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THE
GOLDEN WEDDING RING;
OR,
A CONVERSATION
BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS TWO CHILDREN,
ON MARRIAGE.

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THE GOLDEN WEDDING RING;

OR,

A CONVERSATION

BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS TWO CHILDREN,

ON MARRIAGE.

PATERNUS was a venerable clergyman of the last century, distinguished alike by his learning and talents, but above all, by his unfeigned piety and sincere zeal for the salvation of his flock. He had two children, Eugenio his son, and Miranda his daughter. Eugenio was in the twenty-second year of his age, and Miranda in her nineteenth year. From their earliest youth they had been instructed in the principles of the Christian Religion, both in regard to its *evidences*, or the conviction of its truth in their understandings, and its *operation*, or the effects it was intended to produce on their hearts and lives. Religion, Paternus would often tell them, is not a mere *science* to enlighten and amuse the intellect of man, but it is a *rule of life*, or rather it is itself a *living principle*, to govern his *affections* and *tempers*, to control his *passions* and *appetites*, to soften and subdue his *asperities*, to mitigate his *sorrows*, to increase and perpetuate his *joys*, and, in short, to infuse into the whole man a new life and spirit, new ends and intentions, new hopes and delights, by forming him after the image and likeness of that HEAVENLY FATHER whose child he properly is. Religion, therefore, added Paternus, does not produce its full effect in man till it takes possession of his whole mind, and governs him alike in his *business* and *recreations*, his *closet* and his *shop*, his *prayers* and his *pleasures*, his *solitude* and his *association* with his fellow-creatures; in short, under

every character and relationship, whether as a parent or child, a husband or wife, a citizen, a subject, or a ruler.

I have often (said Eugenio, one day, as he and his sister were walking with Paternus) been delighted with the views which you have presented to me of the noble ends of Religion, and am entirely agreed with you in your general conclusions. But still I have my doubts about some particular applications of your general rule, and especially about its application to the relationship betwixt husband and wife, commonly called marriage. For though I am willing to allow the sacredness of this relationship, and that it is, in a certain degree, connected with Religion, yet I am half afraid, lest, by regarding it in too serious a point of view, you would deprive it of all that natural joy, delight, and festivity which it is calculated to inspire.

I am as great a friend as you can be, replied Paternus, to all the natural joys, delights, and festivities attending marriage; and I should be as much afraid as you can be of depriving marriage of such good company. But is Religion, think you, an enemy to joy, delight, and festivity? or, rather, is she not their best friend, by connecting them with their eternal Source? Does she not also, by forwarding such a connection, prevent their *destroying* themselves, and thus render them constant, permanent, and eternal? Our Lord Jesus Christ says to His disciples—“These things have I spoken unto you, that *my joy might remain in you*, and that *your joy might be full*.” (John xv. 11.) Is there anything, now, in this declaration which proves our Lord Jesus Christ to be an enemy to human joys, or that He seeks their destruction? Rather, do not the words demonstrate that He is friendly to all human joys, and that He is desirous to preserve them, by *filling* them with His own joy? The case, therefore, appears to be this, that all natural delights, even the greatest of them, which is conjugal delight, without Religion, destroy themselves, because, without Religion, they *separate* themselves from their DIVINE SOURCE; whereas, when

connected with Religion, they are continually improving in purity, bliss, and permanency, because, being connected with Religion, they are connected with God, the only living Fountain of all true and stable joy. And does not daily experience, especially in the case of marriages, bear witness to the truth of this remark? For, examine the reason why, in so many sad instances, the delights of conjugal love grow *undelightful*, and are even turned into their *opposites*, and I am of opinion you will thus find that it is universally owing, either to a defect of religious principle in one or both the parties, or to some mistaken ideas of Religion.

But I have always conceived, said Miranda, that when our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to deny *ourselves*, and to take up our *daily cross*, and to "cut off our offending hands and feet," and to "pluck out our offending eyes," He had some view to our natural delights, and this consideration has sometimes made me almost afraid of joy, even of conjugal joy.

• You have nothing to fear from the *joy*, replied Pater-nus, for the joy in itself is perfectly innocent; all that you need be afraid of is, that natural *selfishness* which would lead you to consider the joy as your *own*, independent of GOD, and thus to separate it from GOD, by not restraining it within the bounds of His *order*, and by not acknowledging it to be His gift. And this is the reason why our *Lord Jesus Christ* calls you to deny yourself, and to take up your *cross*; because it is only by *denying* such a *selfish spirit*, and by fighting against it, that you can ever be brought to connect your joys with their DIVINE FOUNTAIN, so that they may be perpetually *filled* from that FOUNTAIN. This selfish spirit, therefore, and not your joy, is the offending *hand* and *foot*, which you are required to *cut off*, and the offending *eye*, which you are required to *pluck out*.

Are we to suppose, then, said Eugenio, that all the delights of conjugal love and life are pure, allowable, and pleasing, in the sight of God?

You cannot suppose otherwise, replied Paternus, if you consider, as you ought, that those delights are all implanted by God, and if under this consideration they be referred to God, and humbly and gratefully acknowledged to be from His fatherly bounty and liberality to His creatures. With the wise and the good, therefore, the delights of conjugal love and life are pure, allowable, and pleasing to the ALMIGHTY, because the wise and the good are never so happy as in tracing up all their natural delights to a Divine Source. But it is otherwise with the wicked and thoughtless, who feel no concern at all about their delights, whether they be pure, allowable, and pleasing to God or not.

From your view of the subject, said Eugenio, I should conceive the married state to be the happiest of all states.

Your observation, replied Paternus, must be made with some restriction, because, though it is certainly true of marriage, properly so called, yet it is not true of all marriages.

Are there, then, said Eugenio, any marriages *not* properly so called?

