

THE MARRIAGE INSTITUTION

1. AFTER creating man, what did God say?

“And the Lord God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone.*” **Genesis 2:18.**

2. What, therefore, did God say He would make?

“I will make him *an help* meet for him.” **Same verse.**

NOTE — Not a *helpmeet* nor a *helpmate*, but—two words—a *help meet* for him; that is, *fit* or *suitable* for him. The word *meet* in the original means a front, a part opposite, a counterpart, or mate. Man’s companion, or help, was to correspond to him. Each was to be suited to the other’s needs.

3. Could such a help be found among the creatures which God had already made?

“And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; *but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*” **Verse 20.**

4. What, therefore, did God do?

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, *made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*” **Verses 21, 22.**

NOTE — How beautiful, in its fullness of meaning, is this simple but suggestive story, at which skeptics sneer. God did not make man after the order of the lower animals, but “in His own image.” Neither did He choose man’s companion, or “help,” from some other order of beings, but made her from man—of the same substance. And He took this substance, not from man’s *feet*, that he might have an excuse to degrade, enslave, or trample upon her; nor from man’s *head*, that woman might assume authority over man; but from man’s *side*, from over his *heart*, the *seat of affections*, that woman might stand at his side as *man’s equal*, and, *side by side with him*, together, under God, work out the purpose and destiny of the race,—man, the strong, the noble, the dignified; woman, the weaker, the sympathetic, the loving. How much more exalted

and inspiring is this view than the theory that man developed from the lower order of animals.

5. What did Adam say as he received his wife from God?

“And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*” **Verse 23.**

6. What great truth was then stated?

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and *they shall be one flesh.*” **Verse 24.**

7. In what words does Christ recognize marriage as of God?

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*” **Matthew 19:6.**

NOTE — Thus was the marriage institution ordained of God in Eden, before man sinned. Like the Sabbath, it has come down to us with the Edenic dews of divine blessing still upon it. It was ordained not only for the purpose of peopling the earth and perpetuating the race, but to promote social order and human happiness; to prevent irregular affection; and, through well-regulated families, to transmit truth, purity, and holiness from age to age. Around it cluster all the purest and truest joys of home and the race. When the divine origin of marriage is recognized, and the divine principles controlling it are obeyed, marriage is indeed a blessing; but when these are disregarded, untold evils are sure to follow. That which, rightly used, is of greatest blessing, when abused becomes the greatest curse.

8. By what commands has God guarded the marriage relation?

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.” **Exodus 20:14, 17.**

9. What New Testament injunction is given respecting marriage?

“*Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*” **Hebrews 13:4, R. V.**

NOTE — By many, marriage is lightly regarded—is often made even a subject of jest. Its divine origin, its great object, and its possibilities and influences for good or evil are little thought of,

and hence it is often entered into with little idea of its responsibilities or its sacred obligations. The marriage relationship is frequently used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the relationship existing between God and His people. See **Romans 7:1–4; 2Corinthians 11:2; Hosea 2:19, 20; Revelation 19:7.**

10. After the fall, what sort of marriages were introduced by men, which were productive of great evil?

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that *the sons of God saw the daughters of men* that they were fair; *and they took them wives of all which they chose.*” **Genesis 6:1, 2.**

NOTE — Not only was there plurality of wives, which in itself is an evil, but the “sons of God,” descending from Seth, married the “daughters of men,” the descendants from the idolatrous line of Cain, and thus corrupted the seed, or church, of God itself. All the barriers against evil thus being broken down, the whole race was soon corrupted, violence filled the earth, and the flood followed.

11. What restriction did God make respecting marriages in Israel?

“Let them marry to whom they think best; *only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.*” **Numbers 36:6.**

12. What prohibition did God give His chosen people against intermarrying with the heathen nations about them, and why?

“*Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*” **Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.**

NOTE — Intermarriage with the ungodly was the mistake made by the professed people of God before the flood, and God did not wish Israel to repeat that folly.

13. What instruction is given in the New Testament regarding marriage with unbelievers?

“*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what*

communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God.” **2Corinthians 6:14–16.**

NOTE — This instruction forbids all compromising partnerships. Marriage of believers with unbelievers has ever been a snare by which Satan has captured many earnest souls who thought they could win the unbelieving, but in most cases have themselves drifted away from the moorings of faith into doubt, backsliding, and loss of religion. It was one of Israel’s constant dangers, against which God warned them repeatedly. “Give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace [by such compromise] or their wealth forever.” **Ezra 9:12.** See also **Exodus 34:14–16; Judges 14:1–3; Ezra 9 and 10; and Nehemiah 13:23–27.** Even Solomon fell before the influence of heathen wives. Concerning him the inspired Word has left this melancholy record: “His wives turned away his heart after other gods.” **1Kings 11:4.** No Christian can marry an unbeliever without running serious risk, and placing himself upon the enemy’s ground. The Scriptures do not advocate separation after the union has been formed (see **1Corinthians 7:2–16**) but good sense should teach us that faith can best be maintained, and domestic happiness best insured, where both husband and wife are believers, and of the same faith. Both ministers and parents, therefore, should warn the young against all improper marriages.

14. What instruction did Abraham give his servant Eliezer when sending him to select a wife for his son Isaac?

“Thou shalt take a wife for my son of *my kindred, and of my father’s house.*” **Genesis 24:40.**

NOTE — This passage indicates that in early Bible times parents generally had more to do in the selection of life companions for their children than they commonly have now. Young people who are wise will seek the advice and counsel of their parents, and above all, will seek to know the will of God,

before entering upon this important relationship, with its grave responsibilities and its momentous consequences.

15. For how long does marriage bind the contracting parties?

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband *so long as he liveth.*” **Romans 7:2.** See **1Corinthians 7:39.**

16. What only does Christ recognize as proper ground for dissolving the marriage relationship?

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication,* and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” **Matthew 19:9.**

NOTE — Civil laws recognize other reasons as justifiable causes for separation, such as extreme cruelty, habitual drunkenness, or other like gross offenses; but only one offense, according to Christ, warrants the complete annulment of the marriage tie.

THERE is a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,

When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,

With heart never changing and brow never cold,

Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.

MOORE.