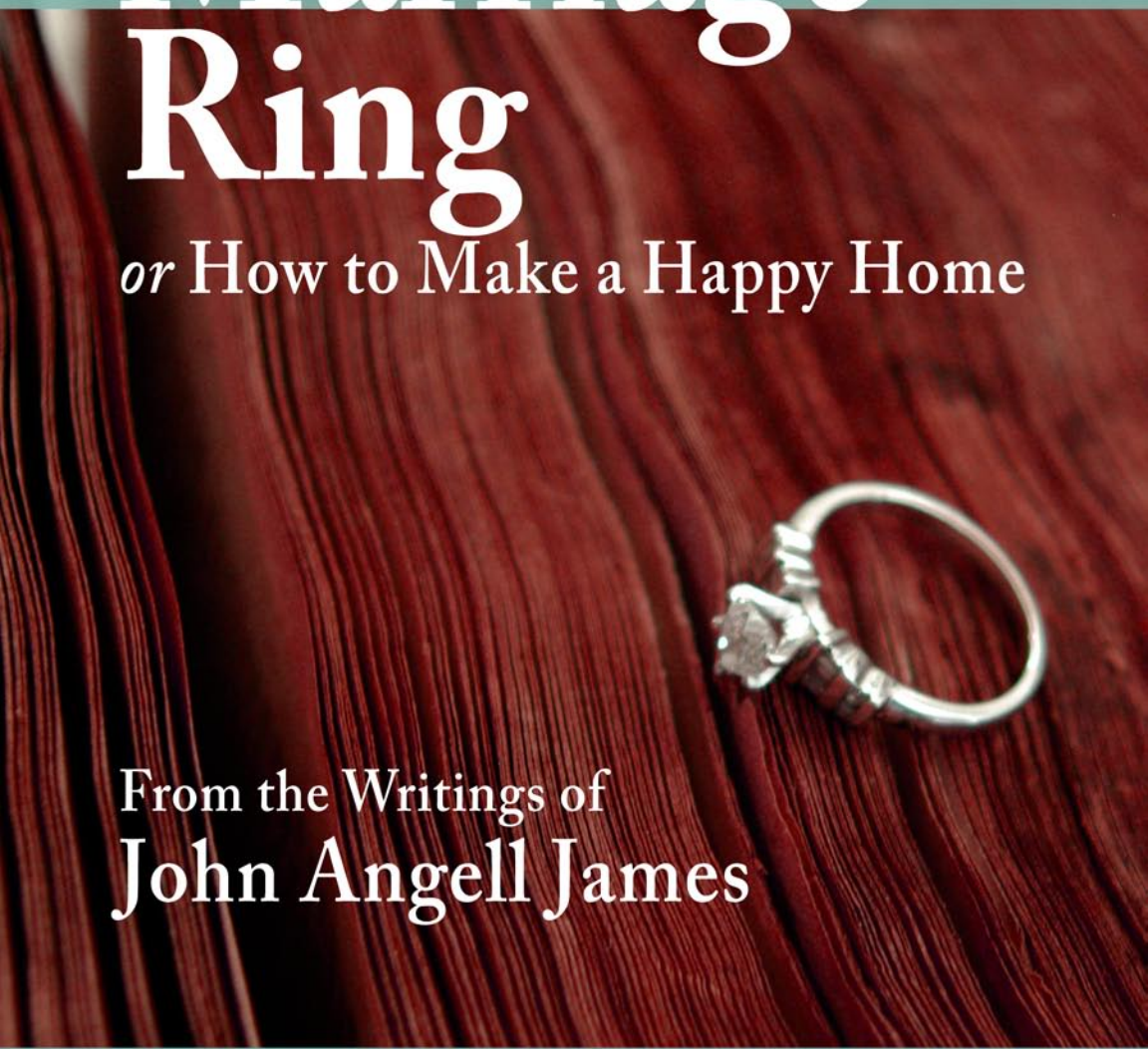
"The secret of happiness lies folded up in the leaves of the Bible"

The Marriage Ring

or How to Make a Happy Home



From the Writings of

John Angell James

A Hail & Fire REPRINT
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"The Marriage Ring: or How to Make a Happy Home" from the writings of John Angell James, 1842 Illuminated Edition, here reprinted by Hail & Fire, 2009.

Category: Religion, Christian, Protestant, Sermon, Christian Relationships, Courtship and Marriage

John Angell James
(Protestant Christian Preacher)

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PREFACE

to the Protestant Reprint of

"The Marriage Ring: or How to Make a Happy Home" from the writings of John Angell James (1842)

by Hail & Fire

PROTESTANT SERMONS & EXHORTATIONS

In this age of ecumenism, when the lines have been blurred between the two major denominations and the world itself speaks of the Pope as head of all Christians, we join with so many to call to remembrance the truth of the Gospel and of those who, in times past, both well-known and unknown, answered a good answer for a pure and Gospel faith against the traditions of men. The intention of Hail & Fire is to make available Gospel and Reformed Theology in the works, sermons, exhortations, prayers, and apologetics of those who have maintained the Gospel and expounded upon the Scripture as the Eternal Word of God and the sole authority in Christian doctrine.

THE

MARRIAGE RING:

OR

HOW TO MAKE HOME HAPPY.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

"Pure, open, prosperous love,
That, pledged on earth and sealed above,
Grows in the world's approving eyes,
In Friendship's smile and Home's caress,
Collecting all the heart's sweet ties
Into one knot of happiness!"

ILLUMINATED EDITION.

BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

THIS little volume, intended as a manual for those just entering the marriage state, is selected, principally, from the works of an author beloved and esteemed for his many practical writings, and who has very justly remarked: —

"It is an unquestionable truth, that if a man be not happy at home, he cannot be happy anywhere; and he who *is* happy there, need be miserable nowhere. 'It is the place of all the world I love most,' said the interesting author of the 'Task,' when speaking of home. And *he* may be felicitated who can say the same. Any attempt, however feeble, to render the domestic circle what it ever should be—*a scene of comfort*—is at least benevolent. The secret of happiness lies folded up in the leaves of the Bible, and is carried in the bosom of Religion. The author knows of no other way to felicity, and therefore does not

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profess to teach any other. Let the two parties in wedded life be believers in Christ Jesus, and partake themselves of the peace that passeth understanding; let them, when they become a father and a mother, bring up their children in the fear of God; and if happiness is to be found upon earth, it will be enjoyed within the hallowed circle of a family, thus united by love, and sanctified by grace."

Most of the works published on this subject have been of a light and trifling character,—but the compiler of this volume has aimed to present such a work as might be deemed a suitable offering from the hand of a Pastor, or Christian Friend.

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THE

MARRIAGE RING.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE FORMATION OF THE MARRIAGE UNION.

"Happy they! the happiest of their kind!
Whom gentler stars unite; and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their being blend."

It must be evident to all, that marriage is a step of incalculable importance, and ought never to be taken without the greatest consideration and the utmost caution. If the duties of this state are so numerous and so weighty, and if the right discharge of these obligations, as well as the happiness of our whole life, and even our safety for eternity, depend, as they necessarily must do, in no small measure upon the choice we make of a husband or wife, then let reason determine with what deliberation we should advance to such a connexion. It is obvious, that no

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decision of our whole earthly existence requires more of the exercise of a calm judgment than this; and yet observation proves how rarely the judgment is allowed to give counsel, and how generally the imagination and the passions settle the business.

A very great portion of the misery and of the crime with which society is depraved and afflicted, is the result of ill-formed marriages. To use the beautiful language of another, "those who enter the marriage state cast a die of the greatest contingency, and yet of the greatest interest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity. Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to, from an evil husband; she must dwell upon her sorrow, which her own folly hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes, but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And though THE MAN can run from many hours of sadness, yet he must return to it again; and when he sits among his neigh-

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bors, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply."

If, however, it were merely the comfort of the married pair themselves that was concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence, a stake of less value; but the well-being of a family, not only for this world, but for the next, and equally so the well-being of *their* descendants, even to a remote period, depends upon this union. In the ardor of passion, few are disposed to listen to the counsels of prudence; and perhaps there is no advice, generally speaking, more thrown away, than that which is offered on the subject of marriage.

Most persons, especially if they are already attached to a selected object, although they have not committed themselves by a promise or even a declaration, will go on in the pursuit, blinded by love to the indiscretion of their choice; or desperately determined, with the knowledge of that indiscretion, to accomplish, if possible, their purpose. Upon such individuals, reasoning is wasted, and they must be left to gain wisdom in the only way by which some will acquire it,—painful experience. To others, who may be yet

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disengaged, and disposed to hearken to the language of advice, the following remarks are offered.

In the affair of marriage, BE GUIDED BY THE ADVICE OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS. Parents have no right to *select* for you, nor ought you to select for yourself, without consulting with them. How far they are vested with authority to prohibit you from marrying a person whom they disapprove, is a point of casuistry very difficult to determine.

If you are of age, and able to provide for yourselves, or are likely to be well provided for by those to whom you are about to be united, it is a question whether they can do anything more than advise and persuade; but *till you are of age*, they have positive authority to *forbid;* and it is an undutiful act in you to form connexions without their knowledge, and to carry them on against their prohibitions.

Their objections ought always, I admit, to be founded on reason, and not on caprice, or pride; for, where this is the case, and children are of full age, and are guided in their choice by prudence, by piety, and by affection,

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they certainly may, and must be left to decide for themselves. Where, however, parents rest their objections on sufficient grounds, and show plain and palpable reasons for prohibiting a connexion, there it is the manifest duty of sons, and especially of daughters, to give it up. Very seldom does that connexion prove otherwise than a source of wretchedness, on which the frown of an affectionate and wise father and mother fell from the beginning; for God seems to rise up in judgment, and to support the parents' authority, by confirming their displeasure with his own.

Marriage should in every case be formed UPON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL ATTACHMENT. If there be no love *before* marriage, it cannot be expected there should be any after it. Lovers, as all are supposed to be who are looking forward to this union, without love, have no right to expect happiness; the coldness of indifference is soon likely, in their case, to be changed into aversion. There ought to be *personal* attachment. If there be anything, even in the exterior, that excites disgust, the banns are forbidden by the voice of nature.

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I do not say that beauty of countenance or elegance of form is necessary; by no means; a pure and strong attachment has often existed in the absence of these. And I will not take upon me to determine, that it is absolutely *impossible* to love *deformity;* but we certainly ought not to unite ourselves with it, unless we *can* love it, or, at least, are so enamored with the fascination of mental qualities that may be united with it, as to lose sight of the body in the charms of the mind, the heart, and the manners. All I contend for is, that to proceed to marriage against absolute dislike and revulsion, is irrational, base, and sinful.

But love should respect the *mind* as well as the body; for to be attached to an individual simply on the ground of beauty, is to fall in love with a doll, a statue, or a picture. Such an attachment is lust or fancy, but certainly not a rational affection. If we love the body, but do not love the mind, the heart, and the manners, our regard is placed upon the inferior part of the person, and, therefore, only upon that which, by disease, may be next year a very different thing to what it is now. Nothing fades so soon as beauty; it

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is but like the delicate bloom of an attractive fruit, and, if there be nothing agreeable underneath, will be thrown away in disgust when that is brushed off; and thrown away, too, by the very hand of him that plucks it.

It is so commonly remarked, as to be proverbial, that the charms of mind increase by acquaintance, while those of the exterior diminish; and that, while the former easily reconcile us to a plain countenance, the latter excite, by the power of contrast, a distaste for the insipidity, ignorance, and heartlessness with which they are united, like gaudy, scentless flowers, growing in a desert. Instead of determining to stake our happiness upon the act of gathering these blooming weeds, to place them in our bosom, let us ask, how they will look a few years hence, or how they will adorn and bless our habitation? Let us ask, will the understanding, united with that countenance, render its subject fit to be my companion, and the instructor of my children? Will that temper patiently bear with my weaknesses, kindly consult my tastes, affectionately study my comfort? Will those manners please me in solitude, as well as in society? Will those

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habits render my dwelling pleasant to myself and to my friends? We must try *these* matters, and hold our passions back, that we may take counsel with our judgment, and suffer reason to come down and talk with us in the cool of the evening.

Such, then, is the love on which marriage should be contracted; love to the whole person; love to the mind, and heart, and manners, as well as to the countenance and form; love tempered with respect; for this only is the attachment that is likely to survive the charms of novelty, the spoliation of disease, and the influence of time; that is likely to support the tender sympathies and exquisite sensibilities of the conjugal state; and render man and wife, to the verge of extreme old age, what it was the intention of him who instituted the marriage union they should be,—the help and the comfort of each other.

Young people should be extremely careful, to let no persuasions of others, no impulse of their own covetousness, no anxiety to be their own masters and mistresses, no ambition for secular splendor, induce them to enter into a connexion to which they are not

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drawn by the solicitations of a pure and virtuous love. What will a large house, splendid furniture, a gay equipage, and fashionable entertainments do for their possessor, in the absence of connubial love? "Is it for these baubles, these toys," exclaims the wretched heart as it awakens, alas! too late, in some sad scene of domestic wo, "is it for this I have bartered away myself, my happiness, my honor?"