There is no term in language, replied Paternus, more misunderstood at this day, or more perverted, than the term MARRIAGE, which, therefore, we see every day prostituted to the vilest of purposes. Thus, some call it *marriage* to be united to a mass of flesh and blood, without any regard to a union of *minds*; others marry a large *fortune*, others an *accomplishment*, others a *title*, and they do not scruple to appear in the presence of the ALMIGHTY, and upon their knees before Him, at His altar, to supplicate His blessing upon their shame and folly. But would you call this *marriage*, or would you think it right to apply to two persons so connected, that description of the union of conjugal partners given by our Lord Jesus Christ, where he so emphatically characterises them as those WHOM GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER? (Matt. xix. 6; Mark x. 9.)

I should conceive, said Miranda, that marriage, properly

so called, must mean a *union of minds*, and that if minds are *not* united, it cannot be properly called marriage.

You are right, replied Paternus, if by a union of minds you mean the minds of two persons of different sexes; but have you ever considered what it is which properly constitutes a union of minds between two persons of different sexes?

I cannot say that I ever considered the subject, said Miranda, but I should feel truly thankful, my dear father, if you would explain it to me.

God, my child, replied Paternus, has manifestly, by creation, distinguished the man from the woman, and the woman from the man, not only as to *body*, but as to *mind*; not only as to corporeal strength and energy, but as to *mental faculty, character, and disposition*. For who cannot discern that the man is by nature formed more for the exercise of the *intellectual* principle, in *science* and the pursuits of *wisdom*; and the woman more for the exercise of the *voluntary* or will principle, in *affection*, in *gentleness*, in *softness*, and *sweetness* of temper and manners? The man is born that he may be made *understanding*, and the woman is born that she may be made *will*, loving the understanding of the man. Thus the proper distinguishing character of the man is *intellect*, but the proper distinguishing character of the woman is the *love* of the man's intellect, and thus of his moral and spiritual wisdom. Hence we find by experience that every sensible and well-disposed woman attaches herself to a man of *understanding*, and that every sensible and well-disposed man attaches himself most to that woman who *most loves* his understanding. Here, then, is the true ground of the *union of minds* between two persons of different sexes. For all union of minds proceeds from love, and the union of minds between two persons of different sexes, proceeds from this distinct love—that the man loves the woman because she *loves his understanding*, and that the woman loves the man for the sake of his *understanding*, and its

*uses.** Thus their union is like that of love and wisdom, for all love seeks earnestly to be united with wisdom for its guidance and defence, and all wisdom is alike desirous to be united with love for its life and blessedness; for the same reasons, the love of the woman is always eager to unite itself to the wisdom of the man, and the wisdom of the man, in its turn, is alike eager to unite itself with the woman's love. We may add yet further, that as love is imperfect, or rather is not anything, without union with its proper wisdom, and as wisdom is imperfect, or rather is not anything, until it be united to its proper love, so the woman's love is imperfect, or rather is not anything, separate from the wisdom of the man, and the wisdom of the man is imperfect, or rather is not anything, unless united with the love of the woman. It is, however, well to be noted, that as all true love and wisdom are from God, and cannot be united but in and by God, so the woman's love for the man's wisdom, and the man's wisdom itself, are from God, and cannot be united, unless both the woman and the man have devout respect to God as the only Source of their love and wisdom, and the only true cement of their union.

What you have been observing, said Miranda, concerning the distinct characters and qualities of man and woman, brings to my recollection what my favourite poet, Milton, says on the same subject, in his beautiful description of Adam and Eve in Paradise—his words are these:—

For contemplation he, and valour form'd,
 For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
 He for God only, she for God in him.

* When it is said that the "man loves the woman *because she loves his understanding,*" it is not intended to assert that he loves her on this account alone, independently of her virtues, graces, accomplishments, &c., but only to say, that what renders her virtues, graces, and accomplishments, more agreeable in his eyes, is the consideration of the peculiar harmony and agreement subsisting between her affection and his understanding, by virtue of which harmony and agreement, her affection is always seeking to be conjoined with his understanding, and his understanding in its turn with her affection. Just as the principle of good desires to be united to truth, and truth seeks to be united to good.

You might have added, too, replied Paternus, what the same poet has put into the mouth of the angel Raphael, in his discourse with Adam, concerning Eve:—

What high'r in her society thou find'st,
 Attractive, human, rational, love still:
 In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
 Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
 In reason, and is judicious, is the scale
 By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend.

You see, therefore, my children, that according to the enlightened views of this great poet, conjugal union, or marriage, is grounded in the eternal distinction of the two sexes, as to mind as well as body, and in their capacity to bless each other according to that distinction. You see, likewise, how good and wise men, in all ages, have regarded conjugal love as something sacred and holy, perfectly distinct from what is called *lust* or *passion*, and therefore calculated, by its nature, as well as by its origin, to *raise the soul to heaven*, and conjoin it with God.

But how, asked Eugenio, am I to distinguish in myself that pure and sacred conjugal love which you speak of from that base and unholy lust or passion which bears a resemblance to it, and which so many people, as it appears to me, mistake for it?

Your rule is plain, replied Paternus, because the features of discrimination are broad and manifest. For pure and genuine conjugal love is of the *mind*, and descends thence into the body; whereas lust, or passion, is of the body only, and has no place at all in the mind, but only in the animal nature. Pure conjugal love, again, delights to look *upwards* towards God, and thus to connect itself with an *eternal* end; whereas lust, or passion, delights only to look *downwards*, and never thinks of regarding any end except the present gratification of appetite. Pure conjugal love, again, finds its chief happiness in being confined to *one* of the sex, and trembles at the idea of more than one; whereas

lust, or passion, is pleased with the variety of unlimited indulgences, and would regard as a fetter of iron the shackle which should bind its attachment to a single object. Pure conjugal love, again, is an internal, spiritual, and heavenly principle; and being connected with its divine origin, creates in the human mind a little *paradise* of its own *peace, innocence, purity, and bliss*; whereas lust, or passion, is an external, natural, and infernal principle, which, being separated from God, banishes the human soul from paradise, and imprisons it in a miserable dungeon of *restlessness, guilt, unhappiness, and pollution*, with the lost spirits of darkness.

