

A

# Wedding-Ring,

*Fit for the Finger :*

OR,

The Salve of Divinity on the Sore  
of Humanity.

L A I D O P E N I N A

## S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D A T

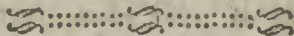
A WEDDING in ST. EDMOND'S.

By WILLIAM SECKER,

Late Preacher of the Gospel.

GENE: I. iii. 18.

*And the LORD G D said. It is not good that  
the man should be alone; I will make him  
an help meet for him.*



F A L K I R K :

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W E D D I N G - S E R M O N  
ON

GENESIS ii. 18.

*And the Lord God said. It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help-meet for him.*

**H**UMAN misery is to divine mercy, as a black foil to a sparkling diamond; or as a sable cloud to the sun-beams; Psalm viii. 4. "Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him!"

Man is, in his creation, angelical; in his corruption, diabolical; in his renovation, theological; in his translation, majestical.

There were four silver channels, in which the chrystal streams of God's affection ran to man in his creation.

1. In his preparation. 2. In his assimilation. 3. In his coronation. 4. In his association.

1. In his preparation. Other creatures received the character of their beings by a simple fiat; but there was a consultation at his forming; not for the difficulty, but for the dignity of the work. As the painter is most studious about that which he means to make his master-piece. The four elements were taken out of their elements to make up the perfection of man's complexion: the fire was purified, the earth was refined. When man was moulded, heaven and earth were married, a body from the one, was espoused to a soul from the other.

2. In his assimilation. Other creatures were made like themselves, but man was made like God as the wax hath the impresson of the seal upon it. It is admirable to behold so fair a picture in such coarse canvas, and so bright a character in so brown paper.

3. In his coronation. He that made man, and all the rest, made man over all the rest; he was a little lord of a great lordship: this king was crowned in his cradle.

4. In his association. Society is the solace of humanity; the world would be a desert, without a consort.

Most of man's parts are made in pairs; now he that was double in his perfection, must not be single in his condition; "And the Lord said," &c.

These words are like the iron gate that opened to Peter of it's own accord, dividing themselves into three parts:

1. An Introduction: "And the Lord God said" 2. An Assertion: "It is not good that man should be alone." 3. A determination: "I will make an help meet for him."

In the first there is a majesty proposed. — In the second there is a malady presented. In the third there is a remedy provided.

Once more let me put these grapes into the press.

1. The sovereignty of the expression: "And the Lord God said." 2. The solitariness of the condition: "It is not good" &c. 3. The suitableness of the provision: "I will make," &c.

In the first, there is the worth of veracity.  
 In the second, there is the want of society.—  
 In the third, there is the work of divinity.

Of these in their order. And,

1. The sovereignty of the expression —  
 “ And the Lord God said, &c ” Luke i. 70.  
 “ As he spake by the mouths of his prophets.”  
 In other scriptures he used their mouths, but  
 in this he makes use of his own. They were  
 the organs, and he the breath. They the  
 streams, and he the fountain. How he spake,  
 it is hard to determine; whether eternally,  
 internally, or externally. We are not to en-  
 quire into the manner of speaking, but into  
 the matter that is spoken; which leads me,  
 like a directing star from the suburbs to the  
 city; from the porch to the palace, from the  
 founder of the mine, to the treasure that is  
 in it: “ It is not good,” &c. In which we  
 have two things:

1. The Subject 2. The Predicate. The  
 Subject, “ Man alone.” The Predicate, “ It  
 is not good.” &c.

1. The Subject “ Man alone.” Take this  
 in two branches.

1. As it is limited to one man.
2. As it is lengthened to all men.

First As it is limited to one man: And so  
 it is taken particularly: Man, for the first man.

When all other creatures had their mates,  
 Adam wanted his, though he was the emperor  
 of the earth, and the admiral of the seas, yet  
 in Paradise without a companion; though he

was



was truly happy, yet he was not fully happy; though he had enough for his bread, yet he had not enough for his bed; though he had many creatures to serve him, yet he wanted a creature to solace him; when he was compounded in creation, he must be completed by conjunction; when he had no sin to hurt him, then he must have a wife to help him: "It is not good that man should be alone."

