

"MARRIAGE IS HONORABLE"

NO MATTER what others may say or do, each one of the Lord's people is to be guided in his judgment by the letter and spirit of God's Word, the Bible. It declares, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the marriage-bed not impure." (Hebrews 13:4.) St. Paul recommended that such of the Lord's people as desired to give themselves, completely, to the Divine service would doubtless be able to accomplish their sacrifice joyfully by remaining unmarried. He tells his reason for this argument; but he does not say that the marriage state is unholy or impure or in any way contrary to God's law. He merely declared that the married man, properly enough, would seek to please his wife, and that the married woman would, naturally and properly, seek to please her husband.

Thus, to be in the married condition would more or less take away from the singleness of purpose with which the individual would be able to serve God in body and in spirit. (1 Cor. 7:32-35.) St. Paul reminds the Church that he had found the single, or celibate, condition advantageous – that he was able to accomplish greater service than if he had been more or less mortgaged by the care of a companion and the necessary duties toward that one.

But St. Paul points out distinctly that there is no law of God to *prohibit* brothers and sisters in the Lord from marrying if they find, in their judgment, that this is the necessary or preferable thing in their cases – if they believe that thereby they can carry out their consecration vows the more acceptably.

We mention this because in some instances brethren and sisters, in counseling the unmarried, have been going beyond what is written – laying upon them burdens which the Lord has never declared – telling them that to marry means to lose the prize of our High Calling. Good intentions cannot justify one in such a course.

Additionally, we heard recently of a dear couple who have an infant child, which properly they very dearly love. The mother was shocked by some sisters intimating to her that it should be considered a disgrace to be a mother, in view of our expectation of great changes shortly.

We believe that those dear sisters made a mistake. They, of course, have a right to think for themselves and to shape their own courses in life according to their best judgment of the Lord's will. But they have no right to censure others for having a different opinion on the subject. To his own Master each servant stands or falls. Nothing in the Bible speaks disrespectfully of either fatherhood or motherhood – quite to the contrary.

If, as the Apostle suggests, some of the Lord's people mutually agree to live celibate lives, it is a matter of their own concern. If they thus make themselves eunuchs in the interests of the Lord's cause, that they may have the more opportunity, energy and means to invest in the service of God, it is their sacrifice at their own option, and they are to look to the Lord for such reward as He sees best. But if it is their option and they are to be rewarded, we should remember that others have an equal option and may, if they think proper, take an opposite course without condemnation from us, and, indeed, without our feeling that we have even the least right to interfere with their social rights and privileges.

The Golden Rule is very helpful to us in our dealing with the brethren as well as in our dealings with the world. We should do toward others as we would that they should do toward us. We should grant them the same liberties that we think proper for ourselves.

We fear that some of our readers have not given sufficient attention to Chapter xii. of Vol. VI. of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, which examines this subject in detail.

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