But of all the characters of distinction, continued Paternus, between pure conjugal love and lust, or passion, none is more remarkable than that which discriminates each in its *figurative* capacity. For, as you have frequently heard me observe in former conversations, all things here below are *figures*, and intended to be so, of the spiritual realities of the invisible world, or of those eternal principles which constitute, on the one hand, the kingdom of light and blessedness, and on the other, the kingdom of darkness and misery. Thus, *marriage*, grounded in pure conjugal love, and uniting the minds and bodies of two conjugal partners here on earth, is an exact representative figure of that *heavenly and eternal* marriage by which the divine Love and Wisdom exist for ever united—first, in their supreme Source, called JEHOVAH GOD, in the Old Testament, and *Jesus Christ* in the New; and next, by descent, in their two grand recipients, the angelic heaven and the church on earth. Hence, JEHOVAH GOD, in the Old Testament, and *Jesus Christ* in the New, is so emphatically called by the significant and sacred appellation of BRIDEGROOM and HUSBAND,* whilst His kingdom and church is called by

* How plainly does it appear from these appellations, that JEHOVAH and *Jesus Christ* are one and the same identical Being, with this only difference, that the JEHOVAH of the *Old Testament* had not assumed the *Human Nature* or *Humanity*, whereas *Jesus Christ* was JEHOVAH manifested in, and made one with the *Humanity* &c.—For who cannot see that it is impossible for the Church to have more than one *Bridegroom* and *Husband*!

the sacred and significant name of *Bride* and *Wife*. Hence, too, the kingdom of heaven is so frequently, in the New Testament, compared to a *marriage*, and the conjunction of our Lord Jesus Christ with His people is called the *marriage supper* of the Lamb. In pure conjugal love, therefore, and the blessed union to which it gives birth, we behold a representative *image* or *picture* of the union of all divine and heavenly principles, from their SUPREME SOURCE to their lowest state of descent and operation;* which image or picture, being continually before the eyes of the married partners, and excited by mutual presence and aspect, inspires them with an ever-increasing regard one towards another, and replenishes their mutual love with a fulness of new and endless delights, innumerable and inconceivable.

But what a sad reverse, continued Paternus, does the operation of lust, or passion, exhibit in its unhappy votaries! For who cannot discern that it also is a *figure*—an exact representative *image* or *picture*—of the consociation and confederation of all wicked principles and persuasions in that dark kingdom in which it originates. Hence *adultery*, which is nothing else but the effect of lust, or passion, is a term applied, in the Sacred Scriptures, to denote all wickedness, whilst the perpetrators of wickedness are called a *seed of adulterers*, an *evil and adulterous generation*. In *adulterous* love, or lust, therefore, nothing is to be seen but a *frightful* representation of all uncleanness, impiety, and rebellion against GOD. Pure and legitimate marriage, then, presents to our delighted eyes a blessed figure of *Heaven*; and of all the sacred and happy principles which compose it; whilst its opposite, which is adulterous lust, exhibits nothing to our view but the disgusting sight of the *infernal* abodes, and of all those miserable and abominable corruptions from which they are formed.

* This *figurative* character of marriage is beautifully expressed in the *Office for Matrimony*, as it is used in the Church of England. The words are these:—“O GOD, who hast consecrated the state of matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that by it is represented and signified the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt CHRIST and His church.”

But supposing, said Miranda, that I should be inclined to love a man because he was *handsome, agreeable, and accomplished*, would you call this love by the name of true conjugal love, or of its opposite?

If you were inclined to love him, replied Paternus, *for no other reason* than because he was handsome, agreeable, and accomplished, I should not say that in such love there was anything of that pure conjugal principle of which we have been speaking. For the pure principle of conjugal attachment is always distinguished, as we have seen, by a regard to God and to those eternal purities which constitute His kingdom. Nevertheless, I do not insist that a handsome form, and agreeable and accomplished manners, are of *no account* in forming a matrimonial connexion. I only insist that they ought to be viewed in connexion with *higher qualities*; and ought not, if those higher qualities be wanting, to be allowed any influence in directing the choice, but rather to be regarded as snares and temptations to mislead the affections, and thus to throw you into the arms of an *infernal*, whilst you fancied you were taking an *angel* to your bosom. For a handsome form and agreeable accomplishments, it is possible, like the beautiful rind of some fruits, may only be an external covering to rottenness and decay within. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST has accordingly given His disciples this salutary caution—"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment;" and this caution is particularly applicable to all young people in their quest of a conjugal partner. For if they judge only according to the *appearance*, they may make the most dangerous mistakes, by supposing the *rind* of the fruit to be everything, and thus prefer *form to substance*, and the tinsel ornaments of mere external advantages to the solid gold of internal piety, wisdom, and virtue.

But you were speaking, said Miranda, of female love being the love of the man's *wisdom*, and that this love

is the proper love of the woman—by wisdom, do you mean great *talents* and *learning*?

No, Miranda, replied Paternus; for wisdom is distinguished from great talents and learning, and principally in this respect;—that wisdom, properly so called, is always connected with *religion* and the *fear* of God, whereas learning and great talents have no such necessary connection, and are, therefore, frequently found in the possession of the most profligate and abandoned characters. Let me earnestly, therefore, advise you, my child, to be ever most scrupulously upon your guard against the influence of great talents and learning, when *separated* from Religion, lest you should take a *serpent* to your bosom and mistake it for a *man*. For great talents and learning, when destitute of religious principle, which is the fear and love of God, form the most tremendous, as well as the most poisonous of all serpents; nor can this serpent ever become a man, but by admitting, and submitting to, the guidance and government of that true wisdom, which alone constitutes a man, properly so called, and which is always in connection with the wisdom of the Most HIGH.

Would you say, then, asked Eugenio (looking on his father with great earnestness), that the married state is to be preferred to the single?