> "How ill the scenes that offer rest,
> And hearts that cannot rest, agree!"

O, there is a sweetness, a charm, a power to please, in pure and mutual affection, though it be cherished in the humblest abode, and maintained amidst the plainest circumstances, and has to contend with many difficulties, compared with which, the elegances and brilliancies of worldly grandeur are but as the splendor of an Eastern palace, to one of the bowers of the garden of Eden. Let the man nobly determine to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and find his daily task sweetened by the thought that it is for the woman he loves, rather than roll about in his chariot, and live a life of

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splendid indolence and misery, with the woman he does *not* love; and let the other sex as nobly and heroically determine to trust to their own energies, but especially to a gracious Providence, rather than marry without affection for the sake of a settlement.

Then there is another error committed by some: having been disappointed in a connexion which they hoped to form, they become reckless for the future, and, in a temper of mind bordering upon revenge, accept the first individual who may present himself, whether they love him or not. This is the last degree of folly, and is such an act of suicidal violence upon their own peace, as can neither be described nor reprobated in terms sufficiently strong. This is to act like the enraged scorpion, and to turn their sting upon themselves; and in an act of spleen to sacrifice their happiness to folly.

Marriage should ever be contracted WITH THE STRICTEST REGARD TO THE RULES OF PRUDENCE. Discretion is a virtue at which none but fools laugh. In reference to no subject is it more frequently set aside and

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despised, than in that which, of all that can be mentioned, most needs its sober counsels. For love to be seen standing at the oracle of wisdom is thought, by some romantic and silly young people, to be a thing altogether out of place. If *they* only were concerned, they might be left to their folly, to be punished by its fruits; but imprudent marriages, as we have already considered, spread far and wide their bad consequences, and also send these consequences down to posterity.

The understanding is given to us to control the passions and the imagination; and they, who, in an affair of such consequence as choosing a companion for life, set aside the testimony of the former, and listen only to the advice of the latter, have, in that instance, at least, forfeited the character of a rational being, and sunk to the level of those creatures who are wholly governed by appetite, unchecked by reason. Prudence would prevent, if it were allowed to guide the conduct of mankind, a very large portion of human misery. In the business before us, it would allow none to marry till they had a prospect of support. It is perfectly

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obvious to me, that the present generation of young people are not distinguished by a discretion of this kind; they are too much in haste to enter the conjugal state, and place themselves at the heads of families, before they have any rational hope of being able to support them. As soon almost as they arrive at the age of manhood, whether they are in business or not, before they have ascertained whether their business will succeed or not, they look round for a wife, and make a hasty, perhaps an injudicious selection. Let young people exercise their reason and their foresight; or, if they will not, but are determined to rush into the expenses of housekeeping, before they have opened sources to meet them, let them hear, in spite of the syren song of their imagination, the voice of faithful warning, and prepare to eat the bitter herbs of useless regrets, for many a long and weary year after the nuptial feast has passed away.

Prudence forbids all *unequal* marriages. There should be an equality as near as may be in AGE. How unnatural, how odious is it to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity, so as to perplex strangers to

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determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother! No one will give the woman in the one case, or the man in the other, the credit of marrying for love; and the world will be ill-natured enough, and one can hardly help joining in the censoriousness, to say that such matches are mere pecuniary speculations; for, generally speaking, the old party in the union is a rich one; and as generally they carry a scourge for the other in their purse. A fortune has often thus been a misfortune for both.

Equality of RANK is desirable, or as near to it as possible. It is much less perilous for a rich *man* to descend into the vale of poverty for a wife, than it is for a rich *woman* to go down for a husband. *He* can much more easily raise his companion to his own level, than *she* can. Society will much more readily accommodate themselves to his error, than to hers. Much of the happiness of the conjugal state depends upon the relatives of the parties; and if the marriage has offended them, if it has degraded them, how much of bitterness is it in their power to throw into the cup of enjoyment! Many a wife has carried to her grave the sting in-

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flicted upon her peace by the insults of her husband's friends; and in all such cases, *he* must receive a part of the venom.

To my brethren in the ministry I do recommend, and recommend with an earnestness which I have no language sufficiently emphatic to express, the greatest caution in this most delicate and important affair. In their case, the effects of an imprudent marriage are felt in the church of the living God. If the wives of the deacons are to be "grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things," what less can be required of the wives of the pastors? "A bishop must be blameless, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" But how can he exhibit in his domestic constitution the beautiful order and harmony which should prevail in every Christian family, and especially in every *minister's* house, without the intelligent and industrious co-operation of his wife? And how can this be expected of one who *has* no intelligence or industry? Not only much of the comfort. but of the *character* of a minister, DEPENDS

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UPON HIS WIFE; and what is of still greater consequence, much of his usefulness.

Marriage should always be formed WITH A DUE REGARD TO THE DICTATES OF RELIGION. A pious person should not marry any one who is not also pious. It is not desirable to be united to an individual even of a different denomination, and who, as a point of conscience, attends her own place of worship. It is not pleasant on a Sabbath morning to separate, and go one to one place of worship, and the other to another. The most delightful walk that a holy couple can take, is to the house of God in company, and when, in reference to the high themes of redemption and the invisible realities of eternity, they take sweet counsel together. No one would willingly lose this. But, oh, to walk separately in a still more important and dreadful sense! to part at the point where the two roads to eternity branch off, the one to heaven, the other to hell; and for the believer "to travel on to glory, with the awful consciousness, that the other party is journeying to perdition!" This is indeed dreadful, and is of itself sufficient to occasion no small diminution of conjugal felicity.

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If, however, the *comfort* of the parties only were concerned, it would be a matter of less consequence; but it is a matter of *conscience*, and an affair in which we have no option. "She is at liberty to marry whom she will," says the apostle, speaking to the case of a widow, "but only in the Lord." Now, though this was said in reference to a female, all the reasons of the law belong with equal force to the other sex. This appears to me to be not only advice, but *law*, and is as binding upon the conscience as any other law that we find in the word of God; and the incidental manner in which this injunction occurs is, as has been very properly remarked, to the intelligent reader of Scripture, the strongest confirmation of the rule in all cases where marriage is in prospect, and where there has been no engagement previous to conversion.

As to the other passage, where the apostle commands us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, it does not apply to marriage, except by inference, but to church fellowship, or rather to association and conduct in general, in reference to which, professing Christians are not to symbolize

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with unbelievers. But if this be improper in regard to other matters, how much more so in that connexion which has so powerful an influence over our character, as well as our happiness! For a Christian, then, to marry an individual who is not decidedly and evidently a pious person, is a direct opposition to the word of God.

And as Scripture is against it, so also is reason; for "how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" A difference of taste in *minor matters* is an impediment in the way of domestic comfort; but to be opposed to each other on the all-important subject of religion, is a risk, even as it respects our comfort, which no considerate person should be induced, on any considerations, to incur. How can the higher ends of the domestic constitution be answered, where one of the parents has not the spiritual qualifications necessary for accomplishing them? How can the work of religious education be conducted, and the children be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

And as it respects individual and personal assistance in religious matters, do we not all want helps instead of hindrances? A

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Christian should make everything bend to religion, but allow religion to bend to nothing. This is the one thing needful, to which everything should be subordinate; and, surely, to place out of consideration the affairs of his eternal salvation, in so important an affair as marriage, shows either that the religion of a person who acts thus is but profession, or likely soon to become so.

No one should contemplate the prospect of such a connexion as marriage without the greatest and most serious deliberation, nor without the most earnest prayer to God for direction. Prayer, however, to be acceptable to the Almighty, should be sincere, and should be presented with a real desire to know and do his will. Many, I believe, act towards the Deity as they do towards their friends: they make up their minds, and then ask to be directed. They have some doubts, and very often strong ones, of the propriety of the step they are about to take, which are gradually dissipated by their supplications, till they have prayed themselves into a conviction that they are quite right in the decision, which they have, in fact, already made.

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To pray for direction in an affair which we know to be in opposition to God's word, and on which we have already resolved to act, is adding hypocrisy to rebellion. If there be reason to believe that the individual, who solicits a Christian to unite herself with him in marriage, is not truly pious, what need has she of praying to be directed? This seems like asking the Almighty to be permitted to do that which he has forbidden to be done.

In the case of WIDOWS and WIDOWERS, especially where there is a family, *peculiar prudence* is necessary. I have known instances in which such persons have sacrificed all their own tastes and predilections, and have made their selection with *exclusive* reference to their children. Such a sacrifice is indeed generous; but it may become a question whether it is discreet. It is placing their own comfort, and even character, in some degree of peril, neither of which can be lost, without most serious mischief to those very children, whose interests they have so heroically consulted. This, however, is an error much more rare and venial, than that of the opposite extreme. How un-

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seemly and inconsiderate is it for a sexagenarian to bring home a young wife, and place her over daughters older than herself, and introduce into the family circle aunts and uncles younger than some of the nephews and nieces! Rare is the case, in which such inexpedient connexions are formed, without the authors of them losing much of their own reputation, and destroying much of the comfort of their families. Let not such men wonder, if their daughters by the first marriage are driven from their home by the consequences of the second, and are led to form imprudent matches, to which they were led by the force of parental example, and urged by the consequences of parental folly.

In the selection of a second companion for life, where the first had been eminent for talents or virtues, much care should be taken that there be no great and striking inferiority; for, in such a case,

> "busy, meddling memory,
> In barbarous succession, musters up
> The past endearments of their softer hours;"

which form a contrast ever present and ever painful. The man that never knew by ex-

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perience the joy of a *happy* marriage, can never know the ills of an imprudent one, as aggravated by the power of comparison. Let him that *has* thus known them beware how he expose himself to such helpless, hopeless misery.

Due care should also be exercised in reference to children's interests. Has the woman about to be selected that principle, that prudence, that self-control, that good temper, which, if she become herself a mother, will help her to conceal her partialities, (for to suppress them is impossible, and would be unnatural,) and to seem no less kind to her adopted offspring than to her own? That man acts a most cruel, a most wicked part towards the memory of his first wife, who does not provide for *her* children a kind and judicious friend in his second. Let me become the advocate of fatherless or motherless children, and entreat, for the sake both of the living and the dead, a due regard to the comfort of these orphans.

Nor should less deliberation be exercised by the party who is about to take, or invited to take, the care of another person's children. Have they love enough for the parent to bear

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the burden of care for his sake? Have they kindness enough, discretion enough, for such a situation, and for such an office? There is no difficulty where the children are lovely in person, and amiable in temper; but when they have no personal attractions, no charms of mind, no endearments of character, then is the time to realize the truth of the remark, "a wife *may* be supplied, a mother *cannot*." The man or the woman, that can act a parent's part towards a froward and unlovely child, must have more than *nature*, (for this belongs only to a real parent,) they *must* have principle and kindness, and *need* have grace. Let all who are invited to take the superintendence of a family, ask themselves, if they possess the requisites for the comfortable and satisfactory discharge of its duties. Let them inquire whether it is likely they can be happy in such a situation themselves; for if not, they had far better never enter it, as their unhappiness must inevitably fill the whole family circle with misery.

It cannot be sufficiently deplored, that all suitable preparation for the marriage state is usually put aside for the busy activities of vanity, which, in fact, are but as dust in the

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balance of conjugal destiny. Every thought, and anticipation, and anxiety, is too often absorbed in the selection of a house and furniture, and in matters still more insignificant and frivolous. How common is it for a female to spend those hours, day after day, and week after week, in communion with her milliner, debating and discussing the subject of the color, and form, and material, in which she is to shine forth in nuptial splendor, which ought to be employed in meditating the eventful step, which is to fix for life her destiny, and that of her intended husband; as if the great object were to *appear* a gay and fashionable bride, rather than to *be* a good and happy wife! But;—

"Joy, serious and sublime,
Such as doth nerve the energies of prayer,
Should swell the bosom, when a maiden's hand,
Filled with life's dewy flowerets, girdeth on
That harness, which the ministry of Death
Alone unlooseth, but whose fearful power
May stamp the sentence of Eternity."

"Study," said an old author, "the duties of marriage before you enter into it. There are crosses to be borne, there are snares to be avoided, and manifold obligations to be discharged, as well as great felicity to be

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enjoyed. And should no *provision* be made? For want of this, result the frequent disappointments of that honorable estate. Hence that repentance which is at once *too soon*, and *too late*. The husband knows not how to rule; and the wife knows not how to obey."

"Women are not for rule designed,
Nor yet for blind submission. Happy they
Who, while they feel it pleasure to obey,
Have yet a kind companion at their side,
Who in the journey will his power divide,
Or yield the reins, and bid the lady guide;
Then points the wonders of the way, and makes
The duty pleasant that she undertakes;
He shows the objects as they pass along,
And gently rules the movements that are wrong;
He tells her all the skilful driver's art,
And smiles to see how well she acts her part;
Nor praise denies to courage or to skill,
In using power, that he resumes at will."



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CHAPTER II.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

"Home!
There 's magic in that little word;
It is a mystic circle which surrounds
Comforts and virtues, never known
Beyond the hallowed limit."

