



THE PAULIST PRESS

401 West 59th Street

New York, N. Y.

Whom God Hath Joined

By
REV. J. ELLIOT ROSS

NEW YORK
THE PAULIST PRESS
401 WEST 59TH STREET

Nihil Obstat:

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,
Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur:

✠ PATRICK J. HAYES, D.D.,
Archbishop of New York.

New York, September 21, 1922.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

COPYRIGHT, 1922, BY "THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. PAUL
THE APOSTLE IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK"

Deacidified

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED



THE very fact of sex necessitates some form of union between men and women if the race is to be perpetuated. Unfortunately, there have been lower forms of union as well as higher ones. In fact, every conceivable kind of union, except entire promiscuity, has been tried somewhere at one time or another. There have been examples of monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, and even group marriage.

The Christian ideal of marriage is the union of one man and one woman for mutual helpfulness and the propagation of the race, in a bond broken only by the death of one or the other. This Christian ideal is taught clearly by Christ, and is strongly supported by the facts of nature itself.

Fortunately, we are passing out of that phase of scientific thought when the mere fact of a proposition being traditional was sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of so-called scientists. The nineteenth century witnessed a revolt against Christianity that was, in itself, a violation of the very principles of the science it professed to vindicate. In the twentieth century, on the contrary, many scientists, more loyal to the search for truth, are stoutly defending certain old-fashioned religious teachings.

On no other point is this more striking than on the question of marriage. It was the fashion of

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

anthropologists, a generation ago, to ridicule the idea that monogamy is the primitive form of marriage. To them, man was a beast, and he could not originally have had any ideas of morality above the instincts of the beasts. As beasts practised promiscuity, so man must originally have practised it. Man's passions were only fettered by clever priests playing on an innate superstitious fear. Today, however, we have leading sociologists frankly admitting that there is no evidence for the practice of promiscuity among any tribe or nation of men, no matter how degraded; whereas there is ample evidence that monogamy was the primitive form of union and the one intended by nature. They can see, too, that monogamy best subserves the interests of society, and of the individual.

Hence those who advocate free love, even though they disguise their ugly doctrine with ambiguous phrases, such as "the right to motherhood," or the "immorality of marriage when love has departed," and so on *ad nauseam*, are simply advocating lower forms that only inferior groups practise. Their proposals are not only anti-Christian, they are also unscientific. Instead of being progressive, they are really retrogressive. Instead of calling to something higher, they are really degenerate.

Professor Howard, for instance, is a recognized authority on the question of matrimonial customs and practices. His monumental work on the *History of Matrimonial Institutions* takes a deservedly high place among the scholarly contributions to the subject. He tells us that even among some of the

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

very lowest peoples, as the Veddahs of Ceylon, there is free courtship, no divorce, no prostitution and no form of marriage but monogamous unions, and these characterized by great fidelity and lasting until death.”¹

The whole trend of present sociological thought is well summed up by Dr. Edward C. Hayes in his *Introduction to the Study of Sociology*. Dr. Hayes is professor of sociology in the University of Illinois, has been president of the American Sociological Society, and his book is praised by Giddings, Ross, and Small—all eminent sociologists, and all former presidents of the Society. In the preface to this textbook, Dr. Hayes professes to eschew originality and to give rather, in a systematic way, a summary of sociological thought. We may, therefore, accept his statements as really representing the current attitude of sociologists on this important point.

Professor Hayes says: “Mankind has experimented on a great scale and through long periods with every possible form of domestic organization, and among all highly advanced peoples, monogamy increasingly survives and prevails. Its predominance has been assisted by social and religious sanction, due to the approval of the influential, but this predominance has been essentially due to the natural selection of the survival of the fittest. Nothing human is perfect, no domestic arrangement makes ideals automatically fulfill themselves; but it would seem that if anything can be said to have been demonstrated by experience, the incomparable superiority of monog-

¹ Page 141. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904. \$10.00.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

amy over other forms of the family seems removed beyond argument.”²

We might quote hosts of others in the same line. The movement for free love, for easier divorce, for “the right to motherhood,” and so on, in spite of many glib phrases and much pseudo-science, is really opposed to the best interests of society and of the individual. Those tribes or races or nations that have practised these things in the past are no more or occupy an inferior position. History, as Heinrich Pesch says, has only one way of arguing—the *reductio ad absurdum*. It has been amply proven that these forms will not stand the test of actual life in competition with monogamy.

