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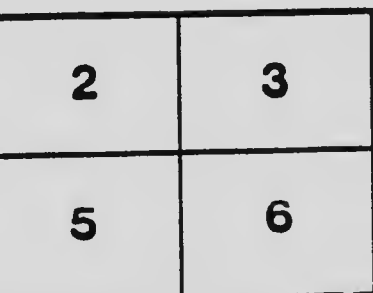
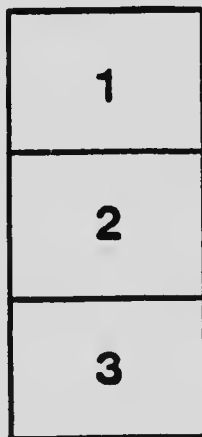
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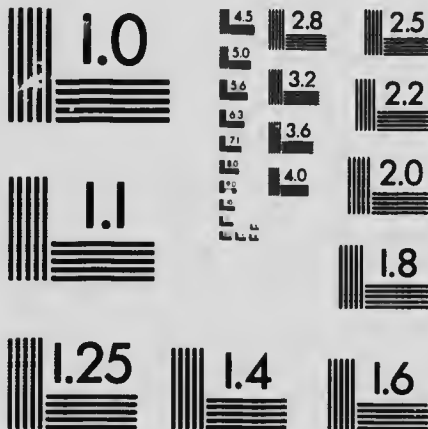
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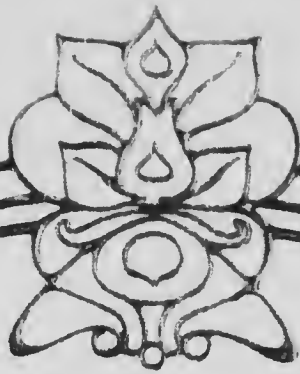
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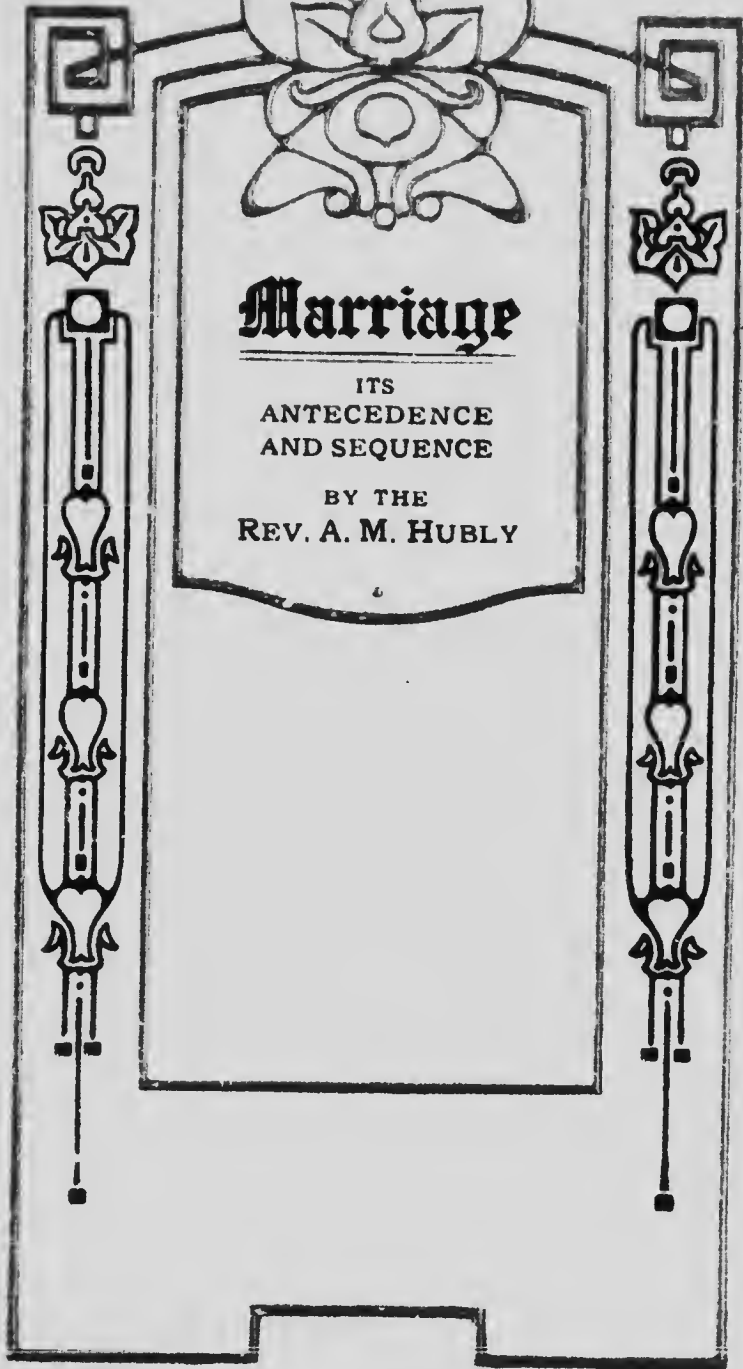
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Marriage