A FAMILY! How delightful the associations we form with such a word! How pleasing the images with which it crowds the mind, and how tender the emotions which it awakens in the heart! Who can wonder that domestic happiness should be a theme dear to poetry, and that it should have called forth some of the sweetest strains of fancy and of feeling? Or who can be surprised, that of all the objects which present themselves in the vista of futurity to the eye of those who are setting out on the journey of life, this should excite the most ardent desires, and engage the most active pursuits? But, alas, of those who, in the ardor of youth, start for the possession of this dear prize,

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how many fail! And why? *Because their imagination alone is engaged on the subject:* they have no definite ideas of what it means, nor of the way in which it is to be obtained. It is a mere lovely creation of a romantic mind, and oftentimes, with such persons, fades away,

> "And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
> Leaves not a wreck behind."

It may be of service, therefore, to lay open the sources of domestic happiness, and to show that these are to be found, not in the flowery regions of imagination, but in the sober realities of piety, chaste love, prudence, and well formed connexions. These precious springs are within the reach of all who will take the right path that leads to them; and this is the way of knowledge. We must make ourselves acquainted with the nature, designs, and importance of the family compact; we must analyze this union to ascertain its elements, its laws, and its purposes. Who can be a good member of any state, without knowing the nature of its constitution, and the laws by which it is directed? And it is equally vain to look for domestic happiness, without a clear insight into the

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ends and laws which Providence has laid down in the formation of the household.

In the discussions which have been agitated, to settle the question, as to the form of civil government best adapted to secure the welfare of the human race, the FAMILY CONSTITUTION has been too much overlooked. Speculation has been indulged, and theories proposed by their respective authors, in reference to the greater aggregations of society, with all the confidence of oracular authority; while, at the same time, it is evident they have forgotten, how much the well-being of states is dependent on the well-being of the families of which all states are composed.

If there be any truth in the figure, by which a nation is compared to a pillar, we should recollect that, while individuals are the materials of which it is formed, it is the good condition of families that constitutes the cement, which holds it together, and gives to its fine form solidity and durability. Let this be wanting, and however inherently excellent the materials, however elegant the shape, however ornamental the base, the shaft, or the capital may be, it contains in

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itself a principle of decay, an active cause of dilapidation and ruin.

The domestic constitution is a divine institute. God formed it himself. "He taketh the solitary, and setteth him in families;" and, like all the rest of his works, it is well and wisely done. It is, as a system of government, quite unique; neither below the heavens nor above them is there anything precisely like it. In some respects, it resembles the civil government of a state; in others, the ecclesiastical rule of a church; and it is there the church and the state may be said to meet. This meeting, however, is only on a very small scale, and under very peculiar circumstances. When directed as it should be, every family has a sacred character, inasmuch as the head of it acts the part of both the prophet and priest of the household, by instructing them in the knowledge, and leading them in the worship of God; while, at the same time, he discharges the duties of a king by supporting a system of order, subordination, and discipline.

Conformably with its nature is its design. Beyond the benefit of the individuals which compose it, and which is its first and imme-

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diate object, it is intended to promote the welfare of the national community to which it belongs, and of which it is a part. Hence every nation has stamped a great value on the family compact, and guarded it with the most powerful sanctions. Well-instructed, well-ordered, and well-governed families are the springs, which, from their retirements, send forth the tributary streams that make up, by their confluence, the majestic flow of national greatness and prosperity; nor can any state be prosperous, where family order and subordination are generally neglected; nor otherwise *than* prosperous, whatever be its political forms, where these are generally maintained.

It is certainly under the wise instruction and the impartial sceptre of a father, and within the little family circle, that the son becomes a good citizen; it is by the fireside, and upon the family hearth, that loyalty and patriotism, and every public virtue, grows; as it is in disordered families that factious demagogues, and turbulent rebels, and tyrannical oppressors, are trained up, to be their neighbors' torment, or their country's scourge. It is there that the thorn and the brier, to

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use the elegant simile of the prophet, or the myrtle and the fir-tree, are reared, which are in future time to be the ornament and defence, or the deformity and misery, of the land.

But has the domestic constitution a reference only to the present world and its perishable interests? By no means. All God's arrangements for man view him, and are chiefly intended for him, in his relation to eternity. The eye of Deity is upon that immortality to which he has destined the human race. Every family has, in fact, a sacred character belonging to it, which may indeed be forgotten or disdained; but the family is constituted, and ought, therefore, to be conducted, with the prospect of the rising generation following that which precedes it, not only to the grave, but to eternity.

Every member of every household is an immortal creature; every one, that leaves the circle by death, goes into an eternity of torment or of bliss. Now, since all the institutes of God look to another world as their chief and ultimate reference, surely, that institute which is the most powerful of

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all, in the formation of character, must be considered as set up with a special intention to prepare the subjects of it for "glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life."

Where religion is wanting as the basis of the marriage union, the happy fruits of it cannot be expected. How many interesting households are to be found, where all the mere social virtues are cultivated with assiduity, where the domestic charities all flourish, and public excellence is cherished; but which, on account of the want of vital godliness, are still losing the highest end of their union, and carrying on no preparatory course of education for the skies, and are destined to be swept away with the wreck of the nations that knew not God, and with the wicked who shall be turned into hell. Alas, alas! that from such sweet scenes, such lovely retreats of connubial love and domestic peace, to which learning, science, wealth, elegance, have been admitted, religion should be excluded; and that while many wise and interesting guests are continually welcomed to the house, *He* only should be refused, who blessed the little family of

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Bethany; and who, wherever he goes, carries salvation in his train, and gives immortality to the joys which would otherwise perish forever.

Precious, indeed, are the joys of a happy family; but, oh, how fleet! How soon *must* the circle be broken up, how suddenly *may* it be! What scenes of delight, resembling gay visions of fairy bliss, have all been unexpectedly wrapt in shadow and gloom, by misfortune, by sickness, by death! The last enemy has entered the paradise, and, by expelling one of its tenants, has imbittered the scene to the rest. The ravages of death have been in some cases followed by the desolations of poverty; and they, who once dwelt together in the happy enclosure, have been separated and scattered to meet no more. But religion, true religion, if it be possessed, will gather them together again, after this destruction of their earthly ties, and conduct them to another paradise, into which no calamity shall enter, and from which no joy shall ever depart.

Happy then would it be, for all who stand related by these household ties, if the bonds of nature were hallowed and rendered per-

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manent by those of divine grace. To found our union on any basis which does not contain religion in its formation, is to erect it on a quicksand, and to expose it to the fury of a thousand billows, each of which may overturn the fabric of our comfort in a moment: but to rest it upon religion, is to found it upon a rock, where we shall individually still find a refuge, when the nearest and the dearest relations are swept away by the tide of dissolution.

It is a pleasing reflection, that the domestic constitution depends not for its existence, its laws, its right administration, or its rich advantages, either upon family possessions, or the forms of national policy. It may live and flourish in all its tender charities, and all its sweet felicities, and all its moral power, in the cottage as well as in the mansion; under the shadow of liberty, and even under the scorching heat of tyranny. Like the church, of which it is in some respects the emblem, it accommodates itself to every changing form of surrounding society, to every nation and to every age. Forming with the church the only two institutions ever set up by God, as to their framework,

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like its kindred institute, it remains amidst the ruins of the fall, the lapse of ages, and the changes of human affairs, the monument of what has been, the standing prediction of what will be.

Domestic happiness, in many respects, resembles the manna which was granted to the Israelites in the wilderness; like that precious food, it is the gift of God which cometh down from heaven; it is not to be purchased with money; it is dispensed alike to the rich and to the poor, and accommodates itself to every taste; it is given with an abundance that meets the wants of all who desire it; to be obtained, it must be religiously sought in God's own way of bestowing it; and is granted to man as a refreshment during his pilgrimage through this wilderness to the celestial Canaan.

"By thee
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother first were known.
Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!"

Milton.

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CHAPTER III.

MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

"See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."
St. Peter.

MARRIAGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUTION; this, says the apostle, "is honorable in all;" and he has condemned, as "a doctrine of devils," the opinions of those by whom it is forbidden. It is an institute of God, was established in Eden, was honored by the personal attendance of Christ, and furnished an occasion for the first of that splendid series of miracles, by which he proved himself to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. But there is another mark of distinction put upon it by the Holy Ghost, where it is said, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." Ephes. v. 32.

Many consider the term *mystery* as having no allusion to the nuptial tie, but as applying exclusively to the union of Christ and the

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church. If this be the case, it seems difficult to account for the introduction of this union at all, or to explain what bearing it has upon the subject in hand. Besides, the two-fold reference to the mediatorial undertaking of Christ, which is made by the apostle, when he enforces the duties of husband and wife, seems to confirm the opinion, that he represents the conjugal union as a type or symbol of the close and endearing relation in which the church stands to its divine Redeemer. Nothing can throw a higher sanctity over this connexion, nor invest it with greater honor, than such a view of it.

Distinguishing, as it does, man from brutes; providing, not only for the continuance, but for the comfort of our species; containing, at once, the source of human happiness, and of all those virtuous emotions and generous sensibilities, which refine and adorn the character of man, it can never, as a general subject, be guarded with too much solicitous vigilance, nor be contracted, in particular instances, with too much prudence and care.

In proportion to the importance of the connexion itself, must be a right view and a

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due performance of the obligations arising out of it.

The first, and the ground of all the rest, is LOVE. Let this be wanting, and marriage is degraded at once into a brutal or a sordid compact.

> "Love is a plant of holier birth
> Than any that takes root on earth;
> A flower from heaven, which 't is a crime
> To number with the things of time."

This duty, which, though for reasons we shall consider in due place, is especially enjoined on the husband, belongs equally to the wife. It must be mutual, or there can be no happiness; none for the party which does *not* love; for how dreadful the idea of being chained for life to an individual for whom we have no affection; to be almost ever in the company of a person from whom we are driven back by revulsion, yet driven back upon a bond which prevents all separation and escape. Nor can there be any happiness for the party that *does* love; such an unrequited affection must soon expire, or live only to consume that wretched heart in which it burns.

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A married couple without mutual regard is one of the most pitiable spectacles on earth. They cannot, and, indeed, in ordinary circumstances, ought not to separate, and yet they remain united only to be a torment to each other. They serve one important purpose, however, in the history of mankind, and that is, to be a beacon to all who are yet disengaged, to warn them against the sin and folly of forming this union, upon any other basis than that of a pure and mutual attachment; and to admonish all that are united, to watch with most assiduous vigilance their mutual regard, that nothing be allowed to damp the sacred flame.

As the union should be formed on the basis of love, so should great care be taken, especially in the *early* stages of it, that nothing might arise to unsettle or loosen our attachments. Whatever knowledge we may obtain of each other's tastes and habits before marriage, it is neither so accurate, so comprehensive, nor so impressive, as that which we acquire by living together; and it is of prodigious consequence, that when little defects are first noticed, and trivial faults and oppositions first occur, they should not be allowed

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to produce an unfavorable impression upon the mind.

Man and wife are equally concerned to avoid all offences of each other in the beginning of their conversation. Every little thing can blast an infant blossom; and the breath of the south can shake the little rings of the vine, when first they begin to curl like the locks of a new-weaned boy; but when by age and consolidation they stiffen into the hardness of a stem, and have, by the warm rays of the sun, and the kisses of heaven, brought forth their clusters, they can endure the storms of the north, and the loud noises of a tempest, and yet never be broken. So are the early unions of an unfixed marriage; watchful and observant, jealous and busy, inquisitive and careful, and apt to take alarm at every unkind word.

For infirmities do not manifest themselves in the first scenes, but in the succession of a long society; and it is not chance or weakness when it appears at first, but it is want of love or prudence, or it will be so expounded; and that which appears ill at first usually affrights the inexperienced man or woman, who makes unequal conjectures, and

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fancies mighty sorrows, by the proportions of the new and early unkindness.

It is a very great passion, or a huge folly, or a certain want of love, that cannot preserve the colors and beauties of kindness, so long as public honesty requires a man to wear their sorrows for the death of a friend. *Plutarch* compares a new marriage to a vessel before the hoops are on; everything dissolves its tender compaginations; but when the joints are stiffened, and are tied by a firm compliance and proportioned bending, scarcely can it be dissolved without fire, or the violence of iron. After the hearts of the man and the wife are endeared and hardened by a mutual confidence, and experience, longer than artifice and pretence can last, there are a great many remembrances, and some things present, that dash all little unkindnesses in pieces.

Let man and wife be careful to stifle little things, that, as fast as they spring, they be cut down and trod upon; for if they be suffered to grow by numbers, they make the spirit peevish, and the society troublesome, and the affections loose and uneasy by an habitual aversion.

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' Some men are more vexed with a fly than with a wound; and when the gnats disturb our sleep, and the reason is disquieted, but not perfectly awakened, it is often seen that he is fuller of trouble than if, in the daylight of his reason, he were to contest with a potent enemy. In the frequent little accidents of a family, a man's reason cannot always be awake; and when his discourses are imperfect, and a trifling trouble makes him yet more restless, he is soon betrayed to the violence of passion. It is certain that the man or woman are in a state of weakness and folly then, when they can be troubled with a trifling accident; and therefore it is not good to tempt their affections, when they are in that state of danger.

