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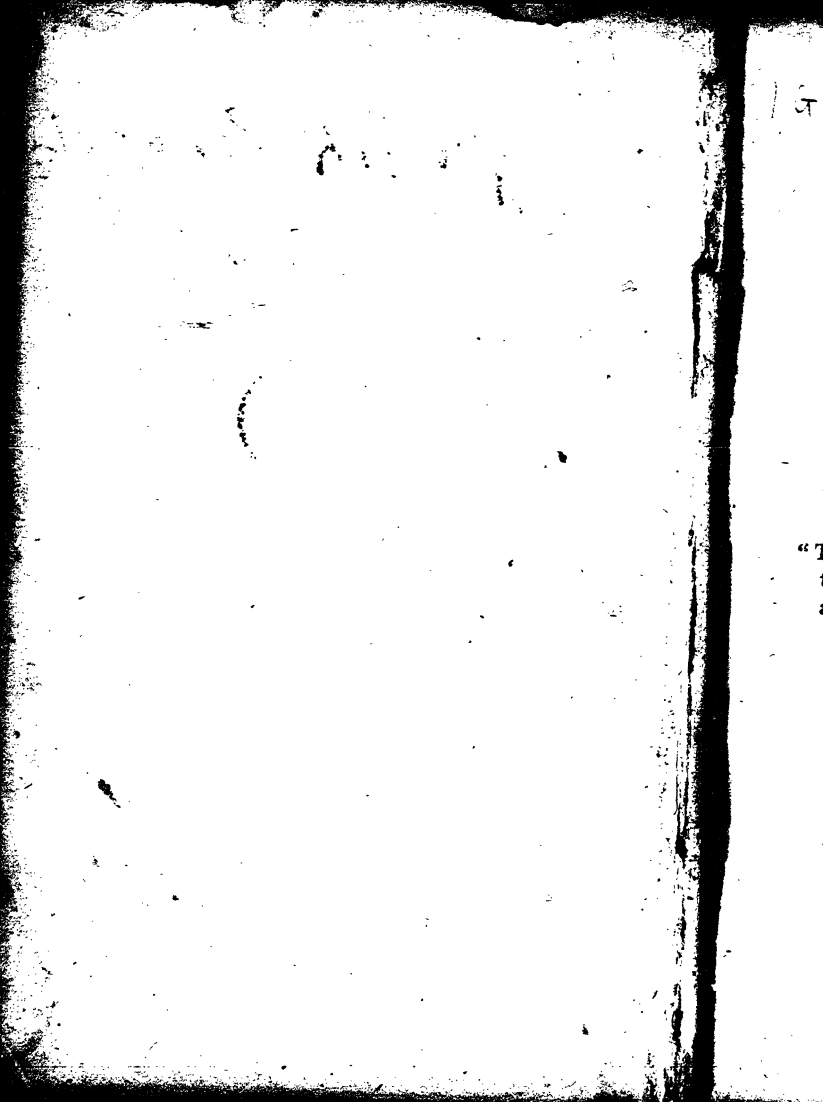
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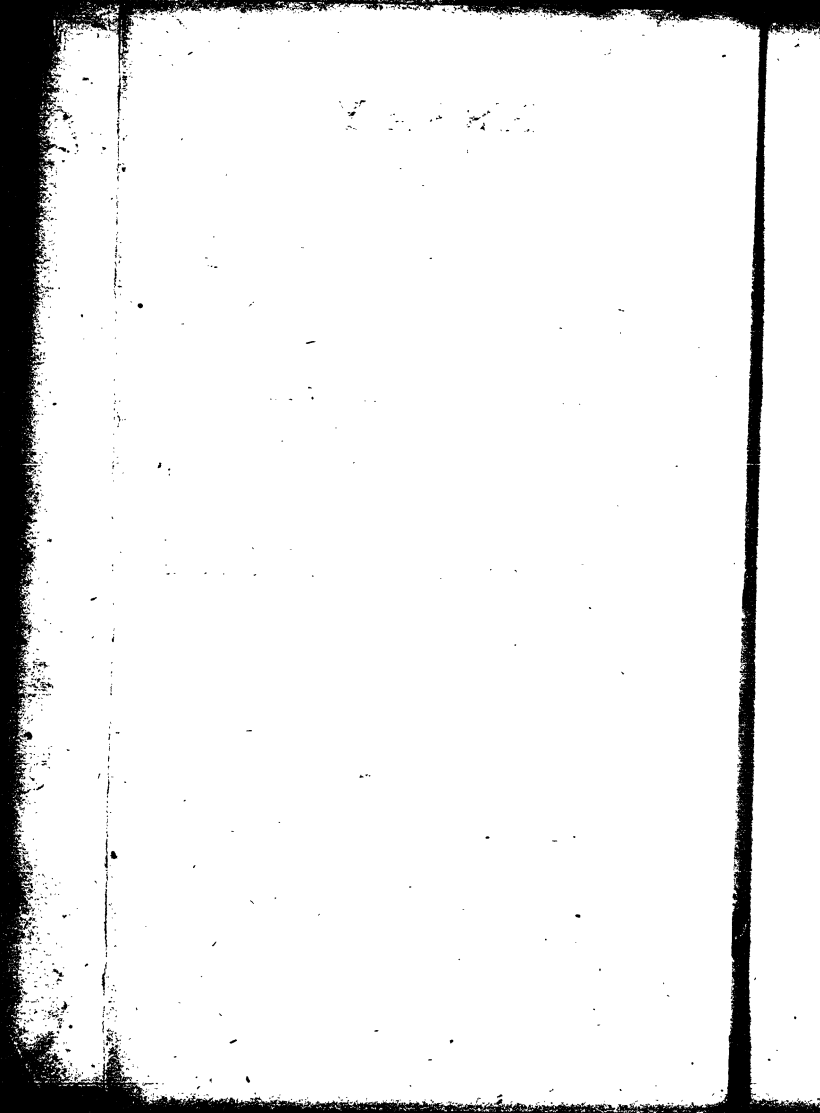
MARRIAGE.

“They are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

QUEBEC:
PUBLISHED BY P. & W. RUTHVEN:

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1829



THIS VOLUME

Is inscribed to

HER,

WHOSE

DUTEOUS AFFECTIONS

As a

WIFE,

AND

WHOSE

TENDER SENSIBILITIES

As a

MOTHER,

Exemplify

PRACTICAL PIETY.

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INTRODUCTION.



