

Marriage Ceremony.

(The Minister may offer any other introductory remarks in the place of this exhortation, or, he may at once address the bridal couple.)

WE are gathered to sanctify with the solemn blessing of religion, the vows of love uniting these young people. Open, then, your minds to the meaning of this occasion; for not lightly shall man think of the responsibility of the married state. It is a covenant like that which unites man with his Maker, which binds Israel to his God. Upon morality shall the home be founded; its altar must be allame with the fire of devotion; its light must be like that of the temple of old, streaming from within outward, so that its cheer may follow him who, to do his duty in the outer world, leaves its protecting shadow. May He who is the life and love of all, bless these two young hearts with the power to build a house in which peace shall abide, and the spirit shall dwell that bids man to lay aside all selfishness. May God give them the power to understand their duties, that they be ever willing to share life's joys with each other, and to bear life's burdens for each other. May the memory of this hour be to them the beacon-light whereby to steer the bark of their united life, that from strength to strength they shall proceed, and their house become a blessing to Israel, and a joy to all who enter its portals. Amen.

Here the Minister may address the couple at greater length, if desired. Then he will put this question to the groom:

Will you, N. N., now take unto yourself to be and to hold for your lawful wife this woman, N. N., plighting to her your troth for your life natural, and do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and protect her for better or for worse, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity?

Answer: I do.

The Minister will put this question to the bride:

Will you, N. N., now take unto yourself to be and to hold for your lawful husband this man, N. N., plighting to him your troth for your life natural, and do you promise to love, honor, cherish, and respect him for better or for worse, in joy and sorrow, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity?

Answer: I do.

Then the Minister will give the ring to the groom and say:

And now in keeping with your declaration of love you will place this ring upon your bride's finger. In all times and places the circle has been the symbol of unity, concord, and perfection. It is the simplest of all figures. Everywhere it is beheld in nature. In its shape are the paths of the stars; and the great circle of the sky, like to a ring, surrounds us with Providence and reveals the Divine Glory. Wherefore, let this ring be given and taken between you, to be a symbol of this holy marriage; and as often as ye shall see it, ye shall remember the solemn joy and duty of this covenant, by which ye become as one soul.

In this spirit give this token to your bride, pronouncing while so doing these words of consecration:

With this ring I thee wed in accordance with the word of God and the law of man.

In case two rings are used, the Minister will ask the bride to repeat the same formula. Then the Minister will say:

And I, by virtue of the power in me vested, do now pronounce your marriage religiously consecrated and legally concluded, you are husband and wife before God and man.

PRAYER.

When wine is used, this benediction will be said:

Praised be Thou, Ruler of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine to gladden the heart of man; send, we beseech Thee, Thy richest blessing to these Thy children, that they may go hence in strength and courage, and share joyfully, and enjoy humbly, whatever Thou in Thy wisdom sendest. Amen.

As a symbol of your united life you will now drink of this cup of wine.

The groom and bride drink.

May like this cup, your cup of life sparkle with the gold of divine joy; may strength and courage never fail you, contentment and happiness ever attend you.

BENEDICTION.