In this case the caution is, to subtract fuel from the sudden flame; for stubble, though it be quickly kindled, yet it is as soon extinguished, if it be not blown by a pertinacious breath, or fed with new materials. Add no new provocations to the accident, and do not inflame this, and peace will soon return, and the discontent will pass away soon, as the sparks from the collision of a flint; ever remembering, that discontents,

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proceeding from daily little things, do breed a secret undiscernible disease, which is more dangerous than a fever proceeding from a discerned notorious surfeit.

If they would preserve love, let them be sure to study most accurately each other's tastes and distastes, and most anxiously abstain from whatever, even in the minutest things, they know to be contrary to them. The ancients, in their conjugal allegories, used to represent Mercury standing by Venus, to signify that by fair language, and sweet entreaties, the minds of each other should be united.

If they would preserve love, let them most carefully avoid all curious and frequently repeated distinctions of MINE and THINE; for this hath caused all the laws, and all the suits, and all the wars in the world; let them, who have but one person, have also but one interest. Instances may occur in which there may and must be a separate investiture of property, and a sovereign independent right of disposal in the woman. In this case, the most anxious care should be taken by the husband not to attempt to invade that right, and by the wife, neither

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ostentatiously to speak of it, nor rigidly to claim it, nor selfishly to exercise it.

In ordinary cases, "they should be heirs to each other, if they die childless; and if there be children, the wife should be with them a partner in the inheritance. But during their life, the use and employment is common to both their necessities, and in this there is no other difference of right, but that the man hath the dispensation of all, and may keep it from his wife, just as the governor of a town may keep it from the right owner; he hath the *power*, but not the *right* to do so."

MUTUAL RESPECT is a duty of married life; for though, as we shall afterwards consider, especial reverence is due from the wife, yet is respect due from the husband also. As it is difficult to respect those who are not entitled to it on any other ground than superior rank or common relationship, it is of immense consequence that we should present to each other that conduct which deserves respect and commands it.

Moral esteem is one of the firmest supports and strongest guards of love; and a high degree of excellence cannot fail to pro-

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duce such esteem. We are more accurately known to each other in this connexion, than either to the world, or even to our own servants and children. The privacies of such a relationship lay open our motives, and all the interior of our character; so that we are better known to each other than we are to ourselves. If, therefore, we would be respected, we should be respectable.

Charity covers a multitude of faults, it is true; but we must not presume too far upon the credulity and blindness of affection; there is a point beyond which even love cannot be blind to the crimson coloring of a guilty action. Every piece of real sinful conduct, the impropriety of which cannot be mistaken, tends to sink us in each other's esteem, and thus to remove the safeguards of affection. Perhaps this has not been sufficiently thought of in wedded life, the parties of which have been sometimes anxious merely to cover their delinquencies from the world, forgetful that it is a dreadful thing to lose their mutual respect. It is delightfully striking to observe how some pairs of eminent moral worth, regard each other; what reverence is blended with their love,

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and how like to angel forms of heavenly excellence they appear to one another.

In all the conduct of the conjugal state, then, there should be the most marked and unvarying mutual respect, even in little things: there must be no searching after faults, nor examining, with microscopic scrutiny, such as cannot be concealed; no reproachful epithets; no rude contempt; no incivility; no cold neglect: there should be courtesy without ceremony; politeness without formality; attention without slavery: it should, in short, be the tenderness of love, supported by esteem, and guided by politeness.

And, then, we must maintain our mutual respectability before others: strangers, friends, servants, children, must all be taught to respect us, from what they see in our own behavior. It is in the highest degree improper for either party to do an action, to say a word, or assume a look, that shall have the remotest tendency to lower the other in public esteem.

MUTUAL ATTACHMENT TO EACH OTHER'S SOCIETY is a common duty of husband and wife.

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We are united to be companions; to live together, to walk together, to talk together. The husband is commanded "to dwell with the wife according to knowledge." This, says Mr. Jay, intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd, for those who have no prospect of dwelling together, to enter this state; and those who are already in it, should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional excursions unavoidable; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished; and let him always travel with the words of Solomon in his mind, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." Can a man, while from home, discharge the duties he owes to his household? Can he discipline his children? Can he maintain the worship of God in his family?

I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband; and she should take it up as a cross, if not, for the time, as a privilege. Few, however, are thus disposed, and hence one of the sanctuaries of God, for weeks and months together,

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is shut up.—I am sorry to say that there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated to the wife! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled; she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man, when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad. It implies something bad, and it predicts something worse.

And to ensure, as far as possible, the society of her husband at his own fire-side, let the wife be "a keeper at home," and do all in her power to render that fire-side as attractive as good temper, neatness, and cheerful, affectionate conversation can make it; let her strive to make his own home the soft green on which his heart loves to repose in the sunshine of domestic enjoyment.

We can easily imagine that even in Paradise, when man had no apparition of guilt, no visions of crime, no spectral voice from a troubled conscience, to make him dread soli-

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tude and flee from it, that even then, Adam liked not, on his return from the labor of dressing the garden, to find Eve absent from their bower, but wanted the smile of her countenance to light up his own, and the music of her voice to be the melody of his soul. Think, then, how much more in his fallen estate, with guilt upon his conscience, and care pressing upon his heart, does man now, on coming from the scenes of his anxious toil, need the aid of woman's companionship, to drive away the swarm of buzzing cares that light upon the heart to sting it; to smooth the brow ruffled with sadness; to tranquillize the bosom agitated with passion; and at once to reprove and comfort the mind that has in some measure yielded to temptation.

O woman! thou knowest the hour when the "good man of the house" will return at midday, when the sun is yet bowing down the laborer with the fierceness of his beams, or at evening, when the heat and burden of the day are past: do not let him, at such a time, when he is weary with exertion, and faint with discouragement, find, upon his coming to his habitation, that the foot, which

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should hasten to meet him, is wandering at a distance; that the soft hand, which should wipe away the sweat from his brow, is knocking at the door of other houses; nor let him find a wilderness, where he should enter a garden; confusion, where he ought to see order; or that which disgusts, where he might hope to behold neatness that delights and attracts. If this be the case, who can wonder, that, in the anguish of disappointment, and in the bitterness of a neglected and heart-stricken husband, he turns away from his own door, for that comfort which he wished to enjoy at home, and that society which he hoped to find in his wife, and puts up with the substitutes for both, which he finds in the houses of others?

United to be associates, let man and wife be as much in each other's society as possible. I thank God, I am a stranger to that taste, which leads a man to flee from his own comfortable parlor, and the society of his wife, from the instruction and recreation contained in a well-stored library, or from the evening rural walk, when the business of the day is over, to scenes of public amusement for enjoyment. To my judgment, the

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pleasures of home, and of home society, when they are all that could be desired, are such as never cloy, and need no change, but from one kindred scene to another. I am sighing and longing, perhaps in vain, for a period when society shall be so elevated, and so purified; when the love of knowledge will be so intense, and the habits of life will be so simple; when religion and morality will be so generally diffused, that men's homes will be the seat and circle of their pleasures; when, in the society of an affectionate and intelligent wife, and of well-educated children, each will find his greatest earthly delight; and when it will be felt to be no more necessary to happiness to quit their own fire-side for the ball-room, the concert, or the theatre, than it is to go from the well-spread table to the public feast, to satisfy the cravings of a healthy appetite. Then will it be no longer imposed upon us to prove, that public amusements are *improper*, for they will be found to be *unnecessary*.

But the pleasures of home must not be allowed to interfere with the calls and claims of public duty. Wives must not ask, and

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husbands must not give, that time which is demanded for the cause of God and man. This is an age of active charity, and the great public institutions, which are set up, cannot be kept in operation without great sacrifices of time and leisure by very many persons. Those who, by their wisdom, talents, rank, or property, receive the confidence of the public, must stand prepared to fill up and conduct the executive departments of our societies; nor should they allow the soft allurements of their own houses to draw them away from what is obviously the post of duty.

We have known some, who, till they entered into wedded life, were the props and pillars of our institutions, yield so far to the solicitations of their new and dearest earthly friend, as to vacate their seat at the board of management forever after. It is, I admit, a costly way of contributing to the cause of religion and humanity, to give those evening hours which could be spent so pleasantly in a country walk, or in the joint perusal of some interesting volume; but who can do good, or ought to wish to do it, without sacrifices? I know an eminently holy and

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useful minister, who told the lady to whom he was about to be united, that one of the conditions of their marriage was, that she should never ask him for that time, which, on any occasion, he felt it to be his duty to give to God. And surely, any woman might feel herself more blessed in having sometimes to endure the loss of a husband's society, whose presence and talents are coveted by all public institutions, than in being left to the unmolested enjoyment of the company of one whose assistance is coveted by none.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE is another duty.

This we owe to all, not excepting the stranger, or an enemy; and, most certainly, it must not be denied to our nearest friend. For the charity that "*suffereth long, and is kind; that envieth not; vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; that doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; that covereth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things;*" for this charity there is both need and room in every relation of life. Wherever sin or imperfec-

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tion exists, there is scope for the forbearance of love. There is no perfection upon earth. Lovers, it is true, often fancy they have found it; but the more sober judgment of husbands and wives generally corrects the mistake; and first impressions of this kind usually pass away with first love.

We should all enter the marriage state, remembering that we are about to be united to a fallen creature: and as, in every case, it is not two angels that have met together, but two sinful children of Adam, from whom must be looked for much weakness and waywardness; we must make up our minds to some imperfection; and, remembering that we have no small share of our own that calls for the forbearance of the other party, should exercise the patience that we ask. Where both have infirmities, and they are so constantly together, innumerable occasions will be furnished, if we are eager, or even willing, to avail ourselves of the opportunities for those contentions, which, if they do not produce a permanent suppression of love, lead to its temporary interruption. Many things we should connive at; others we should pass by with an unprovoked mind; and, in all

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things, most carefully avoid even what at first may seem to be an innocent disputation.

Affection does not forbid, but actually demands, that we should mutually point out our faults; but this should be done in all the meekness of wisdom, united with all the tenderness of love, lest we only increase the evil we intend to remove, or substitute a greater one in its place. Justice, as well as wisdom, requires that, in every case, we set the good qualities against the bad ones; and, in most cases, we shall find *some* redeeming excellences, which, if they do not reconcile us to the failings we deplore, should at least teach us to bear them with patience; and the more we contemplate these better aspects of the character, the brighter will they appear: for it is an indubitable fact, that, while faults diminish, virtues magnify in proportion as they are steadily contemplated.

As to bitterness of language, and violence of conduct, this is so utterly disgraceful, that it scarcely needs be introduced, even by way of cautioning against it. The ancients, we are informed, took the gall from their nuptial

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sacrifices, and cast it behind the altar, to intimate the removal of all bitterness from the marriage state.

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE is the duty of husbands and wives. This applies *to the cares of life*. Women are not usually very conversant with matters of trade, but, still, their counsel may be sought, in a thousand cases, with propriety and advantage. The husband should never undertake anything of importance, without communicating the matter to his wife; who, on her part, instead of shrinking from the responsibility of a counsellor, and leaving him to struggle alone with his difficulties and perplexities, should invite him to communicate freely all his anxieties; for, if she cannot counsel, she can comfort; if she cannot relieve his cares, she can help to bear them; if she cannot direct the course of his trade, she may the current of his feelings; if she cannot open any source of earthly wisdom, she can spread the matter before the Father and Fountain of lights. Many men, under the idea of delicacy to their wives, keep all their difficulties to themselves, which only

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prepares them to feel the stroke the heavier when it does come.

And, then, as the wife should be willing to help the husband in matters of business, *he* should be willing to share with her the burden of domestic anxieties and fatigue. Some go too far, and utterly degrade the female head of the family, by treating her as if her honesty or ability could not be trusted in the management of the domestic economy. They keep the money, and dole it out as if they were parting with their life's blood, grudging every shilling they dispense, and requiring an account as rigid as they would from a suspected servant; they take charge of everything, give out everything, interfere in everything. This is to despoil a woman of her authority, to thrust her from her proper place, to insult and degrade her before her children and servants.

Some, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme, and take no share in anything. My heart has ached to see the slavery of some devoted, hard-working, and ill-used wives; after laboring all day amidst the ceaseless toils of a young and numerous family, they have had to pass the hours of

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evening in solitude; while the husbands, instead of coming home to cheer them by their society, or to relieve them for only half an hour of their fatigue, have been either at a party or a sermon; and then have these hapless women had to wake and watch the live-long night, over a sick or restless babe, while the men, whom they accepted as the partners of their sorrows, were sleeping by their side, unwilling to give a single hour of their slumber, though it was to allow a little repose to their toil-worn wives.

Even the irrational creatures shame such men; for it is a well-known fact, that the male bird takes his turn upon the nest during the season of incubation, to allow the female time to renew her strength by food and rest; and with her, also, goes in diligent quest of food, and feeds the young ones when they cry. No man should think of marrying, who does not stand prepared to share, as far as he can do it, with his wife, the burden of domestic cares.

