

# MARRIAGE

*BEFORE & AFTER*



# MARRIAGE

— *Before and After*

*by*

GORDON BEATTY

Director of Church of England Marriage Guidance Centre  
Sydney

Foreword by the Very Rev. E. A. Pitt, M.A., Dean of Sydney

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*The Reverend Gordon Beatty is Director of the Church of England Marriage Guidance Centre (formerly St. Andrew's Cathedral Marriage Guidance Centre). This Centre provides pre-marital help for young people contemplating marriage as well as conciliation services for those encountering difficulty in their marital relationships.*

## **FOREWORD.**

I am pleased to write these few words of introduction to this booklet which is based on four Addresses given by the Reverend Gordon Beatty at Lunch Hour Services at St. Andrew's Cathedral recently.

Mr. Beatty is Director of the Cathedral Counselling Centre and has had wide experience in many different spheres of pastoral work, including both military and naval Chaplaincy, and also hospital work. In these fields he has had great opportunity of advising in marital problems, and his ministry has been of great help to many people. He has also been closely and actively associated with the development of marriage guidance facilities in Sydney.

I am sure that the talks which are recorded in this booklet will be of value to many people, and I hope that they will have a wide circulation.

ERIC A. PITT,  
Dean of Sydney.

## PREFACE

*The appearance of this small volume embodying the talks given at the lunch-hour services at the Cathedral on four consecutive Wednesdays is due to requests made by many young people and parents. The direct form of address has been retained, mainly in order to preserve the spirit of the talks as "heart to heart" chats. For this reason they are non technical and I hope not too dogmatic.*

GORDON BEATTY,  
*St. Andrew's Cathedral.*  
*December, 1959.*

## CHAPTER I

### FALLING IN LOVE

This series embraces four talks under the general title "Marriage—before and after". It will be very obvious to you, as it is all too obvious to me, that it will only be possible, in the time available, to mention a few points on the subjects "Falling in Love", "Intimate Relationships", "Happiness and Marriage", and "The In-laws". The first two talks will, as you will realise, be concerned with the "Before Marriage" aspect of the general subject and the last two talks will be concerned with the "After Marriage" aspects.

"Falling in Love" is rather a curious phrase, but to-day I make no attempt to define it nor do I propose to attempt to define the term "love", even although this word has a variety of meanings and is often misused. To attempt a definition would take us too far afield and, in any case, we all have a fairly clear idea of what is meant by the phrase "Falling in love", even although we may be hard put to it to define what we mean by love. Because of the difficulty in defining the term love some people talk about "choosing a mate" rather than use the phrase "Falling in love". Others, finding the phrase "choosing a mate" a bit too earthy or perhaps a bit too behaviouristic, to use a term psychologists sometimes use, prefer to speak of "choosing life's partner".

Whatever phrase we care to employ I think we will all agree that the experience of Falling in Love, or choosing a mate, or choosing life's partner, is a most important one for young men and young women, and also, sometimes, for older men and women. It is an experience, or a process, which has far reaching effects not only on the lives of those initially concerned but also on the lives of the children who may be born as an eventual resultant. It is important, therefore, that we should do some clear thinking on the matter before we become involved.

## *Choosing a Partner.*

I was interested to read recently in the Sydney press of one American solution to the problem of "mate picking". Indeed the article was headed "Mate Picking" and carried the bi-line "Machine's aid in Marrying". The article comes from the paper's own correspondent in New York and commences like this: "Americans wanting to marry are queueing up at 'Mate-picking' machines", and continues, "The machines are now standard equipment in the larger marriage bureaus". The article mentions the name of the principal manufacturers of the mate picking machine. The writer of the article waxes somewhat romantic in one place and refers to the machine as the "love" machine. I consulted a Sydney engineer of the particular firm which manufactures the machine. He had not heard of the machine in Australia but he said that from the description it sounded as though it was merely a slightly modified card sorting machine. A careful reading of the article would seem to indicate that he is right.

When a client goes to a Marriage Bureau, which has one of these machines, he or she fills in a card indicating the sort of man or woman he or she is looking for and the punch cards of those registered at the Bureau are run through the machine until someone having the required characteristics is found. The couple is introduced—after paying the required fee, no doubt—and from then on it is up to them. So it turns out that there is not really anything magical about the "Mate picking Machine". It has just one merit, so far as I can see, and that is that the people who go to the Bureau using this card sorting machine are required to do some quiet thinking about the sort of person they seek as a mate before they are plunged into an emotional situation. To-day I want to suggest to young folk that they do just that—before you become emotionally involved give some quiet thought to the kind of person you seek as a partner for life.