To the unprejudiced observer, in fact, nature proves conclusively that marriage ought to exist only between one man and one woman, until death releases. Neither polygamy nor polyandry could be practised on any very large scale in a group, because the sexes are usually about equally balanced. It is only because of the operation of some exceptional cause, as during the late war, that the balance is disturbed. This, in itself, is an interference with nature.

And while nature is not so clear on the question of divorce, nevertheless there are ample indications of her mind. The stronger form of monogamy that does not allow divorce with the right to remarry, is the soundest kind of marriage from the standpoint of national health and social well-being. Even though sociologists, taken generally, have not come completely to the traditional Catholic view on divorce, at

² Page 536. New York: Appleton, 1918. \$2.50.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

least they are realizing the mistake of too easy divorce. They wish to make divorce harder to obtain, rather than easier.

Naturally a foremost consideration affecting their thought is the effect on the home. Sociologists and practical social workers are agreed that the family is the most important institution in the world. It is significant that many charitable organizations have changed their names from United, or Federated, or Associated Charities, to the Family Service Society, or some such title. This indicates the importance modern thinkers attach to the family, and hence the maleficent importance of anything that undermines the family.

Divorce simply shatters the individual home where it takes place, and when the number of divorces, relatively to marriages, becomes very large, its evil influence can hardly be exaggerated. Divorce is worse even than the death of a husband or wife. For death leaves ideals intact and a united family sentiment clinging to the memory of the departed. Divorce, on the contrary, kills love, separates the family in fact and sentiment, and introduces an element of moral instability that will bear evil fruit in every direction of social life. It lowers the standard of self-control, and in doing that, it undermines all individual happiness and all strong citizenship.

Moreover, divorce robs the children of the care of at least one parent, and this means defective home training that frequently leads to delinquency. "The statistics of one large city show that less than one-half of the neglected and delinquent children had

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

homes containing both father and mother. In the majority of cases, one of the parents was dead or they had separated; step-parents had intervened; desertions had occurred; or the parents were both dead. The absence of natural home conditions is therefore an unmistakable cause of the vicious tendencies of the child. . . . 'According to Drähms, fifty per cent. of the population of our industrial schools are either orphans or children of divorced parents.'"³

It is not surprising, therefore, that many independent thinkers, who are not tied to any churchly teaching, have come out strongly against divorce. Dr. Felix Adler, for instance, of the Ethical Culture Society, says baldly: "This is my position: separation, but never divorce."⁴ And it was one of the noteworthy facts of the latest International Congress of Eugenics, that some of the foremost eugenists declared themselves against divorce.

People who advocate divorce grow sentimental over the suffering of women married to drunken husbands, or fathers bound to adulterous wives. And, of course, there is no denying that there is great suffering in many instances. But the remedy is not divorce. First of all, what is needed is more deliberation before marrying, and the impossibility of divorce will tend to compel this. If mistakes are made in spite of deliberation, then what is primarily needed is a reformation of the individuals, not a permission for them to wreck the lives of others. And

³ Mangold, *Problems of Child Welfare*, p. 227. New York: Macmillan, 1917. \$2.00.

⁴ *Marriage and Divorce*, p. 44. New York: Appleton, 1915. 75 cents.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

where this is impossible, mere separation from bed and board will accomplish everything that divorce will, without many of the evil consequences of divorce.

Fortunately, however, we are not dependent upon mere reason for guidance in this difficult field. We have also God's revelation, and this is absolutely clear.

In the first place, there is Christ's institution of matrimony as a sacrament, and His insisting upon its unity and indissolubility.

St. Mark records in the tenth chapter of his Gospel how Christ changed the law from that of Moses. He admits to the questioning Pharisee that Moses permitted divorce. But he says that this was because of the hardness of heart of Israel. "But from the beginning of the creation," Christ continues, "God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother; and shall cleave to his wife. And they shall be two in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

The disciples were somewhat disturbed over this stringent doctrine, and questioned Christ further concerning it. Instead of mitigating it in the least, Christ expressed the law in even stronger terms. "He saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away the husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." ⁵

⁵ St. Mark x. 9-12.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

In St. Luke we have an equally strong statement, though the full setting is not given. "Everyone that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." ⁶

Writing a few years after Christ uttered these words, and when the Church had spread somewhat among the corrupt Greeks and Romans, St. Paul interpreted them as absolutely prohibiting divorce from the bond of matrimony. St. Paul was willing enough to forego circumcision because of the Gentile prejudice, he abandoned the distinction between clean and unclean meats, but he knew that he could not stretch Christ's law of marriage to admit of divorce.