They should be helpful to each other *in the concerns of personal religion*. This duty is clearly implied in the apostle's language:—"For what knowest thou, O

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wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" Where only one is yet a partaker of true piety, there should be the most anxious, judicious, and affectionate efforts for the other's salvation. And where both parties are real Christians, there should be the exercise of a constant reciprocal solicitude, watchfulness, and care, in reference to their spiritual and eternal welfare.

"How blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet accordant minds!
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one!"

One of the ends which every believer should propose to himself, on entering the marriage state, is, to secure one faithful friend, at least, who will be a helpmate for him in reference to another world, assist him in the great business of his soul's salvation, and that will pray for him and with him; one that will affectionately tell him of his sins and his defects, viewed in the light of a Christian; one that will stimulate and draw him by the power of a holy example, and the sweet force of persuasive words; one that will warn him in temptation, comfort

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him in dejection, and in every way assist him in his pilgrimage to the skies.

The highest end of the connubial state is lost, if it be not rendered helpful to our piety; and yet this end is too generally neglected, even by professors of religion. Do we converse with each other as we ought on the high themes of redemption by Christ, and eternal salvation? Do we study each other's dispositions, snares, troubles, decays in piety, that we may apply suitable remedies? Do we exhort one another daily, lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Do we practise fidelity without censoriousness, and administer praise without flattery? Do we invite one another to the most quickening and edifying means of grace of a public nature, and recommend the perusal of such instructive and improving books as we have found beneficial to ourselves? Do we mutually lay open the state of our minds on the subject of personal religion, and state our perplexities, our joys, our fears, our sorrows? Alas, alas, who must not blush at their neglects in these particulars? And yet such neglect is as criminal as it is common. Fleeing from the

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wrath to come, and yet not doing all we can to aid each other's escape! Contending side by side for the crown of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, and yet not doing all we can to ensure each other's success! Is this love? Is this the tenderness of connubial affection?

This mutual help should extend *to the maintenance of all the habits of domestic order, discipline, and piety.* The husband is to be the prophet, priest, and king of the family, to instruct their minds, to lead their devotions, and to govern their tempers; but in all that relates to these important objects, the wife is to be of one mind with him. They are, in these matters, to be workers together, neither of them leaving the other to labor alone, much less opposing or thwarting what is done. "When the sun shines, the moon disappears; when he sets, she appears and shines; so when the husband is at home, he leads domestic worship, when he is absent, the wife must ever take his place."

Some men refer the instruction of *young* children exclusively to their wives, and some wives, as soon as the children are too old to be taught upon the knee, think that they are

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exclusively the subjects of *paternal* care. This is a mistake in the important economy of the family, the members of which are never too young to be taught and disciplined by the father, nor too old to be admonished and warned by the mother. *He* may sometimes have a great influence in awing the rude spirits of the younger branches; while *her* soft, persuasive accents may have delightful power to melt or break the hard and stubborn hearts of older ones. Thus they, who have a joint interest in a family, must attend to them in the exercise of a joint labor.

They must be helpfu. to each other *in works of humanity and religious benevolence.*

Their mutual influence should be exerted, not in restraining, but in stimulating zeal, compassion, and liberality. What a beautiful picture of domestic life is drawn by the pen of the Old Testament historian! "And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto

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her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, and it shall be, that when he cometh to us, he shall turn in hither. And it fell on a day that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there."

Every part of this scene is lovely. The generous and pious wish of the wife to provide accommodation for a destitute and dependent prophet; her prompt and prudent effort to interest her husband in the scheme of her benevolence; her discreet and modest keeping of her place in not acting without his permission; her dignified claim of a right to be associated with him in this work of mercy, for, said she, let *us* make a little chamber on the wall. All is delightful and as it should be on her part; and no less so on the part of the man; for there was no surly refusal, no proud rejection of the plan, because it did not originate with him; no covetous plea for setting it aside, on the ground of expense.

Delighted, as every husband should be, to

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gratify the benevolent wishes, and support the liberal scheme of his wife, so far as prudence will allow, he consented; the little chamber was erected, and furnished by this holy pair, and soon occupied by the prophet; and never was a generous action more speedily or more richly rewarded. Elisha had no means of his own, by which to acknowledge the kindness; but He who said in after times, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward," took upon himself, as he does in every instance, the cause of his necessitous servant, and most munificently repaid the generous deed.

A lovelier scene is not to be found on earth, than that of a pious couple, employing their mutual influence, and the hours of their retired companionship, in stirring up each other's hearts to deeds of mercy and religious benevolence. Not Adam and Eve in Paradise, with the unspotted robes of their innocence about them, engaged in propping the vine, or trailing the rose of that holy garden, presented to the eyes of angels a more interesting spectacle than this. What a contrast does such a couple present to the

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pairs, which are almost everywhere to be found, whose calculations are not what they can save from unnecessary expense to bestow upon the cause of God and humanity, but what they can abstract or withhold from the claims of benevolence, to lavish upon splendid furniture, or domestic luxuries.

Are there no wives who attempt to chill the ardor, to limit the beneficence, to stint the charities of their husbands? who, by their incessant, and querulous, and almost quarrelsome suggestions, that he is doing too much for others, and too little for his own family, drive the good man, notwithstanding he is lord of his own property, to exercise his liberality in secret, and bestow his charities by stealth? And what is oftentimes the object of such women? Nothing more than the pride of ambition, or the folly of vanity; only that they might have these parings of charity, to spend upon dress, furniture, and parties.

Perhaps the question will be asked, whether it is proper for a wife to give away the property of her husband in acts of humanity, or religious benevolence. Such an inquiry ought to be unnecessary; for no woman

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should be driven to the alternative of either doing nothing for the cause of God and man, or doing what she can by stealth. A sufficient sum ought to be placed at her disposal, to enable her to enjoy the luxury of doing good. Why should not she appear in her own name upon the honorable list of benefactors, and shine forth in her peculiar and separate glory, instead of being always lost in the radiance of *our* recorded mercy? Why should *she* have no sphere of benevolent effort? Why should *we* monopolize to ourselves the blessings of those that are ready to perish?

It is degrading a married female to allow her no discretion in this matter, no liberty of distribution, no power to dispense, even in cases that concern her sex, but to compel her to beg first of a husband *that*, which others come to beg of her. If, however, she be unhappily united to a Nabal, a churl, whose sordid, grasping, covetous disposition will yield nothing to the claims of humanity or religion, may she then make up for the deficiency of her husband, and diffuse his property unknown to him? I am strongly tempted to answer this question in the affir-

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mative; for if in any instance we may deviate from the ordinary rule, and taking the man at his own word, which he uttered when, in the solemn act of matrimony, he said, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," may invest the wife with a joint proprietorship, and a right of appropriation, it is in such a case as this.

But still, we must *not* sacrifice general principles to special cases; and, therefore, I say to every female in such circumstances, obtain, if you can, a separate and fixed allowance for charitable distribution; but if even *this* be not possible, obtain one for general personal expenses, and by a most rigid frugality save *all* you can from dress and decoration, for the hallowed purpose of relieving the miseries of your fellow-creatures.

MUTUAL SYMPATHY.—Sickness may call for this, and females seem both formed and inclined by nature to yield it.

"Oh woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light, quivering aspen made,—
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

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Unwilling, and, indeed, unable to subscribe to the former part of this description, I do most readily assent to the truth of the latter. If we *could* do without her, and be happy in health, what are we in sickness without her presence and her tender offices? Can we smooth, as woman can, the pillow on which the sick man lays his head? No. We cannot administer the medicine or the food as she can. There is a softness in her touch, a lightness in her step, a skill in her arangements, a sympathy looking down upon us from her beaming eye, which ours wants. Many a female, by her devoted and kind attentions in a season of sickness, has drawn back to herself that cold and alienated heart, which neither her charms could hold, nor her claims recover.

I entreat you, therefore, married females, to put forth all your power to soothe and please in the season of your husband's sickness. Let him see you willing to make any sacrifices of pleasure, ease, or sleep, to minister to his comfort. Let there be a tenderness in your manner, a wakeful attention and sympathy in your look, a something that seems to say, your only comfort in his afflic-

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tion is to employ yourselves in alleviating it. Hearken with patience and kindness to the tale of his lighter, and even of his imaginary woes. A cold, heartless, awkward, unsympathizing woman is an exception from the general rule, and therefore the severer libel upon her sex.

Nor is this sympathy exclusively the duty of the wife; but belongs equally to the husband. He cannot, it is true, perform the same offices for her, which she can discharge for him; but much he *can* do, and all he can he *should* do. Her sicknesses are generally more numerous and heavy than his; she is likely, therefore, to make more frequent calls upon his tender interest and attention. Many of her ailments are the consequence of becoming his wife. She was, perhaps, in full vigor, till she became a mother, and from that time never had a moment's perfect ease or strength again. That event, which sent into his heart the joys of a parent, dismissed from her frame the comforts of health. And shall he look with discontent, and indifference, and insensibility, upon that delicate flower, which, before he transplanted it to *his* garden, glowed in beauty and in fragrance,

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to the admiration of every spectator? Shall he *now* cease to regard it with any pleasure, or sympathy, and seem as if he wished it gone, to make room for another, forgetting that it was *he* that sent the worm to the root, and caused its head to droop, and its colors to fade?

Husbands, I call upon you for all the skill and tenderness of love, on behalf of your wives, if they are weak and sickly. Watch by their couch, talk with them, pray with them, wake with them. In all their afflictions, be you afflicted. Never listen heedlessly to their complaints; and, oh, by all that is sacred in conjugal affection, I implore you never, by your cold neglect, or petulant expressions, or discontented look, to call up in their imaginations, unusually sensitive at such a season, the phantom of a fear, that the disease, which has destroyed their health, has done the same for your affection. Oh, spare their bosom the agonizing pangs of supposing, that they are living to be a burden to your disappointed heart.

The cruelty of that man wants a name, and I know of none sufficiently emphatic, who denies his sympathy to a suffering wo-

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man, whose only sin is a broken constitution, and whose calamity is the result of her marriage. Such a man does the work of a murderer, without his punishment, and, in some instances, without his reproach; but not always without his design or his remorse.

But sympathy should be exercised by man and wife, not only in reference to their sicknesses, but to all their afflictions, whether personal or relative; all their sorrows should be common. Like two strings in unison, the chord of grief should never be struck in the heart of one, without causing a corresponding vibration in the heart of the other; or, like the surface of the lake answering to the heaven, it should be impossible for calmness and sunshine to be upon one, while the other is agitated and cloudy. Heart should answer to heart, and face to face.



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CHAPTER IV.

SPECIAL DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

THE HUSBAND.

In stating the duties especially enjoined on the two parties in the conjugal union, I shall begin with those of the husband. He is commanded to LOVE his wife.

As we have already shown that love is a duty of both parties, the question very naturally arises, "For what reason is it so especially enjoined upon the husband?" Why is *he* so particularly bound to the exercise of affection? Perhaps for the following reasons:—

1. Because, in the very nature of things, *he* is most in danger of failing in his duty. Placed by the Creator as the "head of the wife," and invested with a certain right to govern his household, he is more in peril of

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merging the tender sensibilities in the predominant consciousness of superiority.

2. Because he is actually more deficient in this duty than the other party. This has ever been the case in pagan and Mahometan countries. In barbarous nations, especially, conjugal affection has ever been exceedingly weak, and it is probable that even in the more civilized countries of Greece and Rome it was not so generally strong and steady, as it has since been made by Christianity. But without even going beyond the limits of Christendom, it may be truly said, that husbands are usually more deficient in love than wives. The latter, in my opinion, excel the former in tenderness, in strength, in constancy of affection.

3. Because a want of love on the part of the man is likely to be attended with more misery to the other party. He can go to greater excesses in violence, in cruelty, in depravity. The want of this tender passion in *him* is likely to have a still worse effect upon his own character, and the peace of the wife, than the want of it in her. In either case a destitution of this kind is a

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melancholy thing; but in him, it is on several accounts the most to be dreaded.

The apostle lays down two models, or rules, for a husband's affection; the one is, *the love which Christ has manifested for his church;* and the other, *the love which a man bears for himself.*

In regard to the first, I shall exhibit the properties of Christ's love, and show in what way *our* affection should be conformed to his.

Christ's love was SINCERE. He did not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. In him there was no dissimulation; no epithets of endearment going forth out of feigned lips; no actions varnished over with a mere covering of love. *We* must be like him, and endeavor to maintain a principle of true regard in the heart, as well as a show of it in the conduct. It is a miserable thing to have to *act* the part of love, without feeling it. Hypocrisy is base in everything; but next to religion, is most base in affection. Besides, how difficult is it to act the part well, to keep on the mask, and to support the character so as to escape detection! Oh, the misery of that woman's heart, who at

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length finds out, to her cost, that what she had been accustomed to receive and value as the attentions of a lover, are but the tricks of a cunning dissembler!

The love of the Redeemer was ARDENT.