REVEALED Truth, Conscience, and Universal History certify, that individual felicity, domestic peace, social concord, and national welfare, are proportionably and inseparably connected with the diffusive practical influence of morality and religion. Hence, all who are anxious to promote the general prosperity, should aid in the promulgation of those principles, which combine the perennity of our civil institutions, the purity of mankind, and the honour of Christianity. No subject, the correct decision of which involves the temporal comfort of rational beings, more intimately concerns the community, than the obligations which result from the hymeneal contract. A vague, undefined impression exists, that marriage includes duties permanently binding; but a dissolution of the compact has been almost unanimously admitted in theory, and in practice universally adopted. Therefore, to review

those Scriptures that relate to the appointment of matrimony, which is the origin of all our relations, the crimes which infringe its sacred character, the stability of the conjugal cement, and the illegality of human interposition to separate that which God has indissolubly joined together, can be neither useless nor superfluous: because no other authority than the Divine Word, can determine, either the nature, engagements, or durability of an ordinance which Heaven has appointed.

INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE is an institution peculiarly important; of divine appointment; coeval with the existence of the human race; and the source of families and national continuance. It distinguishes man from the brute creation, excludes the disorders of licentiousness; surpasses all natural ties; and cherishes the sweetest affections of the heart. No agreement exists in its quality so familiar, in its obligations so binding, and in its consequences so momentous. Hence, that opinion which would either banish or degrade it, has always been held by the wise and virtuous, most vile and injurious, equally destructive of morals and social happiness: and many Heathen legislators and philosophers were peculiarly solicitous to sanction, encourage, and regulate this ordinance. But upon every subject which is favourable to the felicity of mankind, the gospel of our salvation is pre-eminent. The sacred volume classes the prohibition

of wedlock with the doctrine of devils; assures us marriage is honourable in all; conducts us to its commencement in Paradise; *renders the bond indissoluble; places it under the sole jurisdiction of Heaven*; and takes from it an image to prefigure the connection of Christ and his church.

Moses' narrative of Eve's creation, and Adam's reception of her includes, with the Christian interpretation of it, that which God has condescended to reveal with reference to the commencement of society: but this perfectly delineates those practices which are subversive of the institution, duties and objects of the wedded relation. By conducting all living things to Adam that he might name them, propriety and dominion over them were assigned to him by their great Creator; and from a general survey of all the animal tribes, our great ancestor perceived that they were formed in pairs for the propagation of their kinds; that himself was solitary and destitute, without his resemblance; and that a suitable companion in bodily and mental qualities, to cohabit and converse with him, to delight and comfort him, & to assist in procreating

the species, was indispensable to the completion of our globe.

The wisdom of God is most beautifully exemplified in the production of our first Mother. Nothing can more irresistibly evince the intentions of Jehovah with regard to the intimacy and permanency of married life, than the mode by which she was admitted into existence; her introduction to our general progenitor; the gratitude with which he received her; and the irrefragable truth that the Lord uttered, which was intended to direct the affections, sentiments, and conduct of all succeeding generations. After Adam had assumed his prerogative of governing the inferior creatures, and had discovered that there was not found an help meet for him; Jehovah caused a deep supernatural sleep to fall upon him; while he slept, the Lord took one of his ribs, near the heart, the seat of our affections, and of it he formed Eve. She was not like him extracted from the dust, but was part of himself, of his own flesh; and this decision was established for all his posterity, that the wife should be regarded with as much love, and be treated with the same tenderness as the man's own body.

The Lord God brought the woman to the man; who expressed his satisfaction and joy, by the most endearing of all appellations, and by affirming that the connection with her was the nearest which could possibly be constituted: "She is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." To Adam's individual claim the Lord gave his eternal sanction, by a declaration which contains a law of perpetual obligation in every age, and which cannot be violated without insulting the divine supremacy. "Therefore, shall a man leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 1." Thus Marriage was established, sacred and honourable, of high Distinction, and nearly combined with the dignity and fruition of human nature.

The narrative of the Deluge indicates, that the perversion of the matrimonial ordinance was the grand source of those enormous impieties which finally involved

1. By making them one man and one woman, God condemned Polygamy, and by making them one flesh, he condemned Divorce.

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all the departments of our globe in indiscriminate destruction ; and most clearly elucidates the divine will with regard to the nuptial contract. In their relative connections, the human race differed very little from their primitive situation on the sixth day of creation in Paradise. One pair alone existed at that period ; and after the flood, Noah and his wife, the Father and Mother, Shem, Ham and Japheth with their wives, brethren and sisters, comprised the family of mankind ; an union both so inviolate and distinct, that the wisdom of Deity most lucidly appears : for the domestic relations in those houses where the fear of God, which must then have swayed Noah's habitation, reigns, are the spring of every purifying and delicate affection. Are we not taught by this circumstance, that all sexual intercourse should be confined to two persons indissolubly united, and that polygamy and divorce are unnatural, since in the cases cited they were impossible ? The similar condition of man after his creation, and subsequent to his preservation from the inundating grave, and the edict of God with respect to brutes, birds, insects and
" all in whose nostrils was the breath of

life in dry land," remove every vestige of sceptical uncertainty. In the ark, an equal number of males and females of all inferior existing creatures, and of those who by God's appointment "had dominion over them," was scrupulously preserved.

The matrimonial institution unequivocally declares, that domestic conjugal cohabitation was by God's design restrained to one only of each sex. In reproof of the various iniquities of the latter Jews, Malachi introduces this forcible consideration: "did not God make them one"? one pair, one man and one woman; as a rule to all mankind who should descend from them: "yet had he the residue of the spirit;" he could have created other men or additional women, if promiscuous concubinage had been for the comfort of the world. This argument against divorce, which virtually establishes polygamy and legalizes adultery, being confirmed by our Lord's authoritative wisdom, can neither be weakened by sophistry, evaded by artifice, nor overthrown by reasoning. Had it swayed human Legislators, they would have left an ordinance of Heaven to the immediate direction and controul of its Author.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

THE rite by which persons are publicly recognised as man and wife, has been solemnised as a religious ceremony in every country : and this practice being universal and extensive as the human family, decisively attests that matrimony was originally of divine appointment, and that its obligations are most serious and impressive.

The celebration of marriage in all ages of the Christian church, has been conducted with respect to the importance which the Scriptures attach to this indissoluble engagement. It is performed with fewer observances, but with far greater solemnity ; and in whatever aspect the circumstances associated with the rite are contemplated, the ever during continuance of the wedded relation is always presupposed as the basis of the whole proceeding. From the apostolic era, in every land where Christianity is the professed foundation and sanction of the public morals—however the form may have varied the substance

is identical : and the serious charge which is given to the parties and their assembled friends, must inspire correct views of the ordinance. Before him "who searches the heart ;" they are admonished that if any cause exists why the marriage is unlawful, they shall declare it, as they will realise the divine blessing or curse : and the promise of the bridegroom and bride is the most preposterous mockery and deception, if the union be afterwards dissolvable by any terrestrial power. The declaration, that they will mutually love, cherish and support each other in sickness, health, prosperity and adversity, and that they will scrupulously guard themselves from every imputation of infidelity to their own covenant, until death shall divide their hearts and persons, is deliberate violation of the most solemn oath in them, if any idea exists that after the satiety of animal passion, they may discover a mode to untie the knot, and break the bonds of all human associations.