ITS
ANTECEDENCE
AND SEQUENCE

BY THE
REV. A. M. HUBLY

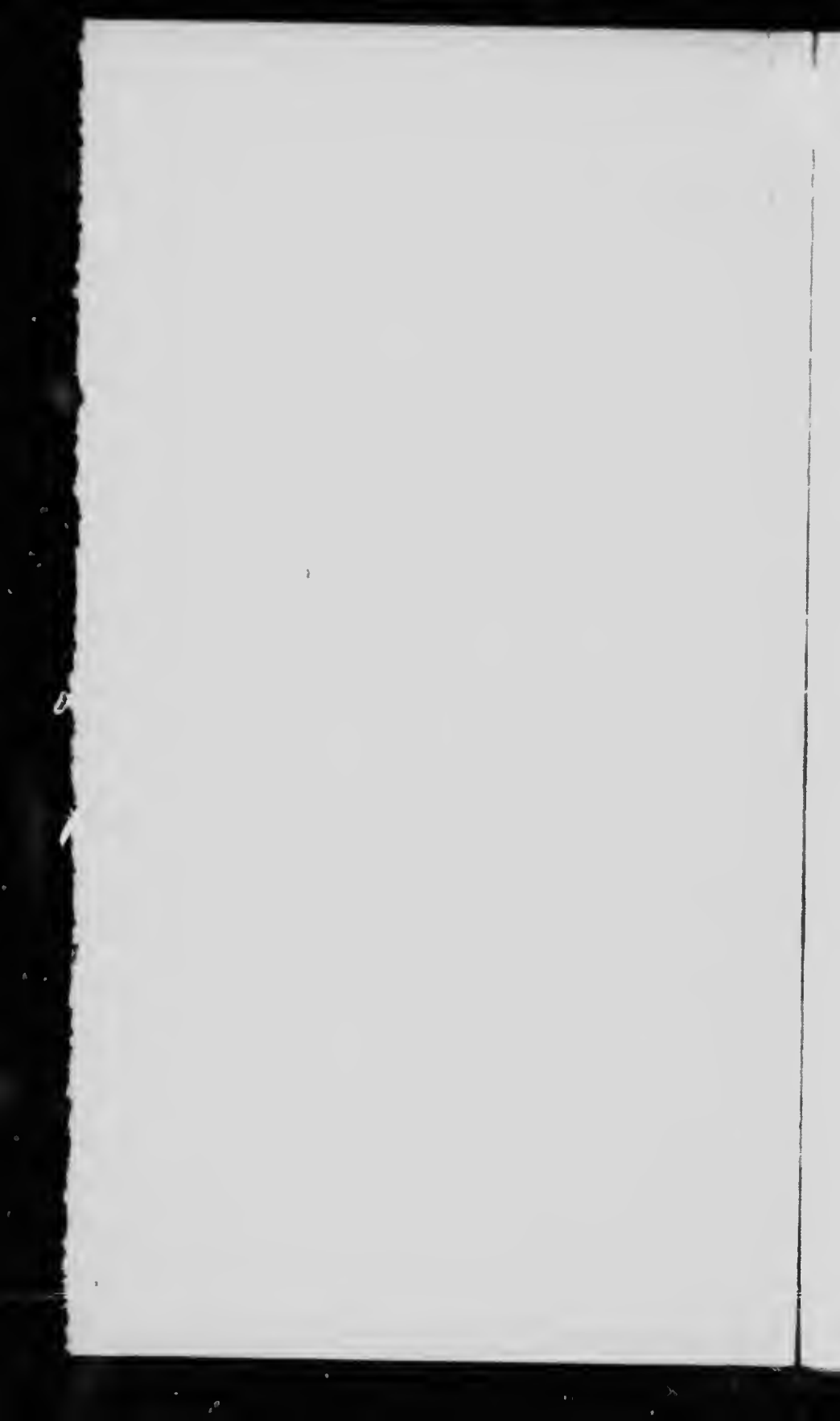


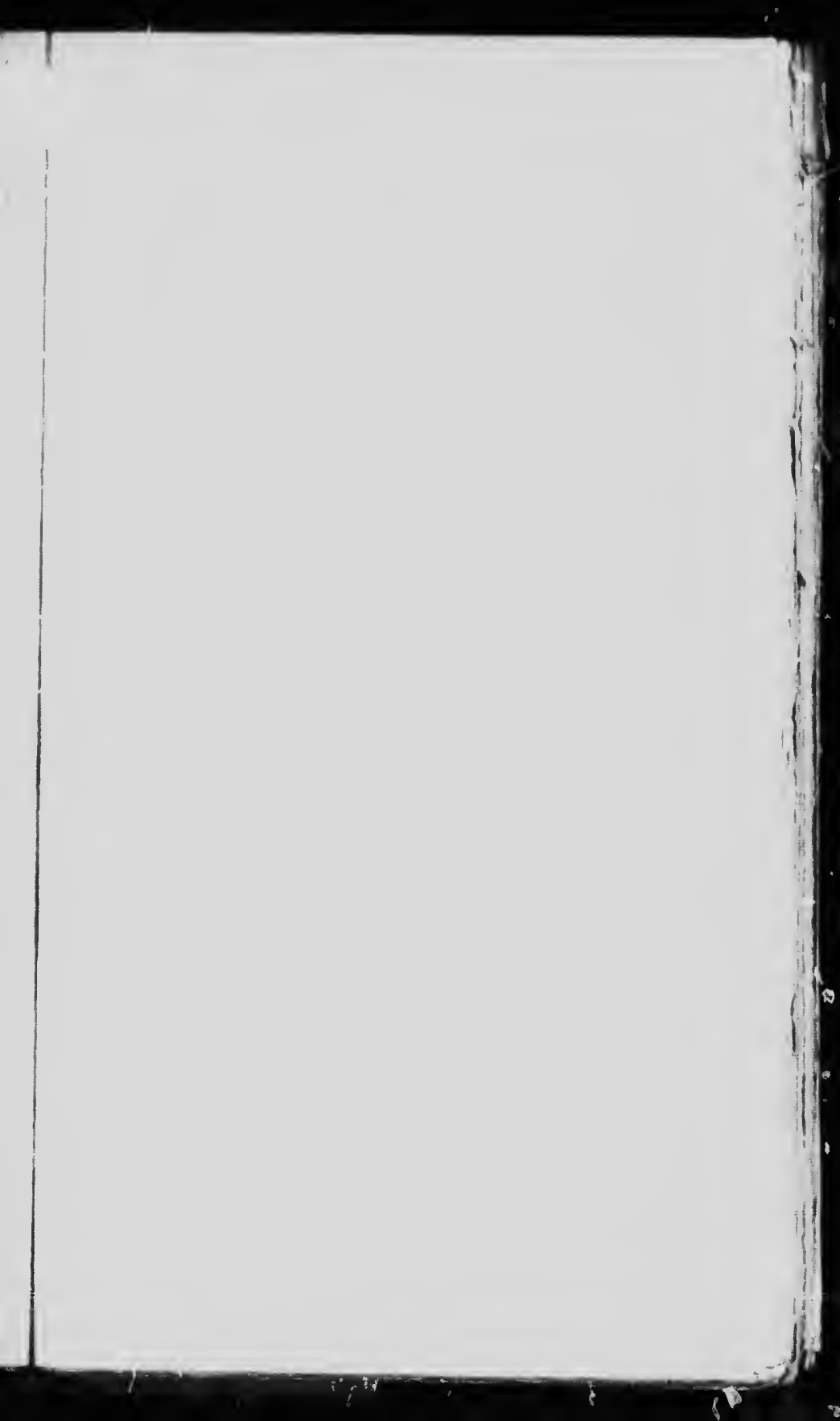
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St. Louis

St. Louis

Mr. and Mrs. E. Hoff
with compliments of the
Author, their Pastor
Christmas! 1913
Emmanuel Church,
Belleville
E. Hoff





Marriage Certificate

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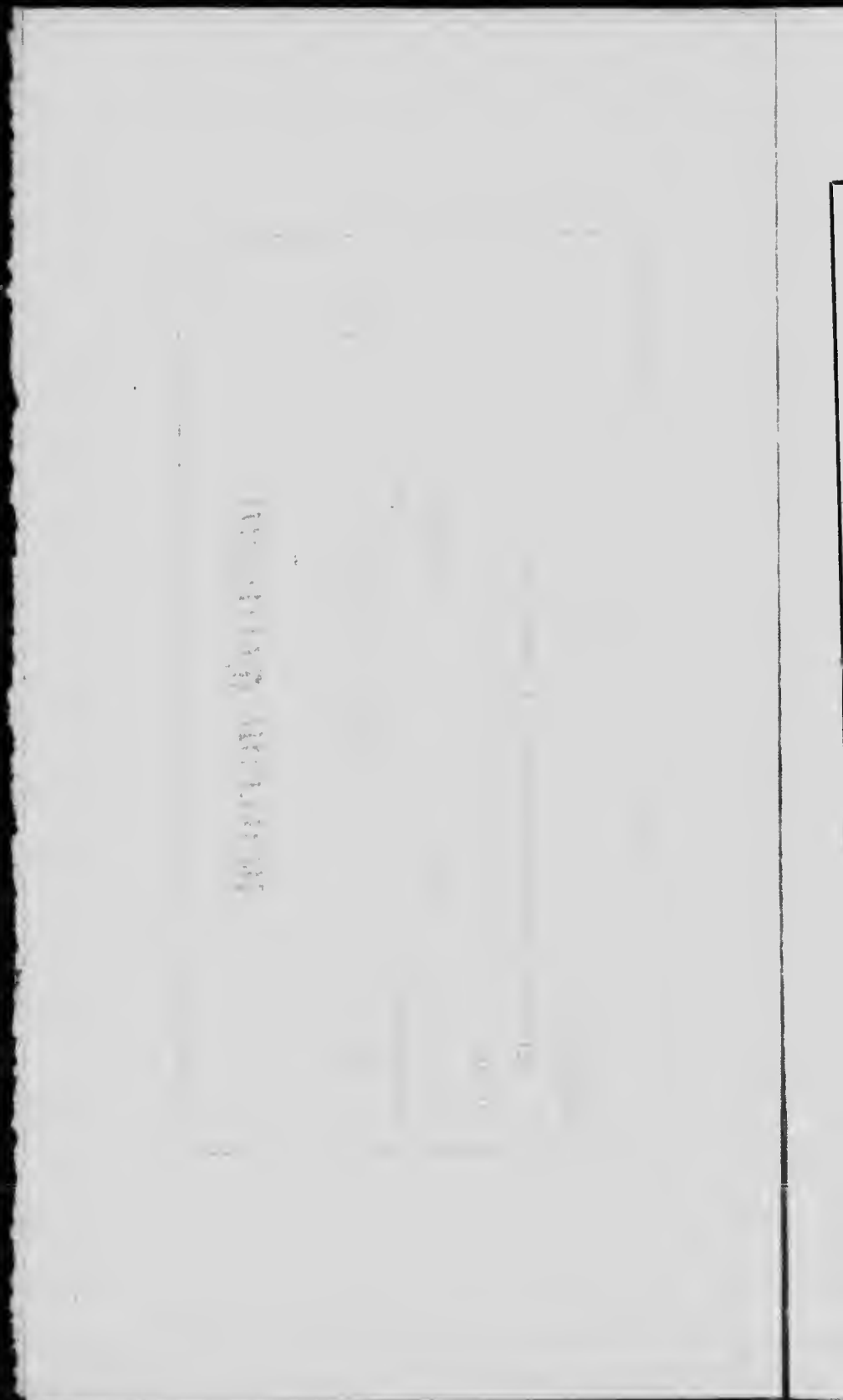
At on the day of of the
were married and of the
by me

This marriage was solemnized between us

Witnesses :

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MARRIAGE

ITS
ANTECEDENCE AND SEQUENCE

BY THE

REV. A. M. HUBLY

Rector of Emmanuel Church
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO

Toronto :
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1913

BV 837

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By A. M. HUBLY

PREFACE

This little book is sent forth with prayerful hope that the Master of human destiny may favor it, and order it to, and direct it in, a mission of love to the young people of this generation; and that its contents may "blaze the way," for many, to matrimonial success, and to homes of happiness and bliss.

A. M. H.

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him,
She obeys him,
Though she draws him,
Yet she follows,
Useless each without the other."

—Longfellow.

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“From the family altar, still
The light is shining,
And the children's love
About the parents twining.”

I. SWEETHEARTS

SWEETHEARTS

"I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."
—*Cant. vi.:3.*

THE evangelical view of this wonderful book, called the "Song of Solomon," assigns to it a twofold purpose: first, to afford a prophetic foreshadowing of the incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension of the heavenly Bridegroom, and of the general history of the Church after these events; and also a dim allegorical picture of the mutual affection and reciprocal love between Christ and His Church.

