Read the following extract and then answer the question that follows.

The possibility of Mr Collins’s fancying himself in love with her friend had once occurred to Elizabeth within the last day or two; but that Charlotte could encourage him seemed almost as far from possibility as she could encourage him herself, and her astonishment was consequently so great as to overcome at first the bounds of decorum, and she could not help crying out—

‘Engaged to Mr Collins! My dear Charlotte,—impossible!’

The steady countenance which Miss Lucas had commanded in telling her story, gave way to a momentary confusion here on receiving so direct a reproach; though, as it was no more than she expected, she soon regained her composure, and calmly replied—

‘Why should you be surprised, my dear Eliza?—Do you think it incredible that Mr Collins should be able to procure any woman’s good opinion, because he was not so happy as to succeed with you?’

But Elizabeth had now recollected herself, and making a strong effort for it, was able to assure her with tolerable firmness that the prospect of their relationship was highly grateful to her, and that she wished her all imaginable happiness.

‘I see what you are feeling,’ replied Charlotte,—‘you must be surprised, very much surprised—so lately as Mr Collins was wishing to marry you. But when you have had time to think it all over, I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr Collins’s character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state.’

Starting with this extract, write about how Austen presents attitudes to marriage.

Write about:

- how Austen presents attitudes towards marriage in this extract
- how Austen presents attitudes towards marriage in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]