle of the Christian wife's submission. Not that, as Meyer seems to put it, the husband in virtue of marriage 'represents' Christ to the wife.' Her relation to the Lord is as full, direct, and personal as his. Indeed, the clause inserted at the end of verse 23<sup>8</sup> seems expressly designed to guard against this exaggeration.

Because her obedience to her husband is part of her obedience to the Lord, she is in a direct relationship to God, not through her husband. Her husband is not the Lord. The *ὡς* in this case does not bring a full and complete comparison, but it has a limiting force.<sup>9</sup> This limiting element will be found expressed later also in the *ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ σώματι* of verse 23.

The final discussion of this verse centers around the word, *ἰδιόαις*. For Paul there was an apparently good reason for the use of such a word here. Normally we would expect either *ἀδελφῶν* or *ἐκείνων*. Of this Plummer remarks:

The Apostle seems always to use *ἐαυτοῦ* or *ἑαυτοῦ* of a man's relation to his wife, but *ἰδιόαις* of a woman's to her husband. Does this show that he regarded the husband as the owner and the wife as being owned? Rom. xiv. 4, somewhat

<sup>8</sup>Findlay, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

<sup>9</sup>Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 311.



encourages this.<sup>10</sup>

Plummer would emphasize the force and nature of the relationship by the use of *ἐδούλωσεν*. Ewald in turn believes that this usage is not in contrast to other men over against her husband.<sup>11</sup> Abbott expresses another view, when he says: "That the word was not required to prevent misconception of *ἐδούλωσεν* is shown by its absence in the parallel, Col. iii, 18."<sup>12</sup> Paul undoubtedly wished to stress to the wives that in their husbands they should see a very special possession given to them by God. However, Plummer's view is rightly taken, and the above thought is not necessarily in opposition to his idea.

In summary the verse is considered to show the women that their primary duty is to submit themselves to their husbands. They do not become complete slaves but as they are willingly obedient to the Lord, thus they react to their husbands. In reality not too much should be expressed yet, since verse 23 is vitally important for the complete understanding of the *ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ*. While verse 22 shows the nature and the extent of the submission, verse 23 gives the ground for it.

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<sup>10</sup>Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), p. 139.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Ewald, "Die Briefe des Paulus an die Epheser, Kolosser, und Philemon," Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, edited by Theodor Zahn (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1905), p. 238.

<sup>12</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 165.



'Because man is head of the woman' is the explicit reason for the submission idea, though understood in verse 22, and is a further amplification of the phrase, *ὡς ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ*. The *ὅτι* can not be construed as 'that,' since one immediately asks the question: What does it mean then? It is causal, and whether one translates it as 'because' or 'since,' only this idea can be derived.

Oddly, Robinson is the only one of the commentators consulted who refers to the problem of *ἀνὴρ*, namely, that *ἀνὴρ* has no definite article while *γυναικὸς* has. He translates the article with *γυναικὸς* as a possessive.

The definite article (*ὁ*) is absent in the best text: 'A husband is head of his wife,' or, more idiomatically in English, 'the husband is the head of the wife.' The article with *γυναικὸς* defines its relation to *ἀνὴρ*.<sup>13</sup>

Another example of this frequent use of the article may be found in I Cor. 11:3. The article is the possessive of the word which it defines or to which it is referred.

At first glance the phrase, *κεφαλὴ ἐστὶν τοῦ γυναικὸς*, would seem to place the man as complete authority over woman. With the background of I Cor. 11 this seemingly becomes more evident. Yet one must be very cautious; with due consideration there comes to view another aspect of the concept, a duty of responsibility for the husband. These two ideas offer themselves in the following discussion.

Man is head of the woman as Christ is head of the Church. The similarity or comparison is direct and bears much weight. To the woman

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<sup>13</sup>Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 205.



the man is therefore a person of authority. In the simile of head and body the union and cooperation of the two is to be emphasized. As Thornton says:

Head and body are mutually complementary; so are husband and wife. But the head has a controlling power over the body. So also the husband is the head of the family and the guardian and protector of his wife. In both of these ways the two types of language suitably represent the mutual relations of Christ and the Church.<sup>14</sup>

Hodge, for example, I believe, goes completely overboard in trying to analyze daily situations and to make a complete understanding of the problem of the submission of the woman. He is rather inconsistent in his attempts.<sup>15</sup> No seriously minded Christian will consider this charge to be a divine fiat to the husband to be a dictator. On the other hand, such words and a comparison of Christ and the church are sharp reminders to the wife that God has made the husband to be the head of the family. Cf. I Cor. 11: 3, 8-9. With the responsibility for this position should come the proper authority over wife and children. As-mussen summarizes the ideas here expressed in his commentary:

Sondern der Mann ist das Haupt des Weibes, weil er sie zur Erfüllung ihrer selbst bringt, und sie 'erfüllt'--in einem abgeleiteten Sinne--ihn. So ist sie um des Mannes willen und durch den Mann da. Darum steht sie 'unter' ihm, nicht in wertenden, weltanschaulichen Sinne, sondern nach ihrer Herkunft in der Schöpfung, ähnlich wie der Untertan 'unter' der Obrigkeit steht, womit über seinem Wert nichts ausgesagt wird. Denn in entsprechendem Sinne ist Christus auch das Haupt seiner Gemeinde, nicht nur insofern, als sie ihm zu gehorchen hat. Das Gehorchen ist

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<sup>14</sup>L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London: Dacre Press, 1950), p. 222.

<sup>15</sup>Hodge, op. cit., pp. 312-313.



die Folge, nicht der Grund für den Hauptcharakter Christi und den des Mannes.<sup>16</sup>

As has been already mentioned, such a phrase does not refer its charges only to the wife. Although this phrase is found in the section of duties of the wife, it bears an indirect charge to the husband. It makes him responsible for the safety and care of his wife. Probably the most important evidence for this is found right in the verse. Christ's major relationship to His Church is one of love and care. The authority angle, however, remains. Robinson states this duality rather uniquely:

It is the function of the head to plan the safety of the body, to secure it from danger and to provide for its welfare. In the highest sense this function is fulfilled by Christ for the church; in a lower sense it is fulfilled by the husband for the wife. In either case the responsibility to protect is inseparably linked with the right to rule: the head is obeyed by the body.<sup>17</sup>

In direct consequence of this 'responsibility' consideration, the discussion necessarily turns to the phrase, *σωτήρα τοῦ σώματος*. E. F. Scott attributes the phrase to Hellenistic origin.<sup>18</sup> Scott also states one of the several interpretations of the phrase, namely, that the phrase emphasizes the protective responsibility of the husband. Hodge sees this possibility, although he believes, as most other commen-

<sup>16</sup>D. Hans Asmussen, Der Brief des Paulus und die Epheser (Brekum in Schleswig: Christian Jensen Verlag, 1949), p. 86.

<sup>17</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>18</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), p. 238.



tators also believe, that it is more important to consider it as limiting the parallel between the husband and Christ in their roles.<sup>19</sup> Meyer in his commentary says the very same thing. Abbott wisely considers the problem from a grammatical view:

Chrys. Theoph. and Oeum., however, interpret this clause as equally applicable to the husband.... But  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  cannot refer to any subject but that which immediately precedes, viz.  $\sigma^{\circ}$   $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ . Moreover, to use  $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$  without some qualification for the wife would be unintelligible; nor is  $\sigma\omega\tau\eta\rho$  ever used in the N.T. except of Christ or God.<sup>20</sup>

Findlay in turn studies the matter from the content:

The qualification that Christ is 'Himself Saviour of the body,' thrown in between the two sentences comparing the material headship to that which Christ holds towards the Church, has the effect of limiting the former. The subjection of the Christian wife to her husband reserves for Christ the first place in the heart and the undiminished rights of Saviourship. St. Paul indicates a real, and not unfrequent danger. The husband may eclipse Christ in the wife's soul, and be counted as her all in all. Her absorption in him may be too complete.<sup>21</sup>

Abbott's grammatical statements and the danger mentioned in Findlay's conclusion are both valid and apparent in the life of this age. Cf. 1 Cor. 7: 34. It is only the Christian, however, who is necessarily concerned with the danger mentioned by Findlay.