"But to them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth," he writes to the Corinthians, "that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled with her husband." ⁷ Here we have the authorization of separation from bed and board, but no hint that divorce from the bond of marriage is lawful for any reason other than death. In fact, a few verses further on, St. Paul specifies clearly that only death can make a second marriage legitimate. "A woman is bound by the law," he says, "as long as her husband liveth, but if her husband die, she is at liberty; let her marry to whom she will, only in the Lord." ⁸

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul again lays down the same law. "For the woman that hath an husband, whilst her husband liveth, is bound to the

⁶ St. Luke xvi. 18.

⁷ 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

⁸ *Ibid.* 39.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

law. But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress, if she be with another man; but if her husband be dead, she is delivered from the law of her husband, so that she is not an adulteress if she be with another man.”⁹

Here, then, are four passages of Scripture and three independent witnesses stating that only death releases from the bond of marriage. What can those Christians who accept the Bible and yet allow divorce allege in justification of themselves?

First of all, a passage in St. Matthew that even by itself seems to forbid divorce. “But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting for the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.”¹⁰ Certainly when this text is taken in conjunction with St. Luke, St. Mark and St. Paul, already quoted, it is abundantly evident that it convicts of adultery the man who marries the wife of another man, no matter for what cause she has been put away; and also the man who puts her away and marries another. The clause, “excepting for the cause of fornication,” clearly refers to the preceding phrase. Hence the meaning is: If a man separate from his wife, he is subjecting her to the danger of taking up with some other man, either through lust or the desire for a home; and he is not justified in thus exposing her unless she has seriously sinned against her marriage vows, as by fornication.

⁹ Romans vii. 2, 3.

¹⁰ St. Matthew v. 32.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

The other text alleged in defence of divorce is also from St. Matthew, and likewise affords no greater evidence in favor of divorce. "And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." ¹¹

Surely it is only the wish that can prove father to an interpretation of this passage as allowing divorce when the wife has been adulterous. As in the other passage of St. Matthew, the parenthesis, "except it be for fornication," evidently refers to the preceding idea, the putting away or separating from the wife; and not to the succeeding idea, marrying another.

This interpretation has been the steady and consistent one of the Western Church from the earliest days. The Eastern Church, it is true, allows divorce for the cause of adultery; and now and then a few ecclesiastics in the West, too subservient to the powerful of this world, tried to justify it. But taking history as a whole, the interpretation has always been that of the Catholic Church today.

However, the real controversy is not over an interpretation of Scripture allowing divorce for one particular cause, but as to whether or not divorce shall be granted for almost any pretext. This is abundantly shown by the history of the movement. And whatever may be the meaning of Matthew xix. 9, certainly it is not that Christian ministers may join in wedlock anyone who has been released by the State from a previous marriage. The hypocrisy of the

¹¹ St. Matthew xix. 9.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

slogan, "the Bible and the Bible only," is shown with naked clarity every time a Protestant minister assists at the marriage of some divorcee.

The Catholic Church has been severely condemned for insisting upon an impossible standard in not allowing divorce. But in regard to the sanctity of marriage, as with many other moral questions, it is wiser to be strict than to be lax. And the Catholic Church is just as strict as Jesus Christ. His law is evidently the best law, for even the possibility of divorce naturally breeds divorce. Persons marry more recklessly, they are less considerate after marriage, and they seek refuge in divorce for situations that time itself would heal did they but wait. One of our professional funny papers several years ago published a joke in which one sister said to the other: "Hurry up, Ethel, or we'll be late for the wedding." "Never mind," was the reply, "we'll be in time for the divorce proceedings." Recently our daily papers carried the news items of a judge granting a divorce, and immediately acting as witness to another marriage of one of the parties.

Unfortunately, these incidents only too accurately reflect the attitude of many persons in America today. Divorce on a supposed Scriptural ground soon leads to divorce for other causes. And finally we come to the situation of divorce by mutual consent. Unless the movement is stopped, we shall have free love, and perhaps a revival of concubinage.

The strong trend in this direction is clearly shown by the alarming increase in the number of divorces. Relatively to the population and to the number of

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

marriages, the number of divorces has been growing larger each year. At present, for the whole country there are only about nine times as many marriages as divorces. That is to say, an average of one marriage in every nine ends in a divorce. Moreover, the proportion in many places is much higher than that. In Washington State, the proportion of divorces to marriages is 1 to 4, in Montana 1 to 5.4, in Oregon 1 to 2.5, in Nevada 1 divorce to 1.5 marriages. Some counties actually have more divorces than marriages. According to the report of the Census Bureau for 1916, there were in Washoe County, Nevada, 347 marriages and 440 divorces; in Rutherford County, Tennessee, 42 marriages and 48 divorces; in Mono County, California, 2 marriages and 2 divorces; in Union County, Oregon, 57 marriages and 65 divorces.