What is the duty of Parents with regard to their children's marriage? One of the most strongly established principles by which the human mind is swayed, is that subjection which from our earliest

recollections we owe and feel to our parents. How long that submission which includes obedience, labour and acquiescence shall continue, must be determined by the law of God or the consent of the parties. In almost every nation the decision has been dissimilar ; but it now seems to be a settled principle, that until twenty one years of age, young persons shall not be considered as independent agents. This opinion should however vary, according to the relative maturity of youth. From the human constitution, a female at eighteen is equally qualified for maternal and domestic duties, as a man at twenty one for worldly avocations, and his temporal provision. If the connubial relation be founded upon love, and cannot justifiably be destroyed ; parents are culpable who endeavour to force their children into connections to which they object ; or who obstruct an union with the desire of the heart. This conduct has often been attended with the most pernicious effects ; and hurried youth into vices of which they otherwise might ever have been ignorant.

Respect, attention and a conformity to parental decisions, in all cases which affect

not conscience, will ever characterise those who feel filial affection and christian restrictions. This regard is peculiarly requisite in reference to a relation which will give a bent to all subsequent life; and in which the comfort of our parents as well as our own happiness is materially concerned. Obedience to those from whom under God we derive our existence, forms a prominent feature of the ancient theocracy; and it is explicitly incorporated by our Lord as an important part of his religion. Paul enjoins this duty in his epistles, and states that to "obey our parents in the Lord in all things is right, and well pleasing unto the Lord." 2.

Early marriages combine advantages so numerous, personal sanctity, relative comfort, social utility, and national stability; that the joyless arguments of philosophical celibacy vanish before the dictates of nature, the claims of morality, and the interests of religion. Every Father, if he judges correctly, would rather manage the business of his inexperienced Son's first wedded life, than see him unmarried and corrupt; acquiring a fondness for illicit

2. Conformity to the Divine Will is moral rectitude.

gratifications until purity and peace find no station in his heart; and the future predominance of all the refined and virtuous affections is very intimately allied with the lawful indulgence of the strongest propensity in human nature, previous to the soul's contamination, by irregular and sinful pleasures.

What situation of mind is inconsistent, and what state of the heart incompatible with the objects of the institution, and the terms of the contract? The duties of married life are often assumed by those who have not the least design faithfully to perform them. Wordly necessities, parental authority or personal aggrandizement frequently induce a submission to the form of marriage, while no intention exists of closing a criminal intercourse with other persons. The acts previously committed cannot be too severely reprobated; but this attempt to deceive and insult both God and man renders the perpetrator indescribably corrupt; is directly contrary to every principle of the engagement; an unquestionable defiance of the divine attributes; and a rooted determination to cancel all the bonds of human obligation.

Men endeavour with all possible assiduity to engage and irrevocably to fix a female's affections; then close their attentions; and although they feel mutual love, desert this object of their regard, and marry another, while the former attachment remains. This, however trifling it may appear in the modern catalogue of social offences is a compound of depravity, that scarcely admits any hope of cure or amendment; and the accumulated guilt of which, no excuses can possibly invalidate. Marriage in this state is a very high degree of moral turpitude, base seduction of female innocence, and deliberate resolution to commit adultery. 3.

Mercenary motives often unite those whose dissimilarity precludes not hymeneal happiness only, but even the practicability of cohabitation. Youth and age, deformity and beauty, intellect and stupidity, delicate urbanity and brutal coarseness,

3. This peculiarly regards men, because they are the suitors. A female, after her affections are once settled, will submit to any deprivation rather than withdraw them: and the single life of many valuable women must be attributed to early disappointment, arising from despicable desertion on the part of him who had thus attracted her love, and wounded her delicacy.

virtuous refinement and bestial degradation sometimes are joined from the love of money in the bonds of marriage; and persons often bind themselves with objects of their aversion and disgust, in an engagement that can be dissolved by death only, "which releases them from a temporal, to conduct them into an eternal hell." Unions formed from these views, are detestable in the sight of God, destructive of personal and social comfort, and injurious to morality and religion. How far an individual may be justified or censurable in marrying that man or woman, who is not the chief object of affection, must greatly depend upon circumstances; if the party be already connected, it is incumbent to eradicate the prepossession, by cultivating another attachment: but any man or woman who marries, while a stronger affection for another is felt, which might by delay, and from the concurrence of providential dispensations be gratified, or a dislike to the proposed partner which precludes all rational expectation of future mutual love, is guilty of wilful falshood, in a situation, when the presence of God, the sanctions of religion, and the solemn importance of

the expected relation, should impose seriousness upon the mind. Hence, the dispositions which are opposed to the nuptial ceremony, prove the perpetuity of the matrimonial covenant.

OBJECT OF MARRIAGE.



TO propagate and nurse offspring, to promote the joint happiness of the couple intermarrying, and to form minds for the great duties and extensive destination of life, are the principal objects of marriage. Dissipation renders men insensible to every virtuous attraction; obstructs or impairs all the tender & generous feelings; and disqualifies them for matrimony, which is the moral union of souls, the sole cement of society, and the only source of pure domestic enjoyment.

The most agreeable scene which we can survey upon earth, is a peaceful and happy family, in which friendship draws more closely the bonds of nature; where every care is divided, every sorrow diminished, every joy redoubled, by discovery, sympathy and communion; where mutual confidence prevails. and advice, consolation and succour are reciprocally given and received. To this sight God himself calls our attention; "behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren

to dwell together in unity !” Some things are good but not pleasant, others are pleasant but not good : here, both are combined, and the effect is fragrant as the sacred perfume, and reviving as the influences of Heaven.

To qualify children for the diversified and important duties of this state, and to imbue them with the holy sentiments of the christian religion with reference to future existence, are the grand objects of the connubial relation ; which cannot be effectually secured, unless the bond be indissoluble. They are subverted by the toleration of divorce ; which irrecoverably injures the youth, who are bereft by it of one parent’s care, and generally of the other’s tenderness. Every principle which is included in wedded life most powerfully opposes all idea of any separation of married persons. The constitutional timidity, the corporeal weakness, and the natural reliance of the female sex upon man, indicate that her enjoyment materially results from the marriage connection. But the source of this consolation is altogether exsiccated, if she has no dependence that her comfort will continue, or if she know not how soon from man’s

caprice, loss of affection or sensuality, she may be disowned from her home, and driven into the world helpless, degraded and despised. Therefore, the happiness of half of the human family, is inseparably connected with the permanency of the contract.

