

2. *Comfort.* This is the same as "cherish." (Eph. v. 29.) It means to support her under the infirmities and sorrows peculiar to her sex. 3. *Honour* This is commanded by St. Peter. (1 Pet. iii. 7.) 4. "*Keep her in sickness and in health.*" This in Eph. v. 29 is "nourish." 5. "*Forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her so long as ye both shall live.*" This forbids adultery, polygamy and divorce. The only difference in the terms of the covenant is that the woman promises to obey and serve the man. (See Eph. v. 22, 24, Col. iii. 18, 1 Pet., iii. 1, 5.) This is agreeable to God's Word and the practice of all nations. To this question each is required to answer unreservedly, "I will."

THE MUTUAL STIPULATION.

Here follows the covenant entered into by each party. This is reproduced by two significant ceremonies: 1. "The father giving the woman in marriage;" 2. "The joining of hands." By the father or friend giving the woman away, is shewn the consent of her guardians. He delivers her up to the minister, as if to commend her to God's disposal, and he, in God's presence, joins their "right hands." This has ever been a sign of contracting a covenant. It has always been used in the covenant of marriage. (Tobit vii. 13.) The first questions correspond to the ancient custom of "espousals" which took place some time before the marriage. This "mutual stipulation" now before us is the *essential part of the ceremony*. The parties must not only be willing to contract, but they must actually make the contract. Cicero calls the right hand "the witness of our faith." The

man takes the woman by the right hand, and plights his "troth" or truth. In other words he says: "If I perform not the covenant, let me forfeit my credit." By this act, too, the woman gives herself to the man. Then they loose their hands. The man gives himself to the woman. The woman is now to take his hand in hers, and make her stipulation. *The Ring.* This is the visible pledge of the covenant. It is a token of love. (Luke xx. 22.) It was used among the Jews, Gentiles and Christians. It is of *gold*, to signify how precious and enduring should be the affection; it is *round*, to signify that this should never end; it is placed on the *fourth finger of the left hand*, because a finger least used, and, perhaps, from the old belief, that there was a vein there which came directly from the heart. It is always worn as a token of the marriage, and a reminder of the solemn covenant made. The man then speaks to the woman: "With this ring I thee wed"—this is a pledge of the covenant; "With my body I thee worship." Worship is the old word for honour. It means that she is to share in all the honours of her husband. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." This pledges a maintenance *in life*, and after his death according to his means. And all this is ratified by the solemn words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" That is, he calls God to witness, and, before the Trinity, he pledges himself to keep his part of the Covenant. Words could not make a stronger or more solemn compact than this form of marriage in the Prayer Book. Then follows a prayer; and the