The second view or interpretation of the book is that, subordinate to the first, it contemplates the relation of marriage as an earthly, though Divine, institution: its duties mirrored forth, on the one hand, in the affections and demeanor of the heavenly Bridegroom to His Bride, the Church; and, on the other hand, in the duties belonging to the Church in relation to her Divine Husband.

On this latter interpretation I want to base a series of sermons on marriage, its antecedents and sequence.

I think there is no institution on earth with power to bless or curse our race equal to that

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of marriage. I believe that too little serious thought has been given to the sacredness of this divinely ordered manner of life; and too little instruction along this line given by the Church and by pedagogy to the young people of Christian countries.

My purpose in preaching these sermons is to do something, if possible, to elevate in thought, word and deed, among young men and women, the holy institution of marriage to the reverent and honorable position to which it was primarily assigned, and to point out its divinely appointed relation to life and happiness.

As I am a man of years, having come to Dr. Osler's suicidal age, I am sure that, in the kindness of your hearts, you will overlook anything in me bordering upon insanity.

As I am a husband and father, with all the children left to me on earth entered into and living in the "holy estate of matrimony," I feel that I can speak frankly and with profit to you upon questions which younger ministers might consider rather delicate for public discourse.

There is not the slightest doubt in the minds of men who have given the subject any serious thought as to the intention of the all-wise Creator when He made man and woman. It was an act of supreme wisdom and love. He expressed His wise conclusion in plain words: "It is not good that the man should be alone."

SWEETHEARTS

Then, in the exercise of infinite love, the Creator of all things made man an "helpmeet." The Divine intention is very plainly revealed in this further display of almighty creative energy; it was to increase man's happiness, a happiness that would depend upon affectionate devotion to an object capable of perfect responsiveness, and also to provide for that which, when sanctified by true religion, affords to the dwellers upon earth a foretaste of heaven—the institution of home and family.

If we begin at the foundation of home and family life, we must of necessity consider that happy relation, first formed, looking to the completion of such blessedness. The happy condition of home and family life, by the wisdom of God, depends upon the mutual esteem and affection of a man and woman drawn together by the divine magnetic influence of sex, and united in a holy, indissoluble bond.

The very first step toward this union, which is the foundation of home and family, is a realizing sense of personal attraction, the one for the other, let me say, of youth and maiden. We have a word in our language that I feel called upon to introduce here. It is a word that does not command, nor receive, the reverential respect from most people that it is entitled to. The word is "sweetheart." It means one who is particularly loved by another, and who loves in return. To meet our present purpose, we must pluralize the term. We have in

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our mind, as we proceed, two persons, each being unqualifiedly responsive to one and another in love and affection, so we speak of them as "sweethearts."

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

"I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

When these words can be truly spoken by two persons of opposite sex, with personal application, they have passed through a transition most interesting and important. There is only one transition that transcends it: that is, when we experience our deliverance from the "power of darkness" and our translation into the "kingdom of God's dear Son." Be not deceived, ye who enter here. In our spiritual translation we must, with diligent care, try to meet requirements—only the "pure in heart shall see God." So is it in the realm of "sweethearts"; only the pure in thought and life shall see the God of love that reigns for blessedness and peace in this new-formed paradise. Love comes with blessedness into the heart that receives it with pure motive, and welcomes it aright, or else, "Oh, bitter fate," it may become a curse more cruel still than hate.

In no realm of human thought and experience is it more true than in the garden of love's early culture. "They that sow in the flesh shall

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of the flesh reap corruption." I am speaking to you as a Christian minister, and am assuming that you all recognize the value of Christ's religion as a principle by which all life should be governed. Therefore, when two young Christians have seen in each other love's sweet graces, so far surpassing the like seen in others, and have found the deepest and highest pleasure in company with one another, there is one thing more needful than all else—that is, that neither of them parts company with Him who gave His life for them, that they, being delivered from sin, might be happy in one another. He alone can protect men and women from evil and uphold them against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is not true, as many are led to believe, that "two are company, and three a crowd." The companionship of two is never so sweet, so helpful and uplifting, as when in fellowship with the third, if that third one is Jesus Christ, the only sanctifier of love and of all things. I confess to you that when I see sweethearts giving evidence of their mutual love for, and of their confidence in, Christ their Saviour, my head bends in worship and my heart is lifted in prayer for His blessing upon them. How different one feels when seeing young lovers giving evidence, by their walk and conversation, that God's will and purpose have no place in their plans, and that His honor and service, if not altogether despised, are at least counted second to their own thoughtless

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pleasure. When two young Christians are attracted to each other, with a view of a life-long companionship, separate and distinct from all others, they forfeit all possibility of permanent happiness if the attraction is allowed to rest only upon the physical. Spiritual fellowship, the helping of each other's faith, the cultivation of religious living, praying with and for one another, are the safeguards against disappointment and estrangement.

It is in this embryo state of matrimonial tendency that we might well apply the scriptural quotation, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Young love, unstayed by religious principles, will in a little time likely become as a wandering bird driven from her nest, or as a wandering star floating into darkness; like waves of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed hither and thither, she wanders in sin, knowing not where or what! Forsaking the Fountain of Living Water, love faints, dies, and lies buried in the sands of a desolated wilderness.

I think you will agree with me when I say that the beginning and ending of the "sweet-heart" relation lies in the pursuit of happiness. I would remind you that in said pursuit there is the danger of a willing ignorance. "None so blind as he who will not see." We may, when too late, find ourselves deceived by outward appearances, as those who in ignorance press

SWEETHEARTS

to their lips the "apples of Soðom." The poet has put it this way:

"To grasp at happiness
Is all our view,
Through different tracks
Her footsteps we pursue;
While each his own fallacious path approves,
As interest leads or inclination moves.
Yet most through error
Lose the wished-for way:
Who set out wrong must
Wander far astray."

So we plead for a good beginning, continuing and ending in this matter.

I would say to every young woman, first give your heart to Christ. He is the one most worthy of your love, and has done more to win it than all the men on earth, with all their united chivalry could do. Give to your adorable Saviour your heart, and pray daily that He may keep it, and so hold it that you may never become a "sweetheart" to a man who is at enmity with Him, and an enemy of His holiness and purity of life. Set your ideal of a lover high. Sift well the character and habits of any man who seeks you as a bosom companion, and be well satisfied that he is worthy of the confidence and love of a pure Christian woman, before you give an opportunity for public reference to you and he as being "sweethearts."

I would say to every young man, first be a Christian believer, both by profession and pos-

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session. Learn from fellowshiping with Jesus Christ the secret of true chivalry. Cultivate the highest respect for woman; think of the position to which the Lord of life, as son of Mary, lifted her. Be careful how you deal with woman's affection and confidence. I need not tell you that I am confining my thought and speech to woman, perfectly separate and distinctly apart from the creatures against which God's Word warns young men in such striking language: "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

But know this, there is no power on earth, except that of a life consecrated to the service of Christ, that will help a young man to paths of safety, to moral probity, to health and vigor of body and soul, lighten life's burdens, and lead heavenward, as the companionship of a pure, true, God-fearing, God-loving and God-serving woman. I would advise every young man to seek such with all diligence, remembering in his search the Bible counseling: "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