I would say, replied Paternus, that both states are in themselves *good*, but that the single state is only so far *good* as it looks forward to, and prepares for, the married state. I would say, further, that though the single state is good, as a preparatory state, yet it never becomes what in the Sacred Scriptures is called "*very good*," (Gen. i. 31.) until it is introduced to the sacred chamber of pure, holy, and genuine conjugal love, and thus loses its *lonely* character. On this comparative view of the two states, it was once asked, with a degree of humour, by a man more distinguished, alas! for his wit and learning, than for his wisdom and piety—"What is

one-half of a pair of scissors good for?" But I should be unwilling thus to insinuate that the single state is *without* its uses, because though one-half of the scissors is good for nothing, if it be supposed always to remain detached from its other half; yet it certainly is good for *something*, on the idea of its capacity of meeting with its mate, and fulfilling all the purposes of such meeting. Would it not, therefore, be wiser to assign to each state its proper advantages, yet with this reserve, that the married state possesses advantages far superior to those of the single state?

And in what, said Eugenio, would you conceive those superior advantages to consist?

I would not scruple to say, replied Paternus, that the married state has greatly the advantage over the single in these four points:—

1st. In being *more agreeable to the order of God* :

2ndly. In being *more admmissive of happiness* ;

3rdly. In being *more conducive to man's purification* ; and 4thly. In promoting *more excellent uses*.

I should feel most happy, my dear father, said Miranda, to be convinced of those advantages, and especially of the *first*: for since the reading of the 7th chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, I have been inclined to think that the apostle gives a manifest preference to the single state above the married.

It is impossible to suppose, replied Paternus, that the apostle meant to discourage marriage *in general*; for if all mankind were to act upon such a principle, what would become of the world, and how could it be legitimately peopled? Besides, it is necessary to reconcile Revelation with itself, in such a manner as that it may not contradict itself; and yet, if we allow that St. Paul *discouraged* marriage, we must say, not only that he contradicts the positive command of God on the subject, as it is delivered in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, but also that he contradicts himself. For in other

parts of his writings we find him asserting, that "marriage is *honourable in all*," and that the doctrine which forbids to marry is a "*doctrine of devils*." But *discouragement* of marriage, when authorised by an apostle, amounts to a *prohibition*; and, therefore, if we say that St. Paul meant to *discourage* marriage, we are constrained to say likewise, that, according to his own testimony, he taught the "*doctrine of devils*," which it is impossible to suppose. To clear St. Paul, then, from every imputation, either of contradicting the general tenor of the Sacred Scriptures, or of being inconsistent with himself, we must look out for some *particular* reason which could induce him to write to the Corinthians, as he has done, in a strain of apparent disparagement of marriage. And it is happy for us that we have not far to look for such a reason, because we find the apostle asserting, in the 26th verse of the above chapter, that it "is good for the *present distress* for a man so to be," that is, to remain unmarried. It was therefore, the *present distress*, in other words, the *disturbed and persecuted* state of the church, at the time when St. Paul wrote, which alone operated as a reason for his recommending to his Corinthian proselytes a *single* state in preference to marriage.

I am much obliged to you, my dear father, said Miranda, for your very satisfactory explanation of the apostle's meaning, and I feel now more disposed than before to attend to what you may have to say on the *advantages* which *married* life possesses over that which is *single*. Will you then proceed to show me, in the first place, why marriage is more agreeable to the *order of God* than a life of celibacy?

Whatsoever God has *commanded*, replied Paternus, must of course be more agreeable to the order of God than what he has *not* commanded. Now God has ordained marriage on the authority of an express command, where He says, "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife,*

and they twain shall be one flesh." (Gen. ii. 24 ; Matt. xix. 5 ; Mark x. 7, 8.) But He has no where ordained *celibacy* either by *command*, or by *commendation*. Moreover, GOD has been pleased, in His own MOST HOLY WORD, to give His divine sanction, countenance, and security to marriage, in the first place, by *forbidding adultery*, which is the opposite to all true marriage, and also its destruction ; and in the second place, by ordaining rules for the regulation of conjugal love, and by establishing the sanctity and dignity of that love, whilst He deems it worthy of an honourable comparison with His own Divine Love for His church, and His church's reciprocal love to Himself. Besides, it is according to the order of GOD that the world should be *peopled* and replenished with *inhabitants* ; but who cannot see that this order is fulfilled more effectually by marriage than by celibacy ? It is again, according to the order of GOD, that the natural asperity of the man should be softened, and subdued by the mild and gentle affections of the woman, and that the mild and gentle affections of the woman should be guided, elevated, and blessed, by the understanding of the man, and that thus the man and the woman together may form *one mind* and *one life*, combining the separate perfections and excellencies of each ; but how can these effects be promoted so successfully as by the bond of marriage ? It is, again, according to the order of GOD, that children should be educated in His fear and love, and that they should be instructed also in the rules and obligations of social, moral, and religious life ; but how inadequate to this purpose is a state of celibacy, and how admirably is marriage calculated to promote it ! Lastly, it is according to the order of GOD, that there should exist here on earth an exact corresponding *figure* of His own most holy conjunction with His kingdom and church, that so all mankind, beholding this sacred and lovely portrait, might find their understandings enlightened, and their affections elevated by it, to the contempla-

tion of that eternal marriage of the Divine Love and Wisdom, which is the wonder and delight of angels, and of all good men; but where now upon earth shall we discover such a corresponding figure, except in pure and legitimate marriage? I conclude, therefore, and I flatter myself you will agree with me in the conclusion, that the married state is more agreeable to the order of God than the single state; and, consequently, that it is more pleasing and acceptable to God, since God must, of course, be best pleased with what is according to His own order.