$\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  must be considered as emphatic. In addition to its emphatic position it refers immediately back to  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ . Possibly Paul also wishes to use  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$  as another sign of the limiting power of

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<sup>19</sup>Hodges, op. cit., pp. 313-314.

<sup>20</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>21</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 359.



ὡς τὸ τοῦ σώματος. αὐτοῦ would hardly refer as far back as *ἐν ἡμῖν* .

If one takes the *ὡς τὸ τοῦ σώματος* as limiting the parallelism between Christ and the husband, and *αὐτοῦ* as referring only to Christ, it does not necessarily destroy the contention that the first thought here is one of love and care. On the other hand, since self-subjection is a duty of the wife, much can be said to emphasize the authority of man. Probably the latter idea carries the argument here, since in I Cor. 11: 3-10 where Paul uses the 'headship' figure, he hints of the authority of men over women. Oepke summarizes the whole discussion beautifully:

So bleibt die Frau trotz ihrer grundsätzlichen Gleichstellung in der Gotteskindschaft faktisch dem Manne untergeordnet, wobei freilich diesem zur Pflicht gemacht wird, seine Führerstellung nicht selbstgütig auszunutzen, sondern in fürsorgender Liebe auszufüllen.<sup>22</sup>

Both authority and responsibility are present. Neither can be ignored or denied.

Paul now concludes the exhortation to the wives with a repetition of the charge in verse 22. However, whereas in verse 22 he gives the command, and then follows with the basis for it (verse 23), in this instance he gives first an example and then the charge.

There is a variance of opinion with regard to the exact force of *ἀλλ'* in verse 24. Some believe that it has the force of 'but,' thus showing a dissimilarity in the comparison of Christ and the husband.

<sup>22</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I, 785-786.



As Westcott puts it: "But, though the parallel is not complete...."<sup>23</sup> Meyer translates it in like manner, when he says, "I understand  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha'$  in its ordinary adversative sense...."<sup>24</sup> It is seen in the same light by Hodge, who discounts entirely the possibility of translating with 'therefore.' The resumptive use of  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha'$  by Robinson, who claims that " $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha'$  is used to fix the attention on the special point of interest," and that "if this is not strictly 'the resumptive use' of  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha'$ , it is akin to it. The use of  $\pi\alpha\lambda\upsilon$  at the end of this section (verse 33) is closely parallel."<sup>25</sup> It seems that in general the commentaries consulted arrive at the same final meaning, that there is a partial comparison and for that reason the wives should take this seriously. It is easy to see that the parallelism is not complete, but it also can be shown that Paul resumes the thought with a summary. Findley, unnecessarily, carries the thought of the husband in dangerous opposition to Christ even to this word.<sup>26</sup>

This brings us directly to the summarizing comparison - Christ and the husband, church and the wife. Since man and wife are compared

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<sup>23</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1950), p. 84.

<sup>24</sup>H. A. W. Meyer, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), p. 511.

<sup>25</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>26</sup>Findley, op. cit., p. 359.



with Christ and the church, they receive a new power and life to maintain that comparison.

To the wife there is a new regulation, derived from the comparison of Christ and the church.<sup>27</sup> "As the Christian wife obeys the Lord Christ in the spiritual sphere, in the sphere of marriage she is subject to her husband."<sup>28</sup> This obedience to her husband is only partial in so far that she loves Christ more. Paul is even so bold as to add *ἐν παντί*. That even this *ἐν παντί* has a limit Hodge is quick to recognize:

She is to be subject *ἐν παντί*, in every thing. That is, the subjection is not limited to any one sphere or department of the social life, but extends to all. The wife is not subject as to some things, and independent as to others, but she is subject as to all.<sup>29</sup>

But Hodge significantly continues with respect to her spiritual life:

This of course does not mean that the authority of her husband is unlimited. It teaches its extent, not its degree. It extends over all departments, but is limited in all; first, by the nature of the relation; and secondly, by the higher authority of God.<sup>30</sup>

The danger of being over- or under-submissive is there. In this day Paul still exhorts the women to be submissive to God. In turn they are members of the church, which is submissive to Christ.

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<sup>27</sup>Assmussen, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>28</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 360.

<sup>29</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 314.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER IV

### DUTIES OF THE HUSBAND

Following the exhortation to the wives, whose theme is 'submission,' Paul turns his attention to the men (verses 25-28). The theme of this section could rightly be 'love.' Stoeckhardt quotes Hofmann, who sees a warning in both sections.

Bei den Frauen, welche als Mitgenossen derselben Gnade leicht auch im ehelichen Leben Gleichberechtigung mit den Männern beanspruchen mochten, ging die Ermahnung auf Selbstuntergebung. 'Die Männer dagegen, deren nächstliegende Versündigung herrische Härte war, werden ermahnt, ihre Frauen lieb zu haben, und zwar mit der Tut....' Hofmann.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Paul's exhortations in both sections are warnings, but it is more probable that in these verses Paul wishes to stress the example set forth, namely, Christ. Husbands love as Christ loved. That is the example; that is the divine imperative.

Relevant to the whole discussion of the husband's action is the nature of the comparison embodied in verse 25. *καὶ ὡς καὶ* --strangely enough there are different opinions regarding the exact force of these words. Stoeckhardt sees only a type contained in these words.

Das Verhältnis Christi zur Gemeinde ist nicht Grund für das rechte Verhalten der Eheleute zueinander, das ja in der Schöpferordnung

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<sup>1</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), p. 240.



begründet ist, sondern Abbild des Verhältnisses des Mannes zum Weibe.<sup>2</sup>

Thus he would translate *καθώς* 'as.' Thornton, on the other hand, views the relation of these two, wife and husband, as an actual participation in the unity of Christ and the church.

Christian marriage is not only to be modelled upon the mystical union of Christ and the Church. It is actually to partake of its quality. It is not only to exemplify the union and symbolize it, but also to embody it.<sup>3</sup>

Hodge, however, maintains in reality a new idea, seeing both 'because!' and 'as.' "Husbands should love their wives, *καθώς* even as, i.e., both because and as."<sup>4</sup> There is strength in his contention. Husbands love their wives, because Christ first loved them, since they are members of the church. Because husbands have experienced this love of their Savior, they are now capable of loving their wives as Christ loved them. This must not be construed to say that, therefore, the wives evidently were not loved by Christ. Yet one can share Stoeckhardt's concern. No man will ever love as Christ loved. That is the goal of the Christian life though. If the extent is qualified, realizing the inadequacy of perfection in man, then *καθώς* could be taken as 'as.' Souter translates *καθώς* : "according to the manner in which, in

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London: Dacre Press, 1950), p. 225.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1864), p. 315.



the degree that, as.<sup>5</sup> Thus it would seem that he leaves the door open for both possibilities. Thayer also allows for both views the extent and the similarity.

Since the husband's action is based on the example of Christ over against the church, it is vitally important to consider this relationship, at least briefly. (Verse 26 and 27 contain other phases of it.) Here the theme of love is illuminated. 'Christ loved the church and Himself gave for the sake of it.' It is the story of the Christian faith. Westcott makes the concise statement about the reason for the love: 'Christ loved the Church not because it was perfectly lovable, but in order to make it such.'<sup>6</sup> There was no cause in the church, but the love was entirely Christ-motivated and embodied a self-giving on Christ's part.<sup>7</sup> Both Asmussen and Stauffer (in Kittel) maintain that this 'sich hingebende' love of Christ is directed primarily toward the congregation and not toward individuals. Thus the marriage is placed in a greater and larger dogmatical connection.

With this in mind a consideration of the love of the husband for the wife is undertaken. Findlay, in a discussion of the three Greek

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 121.

<sup>6</sup>Brooke F. Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1950), p. 84.