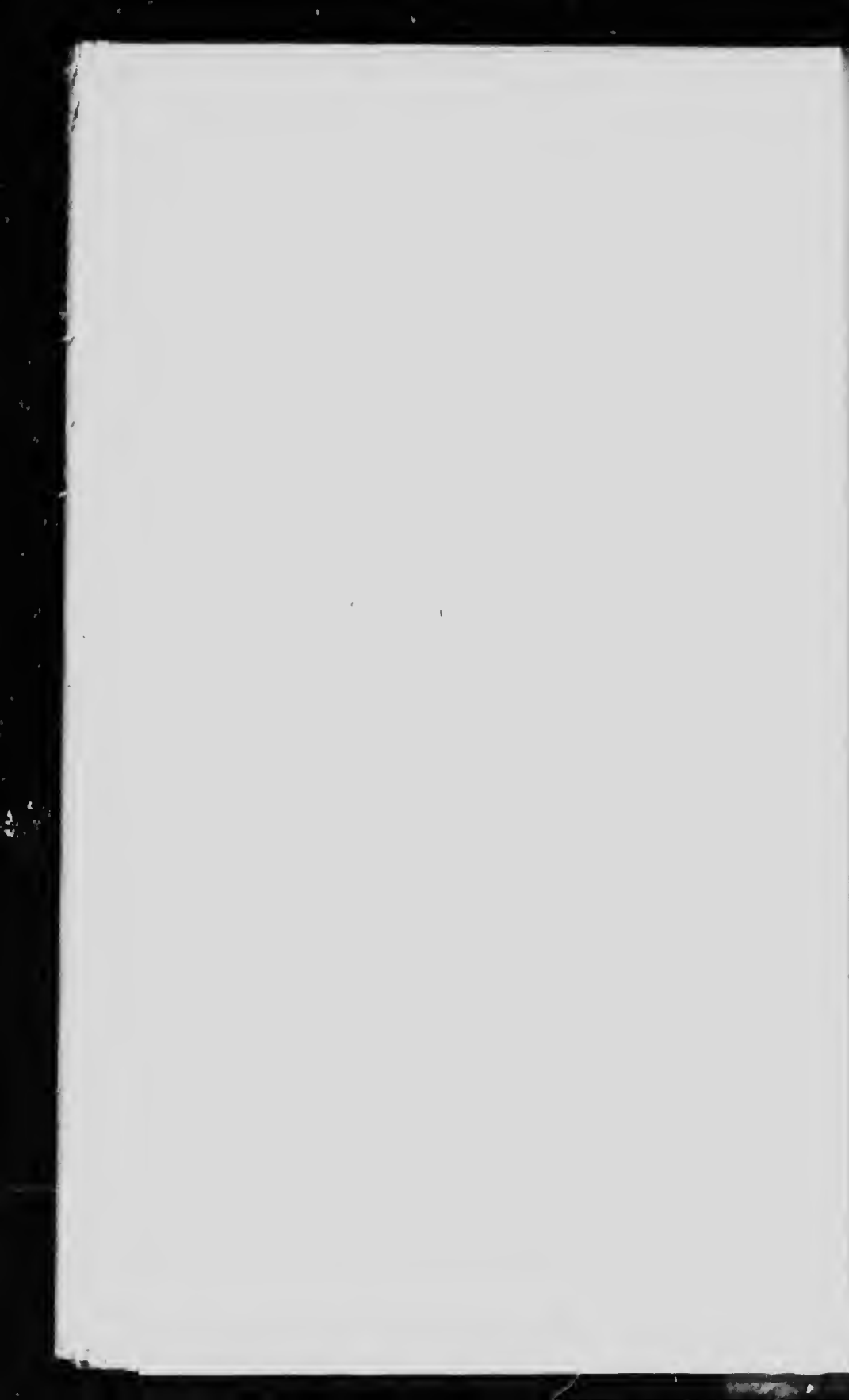
If there is any young man here who has found such a treasure, let him guard it well, and prove himself worthy of the "sweetheart" given to him from among the millions.

"Then let your secret thoughts be fair;
They have a vital part and share
In shaping worlds and moulding fate,
God's system is so intricate."

SWEETHEARTS

How beautiful it is for a Christian youth and Christian maid, with hearts so knit together in a love only subordinate to that of their Lord and Saviour, holding each other dearer than all else in the world, to stand in the present, looking into the future breathing the healthful air of the mount of God, with His blue heavens above them, unto which they lift their hearts together and as one thank their heavenly Father for present happiness in one another, and for the glad anticipation of a still closer union under the continuance of His care and guidance. Then shall the earth beneath them be as a great harvest field of blessed opportunities, for a glad and useful life, gathering in time treasures for eternity.

II. THE BETROTHAL



THE BETROTHAL

"Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thine hand."—*2 Kings x.: 15.*

I HAVE chosen this text, not with any reference to its scriptural or historic setting, but simply because the words are most appropriate to the subject matter of my discourse—the betrothal.

This word means the sacred engagement between a man and a woman to become at some convenient season joined together in "holy matrimony."

I need not tell you that I approach this subject in fear and trembling. It seems like presumption to attempt a sermon on a theme so sacredly exclusive of all the world, apart from the two persons immediately concerned.

A minister of the Gospel is often called upon, in the performance of the duty of his sacred office, to presume and appear as if rushing into the privacy of others, even "where angels fear to tread." The question of need must overrule all hesitancy and unfavorable criticism with regard to presenting various phases of moral and religious teaching. The very fact that the institution of marriage is so frequently

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discussed from a mere physical, carnal and sometimes commercial viewpoint presents ample reason why the pulpit should seek a revival of interest in its Divine spiritual aspect.

Marriage is the foundation of man's greatest happiness on earth—home and family life. This foundation, upon which life, fulfilling its mission in and to the various relations which prompts to the completion of a happy existence, is begun in the drawing together, let me say, of a young man and maiden, by the Divine magnetic influence which God placed in human nature for this very purpose when He saw that it was "not good that man should be alone," and so made him an "helpmeet."

It was of this first step toward this union of opposite sex I spoke last Sunday evening, under the caption of "Sweethearts." Our subject this evening is a step further forward in the antecedence of marriage.

The sweet companionship of those two young Christians, as lovers, has been long enough to prove to each the worth and character of the other; and one or both may be ready to consummate a closer and more binding relation. While "sweethearts" in the garden of young love's culture, they remembered that there, as everywhere else, "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption"; and so they "minded spiritual things." They sought the sanctifying influence of Christ's religion upon their growing affection for each other.

THE BETROTHAL

In this forward movement toward a closer relation, the sweetheart realm is not left behind, but, rather, made more enjoyable. There is the growing beauty of the garden. The seeds are germinating, the roses are budding, the trees are giving promise of fruit; there are new sweet odors of coming summer flowers and fruit after a propitious springtime. When "sweethearts" have come thus far in cultivating personal affection for, and trust and confidence in, each other, there should be no difficulty in coming to a decision with regard to the perfecting of mutual interests in one another for the future of this life.

And yet the matter of betrothal is most momentous. It must be well considered in the light of past word and action, while in the converse and fellowship of "sweethearts." A mistake here, or an ill-considered engagement of marriage, will likely prove fatal to the best interests of both the man and the woman. The words spoken to effect the betrothal, in time and place, will be uttered only for the ears of the two about to enter into it. But this cannot be! These two cannot find a place, at any time, where there is not another to be counted on. There is always an unseen One present whose "ear is not heavy that it cannot hear," and in whose "sight all things are manifest." He must not be forgotten nor counted out of an engagement so vital to life's interests, both

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temporal and spiritual, in relation to both body and soul.

In this connection, the Collect for the Holy Communion is most timely and appropriate: "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy holy name; through Christ our Lord." Our heart is not right with our best beloved on earth, if not right with God. Our love for even sweetheart, or wife, or husband, is not the genuine article unless we love God supremely.

We love our dearest on earth all the better for giving the first place in our heart to Him from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. Christian men and women should truly and absolutely surrender in submissive love to God everything they hold dear upon earth.

If love of a chosen life-companion is but carnal, it will die! How necessary then to be spiritually minded when seeking heart treasures, that they may be to us "life and peace."

It is customary, when effecting marital engagements, for the man to petition for the woman's hand and heart. This means that she will surrender to his will her hand that serves, and her heart that loves. When a man seeks this of a woman, he should prayerfully consider

THE BETROTHAL

how great is the favour he asks, and be prepared to pay the price which such a gracious surrender demands. The Son of God gave His all, and His life with it, for His bride—the Church.

When the favour petitioned for by the man is granted by the woman, the "betrothal" is effected, and should be as binding for life as the vows we make to God when we bind ourselves to His altar of love and service.

When a Christian man has won to himself the hand and heart of the woman he has chosen, from among the millions, as the one altogether lovely, the very thought of such a boon should break down all limitations of his moral horizon and spread before him such a view of life's amplitudes and possibilities as to make all lesser duties appear related to higher ones, and these in turn to still more commanding imperatives, until all his obligations, binding themselves together, might form a path of duty leading to nobler heights of manhood and to greater achievements in humanity's uplift, to the glory of God, and in honor of the woman whose hand and heart he sought and obtained. Thus would he himself be lifted above the commonplace in life and set free to new imperatives, new responsibilities, new possibilities, and so to crown life and love with new glory and new faith. To what heights may not hope soar for a man who finds himself the winner of the hand and heart of the woman who stands, in his opinion,

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superior to all others? The ascent of hope in the hour of betrothal? Like the flight of a bird from the deep Alpine valleys to the stainless summits which lift themselves in almost unpassing light above them. In the valley of bachelorhood:

"I look upon the stormy wild,
I have no wife, I have no child,
For me there gleams no household hearth,
I've none to love me on the earth."

But what may he sing who stands on the betrothal tableland of faith, hope and love?

"The hunger of my heart is stilled,
Because thy heart is mine;
I have no need of aught beside,
For I am thine, and thou art mine."

Now is love's young garden become a paradise. Beauty is stamped upon the canopy above and in every footprint below. The odors of love float upon the breeze. Eden peace and beauty, which were before the fall, are everywhere. The sunbeams reflect these on the placid bosom of the beautiful lake, and pencil them in the opening petals of the flowers; from the trees the song birds sing of happiness and peace. Bright hopes and gladness gleam in gilded characters from every object round about the newly-betrothed as they clasp each other's hand in sweet affection.

THE BETROTHAL

Being believers in Christ and His religion, they will seek their heavenly Father's benediction upon their engagement, and the angel of righteousness and peace will spread his sanctified mantle over them.