I wish, said Miranda, you may succeed as well in proving your *second* point, as you have done in proving your first. Will you have the goodness to try now to convince me, that the marriage state has the advantage over the single in being more admissive of *happiness*, as much as in being more accordant to the order of God? I fear, replied Paternus, that there will be more difficulty in producing conviction on this point than on that which we have just been discussing, I will not say in *your* mind, but in the minds of the bulk of mankind, by reason of the very imperfect and inadequate ideas which people in general form concerning *happiness*. For the case is, that at this day happiness is usually confounded with *pleasure*, and few are at the pains to make the proper distinction between the two terms. Few, therefore, are enabled to discern the proper characters and qualities of each, and how pleasure is a mere external gratification, common alike to the human species and the brutal, whereas, happiness is an internal joy, the peculiar and distinguishing property of men and angels. Pleasure is of the *body* and its *senses*, but happiness is of the *mind* and its *affections*. Pleasure, again, is enjoyed by the wicked and the profligate, as well as by the pious and the good, but happiness is the exclusive privilege of the latter. Again, pleasure is frequently unconnected with God and Religion, but happiness grows in no soil on which God does not shine

as a fructifying SUN, and which is not fertilized by the refreshing waters of religious *truth* and *knowledge*. In short, pleasure is a mere external, natural, temporal, and *short-lived* enjoyment, and if separated from the superior principles of the love and wisdom of GOD, is polluted, filthy, degrading, and destructive; but happiness, is an internal, spiritual, eternal, and *never-fading* bliss, which, by virtue of its conjunction with its Divine Source, is pure, chaste, ennobling, and saving, because proceeding from above; it is always elevating man out of all his natural defilements, to lay hold of the golden *crown* of everlasting life, righteousness, and peace. I wish it, however, to be observed, that happiness and pleasure are not incompatible with each other, because it is possible that the external delights of the body and its senses may be united with the internal joys of the mind and its affections, in which case the former are made partakers of the purities of the latter.

But what, asked Eugenio, has your definition of happiness to do with the comparative claims of the married and single state to the possession of it?

More, perhaps, than you are aware of, replied Paternus, because when it is once seen that happiness is an internal, spiritual, and everlasting principle, to be found only in wise and pious minds, it will then be seen clearly how much more *married* life is admissive of such an invaluable good than *single* life.

Do you suppose, then, said Eugenio, that an unmarried person is incapable of tasting a happiness grounded in an internal, spiritual, and everlasting principle?

No, my dear Eugenio, replied Paternus, it is impossible to suppose any such thing. But you will please to recollect, that our present enquiry is concerning the *comparative* share of such happiness, as enjoyed in the married state and in the single. Without, therefore, denying to the unmarried person his share, I will insist, that both in quality and quantity it falls far short of what he might have tasted in the married state. And

here allow me to call to your remembrance the distinction above adverted to, between *good* and *very good*, and to apply it in the present case respecting happiness. An unmarried person, it was shown, may be *good*, but not *very good*, until he is united with his conjugal partner. In like manner I would say, that an unmarried person may be *happy*, but not *very happy* until he enters upon such an union. In pursuing my argument, however, I do not mean to lay stress on external advantages, or such as accrue from the division of domestic cares and labours, from the endearments of mutual society, from the delights of educating children, from the reciprocal aid and protection afforded, especially in time of sickness, &c. &c., though these considerations ought not to be entirely overlooked. But the point of happiness, on which I would lay particular stress, is that which results from the very *nature of conjugal love itself*. For who does not perceive, and allow, that this love, regarded merely as a *natural* love, is the most delightful and gratifying of all loves, having more natural bliss annexed to it than any other love? Who, therefore, cannot perceive, and who will not be disposed to allow, that when this love is rendered *spiritual*, by being directed upwards to its Divine Source, and enjoyed under the influence of that Source, it then becomes admissive of *spiritual* and *heavenly blessedness*, as far superior to those which other loves enjoy, as its natural delights are superior to the natural delights attending any other love. Besides, it ought further to be taken into the account, that every blessedness is increased by *sharing* it with another; but where will you find another like a conjugal partner, to be a *sharer* with you in your joys? Again, a conjugal partner not only shares in your joys, but also communicates his own. Thus the joys of each partner, being imparted to the other, are continually *doubled*, and, according to this two-fold measure, must ever exceed those of *single* life, which do not admit of any such increase.

But would it not, said Eugenio, be a sad drawback on the happiness of a conjugal pair, if they were uncertain about its continuance *after death*?

I grant it would, replied Paternus, but did you ever know a true conjugal pair who were distressed by any *uncertainty* of such a sort? Or rather, does not their hope of the continuance of their bliss amount to a degree of *certainty*, arising from the full persuasion and desire of meeting again in another world? And does not this very persuasion and desire prove the certainty of the accomplishment of their object? For whence can such a persuasion and desire come, but from that DIVINE BEING, who has mercifully implanted them in the human bosom for the happiness of His creatures? And is it reasonable to suppose that GOD would implant a persuasion and a desire which He never intended to fulfil and gratify? Besides, is it not most certain that man's whole life in this world is meant to be *preparatory* for another? But how could this be true, if conjugal life and love, which form so large a share of man's life and enjoyments here, were to be extinguished after death? I conclude, therefore, on the ground both of reason and of Scripture, that conjugal happiness survives the grave, and that the fear of its extinction can never operate with conjugal partners as any drawback upon its joys.

I do not know, said Miranda to her father, whether my brother is satisfied or not with your conclusion, but for my own part I feel the fullest conviction of its truth, and of the superior blessedness, too, of married life above single, because it appears to me that no human happiness can be so great as that of two married partners, who agree in referring all their mutual joys to a Divine Source, and who find a delight in offering up their daily united prayers and praises to their HEAVENLY FATHER. But though I am inwardly persuaded that, in happiness, the married state has the advantage over the single, yet I confess it is not quite so clear to me, how it can have the advantage also, as being more conducive to man's

purification, which was the *third* point you insisted on. Will you have goodness, my dear father, to explain this point more fully to my apprehension?