I remember Billy Graham, when he was here in Sydney, relating how he and one of his daughters were one day on a very high mountain. As he looked down on a

vast area of towns and villages he said to her, "You know, probably somewhere down there is a little boy who, when you and he grow up, you will marry. Let us pray to God that He will help you to choose the right one." With Billy Graham I feel that it is important to pray about the choosing of a life's partner long before we become emotionally involved. If you pray and think about choosing your life's partner before you become emotionally involved you will avoid some of the pitfalls.

I would like now to mention some pitfalls to be avoided, as well as to make some positive suggestions, concerning Falling in Love, or choosing life's partner.

### *Physical Attraction Not Enough.*

One of the first things that I want to say is this—When you fall in love try to be very sure that there is more to it than physical attraction. Physical attractiveness is important but it is not the only factor or even perhaps the most important factor to be considered in choosing life's partner. Whilst the physical, or sexual, aspect of marriage is important, a marriage based only, or almost entirely on physical attraction, is bound ere long to fail. It is sometimes very easy to mistake sexual attraction for being in love. The only sound basis for marriage is a love which very definitely includes sexual feeling but which is very much more than sexual feeling. Sexual feeling is God given, it is right, but by itself it is not a completely adequate basis for marriage.

### *Common Standards Important.*

The second thing I want to say may sound unromantic but I believe it is practical. It is something that should be thought about before emotional involvement takes place. It has been discovered by scientific research in the field of Marriage Guidance, that unhappiness in marriage, more often than is commonly realised, springs from inequality in educational standards, in cultural interests and in intellectual ability between the partners. It will be a great help towards a happy adjustment in marriage, if the person with whom you fall in love has **cultural interests** in common with you.

It is important that **educational standards** should be

about the same. If they are not there is always the possibility that one will feel inferior to the other or that one will look down upon the other. One partner may feel, either rightly or wrongly, that he or she is being looked down upon by the other. When the first flush of romance has worn off, trouble may start. This is not hearsay; it is a scientific finding of research workers. In my own experience in trying to help unhappy married couples, this factor has often been an important one. It follows, of course, that if the educational standard is about the same there is a strong possibility that the intellectual standard will be similar. This is also important.

Closely related to the question of educational standard is the question of **social status**. Whether we like it or not, there are different social standards in the community. Whilst occasionally some poor little commoner may marry some rich blue blood and be happy, on the whole this only occurs in novels; it seldom occurs in real life. There is a much greater chance of a happy marriage if the partners concerned come from the same social grade and have similar standards and interests.

The question of **temperament** is also an important one. Temperament is partly a physical characteristic related to the balance of the endocrine glands and partly the result of environmental modification and it has some relationship to the emotions. It should be realised that certain kinds of temperaments find it difficult to get on together. It often takes time to discover what a person's temperament is like and sometimes it requires skilled help to do so. This is one of the factors which comes up for consideration when two people attend for pre-marital counselling. This does not mean to say that people of different temperaments are necessarily unable to get on. Often they are complementary to one another, perhaps even necessary to one another, but they need to achieve a deep understanding of each other's needs and strengths and weaknesses. Often this can only be achieved with the aid of skilled help in a pre-marital counselling situation.

Time prevents one from mentioning everything but there is another important factor which must be mentioned.

If a marriage is to be a happy one it is important that the **religious interests**, feelings and convictions of the partners should be similar. I think it is Bishop Fulton Sheen who, in one of his books, says "if there were no mixed friendships there would be no mixed marriages." At this stage in my experience I would say, with a great deal of emphasis, that mixed marriages, that is the marriage of a Roman Catholic with a Protestant, very seldom, if ever, work out. I have checked my experience against the experience of some of my friends who are Roman Catholic Priests and they say exactly the same thing. Religion touches us at the deepest point in our personalities, and if there is not harmony and unity there, disharmony and disunity very easily creep in and spread to other areas of our lives. If you are friendly with a Roman Catholic boy or girl you ought to face now, before you become emotionally involved and fall in love, the inflexibility of the Roman Catholic Church concerning mixed marriages and her convictions concerning the Protestant Church.

### *The Mixed Marriage.*

In a Prayer Book, published by the Catholic Truth Society and issued by the Roman Catholic Church for use by Roman Catholics in the Royal Australian Navy, there are instructions concerning marriage and in particular concerning mixed marriages. Under the heading "Mixed Marriages", this Prayer Book says this: "A mixed marriage is strictly forbidden nor will the Church even tolerate it unless in a special case there be a grave reason and the following conditions be fulfilled:—

1. That ALL the children who may be born of the marriage shall be baptised, and brought up, in the Catholic Faith.
2. That the Catholic party shall have full liberty for the practice of the Catholic religion. The Catholic party is bound to pray, and do everything he or she reasonably can, for the conversion of the other to the Catholic Faith. It is strictly forbidden that

any religious marriage ceremony should take place except the Catholic ceremony."

Some of the unhappiest people I have known have been young men and young women who have fallen in love with a Roman Catholic and have realised when they have become very much emotionally involved just how difficult, if not impossible, the situation will be if they marry the Roman Catholic.