Children cannot be properly nurtured without this institution; the human body in infancy is tender and defenceless; strength and maturity of reason are slow in their progress; and to conduct youth to decency, usefulness and virtue requires constant labour and attention. In the anxieties of maternal love, they find support in weakness, and supply in necessity; and from the combined parental affections, they derive all knowledge requisite to accomplish them for their temporal stations. To insure these effects, without which the human family would speedily disappear; the concurrence of both parents and their united exertions are indispensable. Hence, our structure and condition demonstrate that the human sexes are destined for a moral and the most intimate and lasting union; as by this means alone, children obtain superior instruction, and due provision for their subsequent establishment.

That every refined principle may be exhibited among men, friendship must be directed to some particular point, and humanity distinctly employed. Rational undepraved love settled by marriage, guides the heart to its proper object, circumscribes its views, and by confining it, enlarges the value and expands the influence of the affections. From the wedded connection of one man and woman, by which nature appoints for them a particular sphere of action, which is adapted to their ability and capacity, spring many domestic endearments. Through this relative intercourse; all the inhabitants, are subdivided into separate bodies, directed by a head, whose authority being absolute, his controul is more influential than the laws of the national government. The solicitude which parents feel for the welfare of their children, forms an obligation for their obedience and good order far superior to any other bond which society can receive; and this combination of principles, affections & anxieties is the strongest incentive to exertion, and the most encouraging stimulus to industrious application. 4. Relax the nuptial obligation;

4. The strict alliance of the parties combines their personal substantial comfort, and innocent

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and facilitate the acquisition of divorce; all these effects cease; the social constitution of man is at an end; and the human family would in chaos rush to their extinction.

How can the objects of marriage be secured, by those who profess Christianity, or what is the divine law with respect to it, among the disciples of Jesus? "The influence of evangelic truth upon conjugal comfort is very great and extensive: domestic society is regulated and exalted by the mutual duties which it enjoins on the husband and wife: and the authoritative directions which it gives to all those who submit to its sway, to marry only in the Lord", secure in a prudential attention to its prescriptions, the largest portion of happiness in the present world, and most effectually tend to secure their immortal felicity."

This subject is so deeply interesting to the prosperity of the church of God, that more discipline should be exercised with regard to the matrimonial connection of its members. No apostolic command

enjoyment: and if the sole right which marriage gives to the mutual affections is destroyed; social industry, improvements and virtue, will be extinguished.

is expressed with more energy and plainness, and no sacred injunction, if its importance is compared, is less regarded. Paul decides, that if Christian disciples of either sex unite with persons who cannot be charitably concluded to be servants of Jesus, this act is a direct opposition to their spiritual interest, and a departure from the paramount duty which they owe to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Prudence alone, if religion were totally disconnected from the discussion, strongly dictates the impropriety of this conduct. In every situation of life, it is of high importance, that our connections should be formed with persons whose tempers are congenial with our own dispositions. The peace, comfort and permanency of the married state particularly, which is the nearest and most lasting of all attachments, are materially interested in this similitude; and a diversity of sentiment, feeling and action upon the subject of religion is generally attended with the utmost inconvenience, perplexity and pain. The decision is explicit, that the believer and unbeliever, the children of light and darkness shall not be joined. A mere profession of Christianity, while

the influence of a carnal mind predominates, cannot justify the violation of the law. In all the grand branches of faith, experience and practice the pair would be severed by the impassable gulf; the great bond of spiritual cohesion would be inevitably wanting; a believer in Jesus could not find an helpmate; one must be a perpetual object of pity to the other partner; and in the most solemn moments, the devotional husband of an unbelieving wife, or the prayerful wife of an infidel husband must consider the other as "a child of wrath," and must anticipate death with dismay, as the commencement of an everlasting separation.

To a christian, in whose ears the apostolic precept daily resounds, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" the great danger of this union will be obvious; it will be a powerful, probably an insuperable preventative to the "progress of religion." The enemies, difficulties and obstructions in the christian race are numerous, even when our avocations and connections are propitious to our advancement; but when our nearest relative from whom we must be inseparable by affection

and principle, either openly counteracts or silently diminishes the preponderance of holiness in the spirit and conduct, it is irrefragable, that marriage contrary to the law of Christianity must be inimical to the prosperity of the soul. 5.

Facts and experience incontrovertibly demonstrate the truth of these sentiments; and furnish insurmountable objections to the marriage of a Christian with an unbeliever. To this destructive practice, "the sons of God" taking into the conjugal relation "the daughters of men;" those who feared the Lord being seduced from their principles and allegiance by their ungodly wives; is expressly attributed the complication of "wickedness which filled the old world," and which became so universal that no mode of cure existed, except the total destruction of the race. Moses was bound by the divine law to circumcise his son; but his wife Zipporah expressed the strongest disapprobation of obedience to the command.

5. A worldly wife is to a godly man as an enemy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray him, and by assiduity or perseverance will overcome his resolutions, and prevail with him to comply with her, to the great injury of his credit and comfort.

When Sampson wished a wife from the Philistines, Manoah and his mother thus beautifully and impressively expostulated with him : "is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" His judgment and conscience must have been forcibly swayed by an admonition so parental and affectionate. But passion was imperious, and he replied, "get her for me, she pleaseth me well." They acquiesced ; and the connection was deplorably disastrous. The sinful and idolatrous practices of her country ensnared him, the divine Spirit departed from Sampson, and the child of promise and prayer, the morning of whose life was so serene and splendid, fled into eternity, agitated by tempests and surrounded by storms. He violated the express law against marriage with the Canaanites, and an accumulation of misery succeeded. How did "Solomon's women turn away his heart after other Gods" ! and what a dreadful spirit of impiety was manifested by Job's wife when she said ; "dost thou still retain thine integrity ? curse God and die." This is irresistible evidence, that immense evil is connected

with christians being unequally yoked ; that " in contracting marriage, the senses are dangerous counsellors, and beauty and wit very doubtful recommendations ; and that wisdom, piety and holiness ought principally to be regarded."