Secondly. As it is lengthened to all men; and so it is taken universally. Heb xiii 4. "Marriage is honourable unto all." It is not only warrantable but honourable. The whole Trinity hath conspired together to set a crown of glory upon the head of matrimony.

1. God the Father. Marriage was a tree planted within the walls of Paradise; the flower first grew in God's garden.

2. The Son. Marriage is a chryssal glass, wherein Christ and the saints do see each other's faces.

3. The Holy Ghost, by his overshadowing of the blessed Virgin. Well might the world, when it saw her pregnancy, suspect her virginity; but her matrimonial condition was a grave to that suspicion; without this, her innocency had not prevented her infamy; she needed a shield to defend that chastity abroad, which was kept inviolable at home.

Too many that have not worth enough to preserve their virginity, have yet will enough to cover their unchastity; turning the medicine of frailty into the mantle of filthiness. — Certainly she is mad that cuts off her leg, to get her a crutch; or that venoms her face to wear a mask.

Paul makes it one of the characters of those that should cherish the faith 1 Tim. iv. 3. Not to forbear marriage; which is not only lawful, but also honourable;—to forbid which, is damnably sinful, and only taught by the influence of devils. One of the Popes of Rome sprinkles this unholy and impure drop upon it, “*Carnis pollutionem et immunditiam.*”

It is strange that should be a pollution, which was instituted before corruption; or that impurity which was ordained in the state of innocency; or that they should make that to be a sin, which they make to be a sacrament; strange stupidity!—But a bastard may be laid at the door of chastity, and a leaden crown set upon a golden head.—Bellarmine, (that mighty atlas of the Papal power) blows his stinking breath upon it: “*Better were it for a priest to defile himself with many harlots, than to be married to one wife.*”—These children of the purple whose prefer a monasteries before marriages, a concubine before a companion. They use too many women for their lusts, to choose any for their love.—Their tables are so largely spread, that they cannot feed upon one dish. As for their extolling of a virgin-state, it is like him who commended fasting when he had filled his belly. Who knows not, that virginity is a pearl of a sparkling lustre? But the one cannot be set up, without the other be thrown down? No oblation will pacify the former, but the demolishing of the latter. Tho’ we find many enemies to the choice of marriage, yet it is rare to find any enemies to the use of marriage. They

They would pick the loek that wants the key,  
and pluck the fruit that do not plant the tree.  
The Hebrews have a saying, "That he is not  
a man that hath not a wife. Though they  
climb too high a bough yet it is to be feared  
that such flesh is full of imperfection, that is  
nottending to propagation: Though man alone,  
may be good, yet " It is not good that man  
shuld be alone:" Which leads me from the  
Subject to the Predicate " It is not good."

Now, it is not good that man should be in  
a single condition on a threefold consideration.

1. In respect of sin, which would not elle be  
prevented: Marriage is like water, to quench  
the sparks of lust's fire. 1 Cor. vii. 2. " Never-  
theless, to avoid fornication, let every one have  
his own wife," &c. Man needed no such phy-  
sick when he was in perfect health.

Temptations may break nature's best fence,  
and lay it's paradise waste; but a single life  
is a prison of unruly desires, which is daily  
attempted to be broken open. Some indeed,  
force themselves to a single life merely to avoid  
the charges of a married state; they choose  
rather to live in their own sensuality, than ex-  
tinguish those flames with an allowed remedy:  
" It is better to marry than to burn;" to be law-  
fully coupled, than to be lawfully coched. It  
is best to feed these flames with ordinate fuel.

2. It is not good in respect of mankind,  
which then would not be propagated. The  
Roman Historian, relating the ravishing of the  
Sabine woman, excused them thus, " Without  
them, mankind would fall from the earth,  
and



and perish." Marriages do turn mutability into the image of eternity; it springs up new buds, when the old are withered. It is greater honour for a man to be the father of one son, than to be the master of many servants.-- Without a wife, children cannot be had lawfully: without a good wife, children cannot be had comfortably. Man and woman, as the stock and the scion, being grafted in marriage, are trees bearing fruit to the world. Augustine says, "They are the first link of human society, to which all the rest are joined." Mankind had long ago decayed, and been like a taper fallen into the socket, if the breaches which are made by mortality, were not repaired by matrimony.