### *Is There an Ideal Partner?*

As I talk to you, no doubt there is someone who is saying it is all very well to talk about falling in love in this detached sort of way, suggesting that this or that characteristic should be considered. Surely, when a person falls in love he falls in love and that is it, and surely there is only one person in the world with whom he can fall in love. Quite recently a book was published written by William P. Wylie and entitled "The Pattern of Love." In it the author says something like this: Men need women and women need men, not only sexually but in every way, intellectually, psychologically, from the point of view of companionship and so on. Man is the complement of woman and woman is the complement of man. Each is incomplete without the other. It is interesting too to note that this very argument was raised recently by a group of priests in the Roman Catholic Church who are making a plea for the abolition of the vow of celibacy. Wylie goes on to say that every man and every woman has an idea in his or her mind—more often than not this idea is below consciousness—of the ideal person who is the complement of himself or herself; the person who has those characteristics which can supply the need of, or complete the person of the other. He submits that in this world we cannot have the ideal as there is no one person who has all of these characteristics. Using a term which he borrows from the science of biology, he says that all that can be done is to find an acceptable variant of the ideal of the species: someone who has a sufficient number of the qualities (if one can number such qualities) sought in the ideal. He suggests that there is more than one acceptable variant of the ideal, more than

one person who has enough of the qualities required for the completion of the personality; that is there is more than one such person with whom any one person can fall in love in the fullest sense of this expression. Wylie makes a very strong case for his thesis and makes the argument stronger by appealing to varied and competent authorities. It is my experience that Wylie is right. Wylie also has something important to say about the indissolubility of marriage once the lovers marry, but that must wait for another time.

To turn to the point at issue, I believe that humanly speaking there is not only just one possible person with whom a person can fall in love and with whom he or she can be happy in marriage. Notwithstanding I believe that a Christian should seek the will of God in this matter for I believe that the ideal will of God is that we should marry a particular person. This should be made a matter of prayer. However if we fail to perceive the ideal will of God, God's cause is not entirely and eternally lost. His cause is not completely and finally frustrated by our wrong choices, for even in this matter He can often over rule for good.

It is most important that we should make the right choice and it is for us, as Christians, to fall in love with the right person.

## INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Summarising our first talk, we said that before falling in love and becoming emotionally involved, young people ought to give some quiet thought to the kind of person they seek as a partner for life. If they are Christian people they will want to pray about it and seek God's guidance before there is an emotional involvement. It was said when you fall in love try to be sure there is more to it than physical attraction, for whilst physical attractiveness is important a marriage based only on this is bound to fail. The importance of some sort of equality in educational standards, intellectual ability and cultural interests was mentioned. Also the importance of similarity between the partners with regard to religious interests, feelings and convictions was stressed. Finally, I identified myself with W. P. Wylie, the author of "The Pattern of Love" in his conviction that, humanly speaking, there is more than one possible person with whom we could be happy in marriage, but that we should pray about it in order to seek God's will.

Let us now consider the question of "Intimate Relationships before Marriage". How far should two people, who are in love go, in expressing the love they feel, before they are married. As with falling in love, it is important to give some quiet thought to this matter before emotional involvement takes place.

*Before Marriage — Wise or Unwise.*

"Going the whole way" is a phrase which people sometimes use to describe full sexual intercourse. Some say if two people are in love and intend to marry, why should they not "go the whole way"? Why shouldn't they give themselves to each other in sexual intercourse? What is wrong with it? Although there undoubtedly is a rightness and a wrongness in this matter. I do not want to discuss the question from this aspect to-day. For reasons which lack of time prevents me from dealing with, I think it is better that we discuss whether it is **wise** or **unwise** to "go the whole

way" before marriage rather than whether it is right or wrong.

In my work over the years, and especially in recent times, I have spoken with hundreds of people who have "gone the whole way" before marriage and every one of them, without exception, has regretted it. Precautions were taken to make sure that the expressions of these people in this matter were expressions of their real feelings and not just what they might perhaps consider to be a proper expression in the circumstances. Not all of them, by any means, had feelings of guilt about "going the whole way," but all of them had feelings of regret.

These people were from different social groups, from so called professional groups and from working class groups. They were of different educational standards, apparently different in intellectual ability and some were Church goers and others not. Most of them were people in marital difficulty at the time when I spoke with them. This, to my way of thinking, strengthens, rather than weakens their testimony. From listening to these people, and from reading the findings of others, I have discovered that there are a number of reasons why it is unwise to "go the whole way" before marriage. I only mention one or two.

Let me approach the matter this way.

Those who advocate "going the whole way" often do so on the grounds that sexual compatibility within marriage is important and they consider that it is wise to experiment to discover whether this compatibility exists. Some such idea is involved in the doctrine of "Free Love", so called, and this idea also seems to motivate the advocates of trial marriage.