<sup>7</sup>D. Hans Asmussen, Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser (Brekum in Schleswig: Christian Jensen Verlag, 1949), p. 87.



words for love, views ἀγάπη as a combination of ἔρως and φιλία.<sup>8</sup> He would show that the imperative, ἀγαπᾶτε, contains these thoughts, sexual passion, friendship and a deep spiritual love. This is indeed the background, but it is only of an earthly aspect of love. Stauffer does not differentiate between Christian ἀγάπη and the love of spouses. Both are grounded in the love of Christ, because "Ermöglichungsgrund und Masz aller menschlichen ἀγάπη aber ist in NT die Gottesliebe."<sup>9</sup> Again the problem of the exact nature of the comparison comes forth. Stauffer and, as was previously stated, Hodge maintain that Christ's love is the ground (Grund) and measure (Masz) of the husband's love. Hodge sees only an analogy in the measure, probably meaning that he does not expect the husband's love to be as full as Christ's. There is no doubt that the husband can love with ἀγάπη only because Christ has shown that ἀγάπη over against His church, of which both husband and wife are members. For this reason, being modeled on the love of Christ for His church, the love of the husband is one of self-sacrifice. As Christ gave His very life for the church, so the husband is told that he should love and give himself.

Self-devotion, not self-satisfaction is its note. Its strength and authority it uses as material for sacrifice and instruments of service, not as prerogatives of pride or titles to enjoyment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>G. C. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositors' Bible (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), pp. 361-362.

<sup>9</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I. 651.

<sup>10</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 362.



With regard to daily and practical applications of the imperative, one can become involved, deeply, and sometimes fruitlessly, in such a discussion. That essentially is not the purpose of this paper. However, Findlay has a gem of a discussion in this field, worthy of note. He warns against the possible selfishness of men and their lack of interest in the people of the home. Having spoken of the great interest in the daily business which occupies men, Findlay closes with a quote from Bengel:

'There are many,' says Bengel (on this point unusually caustic), 'who out of doors are civil and kind to all; when at home, toward their wives and children whom they have no need to fear, they freely practise secret bitterness.'<sup>11</sup>

Continuing the thought of verse 25, verse 26 is the first of three <sup>old</sup> clauses which show the purpose of each preceding clause (verses 26-28). These clauses deal mainly with Christ and the church, thus for a time interrupting the general theme of this section, marriage. Robinson sees the construction in this light, when he says that Paul here "interprets the love of Christ by a group of sentences which lift him for the moment high above his immediate theme."<sup>12</sup> However, it is easily seen that Paul allows himself to be carried away only because he wishes to emphasize again to the husband (and possibly also to the wife) that the love required in marriage is so great and so self-sacrificing. This emphasis is brought by these clauses, which are steps to the final

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 360-361.

<sup>12</sup> J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1922), p. 125.



presentation of the church by Christ as 'holy and blameless.' Although the material is, in the main, facts of the redemption of the church, certain items are worthy of examination in this study.

*ἁγιασμοῦ καθαρῶς* - 'he might make holy, (having) cleansed.' The *καθαρῶς* precedes the *ἁγιασμοῦ*, since it is more natural to 'cleanse from the old, and consecrate to the new. But in time the two are coincident.'<sup>13</sup> Its application to marriage might possibly be construed, as Findlay sees it, in the effort on the part of the husband to perfect the wife's character, having been put in charge of her soul.<sup>14</sup> Most commentaries either see no reference to marriage in the words, or they completely forget to mention it. While it is good for the husband to be concerned over the welfare of the wife, especially spiritually, it is rather doubtful that the above idea of Findlay was in Paul's mind when he wrote this. Paul was always greatly concerned that the people to whom he sent letters should know of redemption through Christ and that this knowledge should control every aspect of their lives. This is an example of the zeal of that man.

The phrase, *λουτρῶν τοῦ ὕδατος*, however, brings a much greater controversy regarding its meaning. All commentators take it immediately as a reference to the Sacrament of Baptism. Hodge even spends ten pages on this one phrase. But there the agreement stops, and the camp becomes divided. Some, as Westcott and Abbott, see 'an allusion in

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 205

<sup>14</sup>Findlay, *op. cit.*, p. 362.



λοῦτρον to the usual bath of the bride before the marriage.<sup>15</sup> Findlay sees "an image suggested, as one would think by the bridebath of the wedding-day in the ancient custom."<sup>16</sup> On the other side, Robinson is completely against this theory, because of the absence of historical background for the bridal-bath.

There appears to be no ground for supposing that the apostle here makes any allusion to a ceremonial bath taken by the bride before marriage. There is no evidence for such a rite in the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup>

E. F. Scott takes exception to the 'bridal bath' concept, because

It is doubtful whether Paul's language ought to be pressed in this somewhat artificial manner. For the moment he has turned away from the marriage idea, and is thinking simply of the purification of the Church by baptism.<sup>18</sup>

It is always easy to draw comparisons and find allusions in the material, such as we have here. Those who speak for a bridal bath have the burden of proving it, which they have not done. The arguments of Robinson and Scott do no violence to the text and therefore are conclusive.

The first clause of verse 27, ἡμεῖς ... τοιοῦτου, answers the

<sup>15</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 168.

<sup>16</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>17</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>18</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), p. 240.



following question: Why the action of verse 26? So that 'He might,' etc. The reason for this clause is in turn answered by the second clause of the verse, *ἡ δὲ ... ἡμίμιμος*. Thus both clauses are in close connection with each other and with the previous verse. These are the steps as Paul sees them in the preparation of the church for its presentation.

This presentation is embodied in the word, *παρουσία*. Both Abbott and Lock mention the use of this word in II Cor. 11:2. In that passage Paul views himself as the friend of the bridegroom (Christ) who presents the bride (the church) to her husband. However, in the passage under consideration Christ Himself (*αὐτός*) presents the bride. He is, at one and the same time, best man and bridegroom. He (*αὐτός*) presents the bride (*ἐκκλησία*) to Himself (*ἑαυτῷ*). Cf. verse 23-*σωτηρ τοῦ σώματος*. The double use of the reflexive, *αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ*, is graphic and serves to emphasize Paul's point. Thus it would seem that Paul, while on a so-called tangent from the exact theme, yet remains conscious of that theme, marriage.

The object of the *παρουσία* is the bride, the *ἐκκλησία*. As most brides, this bride is to be presented *ἐνδοξον*, glorious, to the groom. "The tertiary predicate *ἐνδοξον* is placed with emphasis before its substantive."<sup>19</sup> If, in the original, emphasis is obtained by its position and this is true, then it would be better to translate in English, 'the church - glorious.' This state of glory is present, because the bride has neither spot (*σπίλος*) nor wrinkle (*ρτίς*).

<sup>19</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 170.



The *οὐκ ἔχει* is considered to be any disfigurement, while the *ῥυτίτις* is usually thought of as a result of age. 'She is to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, i.e. without any thing to mar her beauty, free from every indication of age, faultless and immortal.'<sup>20</sup>

The Apostle moves on to the next step and again introduces it with *ἵνα*. This is the purpose, the final goal of the previous purpose clauses. 'But that she may be holy and blameless.' The combination of adjectives is used elsewhere by Paul - Eph. 1:4 and Col. 1:22. In both instances it is used concerning the presentation of the Christian as 'holy and blameless in His sight.' God the Father is the source of action in Ephesians; in Colossians Christ presents the Christian in this manner. Here he uses the phrase with reference to the church.

Hodge states, and correctly so, that

The great majority of the commentators, therefore, from Augustine down to the present time, understand the apostle as stating what is to take place when Christ comes the second time to be admired in all them that believe.<sup>21</sup>

This is the final consummation of the will of God, which began before the foundation of the world (1:4). In view of this the *ἵνα* clauses could not be result clauses but must be purpose.