It must not, and ought not to be concealed, my child, replied Paternus, that the married state has its *trials*, *temptations*, and *difficulties*, and I wish you therefore to be well apprised of this, apparently, hard circumstance. For the purification, and consequent union of two minds, are not to be effected in any other way, since every human love, even that which subsists between married pairs, is at first *natural*, and can only be rendered *spiritual*, by spiritual combats, against its natural impurities; and yet until it is rendered spiritual, no true spiritual and conjugal union can be effected between the parties. The parties themselves, indeed, may often suppose that their union is accomplished on the day of marriage, but this is a great mistake: it can only be accomplished successively *after* the day of marriage, when the *interiors* of the mind of each party begin to open, and manifest themselves, which had before been kept closed by external joys. Now in the interiors of the mind of all mankind, as both revelation and experience assure us, there is a great mixture of natural *evil*, which evil being opposite to conjugal love and bliss, has a tendency to destroy them, if it be not discovered, combated, and subdued. For the natural evil of the human heart seeks *dominion*, being a composition of *self-love* and *the love of the world*, so that man, under the influence of such love, is unwilling to submit himself, not only to the will of a conjugal partner, but even to the will of GOD HIMSELF. Whilst such evil therefore remains uncontrolled, and is suffered to have ascendancy, all conjugal union is in danger of being totally dissolved, nor can that danger be escaped but by the eradication of the corrupt principle from which it springs. Hence, then, arises the necessity of trial, temptation, and difficulty, with conjugal partners, after the day of marriage. For they are thus to be

taught the salutary lesson of renouncing and combating their natural evils, that so the love of God, from which all true conjugal union is derived, may be implanted in the place of such evils. They are also to be taught, by the same means, the wholesome discipline of *bearing with each other* in the great work of purification, and also of *submitting to God*. The natural love of dominion is by the same process to be broken, until each party is willing to accommodate to the will of God and of the other party, and both find their principal enjoyment in such accommodation.

But, allowing the necessity of such a process of purification, said Miranda, how does it appear that the *married* state is better suited for its accomplishment than the *single*?

It appears from this consideration, replied Paternus; because in the married state the partners are called to a more constant *exercise* of the duty of the submission of their own wills to the will of another, than in the single state. For, in the single state, both the man and the woman are left more to the indulgence of the *selfish* affections, and have fewer calls to combat them. But in the married state there is required a *continual* sacrifice of inclination to duty, a *daily* and *hourly* exercise of surrender to another's will, especially the will of God. In this *apparent* disadvantage, therefore, consists the *real* advantage of married life over the single as to *purification*. For what is more purifying than the submission of the will, properly understood, and what is man's great *defilement* but a want of such submission? What great reason, then, have we to adore the goodness and wisdom of the FATHER OF THE UNIVERSE, who, in ordaining marriage and its sacred obligations, has established, at the same time, the best and fittest means of our *purification*, by calling us to the *most constant* surrender of ourselves to *His* will, in the *first* place, and in the *second* place to the will of that other being with whom we are desirous to be united in the closest bonds of love, of confidence, and of bliss!

I very much fear, said Miranda, sighing, that I am not yet sufficiently practised in the great duty of *sub-mission* to be able fully to comprehend all that you have been saying on the subject; but this I think I can perceive clearly, that the obstinacy and perverseness of our own wills are, in general, the greatest disturbers of our peace both in the single, and married state, and that I shall be both happy and thankful to find, that the latter state is better calculated than the former to banish from our bosoms for ever those enemies to our purification and bliss. But, quitting this part of the subject for the present, may I now entreat you, my dear Father, to proceed to your *fourth* and *last* point, in which you say the married state has the advantage over the unmarried, viz., the point of *usefulness*?

On this point, replied Paternus, I am happy to find that I can save myself some trouble, by referring you to a sermon of the late venerable and learned Bishop Taylor, on the *mysteriousness and duties of marriage*, in which, amongst other admirable remarks, you will find the following beautiful illustration of our present subject:—“Single life (says he), like a fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in sweetness, but lives alone, and is confined, and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness from every flower, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world, and obeys kings, and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God hath designed the present constitution of the world.”

But, beautiful as is this illustration, continued Paternus, I should be unwilling thus to limit my ideas of the superior *usefulness* of marriage. For the uses enumerated by the good bishop appear to be merely *natural* uses, or such as relate only to the temporal life of this world; whereas it is well known there are such things as *spiritual* uses, which, being connected with God and His eternal kingdom, are of indefinitely higher interest.

and importance than the former. Now, marriage, I would insist, has the advantage over single life in *both* these kinds of uses. For, as to natural and temporal uses, it is exactly figured, as above, by the good bishop's useful bee; but, as to *spiritual* and *eternal* uses, it would be extremely difficult to find any figure or representation in this lower world which would fully describe it. For pure conjugal love, it has been already shown, conducts the soul of man to the highest attainable state of spiritual purification, and in spiritual purification is contained the seed of all spiritual usefulness, consisting in a closer conjunction of life with GOD, in a more intimate consociation with the angelic heaven, in a higher elevation of the love and affections, in a greater fruitfulness in all good thoughts, words, and works, in a more fixed stability of principle and of life, in a more vital energy and activity of the will and understanding, thus in increased strength and security against the powers of darkness and the seductions of the world and the flesh. Such are the important uses of conjugal life, which life, therefore, comparatively as the *flying eagle* (though no comparison can do it justice), soars aloft above all the disorders, cares, and anxieties of this lower world; ascends into a *pure atmosphere*; and approaches as near as anything mortal can approach, to the *Sun of heaven*, to receive the fuller radiance of its all-blessing heat and light. Possibly, too, these uses are not limited to the conjugal partners themselves, but extend even to the blessed inhabitants of the eternal world. For I have frequently been led to conceive, and this on the ground of Scripture authority, that the holy angels take delight in looking on the happy subjects of *married virtue*, as they take delight in beholding one sinner that *repenteth*. And if the delight of those immortal beings is increased by the pure joys of conjugal life, what can be more in favour of the superior *usefulness* of that life?