The anticipation which is often indulged, that the irreligious partner will be converted by the other's exertions is most commonly delusive ; and all the reasoning which is intended to quiet the conscience, for entering into this unhallowed connection is demonstrably fallacious. These speculations are seldom realised ; the want of an helpmate is soon felt ; no guide or counsel diminishes or relieves embarrassment ; no sympathy softens the severity of spiritual conflicts and discouragements ; and no stimulus rouses in seasons of deadness and declension. The christian female is married, but not to a fellow heir of the grace of life ; consequently where she should have experienced a helper, she meets with a hindrance ; the tempers and employments of her husband are so dissimilar to her own, that even on the Lord's day, she is reduced to the painful alternative, either to displease her most intimate relation, or to disobey her Master who is

in heaven. The unfortunate result is generally exhibited, in the sacrifice of religious principle to natural affection, and in the neglect of private and public devotion. Worldly company becomes attractive, seriousness of spirit is injured, the peculiar obligations of the christian life impress with less ardour and spirituality, and the first imprudence is the prolific source of abiding pungent grief. This primary violation of duty often furnishes repentance throughout future existence, or conducts the professor to a lukewarm state, and not unfrequently ends in total apostacy. Mercy's conduct when Mr. Brisk addressed her, is the pattern for christian imitation: "he was a man of some breeding, and one that pretended to religion, but it was feared, a stranger to the power of that which was good. Nay then, said Mercy, I will look no more on him, for I purpose never to have a clog on my soul."

Abraham's precedent in obtaining a wife for his son, comprises instruction of the highest consequence. Eliezer sware, "that he would if possible obstruct Isaac's union with any Canaanite." In faith, the Father of believers sent the steward to

his relations, not doubting the promise of God: the servant stood by the well at the close of his journey, implored the blessing and direction of heaven, and submitted himself to Jehovah's superintending controul. His petition was immediately answered; success attended him in the application to **Rebekah**, and her friends; and the Lord was with him, to return him speedily to Isaac with a beauteous bride. If prayer be at all seasons, upon all occasions, and in every difficulty proper, it must indubitably be requisite upon the most important event of human life; and unions formed in the fear of God, cemented by fervent supplication for the divine benediction, and ratified by a confidential subjection to providential disposal; afford stronger grounds for rational expectation, that the future connection will be comfortable, than those engagements which are commenced without reflection, strengthened by animal passion alone, and concluded with present thoughtlessness, and no consideration of futurity.

This notice of christian duty upon the subject of marriage affords ample proof that the conjugal union is inviolable: And hence, the Lord directs his Apostle to

bequeath the church an express law, which is adapted to all persons, in every country, of every age, and throughout all generations. The disjunction of man and wife is directly subversive of the ordinance which unites them as one flesh, opposed to the law of nature as sanctioned by evangelic institutes, and derogatory to the glory of God. To divorce those who marry and live in the Lord is universally impracticable. The affectionate sensibilities, the sense of relative obligations, the influence of christian purity, and sacred example imperiously forbid every attempt to destroy that contract which when solemnized upon earth, was confirmed in heaven. From the sacred precept, marry only in the Lord, and the absolute impossibility, that christians who are under the ascendancy of gracious principles can even desire a separation; it may be fairly inferred that marriage is in its own nature indissoluble. 6.

6. Truth which is inferentially deduced from the operative effect of religious principles among mankind is of equal potency with express command; and when sanctioned by apostolic example, includes all the authority which is necessary for the government of Jehovah's creatures.

MATRIMONIAL DUTIES.



WHEN two persons unite their all in one stock for life, the partnership cannot be dissolved without mutual concurrence, and in some instances, each is bound durably to adhere to the other, because partition is unfeasible." That intimacy by which a man and woman become possessors of each other's person and fortunes, and the joint relation which they have to their children, strengthen the bonds of matrimony; and every act which is performed in consequence of the nuptial rite, recognises, renews, and repeats the covenant. The title of affection is sealed by that of possession. Both parents are equally and immediately allied to their offspring, who are the medium of a fixed and unalterable junction between them. As they both are of the same blood with the child, the moral and legal connection becomes a natural relation which can never cease or be annulled."

The duties of marriage are nearly defined in the declaration which is originally

made by the parties. His own engagement binds the husband to love, comfort; honour and keep his wife; while she vows to obey, serve, love, honour and keep him, in every vicissitude of health and condition; and both promise that the compact shall not cease during the continuance of their terrestrial existence. This agreement therefore combines, mutual fidelity to the nuptial bed; a combination of counsels and endeavours to promote the family interest; and its immutability until death.

Disloyalty defeats the end of marriage; dissolves the natural cement of the relation; impairs the moral tie, the strength of which is reciprocal affection; and by removing the character of certainty from the descendants, diminishes the care and attachment which are indispensable to their education. The nature of friendship, the rearing of youth, the order of society, and the rules of succession require that the hymeneal contract should be permanent, otherwise these would be involved in extreme and endless perplexity. Before and during marriage, strict decency and chastity, a just sense of their respective characters, mutual esteem and

and tenderness, deference and forbearance, for disputes respecting power and superiority where no opposite or separate interests exist are absurd ; and a communication of advice, assistance and authority are absolutely necessary, and should be cultivated to render cohabitation comfortable.

The christian scriptures state the nuptial obligations with peculiar force. On the part of the wife are demanded, subjection to her own husband—chaste conversation coupled with fear—the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price—and the imitation of godly examples. The husband is ordained to dwell with his wife according to knowledge—and to give her honour : this includes, residence at home and wise superintendence ; esteem from the conviction of her worth ; attachment, peculiar, undivided, and unrivalled affection ; attention without indifference, confidence, seeking her opinions and concurrence ; maintenance and benevolence. 7. The motives which enforce

7. An eminent minister of the Gospel lately declared, that he had never acted in any particular affair, contrary to his Wife's suggestions, without subsequent repentance.

these services are peculiarly energetic, and interesting to our sensibilities. She is the weaker vessel—she is an heir together of the grace of life—and that our prayers be not hindered. The condition of her sex ; the mutually equal participation of gospel privileges, in claim, hope and reversion ; and the harmony of domestic devotion ; are the apostolic reasons which are urged to excite married persons to the performance of their relative duties. Every conjugal act is predicated upon the perpetuity of the union. If separation be practicable ; the promise which involves the fidelity of the contracting parties to each other is preposterous ; no association of wisdom in plan and energy in execution with respect to domestic advantage, would be formed, if the connection of the parties depended, upon their individual or confederated caprice ; and all the social affections which make the house a Bethel would necessarily expire, if no confidence subsisted that the tie was not temporary but interminable.