Hodge condemns any sort of interpretation which would make *ἵνα* *καὶ ἁγίου* derived from any sacrificial sources.<sup>22</sup> Robinson is more

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<sup>20</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 328.



cautious, though, when he sees this possibility, because

In the LXX ἀμωμος is almost exclusively found as a rendering of ἄμωμος, which occurs very frequently of sacrificial animals, in the sense of 'without blemish.' But ἀμωμος is also freely used of moral rectitude, and has other renderings, such as ἁγίος, ἀκέραιος, ἁβύρτος, ἀκλόνος, ὁσίος. Accordingly a sacrificial metaphor is not necessarily implied in the use of the word in this place.<sup>23</sup>

Robinson's view of the phrase is the most acceptable, because he does not discount the Old Testament background of the words. Since Paul is speaking mainly about the church and Christ at this point, and for a moment perhaps has lost sight of the immediate theme, marriage, there is no valid reason for taking the words in a sacrificial sense. However, it seems best to forego any one conclusion.

Asmussen draws the phrase into a marital context in a manner which does no violence to either context or thought.

Das Merkwürdige an diesem Verse ist aber, dass hier die Bilder die aus der Gemeinde für die Ehe genommen werden, sich mit Bildern mischen, die aus der Ehe für die Gemeinde genommen werden. Dass nämlich keine Flecken und Runzeln da seien, ist ein Interesse des Mannes, der in der wholerhaltenen Frau geehrt wird. Darum sorgt er sich auch, dass seine Frau wohl erhalten bleibe. Die Frau ehrt mit ihrer Schönheit der Mann, der Mann ehrt damit, dass er die Frau umsorgt, sich selbst.--In diesem Sinne hat Christus für die Gemeinde gesorgt.<sup>24</sup>

After Paul has finished his excursus on the redemption of the church, he returns to the matter at hand. There is great similarity between his procedure here and in verse 24, where he returns to the duties of the wives. In οὐτως Abbott, Hodge and Findlay see a refer-

<sup>23</sup>Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

<sup>24</sup>Asmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 88.



ence to the statement immediately preceding this verse.

It yields a better sense here to take οὕτως as referring to the preceding statement of Christ's love for the Church.<sup>25</sup>

οὕτως, so, at the beginning of the verse, refers to the preceding representation.<sup>26</sup>

The 'So' gathers its force from the previous example.<sup>27</sup>

Robinson is just a bit vague when he says, "it refers to the general drift of what has gone before," although he may mean the same thing.<sup>28</sup>

It is not difficult to see that the central thought which Paul wishes to emphasize is the 'Χριστός ἠγάπησεν'. As Christ loved, men ought to love their wives. If this is true, and it is taken that way, then the guiding motif of the husband's love should be sacrifice, self-sacrifice. Then the οὕτως contains the idea of self-sacrifice as the measure of love.

With this concept in οὕτως the next words are strange, to say the least. ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. The problem is this: at first the words seem to emphasize self-love, whereas the οὕτως leads one to expect the opposite. Grammatically the problem concerns itself with the use of ὡς and οὕτως. When ὡς is used as a correlative to οὕτως, usually it is

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<sup>25</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>26</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>27</sup>Windlay, op. cit., p. 363.

<sup>28</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 208.



translated 'as...so.'<sup>29</sup> Thus the whole thought of the section would be this: 'Men - love your wives. As Christ loved the church, so ( $\sigma\upsilon\acute{\omega}\nu\varsigma$ ) men ought to love their wives as ( $\omega\varsigma$ ) their own bodies.' But what does this mean? Hodge maintains that the  $\omega\varsigma$  here is 'not comparative but argumentative.'<sup>30</sup> The husbands should not love their wives as they love their own bodies, but they should love their wives because they are their bodies. Christ did not love the church as He loved Himself, if such a thing is even possible. But Christ loved the church because it was His body. Thus the  $\omega\varsigma$  would signify a reason and not a comparison. It would emphasize the basis and not the measure of the love. Westcott, in seeming agreement with Hodge,<sup>31</sup> translates the phrase, "as being their own bodies," and adds: "As the Church is Christ's body, so in a true sense the wife is the husband's body."<sup>32</sup> The chief alarm of the men above is expressed by Abbott.

...although we speak of a man's love for Himself, we do not expect of him as loving his body or having an 'affection' for it (Alford); and to compare a man's love for his wife to his love (?) for his body, would be to suggest a degrading view of the wife,...<sup>33</sup>

He further distinguishes between self-love, which is for the most part of reason, and conjugal love, which is thoroughly emotional.<sup>34</sup> The love

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<sup>29</sup>Scouter, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>30</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Westcott, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>33</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



for the wife of which Paul speaks here must not be confused with the love which is a purely rational result. It is a law of nature that a person looks out for himself. That is not what the Apostle here means. He is speaking of conjugal love. Unfortunately he uses a phrase which easily is construed to mean something entirely different.

The exegete is further dismayed when, after attempting to explain the last phrase, he comes to Paul's next sentence. 'He (the husband), loving his wife, loves himself.' In just what light does Paul see the connection? Robinson and Scott derive its meaning by attaching to be the 'head and body' metaphor.

The conclusion follows at once if indeed it be true that the husband is the head, and the wife the body. Nay, the relation is if possible more intimate still: the man is in fact loving himself.<sup>35</sup>

Stoekhardt introduces the 'one flesh' idea when he says,

dasz von der Schöpfung her, krapft der ehelichen Gemeinschaft der copula carnalis Mann und Weib ein Fleisch sind. Daraus folgt: 'Wer sein Weib liebt, liebt sich selbst.'<sup>36</sup>

Coupled with this concept, Robinson sees that Paul in reality probably means much more than what is on the surface. 'The Apostle is gradually passing away from the thought of headship to the more mysterious thought of complete oneness.'<sup>37</sup> This mystery introduces the next section which in turn contains a mystery. The latter mystery explains in part the difficulty of the present verse.

Any attempt to explain these words at length in a practical setting

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<sup>35</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>36</sup>Stoekhardt, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>37</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 126.



results in an indefinite number of theories and postulates. Hodge does just this, and in the end he proves nothing which is Scripturally conclusive.<sup>38</sup> Suffice it to say that Paul, through these past phrases and sentences, now ends the 'love' exhortation to the husbands; they should love as Christ loved; they should love their wives because they are their bodies. Ethically speaking, the sum of the Second Table is appropriate here. Yet as Asmussen remarks: "dasz dies nicht nur ethisch gilt, zeigen die folgenden Verse."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Hodge, op. cit., pp. 332-336.

<sup>39</sup>Asmussen, op. cit., p. 88.



## CHAPTER V

### CHRIST AND CHURCH - HUSBAND AND WIFE

#### The Mystery

The keen observer will undoubtedly question whether it is correct and proper to begin a new section at this point (verse 29). It is admitted that much can be said against the division. The thought, to a certain extent, is continued from verse 28. As Westcott says: "The conclusion which follows from the last verse is assumed but not expressed: The husband therefore must love his wife, for no one ever...."<sup>1</sup> One might also claim that the ἐκεῖσφι καὶ ὁδ' αὐτῶν is the same action as that which is expressed in verses 25-27. Over against these statements the following may be urged. Verse 28, as was mentioned, is a type of the resume which Paul employed in verse 24 in concluding that section. While it does introduce the new *σωτηρία* theme, it repeats the *ἀγαπᾶτε* command to the husbands. Another factor is the mention of the church again, which gradually goes over into Paul's great mystery. Verse 29a is merely the transition to this greater concept. It does not revert to the thoughts of the previous verses. It must also be admitted that Paul now seems to address both husband and wife. The membership in the body of Christ, Gen. 2: 24, the mystery of the church - both husband and wife should grasp these. He then naturally closes with a two-

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<sup>1</sup>Brooke F. Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1950), p. 85.



fold imperative (verse 33).

It is easy to see that *οὐδεις... ἐμίσημεν* is comparable to *ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ*. The former is merely the negative expression of the latter. The thought expressed is rather 'selbsverständlich.' However, one item must be noticed. Paul uses *σὰρξ* here instead of *σῶμα*, as in verse 28. Both Robinson and Abbott see the use of *σὰρξ* here as a direct reference to the quotation in verse 31, *σὰρξ μία*. Robinson says that "the change from *σῶμα* to *σὰρξ* gives a fresh emphasis to the thought, and at the same time prepares the way for the quotation in verse 31."<sup>2</sup> While Abbott agrees in the conclusion, he seems to disagree with Robinson's first premise.

