

Pastor and People.

GOD ALL IN ALL.

Gracious, all-wise, eternal God,
Source of all light, fount of all good,
Reverent, before Thy throne we bow;
Dependent we, almighty Thou.

Shed from that living fount Thy light,
Shine on our souls, dispel our night;
We own thy power, we wait Thy nod,
God over all, all-present God.

Unseen the path, untried the way,
Thy wisdom is our strength, our stay,
Our rock Thy love, our hope Thy word,
Life of our life, our sovereign Lord.

Spirit of grace, Thy will reveal,
Our souls transform, our sonship seal;
We seek Thy face, on Thee we call,
Our God, our strength, our joy, our all.

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FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE WIFE'S DOWRY.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord." This voices the experience of the ancient Hebrews, whose life lay for the most part in the open sunshine of God's love and grace. It is but another version of the statement made 1,000 years before: "It is not good that the man should be alone." God's favour was declared in the accompanying statement of purpose: "I will make him an helpmeet for him."

In getting a wife, a man may get much more or much less than he expects. She may be dowered with excellencies that he has not discovered, or she may be dowered with questionable qualities which do not stand forth in the light. Does not the so-called "lottery" of marriage lie here? Perhaps it is not easy always to scrutinize the object of affection so dispassionately as to mark the particular graces of the character in their quantum and balance. It is too true that love is blind, especially to qualities that would mar the perfection of the object were it looked at with other eyes. But when the step is taken, the relation entered into is "for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, till death us do part." No loose-jointed divorce laws obtain here to encourage separations and ruinations, on the ground of slight and often unworthy pretences. Each couple must make the best they can out of their bargain. They must accept the position with all its educative and disciplinary forces. It was excellent advice that was given to her son, by Lady Colquhoun, of Rossshu, "In the choice of a wife, seek for one who loves and fears God, and I will venture to assure you of happiness with her. Such a one in your own rank it may be more difficult to find; but among the families of the pious it is far from impossible."

Where Christian principle is, a security is given for purity, peace and prosperity. But where it is not, the opposite may confidently be expected. Was it not this fact that led Abraham to exercise such care in the choice of a wife for Isaac? He would not have him joined to a Canaanite, lest the Canaanites' curse should rest on him. He would have him united to a daughter of a godly people, who would be a blessing to him all the days of his life.

John Bunyan tells us of the fortune that came to him with his wife, with as much pride as though she had had millions of gold. And what she had, and what she was, were to him of infinitely more value than all the gold that ever was coined. She was of a godly seed, and her father's life overshadowed her with its sacred and saving influence. And that fell on John Bunyan with the best results. He tells us in his "Grace Abounding" this exceedingly interesting experience: "Presently, after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father and mother were counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon betwixt us both) yet this she had for her part, 'The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven,' and 'The Practice of Piety,' which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read, wherein I found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me (but all this while I met with no conviction). She also often would tell me what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house and among his neighbours; and what a strict and holy life he lived in his days both in word and deed. Wherefore these books, though they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget in me some desires to reform my vicious life, and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times."

Two good books and a wife of a godly stock, with a heart attuned to a godly life is no small dowry. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." An intelligent reading of the "Grace Abounding" will show that these were the gift of God to John Bunyan, and the seed of all the harvests of good he afterwards reaped, and also of all the good succeeding generations have got through him.

Philip Henry, when settled at Worthenbury, conceived an attachment to Miss Matthews, daughter of Mr. Daniel Matthews, of Broad Oak, in the township Iscoyd, in Flintshire. Catherine was Mr. Matthews' only child, and many fair and honourable overtures had been previously made for her disposal in marriage, but they were not entertained. And so she was reserved to be a blessing to Mr. Henry, of whom this pleasant traditional anecdote is told. "After Mr. Henry, who had come to Worthenbury a stranger, had been

in the country for some time, his attachment to Miss Matthews became manifest; and it was reciprocated by her. Among the objections urged by her friends against the connection was this, that although Mr. Henry was a gentleman and a scholar, and an excellent preacher, he was quite a stranger, and they did not even know where he came from. "True," replied Miss Matthews, "but I know where he is going and I should like to go with him." Is that not simply grand! After all, the dowry a woman brings to a man is an intelligent mind, a loving heart; a strong will for the right, and regard to the will of God, is more than all the dower she can carry in her hand. Rubies and diamonds and titles to estates are not to be compared to them. These may be lost or perish but those are imperishable. Good character must always rank higher than external goods and possessions. Noble qualities of soul are beyond all reckoning in silver or gold. "Who can find a virtuous woman? Her price is far above rubies."

