

81. The Matrimonial Estate was Instituted by God Himself.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. *Gen. 2, 18.*

God Himself, even before the Fall in Paradise, instituted the estate of matrimony. When He had created Adam, He saw that it was not good for him to be alone, and He created a help meet for him. He formed Eve out of a rib of Adam, brought her to him, and then performed the first marriage ceremony. Thus marriage is a divine institution. When Adam, the son of God, and Eve, the first woman, both created in the image of God, clasped their hands in purest affection, the great God Himself pronounced the benediction and gave them as their wedding-gift the dominion over the beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea. But, alas! man fell into sin and dragged all creation with him into ruin.

Yet even after the deplorable fall of man, God does not disown His creation and ordinance, but esteems it highly. Nothing could be more significant than that, when the Savior came to redeem the fallen world and entered upon His atoning work, His first work should be wrought in honor of the estate of holy matrimony. He was present at a marriage-feast and on that occasion changed water into wine and manifested forth His divine glory. By His presence and by that miracle He clearly endorsed, sanctioned, and placed His divine approbation upon matrimony, as He once did in the lovely Garden of Eden.

We should therefore never forget the sacred character of matrimony. No one should enter it lightly, but each one who contemplates marriage ought to take this important step in the fear of God and in full conformity with the divine Law. Couples doing this will later have comfort in times of affliction. Those who have entered holy matrimony lightly, unadvisedly, against their parents' consent, and not in conformity with the divine Law will find no comfort, no consolation, in such days. Let us therefore honor God's holy institution.

Prayer.

Almighty, beneficent God, Thou hast Thyself instituted holy wedlock, and by means of the first miracle of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ didst honor and distinguish it as an estate pleasing to Thee, in which also many sainted fathers and prophets lived a godly life, well-pleasing to Thee. Prevent the Evil One from sowing discord and contention, and if, through weakness of the flesh, the spirit of discord gets the upper hand, grant that harmony between husband and wife be speedily restored. Preserve from harm my house and my home and all Thou hast given me. Amen.

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee —
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

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