It is not perhaps correct, however, to say that it is so chosen instead of *σῶμα*, for it is hardly probable that the Apostle would have used *σῶμα* in this connexion in any case. Rather, the whole sentence is suggested by the thought of *σὰρξ μία*.<sup>3</sup>

Both view the word as a preparation for the meaning of the next verse. The *γὰρ* connects it with the previous idea.

Instead of hating his flesh, it is natural that a person *ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτὸν*. With respect to the meaning of the verbs, Westcott says that "the words answer to the elementary needs of food and raiment."<sup>4</sup> Hodge, however, translates the two verbs as 'nourish and cherish.' "*ἐκτρέφει* is properly to nourish up, to train by nurture,

<sup>2</sup>J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922), p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 171.

<sup>4</sup>Westcott, op. cit., p. 86.



as a parent a child; *ἀγαπᾷ* is to warm, to cherish as a mother does an infant in her bosom.<sup>5</sup> Stoeckhardt sees a combination of both, to clothe and to cherish in *ἀγαπᾷ*.

Das Verbum *ἀγαπᾷ* bedeutet nicht nur 'erwärmen', so dass nur an die Bekleidung des Körpers zu denken wäre, sondern auch, wie Grimm sich ausdrückt: *tenera cura servare vel tueri*.<sup>6</sup>

As Hodge remarks later: "Both terms express tenderness and solicitude, and therefore both are suited to express the care with which every man provides for the wants and comfort of his own body."<sup>7</sup>

A man cares for the wants and comforts of his own body, *καθὼς καὶ* 'as also' Christ cares for the church.<sup>8</sup> Paul might have wished to accomplish a two-fold purpose by his choice of language. He has again brought to the attention of the reader the care and concern which Christ has for the church. In this he stresses again the content of verses 25-27. On the other hand, the great responsibility of the husband to properly care for his wife is directly connected with the thought of this verse. That the nourishing and care which Paul advocates here from

<sup>5</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1864), p. 336.

<sup>6</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1910), p. 245.

<sup>7</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>8</sup>K. L. Schmidt attempts to give meaning to this comparison from the background of the Valentinian Gnosis and the Odes of Solomon. While Paul probably knew of these sources, yet it is highly doubtful whether the material, (which supposes that the church is often identical with the body of the man, and that at times the woman, also called wisdom, takes the place of man), has a direct influence on his thinking at this point. For Schmidt's view the reader is referred to K. L. Schmidt, The Church. Translated and edited by J. R. Coates from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1950), pp. 18-19.



the example of Christ are not motivated by self-love or -pursuit of one's own ends or advantage is easily seen in the following verse.

The change of form is most significant. St. Paul does not say simply, following the language of the preceding sentence, 'because the Church is His body,' but he appeals to the personal experience of Christians, 'because we are members of His body and know the power of His love.'<sup>9</sup>

By his appeal to the readers who knew the love of Christ, as Westcott remarks, Paul forbids any interpretation which would make Christ's concern for the church self-centered. In fact, he attempts to stress just the opposite, the love of Christ for man. Findlay remarks of this love:

It is the love of the Head to the members, of the Son of man to the sons of men, whose race-life is founded in Him.... His life was wrapped up in ours. By such community of life self-love is transfigured, and exalted into the purest self-forgetting.<sup>10</sup>

Although Paul might wish the members of the body, especially those of marital status, to emulate the love of the Head, Christ, he does not deem it necessary to explicitly command it. However, now he is ready to give husband and wife the basic divine command of marriage, Gen. 2:24.

It is necessary to discuss briefly the supposed insertion in the text at the end of verse 30. 'ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ' is attested by manuscripts of the sixth, ninth, and tenth centuries, namely the Byzantine group, the whole Latin tradition, the Syriac version, and Irenaeus. The words in question are a quotation from a section of Gen. 2:23, the verse immediately preceding the verse which

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<sup>9</sup>Westcott, *op. cit.*, p. 86

<sup>10</sup>G. G. Findlay, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," *The Expositors' Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 363.



Paul quotes in verse 31. This combination of the verses in the Old Testament is the greatest reason for the insertion. Hodge goes to great lengths, ten pages, in discussing the interpretation of the insertion. He views with alarm the interpretation of the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches which view the insertion as a reference to the Sacrament of Holy Communion.<sup>11</sup> The whole discussion is Reformed in character and treatment, and it must be judged as such. Abbott is the only other commentator consulted who spends any amount of space on the words. He clearly analyzes the possibilities, pro and con, and arrives at the same conclusion, only in far more words, as Asmussen. "Wenn dieser Zusatz echt ist, dann wirft er kein neues Licht auf unseren Zusammenhang, aber er bestätigt das bisher Gesagte."<sup>12</sup> In reality it would add nothing new of importance, many reliable manuscripts do not have it, and it does not play a definite part in Paul's line of thought at this particular point.

These two verses, just discussed, are a preparation and introduction for something bigger in Paul's thinking regarding marriage. As Asmussen believes,

es nicht genug ist, die Beziehung von Christus-Gemeinde und Mann-Weib nur als eine Beziehung des Vergleiches anzusehen. Weder ist der Begriff 'Haupt' für Christus und 'Leib' für Gemeinde nur ein Vergleich und eine Analogie, noch sind diese Begriffe in der Anwendung auf Mann und Weib nur Analogien, noch wird die Ehe dem Verhältnis Christus-Gemeinde nur zu dem Zwecke der Verdeutlichung konfrontiert. Mindestens ist es so, dass die in der Gemeinde lebenden Eheleute aus denselben Kräften ihr Eheleben zu führen

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<sup>11</sup>Hodge, op. cit., pp. 337-347.

<sup>12</sup>D. Hans Asmussen, Der Brief des Paulus an die Epheser (Breklum in Schleswig: Christian Jensen Verlag, 1949), p. 88.



beginnen, wie die Gemeinde aus Christus lebt, d.h. aus den Kräften der Auferstehung, so dasz also die Eheführung für die Kirche relevant ist.<sup>13</sup>

Paul introduces a new area of concern by quoting Gen. 2:24. In this he imitates Christ, who used the quotation in His discussion of marriage in Mt. 19:5. The Apostle links this verse with the preceding, almost unknowingly as it seems, by quoting the passage in full, which begins with  $\text{יְהוָה} \text{ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew the passage depends on the statement, 'because she was taken out of man.' In this situation it most naturally would be connected with the thought 'we are members of His body,' or perhaps it hearkens back to the general thought, 'Husbands, love your wives.' Westcott translates  $\text{ἀντὶ τοῦτο}$  as "For this cause, in consideration of this unique connexion of the husband and wife...."<sup>14</sup> He evidently means by "connexion" the phrase  $\text{ὁ ἀγαπᾷ ... ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ}$ .<sup>15</sup> Robinson, and in this Abbott and Findlay concur, thinks that "it seems more natural to suppose that  $\text{ἀντὶ τοῦτο}$  is intended as equivalent to  $\text{ἐνεκεν τοῦτο}$  by which  $\text{יְהוָה} \text{ אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$  is represented in the LXX by Gen. ii 24."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Robinson does see the possibility of  $\text{ἀντὶ}$  meaning 'instead of.' The contrast would then be with "the idea of a man's hating his own flesh (v. 29)."<sup>16</sup> Yet, "in the few passages in which St. Paul uses  $\text{ἀντὶ}$  however, it does

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

<sup>14</sup>Westcott, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>15</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.



not suggest opposition, but correspondence.<sup>17</sup> While Robinson leaves the matter there, Findlay makes this further observation. "St. Paul changes the Ἐνεκεν τούτου of the original to Ἀνεὶ τούτων, which conveys the idea that marriage has its counterpart in the fact that we are members of Christ."<sup>18</sup> Although this could conceivably be true, yet it makes Paul quote Scripture entirely out of its context.