3. It is not good in regard of the church, which could not then have been expiated.— Where there is no generation, there can be no regeneration. Nature makes us creatures, before grace makes us Christians. If the loins of man had been less fruitful, the death of Christ would have been less successful. It was a witty question that one put to him that said, "Marriage fills the earth, but virginity fills the heavens." How can the heavens be full, if the earth be empty?

Had Adam lived in innocency, without matrimony, there would have been no servants of God in the church militant, nor no saints with God, in the church triumphant. But I will not sink this vessel by the over-burthen of it, nor press this truth to death, by laying too great a load upon its shoulders. There is one knot which I must untie, before I make farther progress. In 1 Cor. vii. 1. it is said, "It is good



good for a man not to touch a woman." Do all the Scriptures proceed out of the same mouth? And do they not all speak the same truth? — The God of unity will not indite discord: and the God of verity cannot assert falshood. If good and evil be contraries, how contrary then are these Scriptures? Either Moses mistakes God, or Paul mistakes Moses about the point of marriage. To which I shall give a double answer.

1. There is a public and a private good. In respect of one man, it may be good not to touch a woman; but in respect of all, "It is not good that man should be alone."

2. Moses speaks of the state of man created, Paul of the state of man corrupted. Now, that which by institution was a mercy, by corruption may become a misery; as pure water is tainted by running through a miry channel; or as the sun-beams receive a tincture by shining through a coloured glass. There is no print of evil in the world, but sin was the stamp that made it. They that seek nothing but weal in its commission, will find nothing but wo in the conclusion. Which leads me from the solitariness of the condition. "Man alone," to the sui-ability of the provision, "I will make an help meet for him."

In which you have two parts: 1. The Agent, *I will make.* 2. The Object, *A help.*

1. The Agent. *I will make.* We cannot build a house without tools, but the rivety is at liberty. To God's omniscience there is nothing impossible. We work by hands, but

but he works without hands. He that made man meet for help, makes a meet-help for man. Marriages are consented above, but consummated below. Prov. xviii. 22. Though man wants supply, yet man cannot supply his wants. James i. 17. "Every good and perfect gift comes from above." &c. A wife, though she be not a perfect gift, yet she is a good gift. These beams are darted from the Son of righteousness. Hast thou a soft heart? It is of God's breaking. Hast thou a sweet wife? She is of God's making. Let me draw up this with a double application.

1. When thou layest out for such a good on earth, look up to the God of heaven; let him make thy choice for thee, who made his choice of thee. Look above you before you, about you; nothing makes up the happiness of a married condition, like the holiness of a mortified disposition: count not those the most worthy that are the most wealthy. Art thou matched to the Lord? Match in the Lord — How happy are such marriages, where Christ is at the wedding! Let none but those who have found favour in God's eyes, find favour in yours.

2. Give God the tribute of your gratulation for your good companions. Take heed of paying your rent to a wrong landlord: when you taste of the dream, reflect upon the Spring that feeds it. Now thou hast four eyes for thy speculation, four hands for thy operation, four feet for thy abulation, and four shoulders for thy sustentation.

What:

What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in  
 point of divinity; that is unthankfulness, in point  
 of morality, an offence unpardonable. Pity it is, but  
 that moon should be ever in an eclipse, that she  
 will not acknowledge her beams to be borrowed  
 from the sun. He that praises not the giver, &  
 prizes not the gift. And so I pass from the  
 Agent to the Object. *A help*

She must be so much, and no less; and so  
 much, and no more. Our ribs were not or-  
 dained to be our rulers. They are not made  
 of the head, to claim superiority; but out of  
 the side, to be content with equality. They  
 desert the Author of nature, who invert the  
 order of nature. The woman was made for  
 the man's comfort, but the man was not made  
 for woman's command. Those shoulders aspire  
 too high, that content not themselves with a  
 room below their head.