When Sir Joshua Reynolds met Flaxman, the designer, after his marriage, he said to him, "So, Flaxman, I am told you are married; if so, sir, I tell you, you are ruined for an artist." That was not encouraging, but we must bear in mind that Sir Joshua was a bachelor. Flaxman went straight home, sat down beside his wife, took her hand in his, and said, "Ann, I am ruined for an artist." "How so, John? How has it happened, and who has done it?" "It happened," he replied, "in the church, and Ann Denman has done it." He then told her Sir Joshua's remark, and added, drawing up his little figure to its full height, "and I would be a great artist." "And a great artist you shall be," said his wife, "and visit Rome too, if that be really necessary to make you great." "But how?" asked Flaxman. "Work and economize," rejoined his true and brave wife, "I will never have it said that Ann Denman ruined John Flaxman as an artist." And so it was arranged that the journey to Rome was to be made when their means would admit. "I will go to Rome," said Flaxman, "and show the President that wedlock is for a man's good rather than his harm; and you, Ann, shall accompany me."

That is an after-marriage scene, showing the wealth of precious dower there was in John Flaxman's wife. They did work and economize, and went to Rome, and he became famous as a sculptor the world over. Some of his work is in Westminster Abbey, and there, becomes his own monument as well as that of the noble lord it keeps in memory. It is an old proverb, "A man must ask his wife's leave to thrive." That is true every way, not only in reference to temporal matters, but also in reference to spiritual and eternal concerns. The wife exercises a power and wields a sovereignty that is indisputable. I hold that generally the reverse of Tennyson's dictum is true, "as the husband is, the wife is." She is the fountain of love, she is the heart of the household, while the husband is the head; and the heart rules. Is this not acknowledged in the Old Hebrew Scriptures in the prominence given to the wife and mother in the phrase, "His mother's name was," 2 Chron. xii. 13; xiii. 2, etc., etc. And is not this embodied in the statement made by Napoleon the Great, "France needs nothing so much to promote her regeneration as good mothers?"

The wife, however empty-handed, dowered with wisdom and grace, is a gift of God for nobles and the best. Mind is better than money, and sweetness of disposition and subjection to God than silver or gold. These yield fruits that gladden a man's heart and elevate his nature more than all other treasure. They give enduring strength, executive skill, patience, goodness, and the beauty of charity conjoined with meekness. They make woman man's good angel. One who can sympathize with him in his work, cheer and encourage him in his reverses and trials, minister to him in his weakness, keep him humble and lowly in his successes and triumphs, and aid him in the accomplishment of every noble purpose. She is the implement of man's nature, completing it, and making up what otherwise is wanting. "And they twain shall be one flesh; so they are no more twain, but one flesh."

Dr. A. J. Gordon, at the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World, held in London last summer, told this very interesting story of the famous orator, Wendell Phillips, and his wife: "Just before Wendell Phillips died I had a memorable conversation with him. I knew that he sacrificed position and power and social rank and everything a man could sacrifice in going into that fight (the abolition of slavery), and I had the curiosity to want to know what had led him into it. He had an invalid wife who for years had never left the house. Just before he died I asked him this question: 'Mr. Phillips, what led you to espouse the cause of the slave and stand by him?' Said he: 'My whole career is due alone to my wife. She said to me before the thought ever touched my conscience: Wendell, you must take up the cause of the slave; and I did at her request, and I fought it out because she stood behind me.'"

What nobleness and grandeur of character was that of Mrs. Phillips! Her spirit, breathed forth upon her husband, raised him to his greatest elevation; placed him on an imperishable pedestal around which admiring and thankful hearts will gather in every age. How christly was his work, giving "liberty to the captives!" Whatever else his wife brought him, this was something that was of the most invaluable nature, a wise, generous and philanthropic spirit, more precious than all the wealth of Ind. It, once expressed, enters into other souls and grows and multiplies itself. It is imperishable.

The wife's dowry is always something efficient in the life of the husband, a help or a hindrance, a cloud or a light, a joy or a sorrow. Happy is he who is blessed with a good wife:

A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, to command.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

CHRIST'S INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY AND ACCURACY OUR EXAMPLE.

BY REV. JOHN FOTHERINGHAM, GRENFELL, N.W. T.