Hodge believes that ἀνεὶ τούτων justifies the insertion at the end of the last verse. Thus the first part of the verse (ἀνεὶ τούτου ... πρὸς τῆν γυναικα ἡύου ) would refer to man; the latter (καὶ ἕσονται ... ὡς ἓκα μέν) to Christ and the church.<sup>19</sup> That this method grossly perverts the text and the context is self-evident. Asmussen lines up all the possibilities mentioned in a fine summary and comes up with this conclusion (?):

Es ist einerlei, wie man sich entscheidet, -- es bleibt so, dasz Paulus offenbar gewollt fortführt, seine Worte im Zwielicht des Verständnisses zu wählen, so dasz sie alle sowohl auf Christus wie auch auf die Ehe gelten sollen.<sup>20</sup>

He side-steps a final answer, perhaps with good reason. Did Paul expect his reader to know the context of the quotation and therefore make no effort to explain ἀνεὶ τούτου ? Did he quote the complete passage, because he did not think that ἀνεὶ τούτου would cause any difficulty in the clear comprehension of the entire verse, which he

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 377.

<sup>19</sup>Hodge, op. cit., pp. 347-350.

<sup>20</sup>Asmussen, op. cit., p. 89.



wished to use? The first alternative is possible, but not probable; the second is both possible and probable. This paper will take *ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου* as 'on account of this.' Yet it must be admitted that the thought to which this refers is still indefinite in the mind of the writer. Thornton views the passage against its total background in Genesis, and he does not concern himself with its setting in the context of Ephesians.<sup>21</sup> One is tempted to do just this with a situation such as we have.

The man is supposed to leave the father and the mother and to cleave to his wife. That the husband can not be compared to Christ here, Abbott aptly shows.

Understood of Christ, the expressions *ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου* for Christ, and 'leave his father and mother,' for 'leave his seat in heaven,' are so strange and so unlike anything else in St. Paul, that without an express intimation by the writer it is highly unreasonable so to interpret them.<sup>22</sup>

The remaining commentators do not discuss the problem, and by this action disregard any possibility of such an interpretation.

The future passive force in *προσκολληθήσεται* may be taken as middle and thus the original sense 'cleave' is maintained. Hodge sees in this command that

the relation between husband and wife is more intimate than any other, even than that between parents and children; therefore a man shall consider all other relations subordinate to that which he sustains to his wife, with whom he is connected in the bonds of a common life.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (London: Dacre Press, 1950), pp. 222-223.

<sup>22</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>23</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 347.



The 'cleaving' is basic and must be first in the matter of interest of the spouses. However, since Paul could not visualize a situation in which the wife might also need this exhortation, it is directed to the husband. It is not wrong to apply it also to the wife and her parents. The 'apronstring' of both husband and wife must be severed, and together they form a new home. Luther draws attention to the fact that Adam spoke these words even before the Fall, and thus it is not a direct result of sin.<sup>24</sup> He also mentions that if there is any separation of spouses, "geschieht solches nicht allein wider dies Gebot Gottes, sondern es sind auch Zeichen der schrecklichen Verrückung und Verderbung ...."<sup>25</sup> The original order was given in the state of holiness; any breeches in this command are a direct result of the fall of man.

Because the man cleaves to his wife, *ἐσθεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὴν γυναῖκα ἑαυτοῦ*. The union of the two spouses, both socially and sexually, is primarily meant here. Scott refers to it as this, because

Paul makes the reason that which he has given in the previous verse: marriage typifies the supreme union between Christ and Church, and must therefore transcend and displace all former relations in which the man and woman have found themselves. Jesus himself makes use of the verse in Genesis to prove that marriage is indissoluble.<sup>26</sup>

As most others he also takes it to mean the church and Christ, second-

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<sup>24</sup>Martin Luther, Sämtliche Schriften, herausgegeben von J. G. Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1881), I, 168-169.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>E. F. Scott, "The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians," The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), pp. 242-243.



arily. Findlay agrees when he says:

The wedding of a human pair makes each the other's property.... As the church is not her own, nor Christ His own since He became man with men, so the husband and wife are no longer independent and self-complete personalities, but incorporated into a new existence common to both.<sup>27</sup>

Continuing this second theme, Findlay further maintains that "the derivation of Eve from the body of Adam, as that is affirmed in the mysterious words of Genesis, is analogous to the derivation of the Church from Christ."<sup>28</sup> Piper constructs the meaning purely against the background of Genesis. Since God took woman from the side of man, the husband and wife, with reference to the first couple, unite really in a re-union. Yet this unity

is different from all those unifying relationships into which we enter by birth, e.g., unity of a family, race, or mankind. It is of an altogether different kind from these to such an extent that it can enter into opposition to them...<sup>29</sup>

Paul clearly understood the passage as he found it in the writings of Moses. Marriage is the union of two people - husband and wife. For this action the husband must leave the home of his father and mother, and he must join himself to his wife in the most intimate manner. However, Paul saw much more in this passage. This he states in the next verse.

This verse, 32, of all those studied, caused the most comment among the commentaries consulted. There are three basic problems:

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<sup>27</sup>Findlay, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 377.

<sup>29</sup>Otto A. Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 42.



the meaning of τὸ μυστήριον , the antecedent of τοῦτο , and the force of ἐν δὲ λέγει . Of minor concern but important is the meaning of μυστήριον .

The concern over μυστήριον is centered in the exact nature of the word. Most commentators (Robinson, Hodge, Stoeckhardt, Findlay, Lock and Scott) think that μυστήριον "signifies either something which contains a secret meaning not obvious to all, or the secret meaning itself."<sup>30</sup> Wisely Robinson gives examples from later writers.

Justin Martyr, for example, uses it somewhat in the same way when he speaks for instance (Trypho 44) of certain commands of the Mosaic law as being given εἰς μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ; or again, when he says of the Paschal lamb (Trypho 40) τὸ μυστήριον οὗτο τοῦ Προφῆτου ... τύπον ἔχει τοῦ Χριστοῦ . The Paschal rite contained a secret, not to be revealed till Christ came. Thus τὸ μυστήριον is practically a symbol or a type, with stress laid upon the secrecy of its meaning until it comes to be fulfilled.<sup>31</sup>

Hodge declares that

the word μυστήριον is used here, as it is everywhere else, for something hidden, something beyond the reason of human knowledge. ...The thing itself is beyond our comprehension.<sup>32</sup>

E. F. Scott has the same thought when he states,

elsewhere in these epistles Paul means a divine purpose which is hidden from common eyes, and can only be understood in the light of the Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

In addition Scott says that "Paul himself indicates that he is speaking in riddles, which he does not expect his readers fully to understand."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Robinson, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>32</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 351.

<sup>33</sup>Scott, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 241.



Westcott, on the other hand, views it as a revelation.<sup>35</sup> All things being considered, it would seem in view of *μυστη* and *ἐν δὲ δεύτε* to see in *μυστηριου* an element of secrecy. The reasons, in addition to those given here, will come to the surface in the further discussion of the verse.

Abbott and Hodge take up the cudgels against the Roman Catholic Church and its sacrament of marriage, for which this passage is a locus of authority. Abbott, with whom Hodge agrees, argues that marriage does not bestow a divine grace, nor was it instituted for that purpose by Christ.

But if every rite or ceremony which either is, or includes in it, a sign of something spiritual, is to be called a sacrament, then marriage is well entitled to the name, especially in view of the apostle's exposition here.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the difficulties with *μυστηριου* are inherently tied up in the reference of *τοῦτο*. To just what does *τοῦτο* refer? Hodge claims that it refers only to "the union between Christ and his people, the fact that they are one flesh...."<sup>37</sup> Stoeckhardt, however believes that with *τοῦτο* "kann nach dem Zusammenhang nur das eheliche Verhältnis gemeint sein."<sup>38</sup> But he will admit

insofern ist die Ehe ein Geheimnis des Glaubens, als dadurch, wie Paulus im einzelnen gezeigt hat, das Verhältnis Christi zur Gemeinde zu Christo, also das grosse Geheimnis, wovon er in seinem

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<sup>35</sup>Westcott, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>36</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>37</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 351.