Contemplate christian motives and prospects, as incentives to every purifying affection, and to every virtuous exertion ; and nothing more absurd can be conceiv-

ed than the principle which unbinds all natural relations, destroys families, excites discord and confusion, and eradicates all moral coercion; yet these and indescribably more pernicious effects flow from the adoption of divorce. The anticipation of the future world of blessedness is the grand source of consolation to a believer in the midst of all the difficulties, depressions and afflictions which surround him. To pierce beyond the veil which conceals Paradise from his vision, and by faith to realize the enrapturing meeting on the borders of the celestial Canaan with the family which he loved, comprise a considerable portion of this prelibation. His hopes, sensibilities and enjoyments are not circumscribed by the horizon around him; they are extensive as the universe, and boundless as eternity. His marriage contract was arranged, and his matrimonial duties are performed with a distinct reference to future retribution, and the experience of the reward which the Son of Man shall bestow upon his servants when the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God shall have assembled the dormant dust, and revived the body to never-ending existence. On the

day of marriage he saw in his bride, his companion for eternity; and his children, he fondly hoped by parental care and affection, sanctioned by divine grace, would partake of the delights which he expected eventually to obtain. But all these prospects vanish; the demon of divorce engenders the ebullitions of lust; the hope of more comfort with another after a legalized separation, fortifies the inducements which seduction employs for female ruin; and the husband's distraction with the children's irreparable injury inevitably follows. Hence, the duties of marriage viewed in their right aspect, and with regard to their genuine objects, decide that the connubial contract ought not to be broken; and that all legislative interposition which infringes the sanctity of its character, or diminishes the extent and permanency of its obligations, is an assumption of authority which God has not delegated to the inferior ministers of his power.

CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS.



BEFORE the crimes which violate the conjugal union are enumerated and considered; an inquiry into the validity of the opinion, "that impediments may exist, which render the whole contract *ab initio* void, is necessary. 8.

All laws which were binding upon men before the flood, and previous to the promulgation of the Mosaic code, remain in full force under the Christian system.

These rules of human action must have been adapted to the necessities and con-

8. The legal decision upon this point is thus stated: "Sentences of the courts, which release the parties *a vinculo matrimonii*, by reason of impuberty, frigidity, consanguinity within the prohibited degrees, prior marriage, or want of the requisite consent of parents or guardians, are not dissolutions of the marriage contract, but judicial declarations that there never was any marriage; such impediment subsisting at the time as rendered the celebration of the marriage a mere nullity." But does the word of God sanction any practice which is founded upon these arbitrary human distinctions?

dition of man, independent of all local circumstances and political associations. How may they be known? They are deducible from the constitution of man, and from the Sacred Scriptures. From human sensibilities we ascertain, that the social affections are calculated for permanency; that self-preservation is incorporated in our system; that men have no right to destroy their own temporal existence or the lives of others; and that everlasting duration is a distinctive character of the Rational creation. Divine revelation teaches, that human life is subject to its august Creator's disposal alone, that no interference with its natural course is justifiable, except by special authority derived from Him who gave it; and that in the original institution of marriage, no impediments to its consummation, if the parties actually consent; and no subsequent dissolution, were either intended or admissible.

When our first parents were created, God declared their relation to be most intimate and binding; and so strong that the affection of Parents and Children will be comparatively absorbed in the nuptial tie, which admits of no dissolution. The

flood devastated our globe, and all flesh upon the dry land, except Noah, his three sons and their four wives, died. After their liberation from the ark, no explication of the old law upon marriage, and even no reference to it is recorded. The evils which had resulted from the violation of the primeval appointment of matrimony were too deeply impressed upon their minds to render the repetition of it necessary: every sense that they possessed must have testified the divine will; which was so clearly and sufficiently explained when man was created, that a subsequent promulgation of it at the renovation of the human family was altogether superfluous. 9.

The Mosaic law was founded upon the permanent rules of morality; and was intended solely to adapt those principles

9. LAMECH was the only Antediluvian, the memorial of whom is preserved, as having been guilty of *polygamy*. Others, doubtless followed his criminal example; and to this cause may be attributed the chief part of that wickedness which was great in the earth; for impurity, dishonesty and revenge, with all their tremendous effects; uncleanness, robbery and murder reign in all those countries where a multiplicity of wives is tolerated. The conduct of those, who brought the flood of waters upon the earth may serve as a warning, but cannot be quoted as an example.

to the character and condition of the Jewish nation.

A great distinction exists between the political, judicial, ceremonial and moral parts of that code which was delivered upon Mount Sinai. The latter gave an additional sanction only to the laws of creation, and again brought into operation those sacred truths which had been lost in the vices that deluged the world: the former were of temporary influence, and constraining until Shiloh came. Moses enforced by the most awful ratifications, which nothing but the deplorable blindness and the adamantine obduracy of the human mind could have resisted, many duties that had either been generally neglected or totally forgotten: yet all these purely moral ordinances being congenial with our character, and inseparably connected with our comfort; invigorate the obligatory requisitions of the Adamic law: and Apostolic example urges us to believe, that many lesser precepts of the Mosaic code were intended permanently to direct men. 10.

10. Every command which has either a direct or an indirect tendency to promote purity of heart, peace of conscience and the honour of Jesus, can never be abrogated until Christian instruction is lost in celestial intuition.

Barbarity to women and to brutes is a general and a most expressive feature of all those nations and individuals who have not submitted to the yoke of Jesus. It is perceptible, whether we enter an ancient Persian or a modern Turkish Haram; whether we survey an exanimate Scythian or the living Indian; whether we observe the original Ishmaelite or the posterior Arabian; and whether we investigate an Epicurean Greek or Roman of former times, or the polite Infidel of latter ages. Many maxims of the law were delivered by Moses to counteract this propensity. The combined insolence and inhumanity of the nations which surrounded Judea, had generally adopted the cruel practice of muzzling the ox which threshed out the grain, by which the famished animal could not partake of the fruit of his own labours. This barbarity was exterminated among the Jews by an unquestionable prohibition; which was embodied in a more refined sense, by the inspiration of an Apostle into an ordinance of God perpetually coercive upon the church to support them, who by divine Providence, labour in word and doctrine. The political, judicial and ritual edicts

lost their authority and ceased to have effect when the objects for which they were promulgated, perished; the nation as a social body no longer existed; and when the Divine Redeemer had fulfilled all the types with which the sacred formalities were connected: but all those regulations which advert to the sexual intercourse, the sabbatical institution, and the preservation of human life, are merely explanatory of that more concise law which was at first delivered; and therefore continue in force among the Gentiles.

Christianity adds peculiar energy and stability to all the moral precepts of the Jewish theocratic constitution, and abrogates no commandments but those which related to the political state, the judicial decisions, or the ceremonial worship.

The connection which subsists between the Christian and Jewish scriptures; the mutual dependence of each upon the other; the identical basis upon which they rest; and the similar evidence by which they are demonstrated to be of celestial origin, prove this proposition. Our Lord unequivocally decides it: "Think not that I am come to destroy or dissolve the Law or the Prophets; I am not come

to destroy but to fulfil ; and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of the Law to fail, till all be fulfilled." Those Laws which he came to render permanently compulsive upon all succeeding generations of men, relate to murder, fornication, adultery, divorce, swearing, revenge, social affections, liberality, private devotion, forgiveness of injuries, public worship, faith in the superintending and all-bountiful Providence of Deity, censoriousness, evil-speaking, the danger of hypocrisy, inattention to his law, and the reward of obedience : but these contain every principle upon which a Moral Governor can legislate. Hence, the original law of marriage, corroborated and regulated by the explications of Moses and our Lord, was intended to be the standard of judgment and practice, until the Son of Man should reappear, upon the throne of his glory, in righteousness to judge the world.