*No Proof of Compatibility.*

**First**, let me agree that sexual compatibility within marriage is important. Let me add however that it is not by any means the **only** important compatibility within marriage. **Secondly**, the situation, in which the experiment is carried out before marriage, is in no way comparable to the situation after marriage. **Thirdly**, the doctrines of Free Love

and trial marriage are involved in several fallacies concerning man's sexual nature. Free Love has as one of its concepts complete sexual freedom. Complete sexual freedom is a myth. It never could prove practical except for one member of a society, and then only if all the other members of that society were ready to bend their interests and desires to his sovereign will. The nearest approximation to it has existed only in the lands of Eastern potentates where freedom for the one has involved virtual slavery for the many. The doctrines of Free Love and sexual freedom also involve a serious fallacy about the sexual nature of woman. This point is quite well made by Dr. Mace in his book "Does Sexual Morality Matter?" He says, on page 65, "The demand of the modern woman for equality with the man has been carried into almost every sphere of life, including even that which represents the fundamental and unalterable differences between the two. The advocates of sexual freedom have laid down the principle of the complete equality of the sexes, and have therefore based their theories on the assumption that both may be treated exactly alike."

### ***Denies Woman's Real Need.***

But this assumption is dangerously false. It is a good thing that we now accept the fact that woman is no passive partner in the sex act, but that she has a need of sexual fulfilment which in its urgency may often be comparable with that of the man. To recognise this is to be given an increased understanding of women. But to go on and make the deduction that since woman's sexuality is comparable to man's in **strength**, it is also identical with his in **nature**, is not to increase understanding but to spread confusion."

The very fact that the reactions of the man and the woman are reciprocal to one another, implies that the meaning and significance of the act for each is deeply different. This difference is well expressed by T. W. Pym, in his book "Sex and Sense". "To the man," he says, "sex is just one act. To the woman it is one of a long and complicated series: courtship and wooing, sex-act, conception, gestation and pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and

maternity. It is impossible that she should submit to the first two of these, cut off the rest by birth-control, and yet remain unchanged."

### ***Loss of Virginity is Significant.***

There is another aspect, related to this question of whether it is wise or unwise to "go the whole way" before marriage, which is important and which is often forgotten. I refer to the deep significance which the loss of virginity has for the normal woman. It is a significance which cannot be accounted for by reference to social mores or moral codes; it goes much deeper. There was a time when I was prepared to accept the views of those who attempt to account for the significance that loss of virginity has, by a reference to social mores and moral codes. But the experience of talking with people, as a Counsellor, has led me to believe that such a reference does not adequately account for this significance. I have also learnt that because this significance is often a deep one, the effects of the surrender of virginity, both within marriage and outside of marriage, are often far-reaching. Dr. Mace, on page 67 of his book, to which reference has already been made, makes mention of the difference between the effects of loss of virginity before marriage and within marriage and what Dr. Mace says has great relevance to the question of whether it is wise or unwise "to go the whole way" before marriage.

### ***Does Engagement Alter the Position?***

Perhaps at this point you are saying, "That's alright, but we are not talking about casual relationships, we are talking about two people in love who intend to marry". You ask "What about those who are engaged?" It is my somewhat difficult task, from week to week, to try to help people who have been engaged and who have intended to marry but who, for one reason or another, have broken off their engagement and who, during the period of the engagement have "gone the whole way". The young woman concerned has, in each case been deeply in love and has been **deeply aroused**. She has been changed in a deep and fundamental

way by the experience and, with the breaking off of the relationship, she has needed a great deal of spiritual and psychological help to readjust. Some girls, who do not seek help, do not readjust. Studies into the reasons why girls become prostitutes have revealed that many girls in these circumstances became prostitutes—some because of bitterness, and some in a nymphomaniacal search for a satisfaction which eludes them.

There is something else, which my reading of the findings of others, and my daily work of talking over with people their personal problems, reveal as important. Despite precautions and the use of contraceptives, most girls who "go the whole way" before marriage have in their mind, either consciously or subconsciously, **a fear of becoming pregnant**. This in some measure at least spoils the experience. But more than that, by an association of ideas it often carries over into marriage and spoils the relationship within marriage itself. The failure to achieve sexual satisfaction within marriage is often definitely linked with unsatisfactory pre-marital sexual relationships.