<sup>38</sup>Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 246.



ganzen Brief gehandelt hat, vgl. 1,9ff.; 3,4ff.; 3,9ff.; typisch abgeschattet wird.<sup>39</sup>

This is the thought of the main body of commentators who believe that *κοινωνία* refers both to Christ and the church and also to marriage.

Robinson thinks that Paul bids each individual to "See to it that in common life each one of you is true to its first and plainest meaning for the sake of the deeper meaning that lies hid in Christ."<sup>40</sup> Like Westcott, Abbott claims, concerning *κοινωνία*, "it is better to understand it as referring to the comparison of marriage with union of Christ and the church."<sup>41</sup>

E. F. Scott does an admirable job of analyzing the whole problem. He brings to bear not only various possibilities, but also various examples from ancient writers.<sup>42</sup> Scott and Findlay believe that the quote from Genesis aids Paul in seeing

how believers in Christ, forming collectively His body, are not only grafted into Him (as He puts it in the epistle to the Romans), but were derived from Him and formed in the very mould of His nature.<sup>43</sup>

Thornton sees another similarity. "The 'one flesh' shared by husband and wife symbolizes the 'one flesh' shared by Christ and the Church in virtue of the Incarnation."<sup>44</sup> Asmussen sums then all up in his belief.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>41</sup>Abbott, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

<sup>42</sup>Scott, op. cit., pp. 242-243.

<sup>43</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 378.

<sup>44</sup>Thornton, op. cit., p. 224.



Denn Mysterium ist das Verhältnis Christi zu seiner Gemeinde, Mysterium ist die Ehe selbst, und Mysterium ist es, dass beide miteinander in Zusammenhang stehen. Letztlich ist dieser Zusammenhang darin begründet, dass das Haupt des Alles auch das Haupt der Gemeinde ist.<sup>45</sup>

Only Hodge believes that *μυστήριον* can not be applied to the Genesis passage itself.<sup>46</sup> Of course, this is in line with his idea that the *μυστήριον* is the relation of Christ and His people. Robinson, on the other hand, allows *μυστήριον* to be applied to either Gen. 2:24 or to Hodge's concept, "according as we interpret τὸ *μυστήριον* as referring to the actual statement of Gen. 2:24, or to the spiritual meaning of that statement."<sup>47</sup> Findlay takes the extreme opposite view by commenting about Paul: "When he speaks of 'this great mystery,' he means thereby not marriage itself, but the saying of Adam about it. This text was a standing problem to the Jewish interpreters."<sup>48</sup> However, Findlay also admits that Paul sees the verse as a reference to Christ and the church.<sup>49</sup> One almost has to include Gen. 2:24 in the *μυστήριον τοῦτο*, since the demonstrative *τοῦτο* is usually resumptive. *τοῦτο* would then refer immediately to *μυστήριον*. But to deny it further significance is to disregard completely the last clause of this verse.

Paul, in addition to using a word which in itself is a weighty

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<sup>45</sup>Asmussen, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>46</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 351.

<sup>47</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>48</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 378.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.



one, *μυστηρίου*, adds the adjective *μεγάλη*. Robinson remarks of *μεγάλη*: "it retains its proper meaning of magnitude or importance."<sup>50</sup>

Of like vein is Abbott's statement:

as to *μεγάλη*, the English versions--not only the incorrect AV., 'this is a great mystery,' but the grammatically correct RV., 'this mystery is great'--convey the idea that what is said is, that the mysteriousness is great, or, that the mystery is in a high degree a mystery...it assigns to *μεγάλη* a meaning which does not belong to it....*μεγάλη* is not so used, for it properly expresses magnitude, not intensity.<sup>51</sup>

Thus both would translate it as 'an important mystery.' Both Abbott and Robinson seem to split hairs just a bit in the discussion. Although the fact that the rest of the commentators say very little about *μεγάλη* is not conclusive, yet it would seem that they expect the reader to take it in the usual English sense. Findlay does say this of Paul's *μυστηρίου ταύτου*: it is "one that is not only deeply hidden but is many-sided and capable of many interpretations."<sup>52</sup> It is a great mystery - both in importance and ramifications.

Paul, after announcing this mystery, which in a sense may be a symbol or sign, now gives his interpretation of it. *ἔτι δὲ λέγει* ... *Χριστοῦ* ... *ἐκκκλησίαν*. He thinks that this mystery, brought to light in Adam's statement of marriage, is applicable to Christ and the church. As Robinson remarks: "The insertion of the pronoun emphasizes this teaching as specially belonging to the Apostle."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Robinson, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

<sup>51</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>52</sup>Findlay, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>53</sup>Robinson, op. cit., p. 209.



Bornkamm in Kittel goes further: "Die mit *ἐν δὲ ἑξῆς* eingeführte Deutung setzt sich in ausdrücklichen Gegensatz zu andern Deutungen."<sup>54</sup>

However, he goes too far, I believe. Paul does not lay down a divine exegesis of this clause. If he intended to accomplish that, why did he use the phrase *ἐν δὲ ἑξῆς* ? As E. F. Scott paraphrases it:

'Others may explain this in their own manner; I myself could offer other explanations; but I am looking at the matter now from one particular point of view. I see that the ultimate reference of the mystery is to Christ and the church.'<sup>55</sup>

Asmussen believes that "Das 'ich sage es' macht deutlich, dass der Apostel damit rechnet, dass der Leser es zunächst auf die Ehe bezieht."<sup>56</sup> This may be true. Paul realizes what the first understanding might be on the part of the reader. He directs their attention to another possibility which he desires that they comprehend. He has been attempting to infiltrate the whole marriage concept with that of the church and Christ. Thus he leaves them one last reminder.

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<sup>54</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), IV, 830.

<sup>55</sup>Scott, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>56</sup>Asmussen, op. cit., p. 89.



## CHAPTER VI

### PAUL'S SUMMARY

In his concluding statement, verse 33, Paul repeats the central themes of his first two sections on marriage. Husband - love your wife, Wife - respect your husband.

The  $\pi\lambda\gamma\upsilon$ , located at the beginning of this verse, arouses a question of exact force.  $\pi\lambda\gamma\upsilon$  is usually seen as a conjunction, but it may have several meanings in that connection. When it means 'but,' it carries the thought of a return to a previous thought. Abbott sees it in this light. "Howbeit--not to dwell on this matter of Christ and the Church, but to return to what I am treating of--,"<sup>1</sup> Hodge discusses this possibility, but in preference he also mentions another.

$\pi\lambda\gamma\upsilon$ , however may mean, nevertheless, as it is rendered in our version, and this verse be connected with the 32nd.<sup>2</sup>

The 'nevertheless' is analogous to 'however,' which is also used for  $\pi\lambda\gamma\upsilon$ . In opposition to the reference to the immediately preceding thought Blass believes that it has the force of a summation.<sup>3</sup> Of like mind is Souter who casts this thought of  $\pi\lambda\gamma\upsilon$  in this particular verse:

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<sup>1</sup>T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Bros., 1864), p. 352.

<sup>3</sup>Friederich Blass, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943), p. 205.



only, in any case, ending the discussion and calling special attention to the essential, especially in Paul, e.g. I Cor. xi 11, Eph. v 33; ...<sup>4</sup>

To take *παρῶν* as Hodge wishes is a bit too restrictive. While Paul undoubtedly had the mystery in mind, it seems more natural that he is now returning to his general theme. He emphasizes once more the central thought of the duties of the husband to the wife, and the duties of the wife to the husband. He is determined that the spouses see their fundamental duties.