Let us, if we would form a correct idea of what should be the state of our hearts towards the woman of our choice, think of that affection which glowed in the breast of the Saviour, when he lived and died for his people. We can possess, it is true, neither the same kind nor the same degree of regard; but surely, when we are referred to such an instance, if not altogether as a model, yet as a motive, it does teach us, that no weak affection is due, or should be offered to the wife of our bosom. We are told by the Saviour himself, that if he laid down his life for us, it is our duty to lay down ours for the brethren; how much more for the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother!" And if it be our duty *to lay down our life*, how much more to employ it, while it lasts, in all the offices of an affection, strong, steady, and inventive. She, that for our sake has forsaken the comfortable home, and the watchful care, and the warm embrace of her

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parents, has a right to expect, in *our* regard, that which shall make her "forget her father's house," and cause her to feel that, with respect to happiness, she is no loser by the exchange. Happy the woman, and such should every husband strive to make *his* wife, who can look back without a sigh upon the moment, when she quitted forever the guardians, the companions, and the scenes of her childhood!

The love of Christ to his church was SUPREME. He gives to the world his benevolence, but to the church his complacency. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee," said the prophet, "is mighty; he will save thee; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." So must the husband regard his wife, above all else; he must "rest in his love." He should regard her not only above all *without* his house, but above all *within* it. She must take precedence, both in his heart and conduct, not only of all strangers, but of all relatives, and also of all his children; he ought to love his children for her sake, rather than her for theirs. Is this always the case? On the contrary,

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have we not often seen men, who appear to be far more interested in their children than in their wives; and who have paid far less attention to the latter than to grown-up daughters? How especially unseemly is it, for a man to be seen fonder of the society of any other woman, than of that of his wife, even where nothing more may be intended than the pleasure of her company. Nor ought he to forsake her in his leisure hours, for any companions of his *own* sex, however interesting might be their manners or their conversation.

The love of Christ is UNIFORM. Like himself, it is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Conjugal affection should have the same character; it should be at all times, and in all places, alike; *the same at home as abroad;* in other persons' houses, as in our own. Has not many a wife to sigh and exclaim—"Oh that I were treated in my own house, with the same tenderness and attention as I receive in company." With what almost loathing and disgust must such a woman turn from endearments, which under such circumstances she can consider as nothing but hypocrisy. Home is the

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chief place for fond and minute attention; and she, who has not to complain of a want of it there, will seldom feel the need or the inclination to complain of a want of it abroad; except it be those silly women, who would degrade their husbands, by exacting not merely what is really kind, but what is actually ridiculous.

The love of the Redeemer was PRACTICAL and LABORIOUS. He provided everything by his mediation for the welfare and comfort of the church, and at a cost and by exertions of which we can form no idea. It has been already declared that both parties are to assist in the cares of life. A *good* wife cannot be an idle one. Beautiful is her portraiture, as drawn by the wise man. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates, when he

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sitteth among the elders of the land. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." This exquisite picture, combining as it does industry, prudence, dignity, meekness, wisdom, and piety, cannot be too frequently or minutely studied, by those who would attain to high degrees of female excellence. The business of providing for the family, however, belongs chiefly to the husband. It is his to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness, and to drink, if necessary, the waters of affliction, that he may earn, by the sweat of his brow, a comfortable support for the domestic circle. This is probably what the apostle meant, when he enjoined us to give HONOR to the wife as to the weaker

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vessel; the honor of maintenance, which she, in consequence of the weakness of her frame, and the frequent infirmities which the maternal relation brings upon her, is not so well able to procure for herself.

In general, it is for the benefit of a family that a married woman should devote her time and attention almost exclusively to the ways of her household; her place is in the centre of domestic cares. What is gained by *her* in the *shop*, is oftentimes lost in the house, for want of the judicious superintendence of a mother and a mistress. Comfort and order, as well as money, are domestic wealth; and can these be rationally expected in the absence of female arrangement? The children always want a mother's eye and hand, and should always have them. Let the husband, then, have the care of providing; the wife, that of distributing to the necessities of the family; for this is the rule both of reason and revelation.

And as Christ labored for his church, not only during his abode upon earth, but made provision for its welfare when he departed from our world, in like manner should the husband take care of his wife. I never

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could understand the propriety of that custom, which is but too common, of men's providing by their wills so much better for the children than they do for the mother. Does this look like a *supreme* love? Every man, who raises a woman to the rank of his wife, should take care, however inferior she might have been in circumstances before their marriage, to leave her in the situation into which he brought her; for it is indeed most cruel, to leave her to be deprived at once not only of her dearest earthly friend, but of her usual means of comfortable subsistence.

A practical affection to a wife extends, however, to everything; it should manifest itself in the most delicate attention to her comfort and her feelings; in consulting her tastes; in concealing her failings; in never doing anything to degrade her, but everything to exalt her before her children and servants; in acknowledging her excellences and commending her efforts to please him; in meeting, and even anticipating, all her reasonable requests; in short, in doing all that ingenuity can invent for her substantial happiness and general comfort.

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Christ's love to his church was DURABLE and UNCHANGEABLE. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end," without abatement or alteration. So ought husbands to love their wives, not only at the beginning, but to the end of their union; when the charms of beauty have fled before the withering influence of disease; when the vigorous and sprightly frame has lost its elasticity, and the step has become slow and faltering; when the wrinkles of age have succeeded to the bloom of youth, and the whole person seems rather the monument than the resemblance of what it once was. Has she not gained in mind what she has lost in exterior fascinations? Have not her mental graces flourished amidst the ruins of personal charms? If the rose and the lily have faded on the cheek, have not the fruits of righteousness grown in the soul? If those blossoms have departed, on which the eye of youthful passion gazed with so much ardor, has it not been to give way to the ripe fruit of Christian excellence? The *woman* is not what she was, but the wife, the mother, the Christian, are better than they were. For an example of conjugal

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love in all its power and excellence, point me not to the bride and bridegroom, displaying, during the first month of their union, all the watchfulness and tenderness of affection; but let me look upon the husband and wife of fifty, whose love has been tried by the lapse and the changes of a quarter of a century, and who, through this period and by these vicissitudes, have grown in attachment and esteem; and whose affection, if not glowing with all the fervid heat of a midsummer's day, is still like the sunshine of an October noon, warm and beautiful, as reflected amidst autumnal tints.

But, before I go away from this view of a husband's especial duty, I must just advert to another rule of his regard, which is laid down for him by the apostle. "So ought men to love their wives, *as their own bodies;* he that loveth his wife loveth himself." A man's children are parts of himself; his wife is himself; "for they two shall be one flesh." "This is his duty and the measure of it, too; which is so plain, that if he understands how he treats himself, there needs nothing be added concerning his demeanor towards her; for what mighty care

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does he take of his body, and uses it with a delicate tenderness, and cares for it in all contingencies, and watches to keep it from all evils, and studies to make for it fair provisions, and is very often led by its inclinations and desires, and does never contradict its appetites, but when they are evil, and then also not without some trouble and sorrow!" So let a man love his wife as his own body.

Can it be necessary to apply the force of *motives*, to produce an appropriate attention to *such* a duty? If so, I appeal to your *sense of honor*. Husbands, call to recollection the wakeful assiduities, and the tender attentions, by which you won the affection and the confidence of the woman, who forsook her father, and her mother, and the home of her childhood, to find a resting place for her heart in your attachment; and will you falsify the vows you plighted, and disappoint the hopes you raised? Is it accounted a disgraceful stigma on a man's reputation, to forfeit the pledges of a *lover?* Oh, how much more dishonorable, to forget those of a husband! That man *has* disgraced himself who furnishes just occasion

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to the partner of his days, to draw with a sigh a contrast between the affectionate attention she received as a lover and as a wife.

I urge affection to a wife, by the recollection of *that solemn moment*, when, in the presence of heaven and earth, you bound yourself by all the deeply awful formalities of a kind of oath, to throw open, and keep open your heart, as the fountain of her earthly happiness, and to devote your whole life to the promotion of her welfare.

I appeal to your regard to *justice*. You have sworn away yourself to her, and are no longer your own. You have no right to that individual, and separate, and independent kind of life, which would lead you to seek your happiness in opposition to, or neglect of hers. "You twain are one flesh."

Humanity puts in its claim on behalf of your wife. It is in your power to do more for her happiness or misery, than any other being in the universe but God himself. An unkind husband is a tormentor of the first class. His victim can never elude his grasp, nor go beyond the reach of his cruelty, till she is kindly released by the king of ter-

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rors, who, in this instance, becomes to her an angel of light, and conducts her to the grave as to a shelter from her oppressor. For such a woman there is no rest on earth: the destroyer of her peace has her ever in his power, for she is always in his presence or in the fear of it: the circumstances of every place, and every day, furnish him with the occasions of cruel neglect or unkindness, and it might be fairly questioned, whether there is to be found on earth a case of greater misery, except it be that of a wretch tortured by remorse and despair, than a woman whose heart daily withers under the cold looks, the chilling words, and repulsive actions of a husband who loveth her not. Such a man is a murderer, though he escapes in this world the murderer's doom; and by a refinement of cruelty, he employs years in conducting his victim to her end, by the slow process of a lingering death.

If nothing else can prevail, *interest* should; for no man can hate his wife, without hating himself, for "she is his own flesh." Love, like mercy, is a double blessing; and hatred, like cruelty, is a double torment. We cannot love a worthy object without rejoicing

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in the reflex beams of our own affection. Next to the supreme regard we cherish towards God, and which it is impossible to exercise and not hold communion with angels in the joys of heaven, connubial love is the most beatifying passion; and to transvenom *this* into unkindness, is to open, at the very centre of our soul, a source of poison, which, before it exudes to torture others, torments ourselves.

THE WIFE.

"Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day;
She, who ne'er answers till a husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways;
Yet has her humor most when she obeys."

The first duty which I would mention is SUBJECTION.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is

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subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The same thing is enjoined also in the Epistle to the Colossians. Peter unites with Paul in the same strain. "Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." Before I state the *kind* of subjection here commanded, it is necessary to state the nature of the authority to which it is to be yielded.

It is such an authority *as is compatible with religion* or the claims of God; for no man has a right to enjoin, and no woman is bound to obey, any command which is in opposition to the letter or spirit of the Bible. —It is such an authority *as is consonant with sound reason;* its injunctions must all be reasonable; for surely it is too much to expect, that a wife is to become the slave of folly, any more than of cruelty. It is an authority *that accords with the idea of companionship.* It was very beautifully observed by an ancient writer, that when Adam endeavored to shift the blame of his transgression upon his wife, he did not say "the woman thou gavest *to* me;" no such thing; she is none of his goods, none of his possessions, not to be reckoned amongst his

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servants; but he said, "the woman thou gavest to be *with* me," that is, to be my partner, the companion of my joys and sorrows.

Let conjugal authority be founded upon love, be never exercised in opposition to revelation or reason, and be regulated by the idea of companionship, and then there needs no particular rules for its guidance; for within such limits, it can never degenerate into tyranny; nor can it ever oppress its subjects. To such a power any woman may bow, without degradation, for its yoke is easy and its burden light. In every society, from that which finds its centre in the father's chair, to that which in a wider circle rests upon the throne, there must be precedence vested somewhere, and some ultimate authority, some last and highest tribunal established, from the decision of which there lies no appeal.

In the domestic constitution, this superiority vests in the husband; he is the head, the lawgiver, the ruler. In all matters touching the little world in the house, he is to direct, not indeed without taking counsel with his wife, but in all discordancy of view,

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he, unless he choose to waive his right, is to decide; and to his decision the wife should yield, and yield with grace and cheerfulness. No man ought to resign his authority as the head of the family, no woman ought to wish him to do it. He may give up his predilections, and yield to her wishes, but he must not abdicate the throne, nor resign his sceptre. Usurpation is always hateful; and it is one of the most offensive exhibitions of it, where the husband is degraded into a slave of the queen-mother. Such a woman looks contemptible even upon the throne.

I admit it is difficult for a sensible woman to submit to imbecility, but she should have considered this before she united herself to it. Having committed one error, let her not fall into a second, but give the strongest proof of her good sense which circumstances will allow her to offer, by making that concession to superiority of station, which there is no opportunity in her case for her to do to superiority of mind. She may reason, she may persuade, she may solicit, but if ignorance cannot be convinced, nor obstinacy turned, nor kindness conciliated, she has no resource left but to—*submit;* and one of

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the finest scenes, ever to be presented by the domestic economy, is that of a sensible woman employing her talents and address, not to subvert, but to support the authority of a weak husband; a woman who prompts, but does not command, who persuades, but does not dictate, who influences, but does not compel, and who, after taking pains to conceal her beneficent interference, submits to the authority which she has both supported and guided.

An opposite line of conduct is most mischievous, for weakness, when placed in perpetual contrast with superior judgment, is rarely blind to its own defects; and as this consciousness of inferiority, when united with office, is always jealous, it is both watchful and resentful of any interference with its prerogative. There must be subjection then; and, where it cannot be yielded to superior talents, because there are none, it must be conceded to superiority of station. But let husbands be cautious not to put the submission of their wives to too severe a test. It is hard, very hard, to obey a rash, indiscreet and silly ruler. "If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the

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seat of government, but of knowledge. If you will have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides?"