Yet while on earth there is danger. Behind the foliage, or hid among the flowers, is one who is preparing the most deadly cup to blight and blast all the fair prospects of the happy pair. His object is to work the ruin of both body and soul. He has, for accomplishing this work of death, loyal helpers: "the world and the flesh." He presents, in the most fascinating manner, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." He tempts and allures to sensual scenes and festivities, as the ruined lives and desolated homes of many testify.

The theatre, dance hall, and Herodian banqueting houses, have taken the place of the courts of the house of our God in the affections of many young lovers, whose birthright was the "river of God's pleasure," and the fatness of their heavenly Father's house.

"The card-table" may become more enjoyable than "the Lord's table," and "His cup" exchanged for the "cup of the devil." The hand which should have pressed to the lips of her beloved the water of life, has held out to him the cup of sparkling wine, which stirs the hidden passion for evil that lurks in the blood of even those who were sanctified. So it often happens that the most promising betrothals

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materialize in jiltings, estrangements, scandals and heartbreaks. Sin comes down upon the garden! Every flower, every fruit is nipped by the blighting breath of the "old serpent." Love hides himself amid the wreck in agony and despair. Such an ending of a happy betrothal is indeed deplorable, but it need not be so.

Though deceived and fallen, Adam and Eve, hiding among the trees of the garden in all their nakedness, guilty of disregarding God's plain command, may hear, calling unto them, the voice of redeeming love, and may go forth in the light of that glorious promise: "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Let me say to all young lovers: make of the Almighty the habitation of your mutual affections. So will your love for, and happiness in each other, dwell safely, untouched and untroubled by the stormy winds of old passions and desires, kept from all the disturbing elements of doubt and fear which rave and threaten outside of that Divine refuge against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

Wait upon God and wait for Him. Run not before the Almighty. His plans for your entering into that most holy state to which you have pledged one another may ripen slowly; "wait patiently for Him; He will bring it to pass."

"God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart.
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold—
Till then be calm in heart."

III. THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY



THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—*Matthew xix.: 6.*

THESE words, used in the marriage ceremony, are spoken by the minister, but they do not belong to him, nor to any other man.

Both the words and the thought or idea expressed by them are of Divine origin. The sentence was spoken by our Lord when He made answer to the critical questioning of the Pharisee regarding marriage and divorce.

If we take note of Jesus, in the settlement of doubtful disputations, questions of expedience, and of all matters pertaining to life and character, we shall find that He goes back to first principles. We shall always do well to hold with Him in this regard, when tempted by the "progressiveness," so-called, of our generation to depart from the old paths of ethical and moral rectitude.

In this matter of marriage, Jesus went back to the beginning of all such union of sex. Let that be which has always been. God did it! The Creator of male and female instituted this union of dual nature, making both one, therefore there can be no greater authority than His.

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There comes a time, then, in the life of a man and a woman, who have been divinely drawn together in the manner already spoken of in the sermons of this series previously preached, entitled "Sweethearts," and "The Betrothal," when the two become one. In the sense of which they were "two" they are no longer "two," but "one." Such is the Divine conception of marriage. The rule, to be observed by all Christian believers, is to keep strictly to this conception in faith and practice, so that the very thought of dissolving this bond of union should be considered a sin against God, who instituted it, and a rending of body and soul where perfect oneness, by Divine ordering, should exist now and forever.

Therefore, we take those words of our text to be the most important that are said in the performance of the marriage ceremony. They are important because of their Divine origin. Christ, the anointed Son of God, invested them with supreme authority. They are important because of the idea they express: God did the joining together.

Let me quote that queen among women, Francis E. Willard, who never was permitted to experience the marriage bond, yet did a wonderful work in the way of instructing others, with great wisdom, to the uplifting, purifying and establishing peace and happiness in home and family life. Miss Willard said: "I dare affirm that the reciprocal attraction of two

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natures, out of a thousand million, for each other, is the strongest, though one of the most unnoted, proofs of a beneficent Creator. It is the fairest, sweetest rose of time, whose petals and whose perfume expand so far that we are all inclosed and sheltered in their tenderness and beauty. For folded in its heart we find the germ of every home, of those beatitudes—fatherhood and motherhood; the brotherly and sisterly affection; the passion of the patriot, the calm and steadfast love of the philanthropist. For the faithfulness of the two, each to the other, alone makes possible the true home, the pure Church, the righteous nation, the great kind brotherhood of man."

These are sweet, pure, true words, worthy of the noble woman from whose lips they dropped as goodly pearls.

In that reciprocal attraction of which Miss Willard has so beautifully spoken, of holding the germ of so much that gives to earth a foretaste of heaven, there is also the germ of that holy mystic union which is truly sacramental, and not a mere episode or passing event in the life of man and woman.

We must not confuse in the mind the Divine "joining together" with that spurious drawing of carnal desire, which so frequently results in suicides by young men, shooting and killing of paramours, many of which have borne the sacred name of "sweetheart" or "wife."

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Let me remind you again, as I have in the previous sermons of this course, that in all the procedure of marriage, its antecedence and sequence, it is veritably true, "To be carnally-minded is death" to all happiness in home and family life, while to be "spiritually-minded is life and peace."

Where God effects the joining together of man and woman, there must of necessity be the spiritual, as well as the carnal union. There is a union of souls that bodily separation, by time or space, cannot sever. The term "sacrament of marriage," is not the misnomer that some ultra Protestants would have it to be. The Greek and Romish Churches make the sad mistake of declaring that the sacramental grace of marriage depends upon the ceremony being performed by ecclesiastical authority, whereas it is effected only when God confirms the mystic union of the two hearts in a life-bond of affection, which constrains the man and the woman to comply with all requirements of Christian civilization, that sets them before the world as husband and wife.

The laws and ceremonies performed for the publicity and legalizing of marriage are of no particular value as evidence that the parties immediately concerned have been partakers of that mystic sacrament that seals an equal covenant for life's weal or woe, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, and no word nor ritual of human ordering can make it so.

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When the minister clasps the hands of bride and groom together, saying these solemn words, "Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," if, as intimated, God had really caused a Divine union to be effected in every case, there would be few dissolute homes and ruined families, and no need of divorce courts.

This divine joining together, referred to in the ceremony, is generally manifested in a marked and satisfactory degree in marriage when its antecedents have been sanctified by the parties concerned minding spiritual things, walking together in religious fellowship. In the sermons dealing with the antecedents of marriage, I have used the figure of a garden. Some one has expressed a similar idea relative to the holy estate itself. The poet says:

"Honest wedlock is like a banqueting house
Built in a garden,
On which the spring flowers take delight
To cast their modest odors."

Though the honest and true marriage is wrought in heart and life, it is right and proper that it be ratified by religious ceremony with unrestrained publicity. No more fitting place for the performance of that ceremony than the Church of God, where friends and neighbours meet—

"When all good-will and joy combine
To stamp the marriage bond divine."

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There the happy pair stand in the presence of God and the company of believers assembled to witness the vows made, to acknowledge and publicly to ratify the union of hearts by the ministry of religion, which concerns the deepest emotions, and touches the richest chords of the soul.

How this religious rite should lift those two persons right out of the old life and up into the heavenlies, as they realize the greatness and simplicity of this wonderful fact of their being. Christ, who created all things, and for whom all things were and are created, has created in them that new relation which makes them one in Him, with whom they are henceforth to live in the unity of His Spirit, and in the bond of His peace. The Lord of life is the reason for every true marriage, and for everything the married couple are called upon to do with and for one another. Naught between them is to be without His sanction and His blessing, except it be sin. If true to themselves, they will stand by each other against every form of sin. Then shall Christ and His religion be a fountain of happiness, from which they will drink together.

He is the creative principle, energy and cohesive force of the whole scheme and issue of this holy estate. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the source of thought, of love, of science and of life.

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He invites these "two" now made "one" to "sit with Him in the heavenly places."

We have heard a great deal about the "Ne Temere" decree. The Roman hierarchy has exhausted its argumentative vocabulary to convince the Christian world of its righteous and holy intent to guard the sanctity of marriage and to protect home and family life from the evil and sacrilege of an "unauthorized clergy of the unsanctified heretical sects." This world-wide, semi-religious-political institution, styling itself "The Holy Catholic Church of God," not only claims the power to bind the consciences of men and women, but would so bind God as to deny Him the right to join together two persons in holy wedlock. Not only so, but claims the right and power to condemn to a state of concubinage the married pair that receives matrimonial ceremony in any form but that which is prescribed by "The Holy Church," so-called. The Pope, his college of apostles, his cardinals, archbishops, bishops and priests, all and each may forbid any recognition of divine ministration of matrimonial grace except by the will of one or all of them. Even Christ can do nothing except subordinate to the "Holy Church." Its holiness is surely manifest in the history of its doings wherever untrammelled by the "pernicious influence of Protestant heretics."