But do you conceive, father, asked Eugenio, that the world will be disposed to think with you on this subject,

and give you credit for all these advantages which you assign to married life?

I do not expect, replied Paternus, that the world at *this* day will favour my sentiments, nor that it ever will, until it comes to entertain more *just ideas* of God, and to be more zealous about *living the life* which God requires, and which is in agreement with His Divine Order. For it is remarkable that marriage and religion are in the closest connexion with each other, as may be known experimentally from this consideration, that where marriage is made light of and degraded, so is religion, and *vice versâ*. Accordingly, we find it recorded as a distinguishing feature of the corrupt Jewish church, when it was destitute of religion, that "their maidens were not given to marriage;" (Psalm lxxviii. 68.) to instruct us that where religion is debased and corrupted, so will the intercourse between the sexes be. Notwithstanding, however, my small, or rather no hope, of securing to my opinions the favour of the world, I feel the fullest confidence that everything which I have said on the subject of marriage, will be found perfectly in unison with the wishes and sentiments of all good Christians, who are disposed truly to love our *Lord Jesus Christ* and keep His commandments of love and charity. And let me not be deemed either presumptuous or superstitious, when I express to you my firm belief, that the time is fast approaching when *marriage* will be restored again in the earth to its due honours, because I believe the time is fast approaching when mankind will be restored to a fuller sense of the truth, the obligations, and the excellence of *true religion*. This happy reformation, however, can never be expected to take place until the LORD GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST is exalted to due honour in His church, by being acknowledged in heart and life, to be the ONE ONLY TRUE GOD and the ONE ONLY BRIDEGROOM and HUSBAND of the church. And this blessed acknowledgment, I trust, is already begun, is rapidly advancing, and must finally be accomplished,

because that great GOD and SAVIOUR, speaking of His coming to restore His church here on earth, and of becoming her Husband, has been pleased to declare—“Behold, I come quickly;” and again—“Surely I come quickly,” (Rev. xxii. 7, 20.) Even so come, LORD JESUS! AMEN.

Allow me, then, my dearest children, continued Paternus, to press upon you most earnestly, and with all the affection of a father most solicitous for your eternal welfare, a serious attention to the true origin, nature, obligations, and advantages of married life. Consider with yourselves that the institution of that life is from GOD, and that consequently it is *most agreeable to the order of things which He has appointed, most admissible of happiness, most conducive to your purification, and best calculated to promote usefulness.* Remember, however, that you can never hope to enter into the enjoyment of these superior advantages of married life, until you form your minds to the knowledge and the practice of Religion, since Religion and Marriage always go hand in hand together, inasmuch that where there is no Religion there can be no true marriage, and where religion is *perverted and corrupted*, marriage becomes *defiled and degraded* in the same degree. Let the love and the wisdom of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, then, be exalted to pre-eminence in your hearts, and understandings, and lives, if you ever hope to wear the golden crown of conjugal life. For in the degree in which you are conjoined with that great GOD and SAVIOUR, in the same degree will be the purity, the stability, and the bliss of your union with your respective married partners. Look up to that GOD also, in the spirit of fervent supplication, to *direct* you in your *choice*, from a full conviction that all marriages are under the control of His merciful providence, and that without His fatherly guidance you can never hope to make a *right* choice, and to avoid the mischiefs of a *wrong* one. Wait also *patiently* for direction from above on this occasion,

test by your own impetuosity and violence you should go contrary to the counsels of heaven. Do you, therefore, my dear Eugenio, never think of taking to your bosom a partner who cannot attach herself to your wisdom, and love it because it is the wisdom of Religion and of God; and do *you* likewise, my dear Miranda, never think of taking to your bosom a man who has *no* wisdom on which to fix your attachment, and whom, therefore, you cannot love from a wise and religious principle. On this occasion, let me further conjure you, my dear Eugenio, to recollect continually, that the proper distinguishing character of your sex is *wisdom*, and that without wisdom you are not properly a *man*, still less can you be a *husband*. But recollect at the same time, that all wisdom, *rightly* so called, is *from* GOD, and leads *to* GOD. Pray, therefore, earnestly and continually to GOD for this best of gifts and graces, and with a view to the accomplishment of your prayers, make it a point of conscience to read every day some portion of GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD, and to endeavour to form it into your life. And let me also conjure you, my dear Miranda, never to forget what is the proper distinguishing character of your sex, and that you can only become a *woman* and a *wife* by *loving religious wisdom*, and especially the religious wisdom of your *husband*. Cherish, therefore, in your heart all the female graces and virtues of *humility, meekness, gentleness, softness, and submission*, and pray continually to your HEAVENLY FATHER to enable you to cherish them. Thus may both of you hope to become qualified to enter upon the married state, and into the fruition of all its blessings, because in the possession of the above qualifications you will have the best possible security that the *gold of your wedding ring will never be debased with any alloy*. Thus, too, after fulfilling your respective duties on earth, you may hope finally to be admitted into that kingdom of purity and bliss, called the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB, where your conjugal joys will be for ever

increasing, and for ever filling with new delights, from their eternal Source, whose high and holy name is *Jesus Christ*. That such may be the happy lot of you both, will always be the earnest and devout prayer of your tender and affectionate father. AMEN!

A PRAYER,

Which Paternus recommended to his Children as Preparatory to Marriage.