The grounds of submission are many and strong. Waiving all motives founded upon the comparative strength of mind with which the two sexes may be gifted, I refer my female friends to less questionable matters. Look at the *creation;* woman was made *after* the man, "for Adam was first formed, then Eve." She was made *out* of man, "for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." She was made *for* man; "neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Look at the fall. Woman occasioned it. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." She was thus punished for it: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Look at her *history*. Have not the customs of all nations, ancient and modern, savage and civilized, acknowledged her subordination? Look at *the light in which this subject is placed in the New Testament.* How strong is the language of the text,

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"the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Let me then, my respected female friends, as you would submit to the authority of Christ, as you would adorn the station that Providence has called you to occupy, as you would promote your own peace, the comfort of your husband, and the welfare of your family, admonish you meekly and gracefully to be subject in all things, not only to the wise and good, but to the foolish and ill-deserving. You may reason, as I have said before, you may expostulate, but you must not rebel or refuse. Let it be your glory to feel how much you can endure, rather than despise the institutions of Heaven, or violate those engagements into which you voluntarily and so solemnly entered. Let your submission be characterized by cheerfulness, and not by reluctant sullenness. Let it not be preceded by a struggle, but yielded at once and forever. Let there be no holding out to the last extremity, and then a mere compulsory capitulation; but a voluntary,

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cheerful, undisputed, and unrevoked concession.

Reverence is another duty enjoined upon the wife.

"Let the wife see that she reverence her husband." This duty is nearly allied to the last, but is still somewhat different. By reverence, the apostle means nothing of slavish or obsequious homage, but that respect and deference which are due to one whom we are commanded to obey.

Your reverence will be manifest in your *words;* for instance, in your manner of speaking *of* him, you will avoid all that would tend to lessen him in the esteem of others; all exposure of his faults or minor weaknesses; all depreciation of his understanding or domestic rule. Such gossip is detestable and mischievous, for can anything tend more to irritate him, than to find that you have been sinking him in the esteem of the public? Reverence will be displayed in your manner of speaking *to* him. "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord." All flippant pertness, everything of contemptuous consciousness of superiority, of dictation and command, of unnecessary

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contradiction, of pertinacious and obtrusive disputation, of scolding accusation, of angry, reproachful complaint, of noisy and obstreperous expostulation, should be avoided.

Almost all domestic quarrels begin in words; and it is usually in a woman's power to prevent them by causing the law of kindness to dwell upon her lips, and calming the gusts of her husband's passion, by those soft answers which turn away wrath. Especially should she be careful how she speaks to him, or even *before* him, in the company of her family, or of strangers. She must not talk him into silence; nor talk *at* him; nor say anything that is calculated to wound or degrade him; for a sting inflicted in public is doubly charged with venom; she must not endeavor to eclipse him, to engross the attention of the company to herself, to reduce him to a cipher which is valueless till she stands before him. *This* is not reverence; on the contrary, she should do all in her power to sustain his respectability and dignity in public esteem; and her very mode of addressing him, partaking at once of the kindness of affec-

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tion, and the deference of respect, is eminently calculated to do this.

And should he at any time express himself in the language of reproof, even though that reproof be causeless, or unjustly severe, let her be cautious not to forget her station, so as to be betrayed into a railing recrimination, a contemptuous silence, or a moody sullenness. Difficult, I am aware, it is, to show reverence and respect, where there are no other grounds for it to rest upon than mere station; and as easy to pay it where wisdom, dignity, and piety support the claims of relationship. But in proportion to the difficulty of a virtuous action, is its excellence; and hers is indeed superior virtue, who yields to the relationship of her husband that reverence, which he forbids her to pay to him on account of his conduct.

Her reverence will extend itself to her *actions*, and lead to an incessant desire to please him in all things. It is assumed by the apostle as an indisputable and general fact, "that the married woman careth how she may please her husband." All her conduct should be framed upon this principle, to give him contentment, and to increase his

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delight in her. Let her appear contented with her lot, and that will do much to render him content with his; while, on the other hand, nothing is more likely to generate discontent in *his* heart, than the appearance of it in her.

Let her, by cheerful good humor, diffuse an air of pleasantness through his dwelling. Let her guard, as much as possible, against a gloomy and moody disposition, which causes her to move about with the silence and cloudiness of a spectre; for who likes to dwell in a haunted house? She should always welcome him across his threshold with a smile, and ever put forth all her ingenuity in studying to please him, by consulting his wishes, by surprising him occasionally with those unlooked-for and ingenious devices of affection, which, though small in themselves, are the proofs of a mind intent upon the business of giving pleasure.

The greater acts of reverent and respectful love are often regarded as matters of course, and, as such, produce little impression; but the lesser acts of attention, which come not into the usual routine of conjugal duties, and into the every-day offices which may be

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calculated upon, with almost as much certainty as the coming of the hour which they are to occupy, these free-will offerings of an inventive and active affection, these extra tokens of respect, and expressions of regard, have a mighty power to attach a husband to his wife; they are the cords of love, the bands of a man. In all her personal and domestic habits, her first care, then, next to that of pleasing God, must be to please him, and thus hold to herself that heart, which cannot wander from her without carrying her happiness with it, and which, when once departed, cannot be restored by any power short of Omnipotence itself.

Meekness is especially mentioned by the apostle Peter, as a disposition which it is the duty of every wife to cultivate.

He has distinguished and honored this temper by calling it the *ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit. If there be some virtues which seem preëminently to suit the female character, meekness bears a high place amongst such. No one stands in greater need of this disposition than the female head of a family; either the petulance and waywardness of children, or the neglects and

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misconduct of servants, or the sharp words of a husband, are almost sure, if she be easily provoked, to keep her in a state of irritation all the day long.

How trying is a peevish woman! how odious a brawling one! "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman." The Graces were females, says Mr. Jay; so were the Furies too. It is astonishing the influence which meekness has sometimes had in a family; it has quenched the sparks and even coals of anger and strife, which, but for this, would have set the house on fire; it has mastered the tiger and the lion, and led them captive with the silken thread of love.

The strength of woman lies not in resisting, but in yielding; her power is in her gentleness; there is more of real defence, ay, and more of that aggressive operation, too, which disarms a foe in one mild look, or one soft accent, than in hours of flashing glances and of angry tones. When, amidst domestic strife, she has been enabled to keep her temper, the storm has been often scattered as it rose; or her meekness has served

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as a conductor to carry off its dreadful flashes, which otherwise would have destroyed the dwelling.

Put on, then, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Pay less attention to the decoration of the person, more to that of the mind. "Your adorning is not to be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, which is not corruptible." The language of another apostle on this subject is no less striking. "In like manner, also, I will that women adorn themselves in *modest* apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but, which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. Two apostles, who both wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, in such language as this, have denounced as improper, and as unbecoming a profession of godliness, a taste for immodest, expensive, or highly decorative dress.

Surely, then, the subject is worthy the most serious attention of all Christian females. By what sophistry can the letter,

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much more the spirit, of two passages of holy writ, so very plain and express in their terms as these, be set aside? That they *are* set aside, is evident by the appearance of almost every congregation into which we could enter on the Sabbath day.

It is high time for the Christian teacher to call back the women "professing godliness," from their wanderings in the regions of fashionable folly, to the Holy Scriptures; for there, it should be remembered, is laid down a general law for regulating the dress of the body as well as that of the mind. I do hold, then, that these passages of Scripture are still parts of revelation, and, as such, still binding upon the conscience; if not, show me when they were cancelled.

I contend, that *Christian* females ought to abstain from expensive, showy, and extravagant fashions in dress, jewelry, and all kinds of unsuitable personal decoration. I am not arguing for a sectarian costume, for a religious uniform, for canonical shapes and colors; nothing of the sort, but for simplicity, neatness, economy; for what the apostle calls modest apparel, shamefacedness and sobriety; for the *spirit* of the passages

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if not the very *letter;* for a distinction between those who profess godliness, in their comparative inattention to such things, and those who make no such profession; for a proof that *their* minds are not so much engaged on these matters, as the minds of the people of the world are.

I am not for extinguishing taste; alas, in matters of dress, this is already done; but for resisting the lawless dominion of folly, under the name of fashion. I am not for calling back the age of Gothic barbarism, or vulgarity; no; I will leave ample room for the cultivation of both taste and genius in every lawful department; but I am protesting against the desolating reign of vanity; I am resisting the entrance of frivolity into the church of God; I am contending against the glaring inconsistency of rendering our religious assemblies like the audience convened in a theatre.

The evils of an improper attention to dress are great and numerous. 1. Much precious time is wasted in the study, and arrangements, and decisions of this matter. 2. The attention is taken off from the improvement of the mind and the heart, to the

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decoration of the person. 3. The mind is filled with pride and vanity, and a deteriorating influence is carried on upon what constitutes the true dignity of the soul. 4. The love of display infects the character. 5. Money is wasted, which is wanted for relieving the misery and improving the condition of mankind. 6. Examples are set to the lower classes, in whom the propensity is often mischievous in many ways.

I am aware it might be, and is said, that there may be the pride of singularity, as well as of fashion; the pride of being covered with sober autumnal tints, as well as of exhibiting the brilliant hues of the rainbow; the pride of quality and of texture, as well as of color and of form. I know it, and I do not justify the one more than I do the other; I condemn all kinds; but, at any rate, there is a little more dignity in one kind than in another. I will leave opportunity for the distinctions of rank, for the inventions of true taste, and for the modest and unobtrusive displays of natural elegance and simple beauty; but I cannot allow the propriety of Christian females yielding themselves to

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the guidance of fashion, however expensive, extravagant or gaudy.

As to the employment of our artisans by the various changes of fashion, I have nothing to do with this, in face of an apostolic injunction. The silversmiths, who made shrines for the worshippers of Diana, might have pleaded the same objection against the preachers of the gospel, who certainly did, so far as they were successful, ruin this trade. I am only speaking to professors of religion, who form so small a portion of society, that their abstinence from folly would do but little in diminishing the employment of the work-people, and if it did, let them make it up in some other way. What I contend for, then, is not meanness, nor unvarying sameness; but neatness opposed to gaudiness; simplicity and becomingness to extravagance; modesty opposed to indelicacy; economy opposed to expensiveness.

Whether what I contend for is characteristic of the age in which we live, let any spectator determine. I am anxious to see professors of religion displaying a seriousness and spirituality, a dignity and sobriety of mind, a simplicity of habits, and a sedate-

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ness of manners, becoming their high and holy profession; and all this united with an economy in their personal expenses, which will leave them a greater fund at their disposal, for relieving the miseries and promoting the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

But, perhaps, after all, many women may plead, that the gayety and expensiveness of their dress is more to please their husbands than themselves; but even this must have its limits. And I really pity the folly of that man, who concerns himself too much in the arrangement of his wife's wardrobe and toilet; and who would rather see her go forth in all the gorgeousness of splendid apparel, to display herself in the drawing-rooms of her friends, than, in dignified neatness, to visit the cottages of the poor, as the messenger of mercy; and who rejoices more to contemplate her moving through the circles of fashion, the admiration of one sex, and the envy of the other, than to see her holding on her radiant course, in the orbit of benevolence, clad in unexpensive simplicity, and, with the savings of her personal expenditure, clothing the naked, feeding the

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hungry, healing the sick, and thus bringing upon herself the blessings of him that was ready to perish, and causing the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Let it be remembered, that not only the ornament, but the person which it adorns, is *corruptible*. Accidents may distort the finest form, diseases fade the loveliest coloring, time disfigure the smoothest surface, and death, the spoiler of beauty, work a change so awful and appalling, as to turn away the most impassioned admirers in disgust. How soon will every other dress be displaced by the shroud, and every other decoration be stripped off to make way for the flowers that are strewed in the coffin upon the corpse, as if to hide the deformity of death.

But the graces of the heart, and the beauties of the character, are imperishable. Such let a wife be continually seeking to put on; "for she that has a wise husband must entice him to an eternal dearness, by the veil of modesty, and the robes of chastity, the ornaments of meekness, and the jewels of faith and charity; she must have no paint but blushings; her brightness must be her purity, and she must shine round about with

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sweetness and friendship, and then she shall be pleasant while she lives, and desired when she dies."

Economy and *order* in the management of her personal and domestic expenditure, are the obvious duty of a wife.

You are to preside in the direction of household affairs; and much of the prosperity and comfort of the little community will depend upon your skilful and prudent arrangements. There is a manifest disposition, in this age, in all classes of society, to come as closely as possible to the habits of those above them. The poor are imitating the middling classes, and *they* are copying the upper ranks. A showy, luxurious, and expensive taste is almost universally cherished, and is displayed in innumerable instances, where there are no means to support it.

A large house, a country residence, splendid furniture, a carriage, a retinue of servants, and large parties, are the aim of many, whose creditors pay for all. Christian families are in most imminent peril of worldly conformity in the present day; and the line of demarcation between the church and the

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world is fast wearing out. It is true, they have no cards, they do not frequent the theatre, or the ball-room, and *perhaps* they have no midnight routs;—but this is all; for many are as anxious about the splendor of their furniture, the fashion of their habits, the expensiveness of their entertainments, as the veriest worldling can be.