It is between a man and his wife in the house,  
 as it is between the sun and the moon in the  
 heavens, when the greater light goes down,  
 the lesser light gets up; when the one ends  
 in setting, the other begins in shining. The  
 wife may be a sovereign in her husband's ab-  
 sence, but she must be subject in her husband's  
 presence.

As Pharaoh said to Joseph, so should the  
 husband say to his wife, Gen. xii. 20. Thou  
 shalt be over my house, and accustom to thy  
 word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the  
 throne will I be greater than thou. The  
 body of that household can never make any good  
 motion whose bones are out of place.

The woman must be a help to the man in  
 these



these four things: 1. To his society. 2. To his society. 3. To his progeny. 4. To his prosperity. 5. To his piety, by the ferventness of her excitation. 6. To his society, by the fragrantness of her conversation. 7. To his progeny, by the fruitfulness of her education. 8. To his prosperity, by her faithful preservation.

1. To his piety by the ferventness of her excitation, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Husband and wife should be as the two mill-stones, which were coupled together to carry the axe of God; or, as the two cherubims, that looked one upon another, and both upon the mercy-seat; or as the two tables of stone, on each of which were engraven the laws of God. In some families married persons are like Jeremiah's two baskets of figs, the one very good, the other very evil; or like fire and water, whilst the one is flaming in devotion, the other is freezing in corruption.

There is a two-fold hindrance of holiness: 1. On the right side. 2. On the left.

On the right side when the wife would run in God's way, the husband will not let her go. When the fore-horse in a team will not draw, he hinders all the rest; when the general of an army forbids a march, all the soldiers stand still. Sometimes on the left: How did Solomon's idolatrous wives draw away his heart from heaven? A sinning wife was Satan's first ladder, by which he scaled the wall of Paradise, and took away the fort-royal of Adam's heart from him. Thus she, that should have been the help of his flesh, was the hurt of his faith; his nature's under-proper; became his grace's underminer, and the that  
should



should have been a crown on the head, became a cross on the shoulders. The wife is often to the husband, as the ivy is to the oak, which crawls away his sap from him.

2. A help to his society, by the fragrantness of her conversation. Man is an affectionate creature; now the woman's behaviour should be such towards the man, as to require his affection, by increasing his delectation, that the new-born love may not be ruined before it be rooted. A wife should carry herself so to her husband, as not to disturb his love by her contention, nor to destroy his love by her alienation. Husband and wife should be like two candles burning together, which makes the house more lightsome; or like two fragrant flowers bound up in one nosegay, that augments its sweetness; or like two well-tuned instruments, which sounding together, make the more melodious music. Husband and wife, what are they but as two springs meeting, and so joining their streams, that they make but one current? It is an unpleasing spectacle, to view any contention in this conjunction.

3. To his progeny, by the fruitfulness of her education; that to her children in the flesh, may be God's children in the spirit. 1 Sam. 1. 1. Hannah she vows, if the Lord will give her a son, she would give him to the Lord, to serve him. A mother should be more careful of her children's breeding, than she should be fearful of her children's bearing. Take heed, lest these flowers grow up in the devil's garden.—  
Though you brought them out in corruption,  
yet

yet do not bring them up to damnation. Those are not mothers, but monsters, that, whilst they should be teaching their children the way to heaven with their lips, are leading them the way to hell with their lives. Good education is the best livery you can give them living; and it is the best legacy you can leave them dying. You let out your cares to make them great. O lift up your prayers to make them good, that before you die from them, you may see Christ live in them. Whilst these twigs are green and tender, they should be bowed towards God.

Children and servants are in a family, as passengers are in a boat; husband and wife, they are as a pair of oars, to row them to their desired haven. Let these small pieces of timber be hewed and squared for the celestial building. By putting a sceptre of grace into their hands, you will set a crown of glory upon their heads.

4. A help to his prosperity, by her faithful preservation; being not a wanderer abroad, but a worker at home. One of the ancients speaks excellently: She must not be a field-wife, like Dinah; nor a street-wife, like Thamar; nor a window-wife, like Jezebel.