The construction *οἱ καθ' ἑνὸς ἑκάστος*, which follows the emphasis of *καὶ ὑμεῖς*, is strange. As Hodge remarks: "the verb *ἀγαπάτω* being made to agree with *ἑκάστος*, instead of *ὑμεῖς* the real subject."<sup>5</sup> Apparently Paul places the *ὑμεῖς* there to gain an inclusive element. With respect to *ἑκάστος*, "the precept is individualized by the *ἑκάστος*, so as to bring more home its force for each man."<sup>6</sup> *οἱ* is plural, undoubtedly because of *ὑμεῖς καθ' ἑνὸς* is probably used in a distributive sense, although rather ungrammatically. An attempt at exact translation might result in this: 'Only, also you, with reference to the individual, each...'

Paul emphasizes his thought of verse 28 with the imperative, *ἀγαπάτω*, and the phrase *ὡς ἑαυτὸν*. The husband ought to consider his wife 'as himself.' Paul does not elaborate further, since this has been explained in verse 28. Possibly he would recall the

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<sup>4</sup>Alexander Souter, A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 205.

<sup>5</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>6</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 176.



reader to a second inspection of verse 28 and its full meaning for marriage.

In the second clause Paul omits the main verb. Hodge believes that "ἡ δὲ γυναῖς" is the nominative absolute and *ἔσται* depends on a verb understood.<sup>7</sup> Yet he never mentions the verb which is to be understood. *ἔστω* with the subjunctive occasionally does duty for the imperative, like the classical *ἴπρω* with the future (some verbs like 'look to it' or 'see to it' being understood), and the clause really means simply, 'let the wife fear, or stand in awe of, her husband.'<sup>8</sup>

In *φοβῆται* Robinson sees the sense of 'fear,' a fear of reverence.

At the close of the section the Apostle strikes again the keynote with which he began. 'The fear of Christ'--the fear of the Church for Christ which is the pattern of the fear of the wife for her husband -- is no slavish fear, but a fear of reverence.<sup>9</sup>

Much time could be spent in a discussion of the elements of this

'fear,' but as Hodge remarks:

The word *φοβέω* may express the emotion of fear in all its modification and in all its degree from simple respect, through reverence, up to adoration, according to its object. It is, however, in all its degrees an acknowledgement of superiority.<sup>10</sup>

The acknowledgement of this superiority does not necessarily make the

*φοβῆται* contain a sense of dread.

<sup>7</sup>Hodge, op. cit. p. 353.

<sup>8</sup>Blass, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>9</sup>J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1922), p. 127.

<sup>10</sup>Hodge, op. cit., p. 353.



Stoeckhardt remarks that a man should love his wife, "auch wenn einer etwas ein Weib hat, das sich nicht gerade liebenswürdig zeigt...."<sup>11</sup> On the other hand,

das Weib aber, dasz sie den Mann fürchte, vor dem Manne sich scheue als vor dem Herrn und also dem Mann von Herzen untertan sei, auch wenn sie an dem Manne gar manche menschliche Schwächen gewahrt.<sup>12</sup>

As a summary of Paul's complete discussion in Ephesians on the topic of marriage, Stauffer in Kittel provides this view:

Dies Verhältnis zwischen Christus und Gemeinde aber muss maßgebend sein für das Verhältnis von Mann und Frau in einer christlichen Ehe.....Die Spannungen in dem Verhältnis zwischen Mann und Frau, von denen die Genesis weisz, lösen sich *in Christo*. Denn die Hingabe der Frau erhält eine neue Weib und der Trieb des Mannes empfängt Gehalt und Maß in der *Agape*. Die Frau ist dem Manne nicht mehr preisgegeben, sondern anvertraut, der Mann hat nicht mehr das Herrrecht über sie, sondern die Verantwortung für sie.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>G. Stoeckhardt, Kommentar über den Brief Pauli an die Epheser (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1910), pp. 246-247.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>13</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I. 654.



## CHAPTER VII

### A SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Paul in reality adds his own summary to this section of Ephesians. However, it will be of value to draw together the salient thought again into a unit, a unit which will draw just a bit more on the contents of the verses discussed on the topic of marriage.

Paul sets the whole group of comments on marriage on the phrase, 'being subject one to another in the fear of Christ.' If both spouses see their relation to each other as primarily a relation to their God, then the words with which Paul follows will not seem so strange and difficult to them. They are related to one another in their common relation to Christ, their Savior.

The woman's place in marriage, as seen by Paul in this section, is one of subjection. This subjection is due her husband, because 'the man is head of the woman as also Christ is head of the Church.' *Eph. 5:23* This does not make her husband a god in her life, nor does it give him the right to demand utter and helpless obedience as that of a slave. Paul would stress the "saving" and loving care of the husband, which is returned by the wife in her subjection. Yea, rather than a subjection, it is a submission which is voluntarily offered by the wife. The submission of the wife is her place in the authority of the family; it is not a position of servitude to her husband. For this day and age many wives could and should readily renew their marriage vow. The de-



mocracy of our day has brought with it many rights and privileges for woman. Sad to say, however, many women have abused these rights, and many wives are no longer faithful to their marriage vow, in which they promise to 'obey their husband.' The submission which Paul advocates here from the example of the church and Christ is not incompatible with our way of life today. The 'career' woman has a valid place in our day, but she must remember that in the family God has placed her under her husband. With respect to the realm of the family the woman was created to be a mother, respected and loved by her husband and children.

Just as Paul emphasized the submission of the wife, he now follows with a very concise and sharp statement to the husbands - love your wives. It is easily seen why Paul would wish to stress just this particular point. It was noted in Chapter 4 that Paul lived in a civilization which was accustomed to the dominance of men over the women in every field of activity. For this reason Paul goes to great lengths to show that 'as Christ loved the church,' so men ought to love their wives. While developing this theme of the love of the husband for his wife, Paul most wonderfully describes the atoning work of Christ for His church, His bride. Lest any husband think lightly of his place in the family, let him remember that he is a picture of Christ. He is to love and be loved. Must any husband ask for more? With respect to his duty, Paul makes the statement about the husband - when he loves his wife, he in reality loves himself. This is not a love for and of self, but it is a love which finds its source in the quotation of Gen. 2:24 - 'the two shall be one flesh.'



Progressing from the specific duties of each spouse, Paul gives to husband and wife a more clear picture of a comparison at which he has hinted earlier, a comparison of marriage with the relation of Christ and His church. Yet it must be stated that Paul views this relation not as a total revelation; as he mentions, it still is a 'mystery.' The mystery, at least as far as Paul is concerned, is not one of the items in the comparison. For Paul man and wife are representatives of Christ and the church. But the mystery is in just what great and most wonderful manner this connection of man and wife, of Christ and the church, is to be understood. Both man and wife are children of God. Both can either love or be subject because Christ has already loved and been subject for His children. His example is their guide of action; His action is their source of power for such action. Without the past reality of the relation of Christ to His church, this picture of man and wife is useless. With the present reality of the on-going relation of Christ to His church, the possibility of such a relation between man and wife is possible.

To an age which has seen many divorces for petty and unholy causes comes the quotation from Genesis. Although it has been mentioned already, the peculiar relation of marriage which is given by Genesis 2:24 must be emphasized once more. Marriage is a union of a man and wife in a connection which is unlike any other possible relation. Man and wife essentially are 'one flesh.' In marriage the husband and wife leave their individual positions, and they take to themselves each other to form a new and single unit. The man leaves the home of his parents; he establishes a new home with his wife. The former relation of parents



to children is broken, not severed. Each spouse now stands in a co-relation with the other spouse. Strife agitated by in-law trouble should be unheard of in a Christian environment. The over-doting mother or father is set in direct opposition to God's view of marriage. The oft-occurring situation which finds the newly-weds living with the parents is a strain on the example which Adam mentioned.

If the husband and wife view their relation to one another in the light of the greater relation, that of Christ and His church, then the many puny and foolish reasons, now given for divorces, will be completely out of the question for Christians. A breach in the marriage of two Christians in reality is a breach, finally, in the relation of Christ and His church, 'because we are members of His body.' Thus Paul's view of marriage is one of tremendous heights - of tremendous significance for our day.



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