Now a wife has great influence in checking or promoting all this. It has been thought that this increasing disposition for domestic show and gayety is to be attributed chiefly to female vanity. It is woman that is generally regarded as the presiding genius of such a scene; *she* receives the praise and the compliment of the whole, and *she* therefore is under the strongest temptation to promote it. But let her consider how little all this has to do with the happiness of the family, even in its most prosperous state; and how a recollection of it aggravates the misery of adversity, when a reverse takes place. *Then* to be found in debt for finery of dress or furniture; *then* to have it said that her extravagance helped to ruin *her* husband; *then* to want that for bread, which was formerly wasted on luxury;

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then to hear the whispered reproach of having injured others by her own thoughtless expenditure!

Avoid, my female friends, these miseries; do not go on to prepare wormwood and gall to imbitter still more the already bitter cup of adversity. Endeavor to acquire a skilfulness in domestic management, a frugality, a prudence, a love of order and neatness, a midway course between meanness and luxury, suitableness to your station in life, to your Christian profession, an economy which shall leave you more to spare for the cause of God and the miseries of man. Rather check than stimulate the taste of your husband for expense; tell him that it is not necessary for *your* happiness, nor for the comfort of the family; draw him away from these adventitious circumstances, to the mental improvement, the moral culture, the religious instruction of your children. Let knowledge, piety, good sense, well-formed habits, harmony, mutual love, be the sources of your domestic pleasures. What is splendor of furniture, or dress, or entertainments, to these?

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A wife SHOULD BE MOST ATTENTIVE TO ALL THAT CONCERNS THE WELFARE AND COMFORT OF THE CHILDREN.

For this purpose, she must be *a keeper at home*. "That they may teach the young wives to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, *keepers at home*." And how can the duties that devolve upon the female head of a family be well discharged, if she be not a keeper at home? On this I have dwelt already, in a former chapter, but its importance will justify my returning to the subject again. How much has she to attend to, how many cares to sustain, how many activities to support, where there is a young family. Whoever has leisure for gossiping, *she* has none; whoever may be found wandering from house to house, "hearing or telling some new thing," *she* must not.

A mother's place is in the midst of her family; a mother's duties are to take care of *them*. Nothing can excuse a neglect of these; and yet we often see such neglect. Some are *literary characters*, and the welfare of the household is neglected for books.

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Not that I would debar a female from the luxury of reading; far from it; but her taste for literature must be kept within due bounds, and not be allowed to interfere with her household duties. No husband can be pleased to see a book in the hands of a wife, while the house is in confusion, and the children's comfort unprovided for. Much less should *a taste for company* be allowed to draw a wife too much out of the circle of her care and duties. To be wandering from house to house in the morning, or to be engaged till a late hour, evening after evening, at a party, while the family at home are left to themselves, or to the care of servants, is certainly disgraceful.

Even attention to the *public* duties of *religion* must be regulated by a due regard to domestic claims. I am aware that many are apt to make these claims an excuse for neglecting the public means of grace almost entirely; the house of God is unfrequented; sermons, sacramental seasons, and all other religious meetings, are given up, for an absorbing attention to household affairs. This is one extreme; and the other is, such a devotedness to religious meetings, that the

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wants of a sick family, the cries of a hungry infant, or the circumstances of some extraordinary case of family care, are not allowed to have any force in detaining a mother from a week-day sermon, a prayer-meeting, or the anniversary of some public institution.

It is no honor to religion, for a wife, under such circumstances, to be seen in the house of God; duties cannot be in opposition to each other; and, at such a time, hers lie at home. It must be always distressing, and, in some cases, disgusting, for a husband, on his returning to a scene of domestic confusion, and seeing a neglected child in the cot, to be told, upon inquiring after the mother, that she is attending a sermon or public meeting. There is great need for watchfulness in the present age, when female agency is in such requisition, lest attention to public institutions should most injuriously interfere with the duties of a wife and a mother.

I know very well that an active woman may, by habits of order, punctuality, and despatch, so arrange more direct and immediate duties at home, as to allow of sufficient

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leisure to assist the noble societies which solicit her patronage, without neglecting her husband and children; but where this cannot be done, no society, whether humane or religious, should be allowed to take her away from what is, after all, her first and more appropriate sphere. She *must* be a *keeper at home*, if anything there demands her presence.

Such appear to me to be the leading duties of a wife. Motives of a very high and sacred character may be offered for a diligent performance of them. *Her own comfort*, and that of her husband, is of course most vitally connected with a fulfilment of her obligations; and the welfare of her children is also deeply involved. And then, her *character* shines forth with peculiar lustre. A GOOD WIFE is a high attainment in female excellence; it is woman in her brightest glory since the fall.

But there is one consideration of supreme importance, mentioned by the apostle, to which I shall direct your attention. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by

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the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." Powerful and yet tender consideration! Mark, my female friends, the implied eulogy passed by the apostle on *your* sex, where he seems to take it for granted that if one party be destitute of religion, it is the husband. And facts prove that this assumption was correct.

Religion flourishes most among the female part of our species; in our congregations, and in our churches, the greater number is of *them*. Can we account for this by natural causes? Partly. They are more at home, and, therefore, more within the reach of the means of grace;—they are more susceptible;—they are less exposed to those temptations that harden the heart through the deceitfulness of sin;—they are subject to more affliction, which *softens* the heart, and prepares it for the seed of the kingdom;—but all this is not enough, for without grace all these advantages are unavailing; we must resolve it, therefore, into divine purposes, divine interposition, and the arrangements of divine wisdom.

Female influence in all civilized states is

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great; and God has generally made much use of this, wherever the gospel has come, as one of the means for spreading religion. He pours his grace on *them*, that their influence may be employed with others, especially their husbands and their children. If, then, in any case, a Christian woman be united to an unconverted man, she must cherish and display a deep, and tender, and judicious solicitude for his salvation; and "what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" I would not encourage unequal marriages; I would not have the single try the doubtful and dangerous experiment of marrying an irreligious man, in the hope of converting him; in such cases, the conversion is often the other way; but where the union *is* formed, there, I say, nourish the anxiety, and employ every discreet exertion for his eternal welfare.

Many instances have occurred, in which the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife. She has drawn him, with the cords of a tender and judicious love, to a consideration of the subject of personal religion. Think of the value of a soul, and of the ineffable glory of being the instrument

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of its salvation. But, O, to be the means of saving the soul of a husband! Think how it will strengthen the bond, and sanctify and sweeten it, which unites you on earth and in time; and at the same time add to it a tie, by which you shall "not lose one another in the valley of the shadow of death," but be reünited as kindred spirits, though not as man and wife, in heaven, and through eternity.

Think, O wife, of the happiness—the honor that awaits you. What is the triumph you have acquired over him by your charms, compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion? What pleasure will attend you the remainder of your days! now you are of "one heart and one mind;" now you "take sweet counsel together." The privileged language of prayer now is,—"Our Father;"—of every motion made to go and seek the Lord of Hosts there is a ready acceptance—"I will go also." And what will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in that day, when, before assembled men and angels, he will say, O blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us

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in this! The woman thou gavest to be with me led me not to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but to the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

But how is this solicitude to be employed? The apostle tells us; "that they may be won by the conversation of their wives, while they BEHOLD your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." Your religion must be seen embodied in your whole character and conduct. It must commend itself to their judgment, by what they perceive as sincere. It must be *consistent;* for a want of uniformity, however earnest it may in many respects and at many times appear, will produce disgust. You must "let your light shine before them, that they, *seeing* your good works, may glorify God." You must ever appear invested with all the beauty of a lovely example, which, silent though you be as it respects your tongue, is living eloquence.

Your religion must diffuse its lustre over your whole character, and impress itself most deeply on your relation as a wife and a mother; it must be a new motive to all that respect, and reverence, and devotedness,

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and meekness, which have been laid before you; and it must lead you to carry every conjugal and maternal virtue to the highest degree of perfection. It must be attended with the most profound humility; or if there be any spiritual pride, any conscious and manifest sense of superiority, anything approaching to the pharisaic temper, which says, "Stand by, I am holier than thou," anything like contempt of your husband, as an unconverted sinner, you will excite an inveterate prejudice, not only against religion, but against yourself; religion will be hated by him for your sake, and you for religion's sake.

When you venture to speak to him on the subject of piety, it should be as remotely as possible from all lecturing, all dictation, all reproach, all conscious superiority; and with all possible tenderness, meekness, humility, and persuasive affection. Never talk to him of his state *before others*, and never talk *at* him. Nor is it likely to accomplish the object you have in view, to weary him by continual importunity. Many defeat their own end by an incessant introduction of the subject, and sometimes with an asperity

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which increases the revulsion, which its own nature is calculated, in such a mind, to produce. An occasional hint, and that of the most tender, respectful, and delicate kind, is all that you should attempt, and then leave your example to speak. Occasionally, you may put an instructive volume in his way, and when opportunity offers, solicit his perusal of it.

Do not bring your religious friends too much about you, so as to annoy him; especially, keep away as much as possible any that may have a less portion of discretion than the rest; and confine yourself to the more judicious and best informed. Never rudely interfere with his pursuits, his reading, or his company, although they may not be what *you* can cordially approve. Till he is enlightened from above, he will not see the evil of these things, and to attempt to interrupt him, in any other way than by the mildest and most respectful expostulation, will only do harm.

Should he wish to draw you from the high pursuit of eternal life, you are not, of course, in this case, to yield to his persuasion, nor in anything to concede, where your

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conscience is decidedly concerned in the matter. You must be firm, but mild. One concession granted by you would only lead to another. But still, even in this extremity, your resistance of his attempts to interfere with your religion must be maintained in all the meekness of wisdom, and must be attended with fresh efforts to please, in all things which are lawful. If such a line of conduct should subject you to reproach, anger, and persecution, a most painful and by no means an uncommon case, you must possess your soul in patience, and commit your way to Him that judgeth righteously. Many a persecuting husband has been subdued, if not to religion, yet to kinder conduct, by the meek and uncomplaining temper of his wife.

To conclude. Let us all seek after more of the spirit of true religion,—the spirit of faith, of hope, of prayer; a faith that really believes the word of God, and looketh habitually to the cross of Christ, by which we obtain salvation, and to the eternal world, where we shall fully and forever enjoy it; a hope that lives in the expectation and desire of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal

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life; and a spirit of prayer which leads us daily and hourly to the throne of divine grace, for all that aid of the Holy Ghost which we need, not only for the duties that refer to our relations to another world, but for those which devolve upon us in consequence of our relations in this. "Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." The same principle of divine grace which unites us to God will bind us closer to each other.

Religion contains in it not only the seeds of immortal virtues, but of such as are mortal; not only the germs of excellences which are to flourish in the temple of heaven, but which grow up in the house of our pilgrimage upon earth, to enliven with their beauty, and to refresh with their fragrance, the domestic circle. A good Christian cannot be a bad husband or father; and, other things being equal, he who has most piety will shine most in all the relations of life.

A Bible placed between man and wife as the basis of their union, the rule of their conduct, and the model of their spirit, will

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make up many a difference, comfort them under many a cross, guide them in many a strait, wherein flesh and blood will be confounded and at a loss, support them in their last sad parting from each other, and reünite them in that happy world where they shall go no more out.

"Those married pairs that live as remembering that they must part again, and give an account how they treat themselves and each other, shall, at the day of their death, be admitted to glorious espousals; and, when they shall live again, be married to their Lord, and partake of his glories. All those things that now please us shall pass from us, or we from them; but those things that concern the other life are permanent as the numbers of eternity; and although at the resurrection there shall be no relation of husband and wife, and no marriage shall be celebrated but the marriage of the Lamb, yet then shall be remembered how men and women passed through this state, which is a type of that; and from this sacramental union, all holy pairs shall pass to the spiritual and eternal, where love shall be their portion, and joys shall crown their heads,

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and they shall lie in the bosom of Jesus, and in the heart of God, to eternal ages."

"Far, far beyond the reach of mortal ken,
No eye hath seen it, nor hath human pen
Portrayed the glories of that world above,
Whose very atmosphere is holy love!

There Christians, who in union dwelt on earth,
Heirs of its mansions by celestial birth,
In blest society shall meet and blend
In love and fellowship that never end.

Oh! 't will be passing sweet, to meet the friend
We loved on earth, and there together bend
Before the throne eternal, and rehearse
Its untold glories in exalted verse.

To walk in company the golden streets,
To sit, but not apart, on shining seats;
To trace the beauties of each dazzling gem,
Or pluck the fruit of some unfading stem!

To sip the waters of the sparkling fount,
To crop the flowers that deck the holy mount,
To breathe the fragrance of the balmy gale,
Or on the crystal river spread the sail!

But most to adore the wonders of his grace,
To see the unveiled splendors of his face,
Who bought us with a price immense, unknown,
And raised us from a prison to a throne!"



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