

of entering into this state, in consequence of this. From the first ages of Christianity, especially, marriage has been a solemn religious ceremony. On opening your Prayer Book, you find provision 1, that the marriage shall be solemnized by a lawful minister, acting as God's representative; 2, that due care shall be taken to prevent clandestine marriages; 3, that it be done in the day time; 4, that it be celebrated in the Church, the House of God, before whom the contracting parties are to make their covenant, and in the presence of their friends and neighbours. *Bann* is from a word meaning to proclaim. In this country, a license procured from the State generally takes the place of Banns, bondsmen being required to give security that there is no impediment, as far as they know. The clergyman, too, is bound to use caution in his judgment, where parties are not known to him. There is no restriction as to the *time of day*, in Canada. In England except by special license, marriages can only be celebrated between 8 and 12 in the morning. This was enjoined by the old Canons in order to take away the chance of a secret marriage at night, and persons were required to come before they broke their fast, that so there might be no suspicion of their intoxication.

Impediments. — Independently of mental weakness or impotency, these are, 1st. Previous marriage; 2nd. Relationship by blood or affinity; 3rd. Want of age, if consent of parents or guardians be refused.

The place is the Church.—In the American Prayer Book, the words were added, "or some proper house." The Church is the fittest

place to make a religious covenant, not only as preventing secret marriages, but also because there may be greater reverence in those who come to make their vows before God.

Friends and neighbours.—These are relatives and acquaintances. In the primitive Church ten witnesses were required, afterwards six, and then two. Two are now required besides the minister.

The man on the right hand.—This is the place of honor, because the "husband is the head of the wife."

The Preface.—This is a recital of the origin of marriage, the causes for which it was ordained, and a charge to reveal any impediment, if such be known. This appeal is made to the congregation. Then, turning to the persons to be married, the Priest solemnly, and in words of the gravest import, charges them to declare any impediment to their union, if existing, and warns them of the unlawfulness of their marriage if they are breaking the law of God. The utmost precautions having now been taken by the Church to prevent an unlawful marriage, we now proceed to the "solemn compact."

THE MUTUAL CONSENT.

The first step is to "ask the mutual consent of the parties." Rebekah's friends asked her consent (Gen. xxiv. 50). It was the custom among the Romans for each to ask of the other. In Christian marriage the Priest asks as the representative of God, that so the answer may be made as to God himself. The question is put to each, and the duties are pointed out. They are: 1. *Love*. (Eph. v. 25.)