And this does not tell the whole story of domestic tragedy, because there are a great many divorce suits instituted without obtaining divorces, even under our lax laws and practice. In Franklin County, Ohio, for instance, there were, in 1916, 3,039 marriages and 674 divorces. From July, 1919, to July, 1920, there were 4,706 divorce suits before the courts, though for an almost identical twelve-month only 1,151 divorces were granted.

Surely these figures call aloud for some tightening of the marriage bond. But that can best be done by adopting the thoroughgoing Catholic attitude—once married, always married, until released by death. For, as we have said, it is better to be very strict than to start to walk the path of laxity.

For valid Christian consummated marriage, the

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

Catholic Church knows no release except death. However, if the marriage has not been consummated, it may be dissolved by the Pope or by the solemn religious profession of both parties. And if the marriage is not Christian, that is, has taken place between unbaptized persons, and one becomes a Catholic while the unbeliever refuses to live peaceably with him or her, the marriage may be dissolved by the proper ecclesiastical authority. This is based on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says: "If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And if any woman hath a husband that believeth not, and he consent to dwell with her, let her not put away her husband. . . . But if the unbeliever depart, let him depart. For a brother or sister is not under servitude in such cases."¹² Naturally, however, such cases do not often arise.

In addition to this, the Church may grant a decree of nullity, that is, she may decide that a marriage never existed because of some impediment. And while there have undoubtedly been some abuses in this connection, the position of the Church is perfectly sound. It is adopted by every civilized government under the sun. For instance, one of the impediments recognized by both the State and the Church is a previously existing marriage. Suppose, then, that a sailor does not return from a voyage. The ship has been lost, and presumably the whole crew. His wife marries again, as in Tennyson's famous poem of "Enoch Arden." Later he appears. To

¹² 1 Corinthians vii, 13-15.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

whom would she be married? Civil law as well as ecclesiastical would answer: to the first man, since the second marriage would be invalid because of the impediment of a previous bond.

The Church declares that certain other impediments invalidate a marriage. Some of the impediments are from natural law, as certain degrees of kindred, some merely from ecclesiastical law. From her own impediments she can dispense, but from those of the natural law she cannot. It is impossible to go into all these impediments in a pamphlet such as this. But it is sufficient to say that they all have a sound reason back of them. Some, indeed, are recognized by the civil law in various countries, and others are being urged by progressives now as particularly desirable.

But though the Church does not grant a divorce from validly contracted, consummated Christian marriage, she does allow separation. If two parties to a marriage have a grave reason for separating, the Church will sanction this. Drunkenness, adultery, danger to life, and so on, would all be sufficient grounds. The reason, however, must be serious, and it should be judged so by the proper ecclesiastical authorities. Persons who separate for any little whim are committing a serious sin. This is because the temptations of life may prove too strong for them. Besides, where there are children, these must be considered. Neither party to the marriage, therefore, is justified in leaving the other without a grave reason.

We defined marriage as a union between one man and one woman for the propagation of the race and

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

mutual helpfulness, lasting until the death of one party. Marriage, then, is intended primarily for the propagation of the race.

Any agreement, therefore, to limit the number of children by unlawful means, or to have no children at all—except by remaining virgins—would nullify the contract. It would be an element inconsistent with the essence of the Sacrament.

This does not mean, however, that married persons must have as many children as possible. It is physically possible to have thirty-five children by one wife—perhaps even more. The United States Census Bureau records one case of quadruplets, several cases of triplets, and many cases of the same mother having several sets of twins.

No woman could do justice to all the children it would be physically possible to have. Religiously and in every other way, they would be bound to suffer. And if every married couple had this number, or the greatest number physically possible for them, the earth would soon be unbearably overcrowded—unless the death rate advanced proportionately.

We must admit that it is morally lawful, and, perhaps, in some circumstances, socially desirable, to limit the family by abstinence, either temporary or permanent. But it is evident that any misuse of nature is *ipso facto* unlawful. This, however, is a delicate and dangerous topic. Those Catholics who have doubts on the matter, should consult frankly with their confessors.

The large family undoubtedly gives a better training to the child from the standpoint of society. Re-

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

cently a big executive stated in *The American Magazine*, that in employing men he always gave the preference to the one from a large family. He had found by experience, that the man who was an only child was not fitted to battle with the world. Such a man was spoiled, and he was likely to create trouble with other employees because he had never learned the give and take of life.