No doctrine in religion or morals, and no action of men can be correct, if they are inconsistent with Paradiſaical opinions and conduct ; or incompatible with the principles, tempers and conversation that shall characterize mankind during the Millennium.

Prophecy incontrovertibly testifies, that during one thousand years upon earth, purity, virtue, religion and happiness shall be universally diffused: but dissolution of marriage and supplication for divorce are totally subversive of the ordinances of Christianity, and consequently cannot during that period be possible. If we take a retrospective view of the garden of Eden, it will appear that the machinations of human governments upon this subject derive no confirmation from the nature of marriage as originally instituted: and an examination of the Millennial prospect before us demonstrates the extinction of all obstructions to marriage: and as every crime which infringes the covenant will then be unknown, divorce will be imprisoned with Gog and Magog, until their baleful pestilence shall finally overwhelm mankind.

Is the principle, that impediments may exist at the period of ratifying the matrimonial contract, which justify those judicial decisions that release the parties *a vinculo matrimonii*, by declaring the marriage a mere nullity, correct?

What is impuberty? Incompetency of mind to chose the object, and corporeal

incompetence to fulfil the duties of the nuptial union. When does this state cease? On the part of the mind, it must be declared not to exist, when society subjects him to punishment for the violation of its laws, and the affections and desires must be left to every individual's sensations. To forbid the solemnization of matrimony between persons who can neither promote its end nor perform its vows, is undeniably proper; and persons offending that law should indubitably be punished. The parties should be considered as transgressors; but the decision that they never were married is false, absurd and unscriptural. 11.

Consanguinity with regard to the conjugal relation involves a very serious inquiry. From the instances of Adam's first children, of Abraham and Jacob, and from the express institute of Moses with regard to the union with a brother's wife in the case specified, no decision can

11. The impediment which is stated to arise from frigidity, cannot be discussed in any form with delicacy. A penance and punishment might be devised which would deter other impostors; but the parties having contracted for better and worse cannot be divorced.

be deduced that the conjunction of even the nearest descendants is *ipso facto* void. But viewed in its connection with society, as producing the diffusion of wealth, families, and political harmony, and as directly prohibited by the Mosaic Code, it must be declared inexpedient, and improper, and consequently should not be permitted. The law therefore which declares the prohibition should annex a punishment, sufficient to intimidate all persons who might be disposed to transgress it; but to separate even these offenders, by an act which would permit them subsequently to marry other persons, legalizes incest, fornication and adultery, and therefore cannot be justified. As few persons in a christian country can possibly be guilty of forming attachments so unlawful; a general rule with which every thing dear to man both in this world and for ever is connected, must not bend to a principle which punishes not one crime, but publicly authorises others more pernicious in their nature, tendency and effects.

The sole just hindrance to matrimony is the existing union with a living partner; and in that case, no ceremony or form can possibly contract the parties as husband

and wife. The process of wooing and marrying *pro forma*, is a most complicated species of seduction; and a very high crime, which deserves condign censure. But the guilt of Bigamy is founded upon the violation of the original contract, the perpetuity of its obligations, and the impossibility of dissolving it except by the extinction of life.

That a want of the consent of parents or guardians is a justifiable cause for declaring a marriage *ab initio* void is one of the most extraordinary positions which has ever been adopted in civil society. This principle is both the parent and offspring of Aristocracy; and equally irrational, debasing and demoralising with the ancient custom of Marchet. The law, which admits a boy of fourteen years of age to marry a girl of twelve with parental consent, or in a widowed state, which presupposes them at that period qualified for matrimonial duties; declares them unmarried until twenty one years of age, if a mercenary, unfeeling or depraved parent chooses to withhold his sanction. From this doctrine, every religious, moral, social and rational decision, and every refined sensibility intuitively

revolt. Marriage is principally interesting to the parties who contract it; other persons are not so nearly concerned, that all their future comfort is constantly and vitally affected by the relation, and are therefore incompetent authoritatively to decide upon the fitness or impropriety of the union. The judgment, independent of the determination of the passions, would not influence persons to enter upon the conjugal relation. Reason may guide and controul the affections, but it would never direct man to a connection, the basis, end and duties of which are established upon love, prolonged by its existence, and cemented by its increasing fervour and energy. These obvious truths parents and guardians often forget; and most pernicious effects result from the exercise of an authority which the law of God has not given. From dread of denial on the part of their superiors; young men, instead of cultivating an early, pure and virtuous affection for a wife of their youth; indulge in a promiscuous intercourse with corrupting and meretricious females until the moral principles are partly or totally extinguished, and until the influence of religion is drowned in the gulf of sensual-

ity : or if they can procure the orderly solemnization of the marriage ceremony, they endanger all their subsequent comfort and reputation, by exposing "the wife of their bosoms" to the disgrace of being branded as a prostitute, and their children to the infamy of being reputed as illegitimate. This state of things comports neither with religion, virtue, society, chastity nor the law of God ; and the inevitable inference is, that any sentiment which conducts to consequences so destructive in this world, and so tremendous in their connection with futurity, must have originated in human depravity, and hence ought immediately to be abolished. Therefore, no impediment exists ; but inability in the parties to comprehend the obligations, to discharge the duties, and to promote the end of the matrimonial covenant.

What crimes obstruct and violate marriage ? The former are seduction and fornication ; the latter are jealousy, neglect, desertion and adultery. 12. Seduction,

12. To these may be added, injurious extravagance, unfeeling parsimony, constant petulance and intemperate habits ; by which life is embittered, and from which causes, domestic duties are generally neglected.

by which females are swindled out of their honour, is, a most odious and criminal fraud; involving an immense, permanent and irremediable injury to her who has been beguiled by the stratagems of successful intrigue. If we may judge by the effects; with the loss of pudicity, moral principle vanishes; to contract a subsequent union is almost impracticable; and wretchedness is her concomitant, if she be married, while herself is practising the deception which she had suffered. The misery which she experiences, as exhibited in endeavours to conceal the fact, often by the destruction of her own infant, evince that insupportable agony alone could incite her to this wretched alternative. If she were forced, the law would punish the criminal: but rape, with all its horrors, is an offence far less injurious, than the deliberate purpose of robbing from the too credulous, artless and unsuspecting woman her highest ornament. By the attempt of lawless lust, her modesty and purity might be additionally fortified, and the attack of a villain could not justifiably censure her principles or maculate her character; but when by every attention and artifice the heart is

gained, acquiescence in the female seems at length to be a legitimate return for all the tenderness, assiduity and love which have apparently been proved. In an unguarded moment, when passion has usurped the throne, and the voice of prudence and reason is not heard; she passively yields to the impulse of an affectionate conviction that he is her own; the first departure from the path precipitates her along the road of submission to his illicit appetite, until satiety with rapidity follows enjoyment, and she is discarded to lament her own folly, and to reprobate his perfidy.