O Almighty and Merciful Lord, who in Thy tender love to mankind, hast been pleased to ordain *marriage* as a sacred figure of Thine everlasting conjunction with Thy Church, and for the multiplication, comfort, and purification of Thy children, and the increase of Thy Kingdom in heaven, give ear, I beseech Thee, unto the prayer of Thy humble servant, who is desirous to prepare for so heavenly an ordinance. Let Thy Holy Spirit ever direct and guide me in the choice which I may be disposed to make of the partner of my affections. Deliver me from the presumption which would lead me to flatter myself that, in a matter of such infinite concern to my happiness, I am able to guide myself. Preserve me also from that folly and vanity of my own deceitful heart, which would tempt me to look only on the *outside* of the qualifications necessary to make the married state both profitable and blessed. Open mine eyes, and keep them open, to see that beauty, accomplishments, wealth, and talents, can never secure conjugal felicity, if they be separated from Thy sacred fear and love. Let *religion*, therefore, be the *first* object of my regard in the determination of my choice, and let me value other qualifications only so far as I see them connected with religion and under its control. Guard me from that *impetuosity* of my own spirit which would make me forward to follow the bias of my own inclinations, rather than wait *patiently* for the decision of the counsels of Thine all-wise providence. And grant me, I beseech Thee, the grace to purify my heart and life, through Thy MOST HOLY WORD, from all my natural evils of an inordinate self-love, the love of this world, pride, vanity, covetousness, and sensuality, and every other anti-Christian affection and disposition. So shall I have a well-grounded hope to live ever under Thy guidance, and so, sooner or later, as seemeth best to Thine unerring wisdom, be introduced to that state of conjugal felicity which may most promote Thy glory, and my own salvation. *Our Father, &c.*

A PRAYER,

*Recommended by Paternus to be used frequently after Marriage
by the Married couple conjointly.*

O Almighty and Merciful Lord, who, in Thine adorable providence, has been pleased to bring us together, and unite us in the sacred bonds of conjugal affection, strengthen, and confirm in us every day, we entreat Thee, the holy and eternal principles of life which are necessary for the security of those bonds. Let not our natural corruptions again break forth to lay waste the paradise of unity, love, and peace which Thou hast mercifully planted in our bosoms. Give us the grace to watch diligently over our own hearts, that no destructive temper and thought, no defiled inclination and purpose, may ever divide, and, by dividing, destroy us. We are at present most fully convinced that our happiness and our heaven consist in our mutual love towards each other, and that if this love should perish, we shall lose our all. But we are convinced, at the same time, that if left to ourselves without Thee, the warmth of that affection which unites us, will, by degrees, grow cold, and our love will even be turned into hatred. Continue, then, we humbly beseech Thee, Thy fatherly watchfulness and care over us, that so the heavenly flame of true conjugal regard may never be extinguished. Inspire us with the grace to bear with each other's infirmities, to be mild, gentle, and amiable in our conduct towards each other, to let no suspicion destroy mutual confidence, no discord disturb unity, no violence and impetuosity overturn the empire of sweet tranquillity, innocence, and peace, which Thou hast begun to establish in our hearts. We have pledged ourselves at Thine altar, to *love, comfort, and honour each other*. If we are negligent in the discharge of these duties, we are offenders against Thee, to whom we have pledged ourselves for the performance of them. Grant, then, MOST GRACIOUS LORD, that we may keep the promises which we have mutually interchanged in Thy presence, that Thou mayst delight to make Thy continual abode with us, and that thus beholding in each other the consecrated place of Thy residence, and the glory of Thy countenance, the bliss of our union may be for ever increasing, being more and more filled with Thy joy, peace, and benediction. *Our Father, &c.*

 LINES ON WEDDED LOVE.

SEE how the "rosy-bosomed" Spring
Decks with fresh charms yon verdant grove!
The wedded birds, on buoyant wing,
Obey the welcome voice of love:

In partnership of dear delight
 Each busy task of use they share,
 And sweetest songs, from morn to night,
 The rapture of their hearts declare.

But when fierce Winter strips the plain,
 And desolation lowers around,
 No wonted wing, no sportive strain,
 No mutual bliss of life is found ;
 Scared by the storm, each feathered mate
 Forgets the bliss so late pursued,
 And nature mourns her altered state
 In sad and silent solitude.

Not so with man! his flame of love,
 True to the Source from whence it sprang,
 Still seeks its essence from above,
 And glows with life for ever young :
 The clouds and frowns of angry skies,
 The checks that wintry sorrows give,
 Are helps by which its fervours rise,
 Are deaths by which its pleasures live.

Thou, Lord, whose wisdom did provide
 That man, in *union*, should have rest,
 Didst form a *partner* for his side,
 At once to bless, and to be blest :
 To seal this bond, Thou didst declare,
 "Whom God hath joined, let no one part,"
 That human pairs might ever share
 The bliss that most delights the heart.

If, in a world where cares abound,
 Where few are firm to Thy command,
 Some willing hearts may yet be found
 Who own all mercies from Thy hand,
 Shower on those hearts Thy bounteous love,
 And bind them in Thy nuptial chain ;
 Bid each to each a blessing prove,
 A help from sin, a rest from pain !

Teach them, in *wedded love*, to shun
 Each selfish thought, each angry word,
 Their mutual course with ardour run,
 By trust in Thee, Almighty Lord ;
 And when the earthly ties shall cease,
 Their souls, conjoined, shall rise above,
 And never part, but dwell in peace,
 In heavenly rest, and joy, and love.

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46	0 2	69	1 0
47	0 2	70	1 10
48	0 6	71	0 10
50	0 6	72	1 0
51	0 2	73	0 8
52	0 2	74	0 6
53	0 2	75	0 6
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Manchester	Peter-street.
Melbourne, Derbyshire	Penn-lane.
Middleton, Lancashire	Wood-street.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.....	Percy-street.
Norwich	Queen-street.
Nottingham	Trinity Church-street.
Oldham	Retiro-place.
Preston	Avenham-road.
Paisley.....	8, Barr-street.
Ramsbottom	Ramsbottom-lane.
Salford	Bolton-street.
Salisbury	Castle-street.
Stand Lane.....	Pilkington.
Stockport	Rowcroft-place, Higher Hillgate.
Stonehill.....	Farnworth, near Bolton.
St. Heliers, Jersey.....	Victoria-street.
St. Ouyth	Spring-road.
Wigan	Duke-street, Wigan-lane.
Worley	Old-lane.