From the standpoint of the individual, too, it handicaps him. A large family is society in miniature. The hardy virtues learned in it are the virtues necessary for success in later life. Even though the child of a large family is deprived of many comforts, even though he does not have the same start in life, he frequently out-distances others. For he has learned real life from his cradle, whereas the other youngster has been too much shielded and coddled.

Moreover, a reasonably large family acts as a healthy stimulus to ambition on the part of both parents and children. The man who has the responsibility of a large family will "hustle" to a greater extent, and the "hustler" is more important socially than the loafer. Children of large families, too, knowing that their future depends upon themselves, will work harder. If a boy realizes that his father will leave him money enough for all reasonable needs, he does not have the same ambition to earn for himself.

When young people marry, therefore, they ought to look forward to having children. If they intend never to have children—unless they mutually consent to practise virginity—they are really not married.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

In such a case, their marriage relationship involves repeated sin. Could one party to the marriage prove in an ecclesiastical court that the other had had, at the time of the marriage ceremony, the firm intention of having no children, and had actually put the intention into effective practice afterwards, the marriage would be declared null, and either party would have the right to marry elsewhere.

Marriage, however, is intended not only for the propagation of the race. It should also minister to the mutual happiness of the married parties through their congenial companionship. That should be one of the chief considerations in selecting a partner. Mutual happiness will depend upon many things, but mostly upon congeniality.

In addition, marriage is intended—considering human beings as they are—as a satisfaction of certain natural desires that can be lawfully satisfied only in marriage. However, marriage does not justify anything and everything. Mutual happiness and the propagation of the race should be the chief aims of matrimony, not mere animal passion. Persons considering marriage, should look well into their own motives and the motives of the other party. For more marital unhappiness comes from uncongeniality on this score of passion than on any other.

The woman, in these cases, is usually the chief sufferer. She goes into marriage with high ideals, with dreams of companionship and mother-love, only to find too often that she has married a man whose propensities are beastly, and whose desires are insatiable. What should be a sacred union, a sharing in God's

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

creative power, as it were, is turned into something ignoble.

Those who marry, indeed, make a contract to yield themselves to each other. But the contract is not unlimited. There is such a thing as excess. And no person is bound to yield to excessive demands made by another. It is difficult to be specific in such a matter, but both parties ought to remember that the ideal is moderation and self-control. It would be well for married folk voluntarily to practise occasional abstinence. A happy marriage can only be based on self-control. A man who has not learned self-control in this direction, is not likely to practise it in the other ways necessary for two people to live happily under the same roof.

And not only does lack of self-control in this sphere breed disaster in other relations; it really defeats its own purpose of pleasure. Every man who is married, or who contemplates marriage, ought "to understand and appreciate the sex nature within him as a great creative force which pervades his whole life, which has great capacities for giving power, satisfaction, richness and beauty; that its satisfaction may be derived on various levels, low and high, and that the kind and degree of satisfaction will depend on the level on which it is to be found. He may derive from it direct, crude, immediate, unsocial or anti-social satisfaction; or he may derive from it satisfaction much richer and more permanent on higher levels, enhanced by the æsthetic, emotional and spiritual qualities of his whole affectional nature. . . . But (and this must be made clear) he cannot have

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

both the lower and the higher satisfactions; he must choose between them at the outset.”¹³

The mere fact, however, that the Church holds up a high ideal of marriage, does not mean that it will be automatically attained by all Catholics. The Church allows separation, and by that very fact admits that some of her children at least will be unhappy and make mistakes. It will be well for us, therefore, to consider some of the bases for a happy marriage.

And while it may seem rash for a mere celibate to give advice on such a question, yet his advice should not be treated too lightly. For priests sometimes know more about marriage than lay folk do. Cardinal Manning once preached on matrimony, and as two old women came out of church after the services, one was heard to say to the other: “And what did you think of the sermon?” “Sure,” was the reply, “I kept thinking to myself: ‘I wish to God I knew as little about marriage as he does.’” As a matter of fact, however, Cardinal Manning was a widower. And even a priest who has received only five sacraments may know a great deal more of marriage than the callow youths and maidens who so blithely put their heads in the noose. For he has had the opportunity of observing hundreds of married couples at a very close range through the confessional and his pastoral duties.

Before marriage, the parties should first of all

¹³ Preliminary Synthesis and Integration of the Returns of the Sex Education Conference, held under the auspices of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, 1921, New York, p. 40.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

know the nature of the contract they are making. Not often, but yet sometimes, women enter into marriage without realizing the fleshly part of the contract. Browning's "Ring and the Book" brings this out beautifully in regard to Pompilia's marriage.