Phileas, when he drew a woman, painted her under a snail-shell; that she might imitate that little creature, that goes no further than it can carry its house upon its head. How many women are there, that are not labouring bees, but idle drones; that take up a room in the hive, but bring no honey to it; that are moths to their husband's estates, spending when they should

ould be sparing? As the man's part is, to provide industriously, so the woman's is, to preserve discreetly; the one must not be carelessly wanting, the other must not be carelessly waiting; the man must be seeking with diligence, the woman must be saving with prudence. The cock and hen both scrape together in the dust-heap, to pick up something for the little chickens. To wind up this on a short bottom,

1. If the woman be a help to the man, then let not the man cast dirt on the woman.

Secundus, being asked his opinion of women, said, "Viri naufragium, domus tempestas, quietus impedimentum," &c. But surely he was a monier, and not a man; fitter for a tomb to bury him, than a womb to bear him. Some have stiled them to be like clouds in the sky: Like motes in the sun: Like snuffs in the candle: Like weeds in the garden. But it is not good to play the butcher with that naked sex, that hath no arms but for embraces.

A preacher should not be silent in the cause of those who are always silenced from preaching.—Because they are the weaker vessels, shall they be broken all to pieces? Thou that sayest women are evil, it may be thy expression flows from thy experience; but I shall never take that mariner for my pilot, that hath no better knowledge than the splitting of his own ship. Wilt thou condemn the frame of all, for the fault of one? As if it were true logic, because some are evil, therefore none are good. He hath ill eyes, that discerns all  
obj-cts.



objects. To blast thy helper is to blame thy Maker. In a word, we took our rise from their bowels, and may take our rest in their bosoms.

2. Is the woman to be a help to the man? Then let the man be a help to the woman — What makes some debtors to be such ill pay-masters, but because they look at what is owing to them, but not at what is owing by them. If thou wouldst have thy wife's reverence let her have thy respect. To force a tear from this relation, is that which neither befits the husband's authority to enjoin, nor the wife's duty to perform. A wife must not be sharply driven but sweetly drawn. Compassion may bend her, but compulsion will break her. — Husband and wife should act towards each other with consent, not by constraint. There are four things wherein the husband is a meet-help to the wife.

1. In his protection of her from injuries. It is well observed by one, That the rib of which woman was made was taken from under his arm: As the use of the arm is to keep off blows from the body, so the office of the husband is to ward off blows from the wife — The wife is the husband's treasury, and the husband the wife's armoury. In darkness he should be her sun for direction; in danger he should be her shield for protection.

2. In his providing for her necessities. — The husband must communicate maintenance to the wife, as the head conveys influence to the members; thou must not be a stone, and she



she a drudge. A man in a married estate, is like a chamberlain in an inn, there is knocking for him in every room. Many persons in this condition, waste that estate in luxury, which should supply their wife's necessity:— they have neither the faith of a Christian, nor the love of a husband! It is a sad spectacle to see a virgin sold with her own money unto slavery when services are better than marriages; the one receives wages, whilst the others buy their fetters.

3. In his covering of her infirmities. Who would trample upon a jewel because it is fallen in the dirt? or throw away a heap of wheat for a little chaff? or despise a golden wedge, because it retains some dross? these roses have some prickles. Now, husbands should spread a mantle of charity over their wives' infirmities. They be ill birds that defile their own nests. It is a great deal better you should fast, than feast yourselves upon their failings. Some husbands are never well, but when they are holding heir fingers in their wife's sores. Such are like crows, that fasten only upon carrion. Do not put out the candle because of the snuff. Husbands and wives should provoke one another to love; and they should love one-another notwithstanding of provocation.— Take heed of poisoning those springs from whence the streams of your pleasure flow.

4. By his delighting in her society. A wife takes sanctuary not only in her husband's house, but in his heart. The tree of love should grow up in the family, as the tree of life grew

as in the garden. They that chuse their loves, should love their choice. They that marry where they affect not, will affect where they marry not. Two joined together without love are but tied together to make one-another miserable. And so I pass to the last stage of the text *A help meet*.