### *The Question of Petting.*

May be you have decided, for one reason or another, not to "go the whole way" before marriage and you ask "What about petting". As friendship ripens into something stronger and deeper it seems to be natural, and to be generally accepted in our culture, that the two people concerned will express the love they feel by kissing or by some form of caressing. Some, however, go much further and engage in what is now described as "heavy petting". Whilst there are degrees of heavy petting, the term is usually used to describe a form of love making which just stops short of what we have described as "going the whole way". Doctors, psychologists and others, who have studied the effects of heavy petting, all note, amongst others, one effect in particular; they say that heavy petting carried out frequently and over many months becomes a substitute and an end in itself, even after marriage. Instead of aiding physical adjustment in marriage, pre-marital petting may deter it. I

am thinking now of a particularly fine intelligent young couple, aged about 25 years, who came to the Centre for help. Their marriage had been delayed and they engaged in heavy petting for about a year. When they did marry the wife had become so used to "putting on the brakes", or freezing up, at a certain point, that, in spite of everything, including the loving understanding of her husband, the same thing was happening within marriage and resentment was beginning to build up between husband and wife.

### *Controlling the Situation.*

Now what can be done on the positive side. First let us face the fact that **our sexual nature is God given** and let us realise that nothing can be gained by pretending that we do not have a sexual nature. Secondly, let us get things in their proper perspective. Sexual desire is normal and God given and sexual compatibility in marriage is important, but there are other important compatibilities too, religious or spiritual compatibility, to mention only one, is important. Let us give a proper amount of time and thought and expression to **achieving spiritual compatibility** with the one we love. It has been my experience as a Counsellor that, when spiritual compatibility is achieved between two people, the whole of their joint life is wonderfully transformed. Only recently I saw what looked like an impossible situation between a husband and wife transformed because they achieved spiritual compatibility—they became able to commune at a spiritual level.

Too often, when we think of intimate relationships, we think only of physical relationships and forget the importance also of intimate relationships at the spiritual level in marriage and in preparation for marriage.

## HAPPINESS AND MARRIAGE

Our two previous talks were concerned with "Before Marriage". Now we concern ourselves with "After Marriage".

A long time ago I saw the title of a book somewhere (or was it the subject of a talk—I am not sure now) and it read thus, "How to be happy though Married". When thinking about the title for this talk, my first impulse was to borrow the title, "How to be Happy though Married", but I decided on the slightly less cynical title "Happiness and Marriage".

Marriage, in its various aspects, is often the butt of Music Hall jokes. It is often suggested that Happiness and Marriage just do not go together. Marriage has sometimes been called a snare and a delusion. I have heard men refer to their wives, more in cynicism than in humour, as their "ball and chain"; some, of more poetic turn of mind, use the assonance "my trouble and strife". Some women can create the same effect or give vent to the same feeling by referring to the husband in a certain tone of voice as "Me Old Man". Some are less respectful and use a term I do not care to repeat but it also contains the adjective "old", no matter how young the husband may be.

*Is Real Happiness in Marriage Possible?*

Are the cynics right? Is it true that you cannot have happiness and marriage. As usual the cynics are wrong. We hear a great deal about the unhappy marriages but very little about the happy marriages in our community for happy marriages do not seem to have the same news value as unhappy marriages. Is happiness in marriage possible? Millions of couples would very definitely answer "Yes". More than this, many can testify to the fact that when a marriage has become unhappy, for one reason or another, it is still possible by the understanding gained in Marriage Guidance counselling, or in some other way to achieve

happiness. Often the happiness achieved in these circumstances is greater, deeper and richer than ever. One woman, whose marriage had reached the point where she could stand it no longer had left her husband. She was persuaded to seek help through counselling and, after this experience, she expressed herself thus: "A door has been opened for us into a wonderful new world. I could not have dreamt that it was possible and that such happiness could be ours."

Happiness and marriage can, and do, go together but this is not always so. Is there anything that can be done, are there things to be avoided to ensure that our marriage will be a happy one? What I say to you now is based partly on reading but more particularly, and in the main, it is based on the daily experience of talking with people, and my purpose is not to give advice but rather to convey information.

*Understanding is Essential.*

It seems to me that while it goes without saying that the partners should love each other, one prerequisite if happiness is to be achieved in marriage, is understanding. Understanding is something that goes deeper and is of greater significance than knowledge. It has emotional components as well as intellectual components. It is a knowledge which enables a person to feel into and for and with another person. Where there is understanding, there is happiness in the marriage.

This understanding must extend to **all areas of the interpersonal relationships** of marriage. One of the things a Counsellor seeks to do in a pre-marital counselling interview, for example, is to form some assessment of the personalities of the engaged couple. He seeks to interpret to each their needs and their strengths and weaknesses as well as the needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the other person. Further he attempts to help them to understand what their reactions to one another are likely to be in the close relationship of marriage. If I may illustrate by taking the extreme case, the so called "extrovert" and the "introvert" have to be helped to understand why each feels differently

to the other about some things. They have to be shown how they can be complementary to each other and how each can supply what the other lacks. This is of course the extreme case. Nevertheless temperamental differences within marriage, if not understood, can be a cause of unhappiness and difficulty. Some people have the capacity for understanding other people, the capacity of being able to put themselves in the place of another. Some husbands and wives find it relatively easy to understand why it is that each reacts to the same situation in a different way whilst others need skilled help before they are able to do this.

