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HUSBANDS

P.F. JENSEN

"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

Moore College
Library

I was browsing in a book of quotations the other day at a friend's place when I came across a beauty on the subject of husbands: 'Husbands are all the same; they have different faces only so that we can tell them apart'. Understandably, this piece of cynicism was anonymous.

But, of course, cynical remarks about husbands are not on their own. There are very many scoffing jests about wives in general and marriage too. Like Irish jokes they are a sure source of humour.

Often they draw their sting from the fact that they contain elements of truth. The same book of quotations contained the suggestion that 'husbands should be deaf and wives should be blind'; not altogether a bad piece of advice.

There is a danger nowadays, however, in over much cynicism about marriage. We hear too little about the ideals towards which we should all be struggling. For the call to be a husband and a father is a most responsible one; it takes precedence over almost everything else that a man can do or be. Thus, for example, the Bible tells us that if a man is not a success as the head of his home, he should not be invited to become a minister in the church.

Today the whole idea of a man being 'the head of the home' is under attack. And yet, neglect of this pattern does not lead to heaven on earth; it simply means that men are constantly encouraged to free themselves from the responsibilities of home life. This is tragic for the family; but it is also sad for the man, who is thus

deprived of one of his chief tasks in life. At work he may be the most insignificant of people; at home he has responsibility and makes important decisions. The glossy magazines have a lot to answer for in their idealisation of one parent families and easy divorce.

What is the ideal for a husband? The Christian pattern is both rewarding and demanding. It is to follow the example of Jesus Christ himself in relationship to his Church. Christ would never neglect the Church; he nourishes and sustains her. Christ would never abandon his Church, even though she frequently fails him. Christ does not tyrannize his Church; rather he leads through service. Christ, we are told, loved His Church, and gave himself for her. So too should the husband love his wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death parts them. His love is expressed by complete loyalty and sacrificial service.

One great thing about this is that you don't have to be a genius to be a good husband and father. Character is necessary, true; but not intellect. To run a business properly, or to lead an army, or to be some other sort of Great One may require brains. But God has left the best job of all open to any man willing to take on its obligations and to share its privileges. What a pity it is that so many of us fail! Look to the example of Christ; and ask him for his help, and may your marriage reflect his values, and be sustained by his grace. If we were all like Christ, it would be a matter of gratitude that we might say 'Husbands are all the same!'

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