Those cardinals, bishops and priests talk about the "sanctity of the marriage bond," and

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yet, though they themselves are unmarried, readily and with impunity intrude into its most sacred precincts. With most insulting official officiousness, they go between husband and wife, and on the penalty of eternal damnation extract the very soul secrets from the wife concerning the two made one, and of that unity of life for which the married pair are responsible only to God and themselves.

They usurp the place in family life which God alone should occupy. He alone, and He only, "knoweth the secrets and intents of the heart," and therefore He only can judge aright.

The Scripture says: "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord." There is Divine freedom given here for a man to be his own judge concerning seeking and finding a wife, upon whom the favor of God may rest.

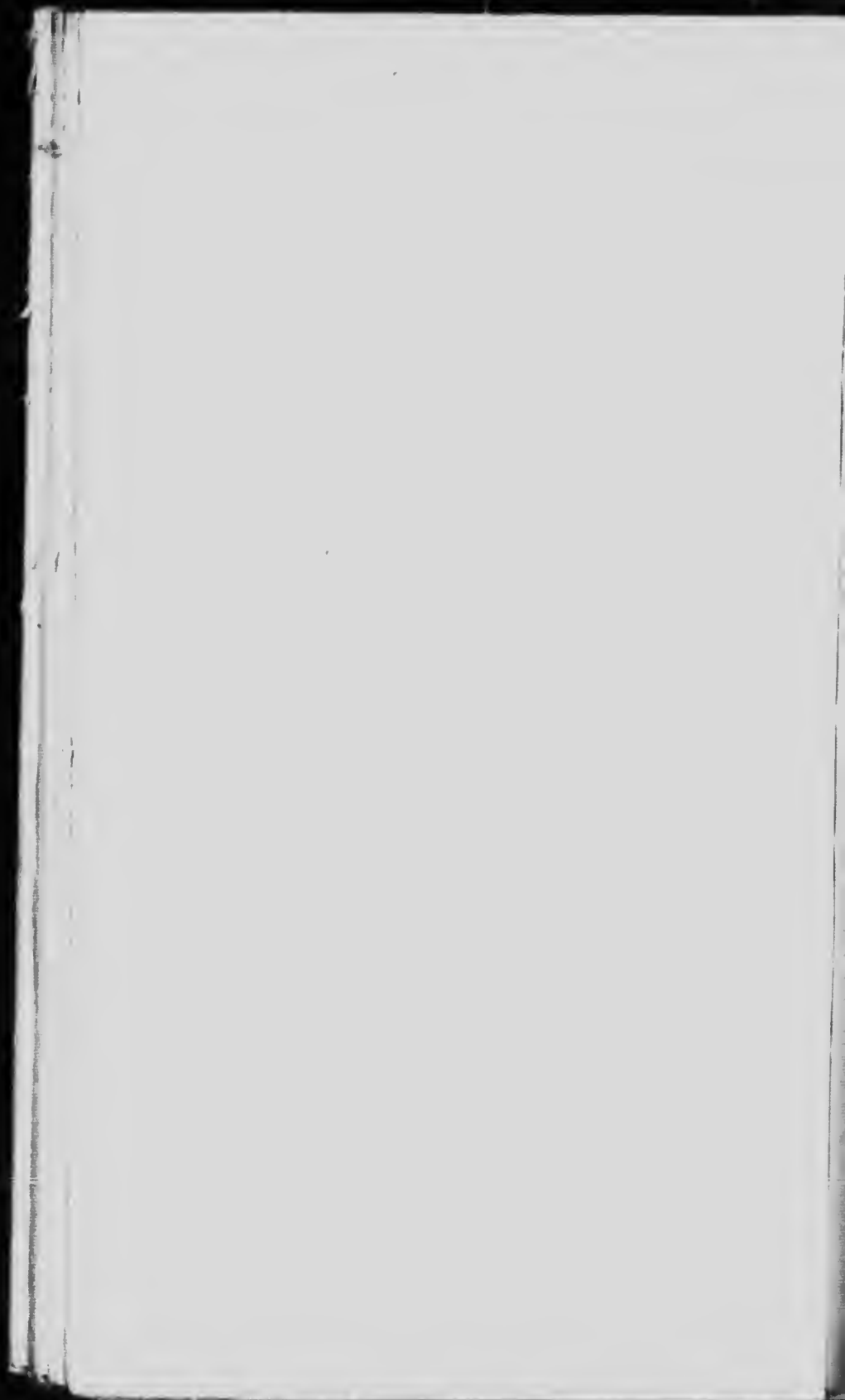
The "Ne Temere" says. "If any one should say that the Church could not constitute impediments destroying matrimony, or that the Church has erred in so constituting impediments destroying matrimony, let him be anathema."

How blessed it is to know that our heavenly Father has not left our happiness and sanctity of home and family life, its beginning, continuing and ending, in the keeping or power of any order or system controlled by erring humanity. Bless the Lord, all ye people, for the marriage ceremony that recognizes the unity of two persons drawn together by a love born of

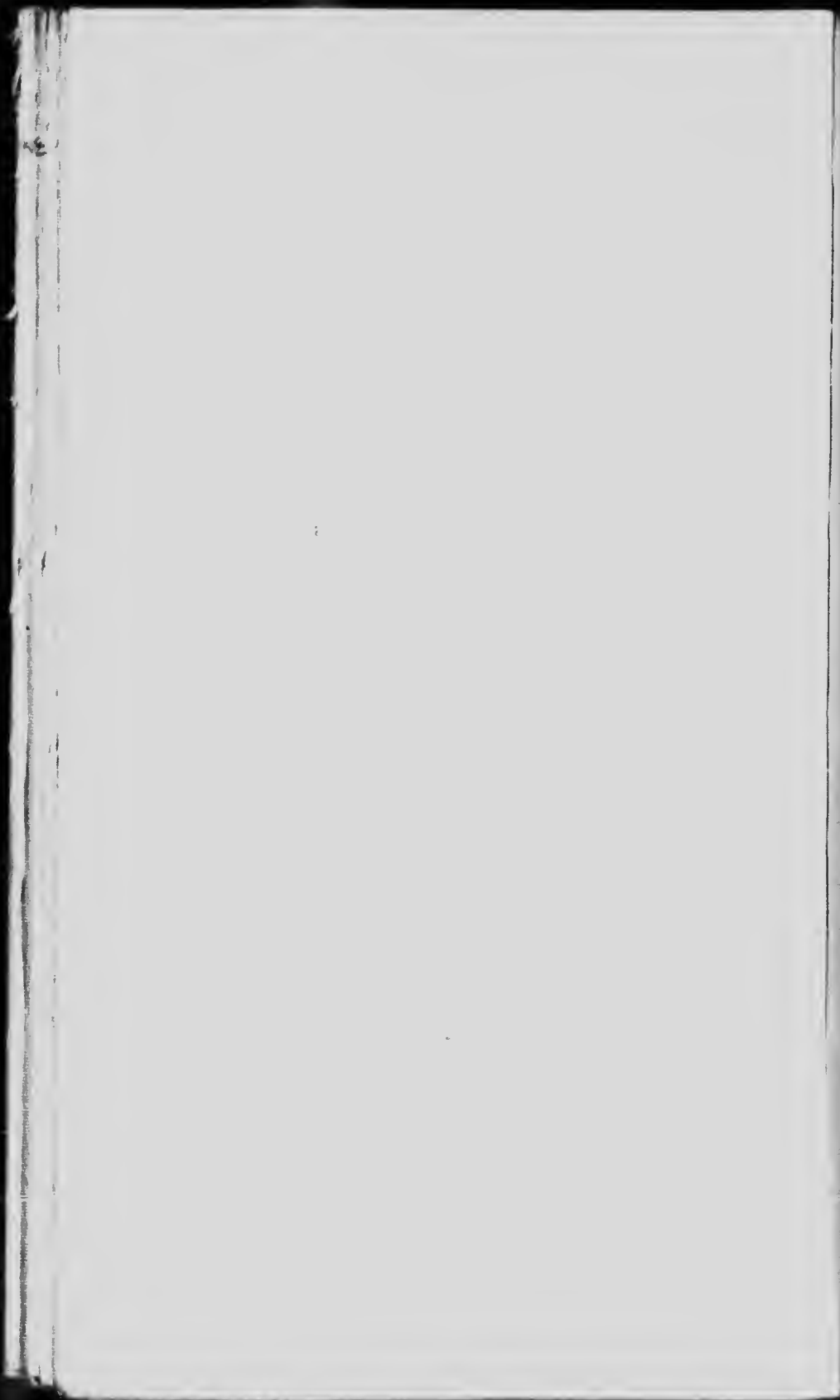
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Him and by Him joined together by a bond that
He only can sever or absolve.

"The voice that breathed o'er Eden
That earliest wedding day
The primal marriage blessing:
It hath not passed away."



IV. HUSBAND AND WIFE.



HUSBAND AND WIFE

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."—*Ephesians v: 25.*

WE have, in this series of sermons, considered the antecedents of marriage, and marriage itself. We now begin to discourse upon the sequence of marriage.