It recorded that after Christ's answers to the rulers questioning His authority, and the Sadducees trying to reduce the doctrine of the resurrection to an absurdity, and this Pharisee (Matt. xxii. 35) with the consent and desire of the other Pharisees gathered around, no one one dared any more to ask entangling questions. It had become manifest, not to the illiterate and ignorant, but to those who held themselves aloft as men of learning and wisdom, the superior and teachers of all others, that they were helpless in any dispute with the Nazarene. In every instance their ignorance had been exposed, their arrogance rebuked, and their pride humiliated. Those who tried to place Him at fault by the trial caused Him to stand out as the faultless One, and themselves as ignorant, and worse than ignorant. There are none among the sons of men whom we may take for leaders, and by whose names we may call ourselves with entire safety. "The best of men are but men at the best," often wrong in their judgments, making mistakes in their practices, and not always free from the perverting influence of the depraved, although redeemed and, in measure, rectified and purified nature. We think well of many leaders of reformations, but we dare not speak of them as possessed of a life morally, or intellectually without spot or blemish. But of one leader and reformer of men we have no cause to be alarmed, whose work of reformation still goes on for all the opposition and hatred to which it is ever exposed. Our Lord and Leader was holy, harmless, undefiled. He could demand of his bitterest enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin? If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil." At His perfect purity we are not surprised. He was not descended "by ordinary generation." His immunity from the taint of sin is explained by the announcement: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Adam's guilt and depravity touched not the seed of the woman.

But we confess to a feeling of surprise on turning to the subject, that Christ was, as a man, so free from intellectual error. There is no recorded instance of His committing an error of judgment, or making a mistake—a wonderful thing in one so tempted and tried by the malice and cunning of shrewdest wickedness. And He is our perfect example. It is our duty to be like Him in our holiness; it is also our duty to be like Him in sobriety, intelligence, and accuracy of judgment. We do not expect to attain to His perfection on this side of the grave; but we may grow and approximate towards it. Christ has apprehended some of us, in trust, not as criminals, but as those given Him by the Father, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and elevate us in all excellence; and as His will is our perfection, we shall be like Him when we see Him as He is.

Let us look at this point—we shall be like Him intellectually as well as morally—shall be freed from errors and blundering. It is common to hear people speak of errors of speech and of action, as if they involved no blame; and many think they are fully justified in some evil or misfortune, which they have done or produced when they can say that they did not mean any harm. But we are bound not only to mean no harm, but to mean what is right and good. If it is right for us to be thoughtless, heedless, or precipitate, we can commit errors of speech or behaviour, without immorality or sin. But to be thoughtless, heedless, precipitate is, itself, sin. Such qualities show indifference to what is right, and indifference to what is right more or less, is indifference to God's will, and therefore to God Himself. To be thoughtless and heedless is to throw off responsibility. But we are under responsibility to God, to our fellow men, to our own interests. Indeed, to be thoughtless and indifferent is a most serious and fundamental deformity of character—a deformity which must result in sorrow, even as it must secure His frown, who has given us faculties to use, and circumstances, and situations upon which to use them. And it must meet with displeasure from one's fellow men, who cannot be expected to subject themselves to the evils of connection with the inconsiderate; for the inconsiderate cause them much loss and damage of comfort, of time, of good temper and equanimity, and of property. It is a shame to be ever committing errors of speech and behaviour, as it is a shame to be thoughtless—and this is the usual parent of errors and blundering. If it be said, in order to soften this rebuke, that all people commit errors, let it be recognized that in proportion to the frequency of the error is the greatness of the disgrace. But, as a rule, such errors as we speak of involve immorality—they are the result of sin; and when one calls himself to account, he is self-condemned. Christ had no reason to blame Himself, because He was always considerate and thoughtful, and used intelligence and reflection before proceeding to word or deed. If one would shelter himself in his errors under the plea of ignorance, he should remember that ignorance is, itself, reprehensible in connection with his own line and sphere of life, and when it is not removed when it may be, it involves blame. In our childhood we are to be like Christ, who grew in wisdom as in stature, and as we advance in years we are not only to grow in knowledge, and the grace of the Lord Jesus but in the knowledge of all that relates to the best performance of duty to God, our fellow creatures and ourselves.

We have said so much in this connection because it is one of the most beautiful manifestations of Christian character to be thoughtful, considerate, and intelligent, in speech and behaviour. It shows not only mind, but self-discipline, heart-culture, and respect for Him who requires us to adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things; who tells us that a good man will conduct himself with discretion, and that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Our life shall be rescued from much that is mean and degrading when we set our heart upon being like Christ—rising to the example of holiness He has set us, and of perfectly regulated, elevated, and sanctified intellectual nature.