**Temperament** is partly the result of heredity, of being born with a certain balance of the endocrine glands, and partly the result of environmental conditioning (i.e., what has happened to us since we were born, the attitudes of our parents and others). When you think about it, two people who marry come from different families and although they may have been brought up in the same community, quite apart from any differences in heredity or the fact that they were born of different parents, they have been brought up differently. It is not surprising then that they **feel** differently about the same things or react differently to the same situation. When people realise this and accept the fact, they can adjust to each other. But where one insists that his way is the right way or that his reaction is the only possible reaction (i.e., where he lacks understanding), there is bound to be difficulty and unhappiness, unless the other partner can accept the fact that he is completely right. Sometimes she does accept the fact that he is completely right but as the years go by resentment is likely to build up.

As we have already indicated, understanding is necessary in all areas of the marriage. Much has been written about the need for **adjustment in the sexual area** and this is important. Understanding is required here if there is to be happiness. In my experience of talking with people, men particularly are prone to misunderstanding in this area of marriage. Even men who have a clear knowledge of the physiology and anatomy of the human body fail to understand. They fail to understand that, although a woman's

sexuality can be comparable to a man's in strength, it is not identical in nature. We discussed earlier how that the sexual relationship is a much deeper thing to a woman than to a man and for her has greater significance and meaning. It is more all pervading, it affects a greater area of her total life. Often husbands, after a quarrel, want to engage in intimate relationships with their wife as a sort of means of making up, and they find it difficult to understand why the wife refuses to do so. It seems to be that she refuses because she can only give herself fully when she is completely happy. The sexual relationship for her is such a deep thing, it has so much significance, that she is unable to use it as a means for making up. When the quarrel has been made up she can express the love she feels in this way but she cannot engage in this relationship until there is complete understanding. It is important for a husband to understand how his wife feels in this matter.

Alternatively the wife should understand that the husband's desire in this situation is not mere animal gratification but that it is his wish to use this intimate relationship as a means of making up. For him the relationship has a different significance, a significance which is not so deep or all pervading. When understanding is achieved in this, as well as in other aspects of the sexual relationship within marriage it will be a great help towards achieving happiness.

Both husband and wife must understand **the difference in their roles**, that the role of each in the marriage is different but complementary. Each is as important as the other and neither must be belittled. I am thinking here of practical every day situations. Unhappiness often begins because the lines of communication break down. The husband comes home from work and the wife wants to talk about Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones and little Mary Brown down the street. She wants to talk about persons, she is interested in persons and what they said and what they did. The husband is not interested in persons so much as in things, ideas and movements. He likes to talk about the old car for example, but his wife is not interested. When the husband understands that his wife's interest in persons springs, in large measure, from her maternal instinct and

that she has a need to talk about people in her relatively small world, and when he is able to listen attentively for a short time he finds that his wife is then prepared to listen to him talk about things, and they are both happy.

Again, husbands often do not realise the **constant demand of children** upon a mother, specially children of pre-school age. They are demanding attention all day long and the house has to be cleaned, the washing and ironing done, the shopping accomplished. Often the same things have to be done day in and day out with but little variation. The husband's work-a-day world is often more interesting. He meets different people, he has opportunities for conversation, but he arrives home and wants to put his feet up because he has had a hard day at the office. It would be a great help towards happiness if he understands that his wife has possibly had a hard day at home. Wives often feel resentful because husbands belittle what they have to do. One sure cure for this is for a husband to have the management of a family, a home, and children for a period; also, if he thinks the wife is spending too much money it is useful to send him off to do the shopping. Understanding at this level of married life is as important as it is at other levels.

Understanding is essential with regard to **the disciplining of children**. The different aims that the husband and the wife may have concerning bringing up the children, ought to be worked out and understanding achieved. It is important that children should not be allowed to crowd out the lives of the parents and they must see to it that they have some time for each other. I appreciate the difficulty in achieving this but it is important.

If there is to be happiness in the marriage it is necessary that both husband and wife should **never take each other for granted**. They must always treat each other with respect as persons. Often a little thought in this respect brings a tremendous amount of happiness. Such a little thing as a man opening a door of a car for his wife, instead of letting her clamber in the best way she can, seems to make a tremendous difference. Not that marriage could or

should be a continual honeymoon, but each should be treated as a person. So often unhappiness creeps into a marriage because a husband or wife fails to do this. Wives sometimes complain, and usually with good reason, that their husbands have ceased to treat them as persons in the full sense of that word and merely use them as bodies; bodies to get their meals and keep their house clean and to satisfy their sexual needs. Some husbands complain **with equally sound** reason, that their wives have come to think of them only as material providers. Whilst this is perhaps stating the extreme, in so many cases this sort of thing happens to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore understanding is required in this area of life.

