

## An Address on Marriage

Heb. 13: 4.

G. V. Wigram.

One of the marks of the last days is "forbidding to marry" (1 Tim. 4: 3), a mark of that state of things which leads to final judgment. "Marriage is *honourable* in all." I don't know anything that marks the low state of things in Christendom more than the levity with which marriage is thought of. Often it is looked upon as not *honourable*. Of peculiar interest to me is the testimony of Scripture on this subject, not only as giving a most solemn character to marriage, but also as a very simple evidence of the Bible being the Word of God. That is, that this union between husband and wife is carried all through the Bible, a cord, the one end of which is in Genesis, the other in Revelation. When God purposed certain things, He had His Son before Him, and thus all the outlines of what He meant to do got their form, and so as to marriage in creation. The place it had in the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ is most remarkable. When the people wanted to ensnare Him about divorce, He said, what did God do? Get back to God in creation. What could they say? Creation was older than Moses. The thought in God's mind, then, was something more than the creation of the first man. Directly the Lord announces Himself as coming as the Bridegroom (Rev. 22), the Spirit and the Bride say "Come."

Adam in Eden had everything to make him happy, but he must have a helpmeet, typical of the second Adam, who will present His Bride to Himself. I may be a most stupid man, but here is a book containing the history of seven thousand years, which begins and ends with the same thing. This is the very perfection of God. It makes me abhor myself, and turn from myself to God.

You have in creation man and wife, and in the end you see the Lord Jesus presenting to Himself His Bride, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. One end of the cord is tied in creation, the other end in the Lord's coming. There are nine or ten points in which the first Adam is a type of the last Adam. So the Bible is full of stages erected for the execution of certain dramas upon them-creation, providence, government, redemption, etc., until all ends in glory.

When God took up Israel, you see marriage in a remarkable way connected with His government. He called Israel His wife. He said later, because of their unfaithfulness, that they should no longer call Him husband, and that later on they should again say "Ishi," or "My husband." He speaks of them as espoused, then as divorced, and asks where is the bill of their divorcement? You see the Lord Jesus set down in heaven, the earth rejected King; and I thus am sure Israel will be gathered, because the King is set in heaven. He is occupied now with gathering out a Bride, but He is King of Israel too. If He is the root and offspring of David, He must come forth as King. If you come to providence, you see that while God in His government puts down one and sets up another, and has made the land of Israel as a barren rock, yet it is only till the time He wants it for Israel. The Jews cannot get the land with the temple, and they won't have it without. I heard that Sir Moses Montefiore offered a large sum of money for it, but when he asked how soon he could take possession of the temple, the reply was, "Oh, you cannot have the *temple*." The land without the temple was nothing to him.

Another thing that brings out marriage is, Jehovah calls the land Beulah, the Bride of Jehovah. God puts thus His stamp upon marriage. The thoughts in Scripture are God's thoughts, whether in creation, providence, government, or redemption, though in different kingdoms.

If you read Eph. 5, you find that the husband is to be as Christ is to the Church, and the wife as the Church ought to have been to Christ. So the purpose of the husband should be, "I am going to set

out in my little circumstances that marvellous union which is between Christ and His Church."

Our sisters should study what the Church is to Christ, not to say my husband is *not* what Christ is to the Church, therefore I need not be what the Church ought to be to Christ. If the one fails, it is just the very reason why the other should not do so.

But the Lord would not have us hide from ourselves difficulties. We must never think that this new relationship is just the enlargement of enjoyment. He would have us to remember that whatever our want of experience, we are to stand forth as Christ and the Church in the world. People say, "Oh, if I had known, I would never have got into such difficulties." Scripture says that is unbelief. Faith says there is no place in the world like "Wit's End"; I always find Christ there. And is it God's thought for us to get rid of difficulties, or to go through them with Him? Every difficulty is but an occasion for saying, "More than conquerors through Him that loved us." You say, "Oh, but I have got no strength." So much the better. If one says, "I am up to it," I fear for him. Do you dread difficulties? Dread *none*. I don't think the hearts are awake to the great truth that we are here to display Christ. He must display Himself in me; I cannot by any might of mine, but He can perfect His strength in me. You say, "I have so many duties and difficulties, and Satan is so strong." Put your foot on him in the name of the Lord Jesus. The eye must have its object.

Three things strike me most about Christians:

- (1.) They know but little about abiding in Him, of being shut up entirely in Christ.
- (2.) They have not made up their minds about the "One thing"; "One thing I do," all others dropped, "I press toward the mark."
- (3.) The doctrine of the resurrection is so little used as applied to every day walk.

God led Israel down to Egypt, and locked them up there, but He was prepared to unlock for them another gate resurrection in principle. Christ traces the path, and if every step brings -you to "Wit's End," He is never at His wit's end. No saint ever got to heaven without a living Christ to lift him over the stiles. We need the force of the words, "All these things shall turn to you for a testimony." An assembly is in great difficulties, I was told; I said I would be in good heart; they are just such as Peter and Paul had. I should rejoice in them as that which would help the Church through the wilderness. Our Lord said ye must through much tribulation enter the kingdom. May we have a full taste of them and of Christ's sufficiency in them. G. V. W.