meaninglessness where each person will experience the bleakness of nagging despair, but with it the marriage can be lifted to a heavenly paradise where exuberant joy will reign without ceasing. The radiant level of life's most exciting venture

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 97

Marriage Ceremony

Today you embark upon the sacred seas of matrimony. Marriage is not a physical arrangement to be entered at will and dissolved at whim, it is holy ground that must be entered reverently. Through its portals men and women enter the realm of their immortality. Indeed, marriage is man's greatest prerogative, for it is in and through it that God has allowed us to aid him in his creative activity.

Today you become the heirs of a legacy of togetherness. Together you will dream dreams. Together you will make plans. Together you will face moments of unutterable joy. Together you will face moments of inexpressible sorrow. Dispair not when the inevitable moments of personality adjustment arise, for they may be the stepping stones to a higher levels of self completion. Be not dismayed when the buoyancy of fulfillment is transformed into the fatigue of disappointment, for this is a part of the changing scenery of life. Like the ever flowing water of the river, life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood. Like the ever changing cycle of the seasons, life has the piercing chill of its winters and the soothing warmth of its summers.

If you feel that the fountain of love is running dry in your marriage, seek desperately to fill it anew, for without love marriage is like a parched and dried up dessert without the refreshing oasis of happiness. If you are tempted to stumble from the mountain of love, seek passionately to reach the high places again, for without truth marriage is like a ship without a compass.

Love, trust, loyalty and mutual respect are the pillars upon which the temple of marriage must be built. If these elements are there the storms may come and the winds may blow, but they will not upset the temple of your marriage, for it is founded upon a solid rock.

AHD MLKP-GAMK, Box 123

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

“God's Relation to the World”

[1948–1954]

Text Neh. 9:6 “Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made heaven and the earth, and things that are therein. and thou preservest them all”

Rom 11:36 “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things”

Of Nehemiah 9:6 On a notecard, King elaborated “Here Nehemiah affirm emphatically that God...
These passages reveal that the Bible represents God's relation to the world under three aspects: creation, conservation and transformation. We may treat these three successively.

I  God created the world. Without him it would not have come into being.

1. The world is not a reality that came into being through the accidental interplay of atoms and electrons. The world is not an eternal reality which always has been and always will be.

2. Rather the world came into being by an act of God. God decided to create the world.

3. He created *ex nihilo* (Compare to what man creates which is always out of something else)

4. Although God created the world he isn't dependent on it. God is a being who depends on nothing, but upon whom everything else is dependent. As the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. William Temple used to say “God minus the world equals God, the world minus God equals nothing." (At this point use the illustration of the Lord’s statement to Moses “I am”)5

Prior to the appearance of self-conscious beings on this earth, God was Prior to all organic life, God was. Long before the hills in order stood or earth received her frame, God was. Before the appearance of the sun, the moon the planets and the stars, God was.6

II  God conserves the world. Syn (Maintain, sustain, uphold, defend, protect)

God is not like an architect who lays the foundation of his world and then leaves. He is not like a clockmaker that mechanically wound this clock of the world and left it to tick on its own accord. God is not like a spectator that sits in some far off cosmic grandstand frequently looking in on the game of human life. Rather God is an active part of the game itself sustaining and protecting it, and without God's continual sustaining power this game of life could not be played. In God “we live and move and have our being.”7 Without God the whole cosmos would crumble to nothingness. Without God our human efforts

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2. *Ex nihilo* is Latin for “out of nothing.”

3. In notes on this topic, King continued, “First, God created the physical world, without Him it would not have come into being, but He is in no way dependent on it (forcibly expressed in Jeremiah's comparison of the potter and the clay [Jeremiah 18:6])” (King, “God's Relation to the World,” Sermon notes, 1948-1954, cf Jeremiah 18:6)


5. Exodus 3:14

6. King invokes Isaac Watts's hymn “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past” (1719)

7. Acts 17:28
would turn to ashes and our sunrises into darkest night. Without God the whole
drama of human life would be a meaningless myth. God is forever on the
scene sustaining and protecting us.

III God will transform the world to its ideal state, in fulfillment of his ultimate
purpose

1. God created the world with the hope that man would live inrighteousness and
in accord with his will. However, he did not force righteousness on man, rather
he gave him free will. But in order to make him true man rather than an
automaton, he gave him free will, i.e., the possibility to choose. The tragedy
came when man misused his freedom. Since that time the whole of human
history has been a persistent struggle between two diametrically opposed
forces, good and evil.

AD CSKC Sermon file, folder 28, “God’s Relation to the World.”

8 In notes for this sermon, King wrote that God’s “conserving power is expressed
in Job thus ‘If he
were to withdraw His spirit to Himself, and to gather His breath to Himself, all flesh would expire at once,
and man would return to the dust’ (Job 34:14, 15)” (King, “God’s Relation to the World,” 1948-1954).

“All That We Are, We Owe”

[1948-1954]

I Introduction

One of the most potent facts of human life is the fact that man, amid all his inde-
dpendency, is basically a dependent being. This fact is revealed from the earliest
days of infancy to the declining days of old age. No man ever makes it by himself. In fact
it is this very element of dependency that makes man man: for no individual
becomes a personality until it interacts with other personalities. In our fickle
moments we may feel that we are what we are by our own achievements, but in our
sober moments we know deep down in ourselves that we did not make it alone in
ourselves. This is another way of saying “All that We are, We owe.”

Certainly this is not in accord with much of our contemporary thinking. Many
modern thinkers would state our theme in the direct opposite. “All that we are, we
have achieved.” There is a school of modern philosophy called existentialism which
starts out with the premise that man creates himself. Says it most outstanding exp-
ponent “It is a doctrine according to which existence preceded, and eternally creates,
the essence. Man first exists, and in choosing himself he creates himself” in acting

1 King may have drawn this phrase from Horatus Bonar’s hymn “All That I Was, My Sin, My Guilt”
(1845). The first stanza reads “All that I was, my sin, my guilt, / My death, was all my own, / All that I am
I owe to Thee, / My gracious God, alone.”