*A help* there is her fulness: *A meet help*, there is her fitness. The angels were too much above him, the inferior creatures too much below him: he could not step up to the former, nor could he stoop down to the latter; the one was out of his reach, the other was out of his race; but the woman is a parallel line drawn equal with him. Meet she must be in three things.

1. In the harmony of her disposition.— Husband and wife should be like the image in a looking glass, that answers in all properties to the face that stands before it; or like an echo, that returneth the voice it receiveth. Many marriages are like putting new wine into old bottles. An old man is not a meet-help for a young woman: He that sets a grey head upon green shoulders, hath one foot in the grave and another in the cradle. Yet how many times do you see, the spring of youth wedded to the winter of old age? A young man is not a meet-help for an old woman; raw flesh is but an ill plaster for rotten bones. He that in his none-age marries another in her dotage, his lust hath one wife in possession, but his love hath another in reversion.

2. In heraldry of her condition. Some of our European nations are so strict in their junctions, that it is against their law: for the  
com-

conditionally to couple with the gentry.—  
 It was well said by one: "If the wife be too  
 much above her husband she either ruins  
 him by her vast expences or reviles him  
 with her base reproaches: if she be too  
 much below her husband, either her low  
 condition makes her too generous, or her  
 present situation makes her too imperious."  
 Marriages are styled matches; yet amongst  
 those many that are married how few are  
 there that are matched! Husbands and wives  
 are like locks and keys, that rather break than  
 open, except the wards be answerable

3. In the holiness of her religion. If adul-  
 tery may separate a marriage contracted, ido-  
 latry may hinder a marriage not perfected,  
 Cattle of divers kinds were not to ingender:  
 2 Cor. vi. 14. "Be not unequally yoked" &c.  
 It is dangerous taking her for a wife, who will  
 not take God for a husband. It is not meet  
 that one flesh should be of two spirits. Is  
 there never a tree thou likest in the garden,  
 but that which bears forbidden fruit? There  
 are but two channels in which the remaining  
 streams shall run: 1. To those men that want  
 wives, how to chuse them. 2. To those wo-  
 men who have husbands, how to use them.

1. To those men that want wives, how to  
 chuse them. Marriage is the tying of such  
 a knot, that nothing but death can unloose.  
 Common reason suggests so much, that we  
 should be long a-doing that which can but once  
 be done. Where one design hath been graveled

in

in the sands of delay: thousands have been split on the rock of precipitance. Rash adventures yield little gain. Opportunities are not like tides that when one is past, another returns. But yet take heed of flying without your wings; you may breed such agues in your bones, that may shake you to your graves.

1. Let me preserve you from a bad choice.

2. Present you with a good one.

To preserve you from a bad choice, take that in three things. 1. Choose not for beauty — 2. Choose not for dowry. 3. Choose not for dignity. He that loves for beauty, buys a picture. He that loves for dowry, makes a purchase. He that loves for dignity, matches with a multitude at once. The first of these is too blind to be directed. The second, too haste to be accepted. The third, too bold to be respected.

1. Choose not by your eyes. 2. Choose not by your hands. 3. Choose not by your ears.

1. Choose not by your eyes, looking at the beauty of the person. Not but this is lovely in a woman: but that this is not all for which a woman should be beloved. He that had the choice of many faces, stamps this character upon them all, "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain." The sun is more bright in a clear sky, than when the horizon is clouded; but if a woman's flesh hath more of beauty, than her spirit hath of Christianity, it is like poison in sweet-meats most dangerous. Gen. vi. 2. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair." One would have thought that they should rather have looked  
for



for grace in the heart. than for beauty in the face: take care of innig at the fairest signs; the swan hath black flesh under her white feathers.