We have noticed with pleasure and profit the happy sweethearts in the garden of young love's culture in the springtime of sowing. We looked upon their betrothal amid sweet odors of bursting promise of summer flowers and fruit. We have witnessed the vowing of the Christian pair at hymeneal shrine, and their wedding banqueting in the garden of love.

We may now behold the newly-wedded pair as entered into the matrimonial paradise, to which they have proceeded along the love-scented path of sweethearts and through the gate of religious ceremony, to gather for mutual enjoyment the full blown roses and ripened fruit grown from young love's sowing in the springtime, now past, never to return. Still they are lovers. But with love more matured, more sanctified, more enduring. The ceremony has been performed. The sweet solemn words have

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been spoken, "Those whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Friends and relatives have expressed kindly interest in greetings and congratulations. The woman has given herself to the man, and the man has left all beside, even father and mother, to cleave to the woman. They are one—separated from all the world unto one another.

"Husband and wife." They stand alone. And yet not alone. God is with them. And they are with God. Here is the holy trinity of marriage: God, husband and wife. Let God be first always. This trinity is the source and supply of that home and family life which gives to each a foretaste of heaven.

In this holy estate of matrimony, there are thoughts, words and deeds to be known only to the trinity of persons which makes it holy—God, husband and wife. To these, everything known to either one must be known by all three, so far as it relates to the Divine covenant by which the sacred trinity was effected.

The sacred holiness of the estate of matrimony forbids intrusion by any one but the trinity of persons whose right it is, and who only can have business within its holy shrine.

In this age of Gospel light, what shall we say of that system of religion which, with ruthless hands, rends the veil of matrimonial privacy, to traffic in the love-secrets, joys and sorrows of husband and wife, for the purpose of making merchandise of their united souls? The

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way in which the Romish Church interferes with the Divine institution of marriage reveals not only the degrading influence of her ministry, but the incapacity of her priests to understand the conditions and rights of husband and wife. For these holy (?) fathers, that great and vital event in the lives of two persons joined together in holy wedlock, with all relating to such event, amounts to no more than a question of religious "shop." As in everything else, what is it worth in the way of revenue?

But I am not discussing the Roman Catholic Church. Our subject is, "Husband and Wife." It is not given to all men and women to enter into these relations. There are, in every generation, many noble people, of both sexes, who go through life unmated. The late Miss Willard once said: "Because of a memory cherished, an estrangement unexplained, an ideal unrealized, a duty bravely met, many of the best men living go their way through life alone." I think the same may be said of women.

We believe that He in whose hand is all power, both in earth and heaven, has the disposing of hearts and hands, especially those of the good and true of either sex.

Those who marry should most surely aim to be worthy of one another, for the sake of Him who gave them being and who joined them together in holy wedlock. There are many blessed examples of such, for which we are thankful.

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Sometimes this is quite noticeable, in the very words at the head of this sermon. "*My husband!*" spoken by some women; and "*My wife!*" by some men, breathe forth sweet odors that remind us at once of that kingdom which is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy." The love is not lost in the husband, and the wife is still the "sweetheart."

Books about "managing a husband," and "ruling a wife," are of little value here, and of no interest where love rules the hour. For this married pair, the simple standard of life is the welfare and highest interest of each other. What a sacred privilege this becomes in this holy and most precious of all human relations!

In every detail of home and family life, the body, soul and spirit, yea, the very being of those whom God has joined together, are committed to the stewardship of each for the other's greatest good, and final crowning in Christ, who is the source of all their comforting hope, and in Him are the springs of all their joys. This perfect condition of married life is not often met with, even where Christ is more or less known and welcomed. It so often occurs that one or other of the two gives way to unbelief. Where such is the case, the believing one has a great responsibility, but also a high and holy privilege.

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the

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wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband." What does the Apostle mean? Is it not that the presence and power in the one believing will sanctify, cleanse and save the unbelieving one of the two divinely joined together? If this hypothesis is right, what a glorious privilege and opportunity are given to husbands and wives in this our day! Just think of it! To let Christ give to the one who is dearest to us in all the world, by our intercession and faith and life in Him, all the best of Himself that He has given to us, and even more, by giving it through a loving companion, in the closeness of united being!

Oh, the matchless joy of it! Husband and wife made one in Him unto the fullness of a life hid with Christ in God! How this sanctified oneness of two persons must put an end to selfishness in the home, and to all unkind criticism in the heart. How positively and triumphantly will the spiritual relation of the man to the woman, and the woman to the man, overrule and govern the physical, which too often, even among Christians, becomes a prominent and sometimes defeating problem.

All this, and a thousand more of all that is pure and beautiful and holy, are included in the meaning of our text, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church." We must admit that this is ideal, and like all Christological ideals impossible with men, except in ideal Christian living, which is only possible

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by abiding in Christ. In Him the ideal can be realized, and no man is worthy of a true wife who does not seek the gracious ministry of the grace of the Lord Jesus, to maintain the divine marital standard which the Scripture sets before every husband. "As Christ loved the Church."

Nothing in life can ever be permanently good or successful apart from our gracious Saviour. He is our example in relation to all things, but especially should we endeavour to copy Him in this most important relation.

First Christ's love for the Church was a sanctified love. This fact is fully established by His advent into the world, by His baptism, fasting and temptation; but more especially by His cross and passion, and by His precious death and burial. He "gave Himself for her." His giving of Himself was an exhibition, not only of sacrificial, but of propitiating love! He redeemed her from a fallen and impure condition, from sin and its consequences.

Secondly, He had a purpose in His love; that His bride, the Church, might be cleansed, sanctified, holy and without blemish. Oh, that husbands would realize their bounden duty, and so meet and perform it, as to find it a glad and happy privilege. That is, to take the place in home and family life so plainly pointed out as the will of God concerning them by the Scriptures. Then would their love for their wives embrace spiritual soul-cleansing religious fellowship. There is a beautiful illustration of

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what I mean by this written in marble and adorning the hall of a palace, yet the truth it tells is for the enrichment of every home, whether it be in cottage or mansion. A piece of statuary standing in Windsor Castle represents Queen Victoria, "The Good," beside her royal consort, Prince Albert, one of his arms about her, and with the other he is pointing upward. Silently but eloquently this sculptured marble tells the story of a husband's strength coupled with tenderness, and his love rewarded by a wife's affectionate, confiding trust. Both faces are turned upward, looking to where the husband points, and they seem to say, all sorrows of earth are brightened by the hope of heaven. On the base of the statue are chiseled the words: "Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Such should be the ambition of every husband, that while loving, protecting and providing for every want of the woman he has chosen from among the millions to be his wife,—above all else to make his every-day life, walk and conversation an allurement to the higher and better world; that if, like the late Queen of England, the wife should see her husband precede her through the vale of shadows, she may know that he still leads the way, as he hitherto had done, to a brighter and better sphere of happiness and spiritual union.

Does it not seem to you that I have been rather partial by pointing out more especially

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the duty of the husband than that of the wife? If so, I would answer the criticism by asking: "Is there not a cause?" As a pastor for thirty years, observation has forced the opinion upon me that the wife, rather than the husband, leads in home and family religion. I admit that there are exceptions, and some very noticeable exceptions. The better way is for each to be in earnest in helping the faith and practice of the other. Let the two be one in spirit, as well as one in the flesh. Such love as Christ gave the Church, gave Him a right to be head over all things to her and merited her most loyal obedience.

The religion of Jesus Christ sanctifies all relationships of life, and makes performance of duty a joy. As the husband loves Christ, he will so love his wife as to win her trust and obedience. As the wife obeys Christ in spiritual things, so will she obey her husband in all righteousness.

Mary, wife of Prince William of Orange, and heir-apparent to the British throne, was asked what her husband, the prince, would be if she became Queen. She called Prince William and promised him, "he should always bear rule, and asked only that he would always obey the command, 'Husbands love your wives,' and she would keep that other command, 'Wives, obey your husbands in all things.'"

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The noted Jeremy Taylor said: "Marriage is a school and exercise of virtue." Here is the proper sense of piety and patience; kindness is spread abroad, and love is united and made firm as a centre.

We now leave, for a season, the newly-married pair, knowing that with their love and obedience, united in Christ, their path through life will be bright and happy, and no cloud, nor storm, though there will likely be both, shall ever hinder their way, "shining more and more unto the perfect day."



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V. FATHER AND MOTHER

FATHER AND MOTHER

"Thy father and thy mother shall be glad and she that bare thee shall rejoice."—*Prov. xxiii.: 25.*

THESE words form a climax to advice given to a son. He is to give "his heart unto wisdom," and to "live in the fear of the Lord." Such a course of life will bring joy and happiness to his parents.

We are told, by some Hebrew scholars, that this verse should read a little different, and in the present tense: "Let thy father and thy mother be glad, and she that bare thee rejoice." This thought cannot but have weight with any son or daughter, even though God be forgotten.