### *Those Middle Years.*

It seems to me, from my experience of dealing with people, that **middle age** brings hazards which must, for the sake of the happiness of the marriage, be carefully negotiated. The physical difficulties that some women encounter at the time of the menopause or the change of life, are relatively well known. Sometimes the change in the balance of the endocrine glands, or the body's chemistry, brings about what is almost equivalent to a change of personality. It is, however, not so well known or not always understood, that often far reaching psychological changes accompany the menopause in women. Frequently these do not seem to have any direct connection with the change in the balance of the body's chemistry. Many women feel unwanted when they reach the menopause. Quite wrongly they feel that now they can no longer bear children, their husband will not want them. The woman in this condition feels that she is less than a woman—that while her husband is still the same sexually she is different.

This period in a woman's life often coincides with the adolescent period of her children; a time when they are wanting to be independent, and this expression of independence often makes the woman feel even more rejected and unwanted. If her husband does not understand or has come to take his wife for granted, her feelings of rejection are increased.

It is not always realised that middle age often brings psychological difficulties to a man. Many men find it difficult to face the fact that they are not as young as they were. Some react negatively and become rather sorry for themselves whilst others attempt to deny their age to the point of ridiculousness by trying to behave as though they were still 25. Some seek the company of younger women in an attempt to recapture the wife of their youth. Whilst these facts are fairly well known it is not always realised that many middle aged men feel pushed aside by teenage sons and daughters. If the wife is feeling rejected herself she often tends to reject her husband and so the husband goes off and, according to his interests, seeks solace elsewhere. I find that many middle aged men, like many middle aged women, have a sense of rejection. If there is understanding these difficulties do not arise and marriage in the middle years can be a wonderfully happy companionship.

We have used the word "understanding" again and again. We have said that understanding is something which is based on knowledge, but something which is beyond knowledge: a **feeling into** and **for** and **with** the other person.

### *The Things of the Spirit.*

I have learnt from talking with people, that the chances of understanding being achieved (and the resultant happiness in all areas of the married life), are tremendously increased where there is a spiritual affinity: where the partners love the same Lord, where they can kneel and pray together, where they can join in corporate worship together. I have mentioned previously in these talks, a husband and wife who recently came to the Centre. They were both very unhappy. The wife had left home. Their difficulties were very great indeed and it seemed impossible for them to achieve an understanding. To-day they are back together experiencing a happiness in their marriage which they never dreamt possible. This all came about because they were able to achieve an understanding of the things of the spirit.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IN-LAWS

As mentioned at the beginning of this series, the time available is all too short and it is only possible to deal with a few points under each subject. This subject, "The In-Laws", is no exception. Like each of the other subjects in the series, this is more complex than it appears at first sight and it is more far reaching in its emotional ramifications than it at first seems. For these reasons, all we can hope to do here is to offer a few suggestions which might help us in our thinking concerning the problems surrounding the subject of the In-Laws.

The term "In-Law", and particularly the term Mother-in-law, has in our culture, come to have almost an unpleasant connotation. With regard to Mothers-in-law the adjective "interfering" is often attached. Indeed, it seems to me the term Mother-in-law can scarcely be used without it being thought that the speaker's intentions are derogatory. Jokes against Mothers-in-law are legion and they are still often used by comedians, as part of their stock-in-trade.

### *Why This Difficulty?*

Why is there all this feeling about In-laws. I suppose it is because parental influence is, in quite an appreciable percentage of cases, a major cause of marital unhappiness. Whilst a dominating father is a more frequent cause of marital unhappiness than is commonly supposed, a possessive mother is perhaps even more so.

Earlier it was suggested that the in-law problem is more complex than it appears at first sight. Let me try to clarify this statement. The In-law problem brings up the whole question of **parent-child relationships**. One of the difficult things that every normal mother has to face is the realisation that the child that grew within her and who was dependent upon her even to the point of being dependent upon her circulatory system for his very life, is an indepen-

dent being. Very often the psychological weaning which, at the appropriate stage must take place if the child is to grow into an emotionally healthy adult, is more difficult than physical weaning. Often it is more painful than the process of birth itself—the physical separation of the child from the body of his mother. The maternal instinct of the normal mother finds great satisfaction in caring for the needs of the dependent child and a strong emotional bond grows between them. The father too, very soon begins to share in this strong emotional bond.