2. Chuse not by your hands, for the bounty of the portion. When Cato's daughter was asked Why she did not marry? She thus replied, She could not find the man that loved her person above her portion. Men love curious pictures, but they would have them set in golden frames. Some are so degenerate, as to think any good enough, who have but goods enough. Take heed for sometimes the bag and baggage go together. The person should be a figure and the portion a cypher, which added to her, advances the sum but alone signifies nothing. When Themistocles was to marry his daughter, two suitors courted her together, the one rich and a fool; the other wise, but poor: and being demanded which of the two he would rather his daughter should have? He answered, "Mallem virum sine pecuni. &c." I had rather she should have a man without money, than money without a man.

3. Chuse not by your ears, for the dignity of her parentage. A good old stock may nourish a fruitless branch. There are many children who are not the blessings, but the blemishes of their parents; they are nobly descended, but ignobly minded: Such was Aureliut Antonius, of whom it was said, that he injured his country in nothing, but being the father of such a child. There are many low in their descents, that are high in their deserts; such as the cobbler's son, who grew

to be a famous captain; when a great person upbraided the meanness of his original, " My nobility, saith he, begins with me, but thy nobility ends with thee." Piety is a greater honour than parentage. She is the best gentlewoman that is heir of her own deserts, and not the degenerate offspring of another's virtue. —

To present you with a good choice in three things.

1. Chuse such a one as will be a subject to your dominion. Take heed of yoking yourselves with untamed heifers.

2. Chuse such a one as will sympathize with you in your affliction. Marriage is just like a sea-voyage; he that enters into this ship, must look to meet with storms and tempests, 1 Cor. vii. 20. " they that marry, shall have trouble in the flesh." Flesh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no; now a bitter cup is too much to be drunk by one mouth. A heavy burden is easily carried by assistance of other shoulders. Husband and wife should neither be proud flesh, nor dead flesh. You are fellow members, therefore should have a fellow-feeling. While one stands safe on the shore, the other should pity him that is tost on the sea. Sympathy in suffering, is like a dry house in a wet day.

3. Chuse such a one as may be serviceable to your salvation. A man may think he hath a saint when he hath a devil; but take heed of a harlot that is false to thy bed; and of a hypocrite that is false to thy God.

2. To those women who have husbands, how to use them. In two things.

1. Carry yourselves towards them with obedience. Let their power command you, that their praise may commend you. Though you may have your husband's heart yet you should love his will. Till the husband leaves commanding, the wife must never leave obeying. As his injunctions must be lawful, so her subjection must be loyal.

2. With faithfulness. In creation, God made not one woman for many men, or many women for one man. Every wife should be to her husband, as Eve was to Adam, a whole world of women; and every husband should be to his wife, as Adam was to Eve, a whole world of men. When a river is divided into many channels, the main current starves.

To conclude, Good servants are a great blessing; good children a greater blessing; but a good wife is the greatest: and such a help let him seek for her that wants one, let him fight for her that hath lost one, let him take pleasure in her that enjoys one.

Where there is nothing but a picture of virtue, or a few shadowy qualities that may subsist without any real excellency, death will hide them for ever in the night of despair. The blackness of darkness will close upon the naked and wandring ghost; whilst its loathsome remains are consigned to oblivion and putrefaction in the prison of the grave, with the prospect of a worse doom hereafter. But where there is a living image of true goodness begun in this state, death will deliver it with safety



safety into the finishing hand of Eternity, to be produced with every mark of honour in the open view of heaven, where its now mortal partner rescued from the dishonours of the dust, and brightened into the graces of eternal youth shall rejoice in it in triumph, to suffer the pangs of separation no more.

What a crown of joy will it confer on the preacher in that day, if this little service shall be rewarded with the reflection of having contributed to the salvation or improvement of any of these young persons whom he now addresses! If ever thine ear was open to my cry, hear me O Lord! hear me in their behalf. What cannot thy Spirit perform, perform by the weakest hand? May that Spirit seal them unto the day of redemption! At that glorious period, may I meet you all amongst the redeemed of the Lord, happy to see you shining with immortal splendour, in the general assembly and church of the first-born! transported to think that I shall live with you for ever, and joining in the congratulations of your fellow-angels around the throne of God, when He shall, in the sight of all, clothe you with the garment of salvation, and cover you with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom is decked with ornaments, and as a bride is adorned with her jewels. Amen.

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