But it is not of the children I would speak this evening, except as reference to parental responsibility demands it. My sermon has to do with the father and mother, relative to children as a natural sequence to marriage.

Let me here repeat a paragraph of the first sermon in this series; it is this: "In the exercise of Divine wisdom and love, God made man a helpmeet; His intention is plainly revealed—the increase of man's happiness, a happiness that would depend upon affectionate devotion to an object that would be perfectly responsive to

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the same ; and further, to provide for that which, when sanctified with true religion, affords to the dwellers upon earth a foretaste of heaven, in the institution of home and family life."

You will doubtless have noticed that in each of the preceding discourses one thought was strongly emphasized. It was this: The increase of happiness, with every stage of advance toward the perfecting of home and family life. This must be the case with the man and woman who, in their united aim for life, make Christ their counsellor and maintain fellowship together with Him.

For those who walk with God there is always something better further on. In no path of life is this more true than in the matrimonial path, the goal of which is happily reached by some who will say, as they stand in the glory of the presence of God who joined them together, "Behold, here are we, and the children which Thou hast given us." The period of sweethearts is made more joyous by the anticipation of a successful betrothal; then happier still is the looking forth to the bridal day, its holy ceremony and marriage festival; then comes the more blessed anticipation of sharing together parental joys and sorrows, the obligations and responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood; the training of a child for heaven and for God, and that child part of the very being of two made one—husband and wife.

We must remember that "children are of the

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Lord." "He doeth whatsoever He will," and no man may say "What doest Thou?" And so it comes to pass that many good husbands and wives never become parents, just as many good sweethearts never become husbands and wives, but as they themselves are children of God by faith in Christ, they uncomplainingly submit to the will of their heavenly Father, believing that His will is best, for "He doeth all things well."

Someone has said that "God withheld the gift of children from George and Martha Washington, because in His great plan He designed them to be father and mother of a nation instead of a family."

I have no doubt that our heavenly Father, who knows the end from the beginning, ordereth all things for the good of those who commit their way to Him; and whatever He wills for them is their highest interest, both for time and for eternity. He makes no mistakes in giving or withholding family increase.

Our subject proper this evening is father and mother. The young husband and wife, who claimed our prayerful attention on previous occasions, have been, with fear and trembling, and yet with glad anticipation, looking forward to the advent of their firstborn. If wise, and if just to themselves, and to their unborn child, they have been for months daily praying for Divine favor upon the looked-for hours of travail and pain, which with God's blessing are

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the forerunners of joy and thanksgiving for a child born into the world.

Let us now consider this Christian pair in their new-found relation to home and family. While the husband, in prayerful solicitation for the safety of his beloved wife, waited upon God, she went down to the waters of death, even to the shore of eternity, under Divine preservation, and brought back on her bosom a new-born soul, wrapped up in part of their own persons. As they look upon the little one, they see in it a real personal increase of their united beings. They have come through all the progressive way that leads from the first thrill of love for one another to the thrilling experience of an affection that centres in a third person with a new revelation of the parental love of God.

What has all past happiness been to them compared with this? Here is the first-fruit of all the earlier sowing in the garden of young love's culture. Oh, the "riches of God in Christ Jesus" that these Christian parents may see unfolded for them in that tiny bit of humanity. As the goodly tree, laden with fragrant blossoms and golden fruit, lies enfolded in the little brown seed, which may be tossed about by baby fingers, so there lies, in the little one sleeping on its mother's breast, the possibility of a life fruitful to the glory of God on earth, and in heaven a being higher than the angels, sharing the honor and worship of Him before whom "angels veil their faces," and "cherubim and

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seraphim rest not day and night, saying Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

What a glorious future for the babe of Christian parents! Great in blessing is the child to them and to itself, but great also is the parents' responsibility. The seed which is to bear a tree laden with blossoms and fruit must be planted where it may be subjected to germinating and life-nourishing influences of a suitable environment. It must receive the ministrations of both the earth and the heavens.

This is analogous to the life of a human being. A seed is dropped into the hands of father and mother to be planted in the garden of God, to be nurtured with prayerful religious zeal, in an environment of suitable life-giving forces for both body and soul. With faith in the promise: "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God," the child is first brought to the baptismal font and dedicated with religious rite to the God who gave it. There the Christian father and mother assume, willingly, the solemn and necessary responsibility of parenthood, promising to "bring up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to teach him all things which a Christian ought to know and believe, to his soul's health."

Such parental duty becomes a very special and blessed privilege, as by precept and example,

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in home and in church, the father and mother unitedly "train up the child in the way it should go."

Sometimes, without the reason being plain to human sense, this privilege of training a soul for God is cut short. It is said that "one-third of the human family die in infancy." Had we time, we could point out many reasons why this may be the result of Divine wisdom. For one thing, it demonstrates both the life-giving and soul-saving power of our heavenly Father. It is enough for the Christian believer, when bereaved of a child, to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

A notable evangelist, to a large audience, repeated a story told by the late D. L. Moody, of a man watching by the sick bed of his little five-year-old son. "The child said, 'Papa, take me up'; the father took him in his arms. The little fellow said, 'Hold me higher, papa,' and he held him up level with his shoulders. Again the child said, in feebler voice, 'Hold me higher, papa.' The father held him as high as he could reach for a moment, and then lowered the little quiet form and looked upon a bit of lifeless clay: his boy had fled. 'It seems to me,' said Mr. Moody, 'that man had given his child to God in that lifting up.' At the close of the meeting, a white-haired gentleman of religious culture approached the evangelist and said: 'I am the father of whom Mr. Moody spoke, and

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I want to say his conclusion was wrong; I did not wait till my child was dying to offer him to God, but did so the day he was born, and held him there by prayer every day of his life.'"

In such a home the life of a child, though short, is not in vain. It is length of days that endangers the success of the mission and destiny of our children. The short life, that ends in childhood, has not failed. As the human being, it has lived, and suffered, and died, and through it all goes back to God, a blood-washed soul, to glorify, for all eternity, its blessed Redeemer. A child has entered "in through the gates into the city," having "right to the tree of life."

The shortest life of a child to its parents is not in vain. It has enriched for them life's memories. A new love has been born in their hearts. Another heart-chord is strung in the harp of praise to the Lord of life and death, and who is the resurrection. The affections of father and mother cluster about a little treasure in God's keeping, they are honored by being parents of a child in heaven. Part of themselves is already glorified in the immediate presence of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, and whose presence is the light of the city of God.

Yet there are greater blessings and honor for the father and mother to whom are given the grace of faithfulness in duty to living,

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growing children. Like all that we have noticed in the various stages, with increasing happiness toward the perfecting of home and family life, there are still better things ahead for those who walk, as parents and children with God. There is great happiness for godly parents in the budding infancy of their child; greater still in the opening flower of its youth and in the blossoming of manhood or womanhood, of purity and virtue. These phases of grace and beauty are all dependent more or less upon religious environment and training.

Fathers and mothers failing in diligence in the training of their children for the higher life, as a labor of love, are unjust to both themselves and their children.

Nothing can glorify the evening shadows of life's day for the united heads of a home and family like the assurance that the children are safe within the "fold of the Good Shepherd," either on earth or in heaven.

There are many peaceful death beds, that seem as a door of entrance into the fullest consummation of promised reward for all the toil and care, the joys and sorrows, of a life consecrated to home and heaven by man and woman divinely joined together, since the first hour their hearts thrilled for one another. Not the least in the comfort of that death bed experience is the thought that the children are safe.

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An aged couple who had lived so long that their children, though they had lived to be men and women, had all passed on into the believer's inheritance, were going down toward the valley of the shadow. The aged mother, lying on a couch, said, "Father, are the children all in?" The old man answered, "Yes, dear, they are all in." Then said his life-companion, "Close the shutters and shut the door, and get the Book." The husband father got the Book, around which they had gathered their children, day after day, as the evening shadows fell, and the shutters and doors of their humble home were closed. The old man read from the sacred pages that for over seventy years they had read together. When he closed the Book he was alone with God—the mother had been called to meet her children "in the morning."

Professor Emslie when dying said to his wife, "Kate, God is love—all love! Kate, we will tell everybody that, but especially our own boy—at least, you will."

Yes, that's it! Tell our own boys and girls of the "riches of God in Christ Jesus." Not only tell them of God, but live Him for them, and enjoy Him with them. Oh, fathers and mothers, if you want the highest joy of the sequence of marriage, walk with your children in the light of God's love. Let the great, "Good Shepherd of the sheep" lead you and them into the green pastures and beside the still waters of cleansing and refreshment. Let your char-

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acter, your example, your everyday walk and conversation, your faithfulness to Christ and duty, in home and in church, be, before your children, pure as the light of God. Thus will the family circle of your home be bathed, in thought, word and deed, as in a celestial fountain, and each child will advance toward a pure and godly maturity and toward heaven, surrounded by guardian angels. Your children will rise up and call you blessed!

walk and
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