'Wherein my husband blamed me. . . .
I was dull, too. . . .
I am blamed that I forwent
A way to make my husband's favor come.
That is true: I was firm, withstood, refused. . . .
I felt there was just one thing Guido claimed
I had no right to give nor he to take. . . .
After the first, my husband, for hate's sake,
Said one eve. . . .
'Go this night to my chamber, not your own!'
At which word, I did rush—most true the charge—
And gain the Archbishop's house—he stands for God—
And fall upon my knees and clasp his feet,
Praying him hinder what my estranged soul
Refused to bear, though patient of the rest:
'Place me within a convent,' I implored—
'Let me henceforward lead the virgin life
You praise in Her you bid me imitate!'"

And even in these blasé and enlightened days, there are women equally innocent and ignorant.

Such ignorance is likely to lead to unhappiness in marriage. Certainly it is a crime against the woman and an injustice to the man. The parents or others who were responsible for the woman's education, sinned seriously in not enlightening her on these questions. They did an injustice to her and to the man she married.

Next to knowledge of the nature of the contract, should come knowledge of the person to be married.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

Men and women sometimes rush into matrimony without sufficient reflection and without sufficient knowledge of the life partner they are choosing. They actually enter into this most sacred and solemn and intimate relationship with less concern that they would exercise in selecting a business partner. As someone has said, men choose their wives with less care than they do their golf sticks.

Eugenics—as was admitted in the latest International Eugenics Congress held in New York—has not yet developed sufficiently to be able to lay down any very certain prescriptions as to who should and should not marry. Nevertheless, it is well to know all one can about the future spouse and his or her family. Delicate health, strains of insanity, social diseases, may easily wreck the fragile matrimonial bark. Some States have passed laws requiring a health certificate before marriage. But while the object is good—to enlighten the other party as to any communicable diseases that may affect them or the children—it is doubtful whether some of the laws enacted are wise and whether the machinery of administration has been sufficiently developed to make them effective. However, it would be well for all who may marry to read some books, such as Dr. Morrow's *Social Diseases and Marriage*, in order to form an idea as to the dangers of entering into this union with a comparative stranger.

It is unquestionably true that those persons have the best chance of happiness in marriage who have been purest before marriage. Moreover, there should not be a double standard. Because a man can sin

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

and conceal the fact, is no reason for society to sanction this. Men, perhaps, find it more difficult to be pure than women, but it is not by any means impossible. When women demand from men the same standard that men demand from them, then they will get it.

But apart from any demand of society or of women generally, it is a law of nature that we pay for what we get. And the men and women who indulge their passions before marriage, can never have that pure and sweet enjoyment of matrimony that comes to the innocent. As Patmore says, wisely and beautifully:

They safest walk in darkest ways,
Whose youth is lighted from above,
Where through the senses' silvery haze,
Dawns the veiled moon of nuptial love.
Who is the happy husband? He,
Who scanning his unwedded life,
Thanks Heaven with a conscience free,
'Twas faithful to his future wife.¹⁴

But even when love comes and can be followed at once by marriage, it should not be allowed to fill the whole soul. Back of the creature should be the Creator. To quote again the greatest of the poets who have eulogized conjugal love:

Lest sacred love your soul ensnare,
With pious fancy still infer,
How lovely and how lovely fair
Must He be Who hath fashioned her.

¹⁴ Patmore, "The Angel in the House."

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

A man should have his passions so well in hand that he could say:

I loved her in the name of God
And for the ray she was of Him.

We have said that marriage is a union for the mutual happiness of the married parties resulting from a strong congeniality. And congeniality in religion is as necessary as any other. The Church forbids her children to marry those not of the household of the Faith, though she dispenses from the law to prevent greater harm. Oftentimes young people look upon this as harsh and narrow-minded. But in reality it is simply the wisdom born of experience. The ecclesiastical authorities know that there is not only danger to the faith of the Catholic party and of the children, but that there is grave danger of unhappiness because of a difference of religion. And while the legislation of the Church is primarily for the Catholic party, nevertheless it is also a safeguard for the non-Catholic, too. For marriage is a mutual affair. One party to it cannot be happy if the other is unhappy.

Young people marry at an early age when religion does not loom so large to them as it will later. Usually it takes the cares and responsibilities of life to bring an appreciation of religion. When those sorrows come, as inevitably they will to married folk, they will need the consolation that proceeds from a united attitude towards the fundamentals of life. Nothing will be a greater support in the trials of mar-

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

riage than union in religion. No one should rashly disregard this fact. Some, indeed, will be happy in spite of lacking it. I suppose we all know of mixed marriages that have turned out well. But, in general, it is true that the chances for happiness are not so great as if both parties had the same faith. And marriage at best is such a complicated matter that ordinarily we should not complicate it further by a difference of religion.