It is of the greatest importance that **every child should feel both loved and wanted**. If a child thus feels emotionally secure he will, as he grows towards adulthood, be able adequately to deal with any other kind of insecurity, including economic insecurity. The importance of the child feeling loved and wanted cannot be over emphasized and the strength of this love should be very great. However, if the child is to grow up into a happy and effective person and an adequate partner in marriage, it is essential also that this should be a balanced love. By this we mean a love which loves the child for his own sake and not as a symbol of something else. If a parent loves a child as an image of herself or himself, or as a substitute for the love of a husband or a wife, or some other person, then some sort of in-law difficulty when that child grows up and marries is almost inevitable. Again, the love of a parent for a child must be a love that can let go as well as hold on. This demands a love that does not smother, that is not oppressive but that gives the child breathing space; a love that encourages independence without making the child feel rejected and yet a love that can be accepting; a love upon which the child can at times lean a little in order to gain strength for the next step towards the appropriate degree of independence. In other words it requires a mature love.

A child that experiences this sort of love is neither too dependent nor too independent. Amongst the most miserable people I have met are husbands and/or wives who have not known this kind of mature parental love, and who have grown up mother dominated or father dominated persons,

and are thus unable to relate to wife or husband in an adequate and satisfactory way. Not only does this cause suffering to their partner and to their own children, but also they are most miserable themselves. Often they recognise that they are parent dominated and long to break free. Some take drastic measures and go to great lengths to do so and then when they do break free they often have deep feelings of guilt. To get rid of this unbearable feeling of guilt they seek again the mother or the father to whom they are in bondage.

### *Parents Who Cling.*

It seems to be more usual for a son to be mother fixated and for a daughter to be father fixated though it does also work conversely. Somebody, I cannot now remember who, writing of this remarks that it is curious that the marriage ceremony requires the father to give away his daughter but does not require the mother to give away her son. This writer goes on to say that, in his opinion both parents of both partners to a marriage should be required to give away son or daughter, as the case may be. Much unhappiness and much in-law trouble arises because parents are unable to give their son or their daughter to the person he or she wishes to marry. Those who are able to give find that they do not lose their child but, on the contrary they keep their child's affection and in addition, gain the affection of their child's partner. The rather trite platitude of the professional master of ceremonies at some wedding receptions, "You have not lost a son but you have gained a daughter", is often literally true where that son has been loved in a mature way and given without reserve.

We have seen that in-law trouble arises where a husband or wife has been dominated and bound by a parent and made **emotionally immature** and where that parent, being unable to give her child, is continually getting in the way in the child's marriage. But not only does this trouble arise because of the emotional immaturity of parents and of their off-spring, it sometimes occurs because of the **emotional difficulties** which some parents experience **after**

**reaching middle age.** Earlier we dealt briefly with the emotional difficulties which sometimes accompany the menopause in women, and what has been called the critical age in men. As mentioned, many men and women feel unwanted and rejected when they reach these middle years. The middle age of parents often coincides with the marriage of their sons and daughters. Sometimes, because the parents have this feeling of rejection, they cling harder to the son or daughter and they seem to be trying to return to their younger days when the children were dependent on them. This of course, inevitably creates the difficulties which are described as "in-law trouble".

### *Is There An Answer?*

Unfortunately there is not time to go into greater detail, or to deal with some other difficulties which come under the heading of in-law trouble. Let us therefore ask and briefly try to answer, the question, "What can be done about all this?" As I have been trying to describe to you some of the difficulties, and their underlying causes, you will no doubt, in large measure, have already answered the question for yourselves. In talking about Happiness and Marriage, you will remember that we spoke about the importance of **understanding**. We defined understanding as something which, although based on knowledge, is more than knowledge; it is, in addition to knowledge, a feeling into and with and for the other person. I feel that this kind of understanding is something which, when applied to the relationships of married people and their parents, helps to prevent in-law trouble and, where there is in-law trouble this kind of understanding helps to heal the difficulties. When parents have knowledge of the needs of their children and feel into and for and with them; and when sons and daughters and sons-in-law and daughters-in-law have knowledge of the needs of the parents and their parents-in-law and feel into and for and with them, in-law trouble cannot occur.

Throughout this series of talks, we have begun the Lunch Hour Service with a hymn as a sort of theme:

Love divine, all love excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,  
All Thy faithful mercies crown:

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,  
Pure unbounded love Thou art;  
Visit us with Thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.

I have discovered from talking with people, as well as from personal experience, that when people allow Jesus to visit them with His "great salvation", when they allow His "pure unbounded love" to possess their hearts and lives, then human love, the love of a man for a maid, of a husband for a wife, of a parent for a child, becomes wonderfully transformed. It becomes fuller, deeper, richer and purer; more mature and more like God's love. What is God's love like? St. John tells us in Chapter 3 of his Gospel, and verse 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God gave his son that we might know real love, a love which has an eternal quality.

*Have you accepted God's gift?*

*Do you know the love of God in your own life? a love which transforms all the human relationships about which we have been thinking in this series of talks on "Marriage—Before and After."*

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**CHURCH OF ENGLAND MARRIAGE GUIDANCE CENTRE**

Head Office: 4th Floor, Griff House

324 Pitt Street

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