All this is true, though in a lesser degree, of social position and race. Ordinarily one should marry in his own class. And while we have no aristocracy in this country recognized by law, yet there are classes. If a professional man steps outside his circle to marry a seamstress, or a banker's daughter marries her chauffeur, neither is likely to be happy. The first glamour of the honeymoon may pass successfully, but in the years to come there will probably be bitter regret. Happiness in marriage is based, to a certain degree, on congeniality, and that congeniality is likely to be lacking where the social backgrounds are so different.

Where a difference in race means a different outlook on marital questions, this, too, is likely to breed disaster. Certain races, for instance, consider their women folk chiefly as servants. Others think that they are susceptible tinder that must be carefully secluded from contact with the fire of man's propinquity. Men and women with such ideas marrying those who look at life differently are courting unhappiness. They are compromising their chances of success in the lottery of marriage.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

Another thing that should be carefully considered before marriage is the question of money. Money is necessary for living, and none should marry without reasonable prospect of being able to get sufficient for the upkeep of a home. And since marriage is intended primarily for the propagation of the race and the rearing of children, it means that the mother should be supported while she performs these duties. She cannot bear children and rear them while working outside the home, without injury to her health and neglect of the children. If a man cannot support a wife, then he ought to wait before he marries.

But, on the other hand, where there is ample money for legitimate needs, it is also necessary to consider this important question of money. Marriage is a partnership. The wife is not a mere housekeeper. The distribution of the money should be on the basis of a partnership. Because the man receives the money as salary or wages, he should not think that it belongs entirely to him. His wife is contributing to the making of the home, and she should have her share in the family income. That is simply elemental justice.

Should the woman have money before she marries, then she ought to make a proper disposition of it beforehand. She should not trust a husband with all of her money. It would be wise to keep her property in her own name. And before she marries she ought to inquire carefully just what are the laws of her State regarding a married woman's property. Also, after marriage, it is safer if moving to another State

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

to find out what the laws are there. Many a woman has lost all her property because she was too much in love to exercise reasonable prudence.

After marriage, there should be frankness between man and wife regarding money matters, and absolute honor. Agreements should be sacredly kept. A man is a coward who will misuse the power he has acquired over a woman. But, unfortunately, there are many cowards.

However, all the faults are not on the side of the husbands. Wives are frequently unreasonable. They sometimes marry for a life of ease and expect their husbands to pay all the bills. Women are more given, perhaps, than men to putting up a false front by living beyond their means. Because some acquaintance of theirs has furs or an automobile or two servants, they must do likewise. Often this comes from faulty education. They have never been taught the value of money, never had to work to earn it. Congeniality on the question of money is almost essential for marital happiness. Either party to the partnership can spoil it by being too extravagant or too miserly.

In regard to the training of children, it is necessary that the parents should agree on a policy. It is fatal to discipline if the children recognize that one parent does not back up the other. And children are very quick to sense a disagreement between parents. They soon become experts in playing one against the other. Finally, there should be a mutual give and take between married persons. No human beings are perfect. And there are very few "unique" people in

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

this world, in either the direction of goodness or badness. Most people are simply average. Don't expect perfection, and don't expect that your John or Mary is going to be the one exception. Your married life will be very much like the married life of other people, with ups and downs. It can only be made tolerable by a sense of humor and the recognition of one's own failings. And, principally, happiness in marriage can only be made sure and permanent by the grace of the Sacrament, and by living constantly in the atmosphere of religion.

In conclusion, let us say that those who contemplate marriage should go to a priest at least a month or two before the day of their intended union. The marriage legislation of the Church is a complicated affair. Only an expert can know the law thoroughly. There is an old saying that he who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client. And this is true regarding Church law as well as civil law.

For instance, between Catholics, there must be the reading of the banns for three Sundays or holy days of obligation. This is a wise law that reformers are now urging the State to adopt. They want the license published in the paper where the marriage is to take place, and in the home of each of the parties three times three consecutive weeks before the marriage is to come off, and they wish to make the license invalid until three months after issue. All this is to prevent hasty marriages and hastier divorces. Again, there are other Church laws regarding the person who must assist at the marriage. Not any priest may lawfully do so. To pick up and go to another

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

town expecting to get married immediately, may complicate matters very seriously.

Pray before coming to a decision. Ask God's direction in this most serious step. And then enter into it with His full blessing. It is disgraceful that Catholics who might kneel together at a nuptial Mass to receive Holy Communion and the special nuptial blessing, prefer an evening wedding for merely social reasons. When Mammon is preferred to God as a wedding guest, wedded happiness need not be expected.

A PRAYER FOR LIGHT ON THE QUESTION OF MARRIAGE

O ALL-KNOWING and all-loving Jesus, grant me the light wisely to decide the problems of my life.

I stand at the beginning of two paths: I may either aim to follow in Thy virgin footsteps, embracing a life of celibacy in order that I may more completely devote myself to certain works of Thine; or I may choose to serve Thee rather by sharing Thy creative power, by bringing into this world other human beings made in Thine image who one day will give glory to Thee in Heaven.

Either course is good in itself—but for me only one will be wise. Without Thy help I cannot determine which it will be. Vouchsafe to enlighten me that I may wisely and unselfishly choose.

If I am to lead a virgin life, let it be from the purest motives, because I wish to serve Thee, and not for fear of the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. If I am to marry, let it be wisely and prudently, led by Thy grace instead of by the impulses of the flesh.

I put myself completely in Thy hands, O my Saviour and my Creator. Do with me what Thou wilt. Choose for me, provided only Thou dost give me the grace to follow the indications of Thy will.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

THE PRAYER OF A MAN JUST MARRIED ¹⁵

WE come before Thee, God all-powerful, good God, God of love, bearing upon our countenances the recent traces of Thy Sacrament. I present to Thee in all the splendor of her innocence her whom the effusion of Thy grace has this morning made the companion of my life. See how our two hands are raised to Thee, united for the first time, but less intertwined, less united than our two souls, and this union will last forever. Heretofore, each of us served Thee in the solitude of an easy devotion that had no responsibility; but now it is necessary that we serve Thee together; today our love for Thee must be doubled without being divided, and each must be responsible for the salvation of the other.

This is not all, O Lord: We shall be responsible for all the other souls that it may please Thee to create through us, in giving to us something of Thy creative power. We know that marriage was instituted especially to people Heaven, and we are in part responsible for its depopulation. However, such an equal mission does not discourage us, such a solidarity does not affright us, for we count upon Thy sustaining grace. Ah, do not refuse it to these poor travelers who see stretching before them the long road of life, and who, without Thee, ask themselves with fear if their feet will carry them so far. Protect especially this child who has received for her portion a gracious weakness that my strength will be insufficient to protect.

I place her especially under thy protection, Queen of Virgins, immortal model whom she proposes to imitate. And in this august hour that communicates to all my words, and to all hers, a touching and indelible gravity, I come to thy feet to make a solemn promise, beseeching thee to cast me out from thy face if ever I violate it. I promise thee to make this child happy who leans upon

¹⁵ *Choix de Prières*, by Léon Gautier, p. 467; Brussels, 1872.

WHOM GOD HATH JOINED

me, and especially I promise to respect this vessel of modesty. I promise thee to love and to die for her, to accept for love of her all that Christ has accepted for love of the Church, all to the very letter, even to the thorns and the cross.

We promise Thee, O Lord, to walk together, hand in hand, and soul in soul, in the light of Thy faith, our eyes fixed upon Thy divine essence, opening wide the mysterious entry of our hearts unto the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, succoring the poor, consoling the afflicted, instructing the ignorant, visiting the imprisoned, converting the unbelieving. And especially, if it shall please Thee to crown our union with a happy fertility, making of our sons men in the deepest meaning of the word, and of our daughters angels. So that after having, without fear and without reproach, traversed this difficult road of life, we may arrive at last at the heavenly portals, always inseparable, and that these gates may open before us to let enter together into the regions of transcendant glory those who, with an equal step, have walked together in the world of grace, encouraged, sustained, blessed by Thee!

*Answer that challenge to your
Catholic Faith!*

Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, C.S.P.

HERE is the one book that will give at a moment's reference a fair, concise reply to any of the one thousand most pertinent objections to the history, belief and practices of the Catholic Church.

THE author is to be commended. On every point he shows himself a staunch defender of the Faith, a valiant protector of its orthodoxy and a courageous champion who never compromises or minimizes his beliefs.

He writes in the popular question and answer style, with deep scholarship and painstaking research characterizing each page, and makes every honest and careful effort to avoid intentionally offending those not of the Faith. Yet his statements of Catholic doctrine and its reasonableness are clear, frank and complete.

480 Pages

Paper, 50c

Cloth, \$1.00

De Luxe, \$2.00

Published by

The Paulist Press

401 West 59th Street

New York, N. Y.

The Question Box