The Mosaic code contains a provision which should be of perpetual obligation. A Seducer was obliged to marry her whom he had thus despoiled, and was not permitted upon any pretext to divorce her during remaining life. What difference between modern manners and ancient regulations! By a contemptible falshood, a father possibly recovers an insignificant trifle in money for the privation of his daughter's honour, which detriment is tenfold accumulated by the mode of obtaining reparation; because he is obliged to make the most public register possible of his child's disgrace. Seduction by

this means is augmented in an inconceivable degree ; and a woman who can submit to record her own thoughtlessness and flexibility amid indelicate remarks, offensive railleries, and indecent questions, manifestly declares that her innocence vanished with her virginity. The law of Moses destroys this corruption and degradation, by fining the man heavily for his deception, by exalting the female to her former rank, and by establishing her in her just right. Seduction would be exterminated by the recuperation of this principle, and the number of prostitutes, with the perpetration of fornication, would be diminished.

Deceptions constupration is the prolific source of all that lewdness which in every age of the world has been notoriously prevalent, which obstructs the extension of the marriage relation, and which supports the reign of dissoluteness, immorality and irreligion. In the sight of God, and in the estimate of Christianity, the Seducer of a female who afterwards lives in prostitution is responsible for all the crimes which she commits and occasions. One cause of the alarming extension of this vice especially in all cities and large

towns is without doubt the existing impediments to marriage. The ordinance of God is absolute ; one man shall cohabit with one woman alone : but human policy has contrived a variety of obstructions to legal marriage in some cases impossible to be surmounted ; and the passion which unites the sexes requiring gratification, an attempt is made either to betray a virtuous girl, or more commonly, indulgence is sought from a connection which involves all that contaminates and debases man ; for the criminal sexual intercourse defiles the mind and depraves the character in a greater degree than any other vice. This is a direct transgression of the grand collective apostolic injunction, and of an express divine command ; fornication being placed in almost every catalogue of human crimes in the New Testament. It renders a man for all moral purposes useless in society, and disqualifies him for the regions of the blessed. The dishonesty which characterizes most persons, who are abandoned to ungovernable concupiscence, and the termination to which they frequently arrive, are sufficient to convince us that modern prescriptions upon this subject

are totally subversive of the social, moral and spiritual interests of man. In most countries, houses for licentious resort are publicly tolerated; in others, they are regularly licensed and made an article of taxation: and thus, vice is authorised, and the national fund supported, by a legal encouragement given to prostitution, seduction and the nefarious performances by which they are maintained.

Although the complicated criminality of fornication can be more easily displayed than that of almost any other vice; yet to no misconduct, through this vitiation of the public opinion is less immorality attached. Corrupt persons defend its toleration, by stating that greater enormities would follow, the strict punishment of it; but this in modern times has never been tried, and is contradictory to ancient history. When the Mosaic law was enforced in all its rigour, the women were proverbially chaste and consequently the men most virtuous; and if that part of the Hebrew Lawgiver's code which was intended to guard female innocence, and to punish the various offences against it, was again admitted; the multiplied obstructions and violations of the connubial relation would nearly cease.

A variety of crimes against the social compact are indissolubly connected with fornication. Few children are observed to proceed from females who live in prostitution ; for the effect of their illicit coition is by some mode destroyed. Hence all concubinage and every facility to the unlawful indulgence of the sexual propensity, add to the general depravity, and circumscribe the extension of marriage. The passions of men must be gratified at any risk ; but if enjoyment can be obtained without the restraint and duties which the matrimonial covenant imposes, unless actuated by correct principles, they will not assume the incumbrance of domestic cares and labours. An individual pretends that the most important reasons hinder him from matrimony ; but as his desires require gratification, he must be indulged with a promiscuous intercourse, and of these fictitious assumptions he alone is the competent Judge. If his claim be repelled upon the general immorality which it includes ; he expresses his astonishment, and wonders at those who charge him with attempting to extinguish our race ; but others may plead a similar right to depart from the original constitution

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of man, untill debauchery became universal.

Obstinate desertion is stated to be one item in the law of nature which justifies divorce: but this, although a subversion of the end, and a neglect of the duties of marriage, affords no release to the parties from their bond: it is an evil which should be punished, because the transgressor is culpable of all the crimes which in consequence of it may be committed. The original institution, and the second establishment of matrimony, with the vow which the parties make preclude all departure from each other, and correction should accompany the offence; but a total separation would render every female who had been deceived in her husband, liable to be discarded when a worthless debauchee chose to conceal himself until he was legally authorized to marry another woman.

Modern law has very considerably restricted the grounds of divorce; but adultery on the part of the wife is still considered a sufficient reason for a total dissolution of the conjugal relation. This crime causes the most distressing and irremediable wound to her husband's af-

fectionate sensibilities which man can conceive. But the solemnization of marriage presupposes the imperfection of the parties, and the consequent necessity of superadding to their own mutual consent as privately vowed, the public recognition of their wishes, with circumstances of religious solemnity, testified by competent witnesses, and ratified by civil sanctions and the law of God. Adultery is equally criminal in the husband as in the wife; but the effects which follow female guilt, are undoubtedly more pernicious. Her transgression involves vast cruelty to her offspring by the disgrace which attaches to them, and by the quarrels which it produces: and the common apology which is made in the prior transgression of the other partner is assuredly sophistical, and affords no justification, under the pretence of retaliating a provocation received: because the consequences of repeating the offence are not confined to the personal injury of the parties but attach to the children; the obligations of marriage flow not from the promise alone of inviolable and mutual fidelity; and because instead of diminishing, it multiplies the corruption. Hence the inexpediency of the crime,

the declaration which is made at the ceremony and the design of it, invincibly condemn adultery in requital, and this mode of defending the act.

This guilt is often mollified by stating, that the consequences which render it so objectionable are of no consideration, if it remain undiscovered : but this assertion proves, to what despicable expedients men are reduced, who would by evasion conceal or lessen this odious depravity. The probability is very great, against maintaining an adulterous intercourse in impenetrable secrecy ; and to have no other foundation for matrimonial chastity than that which arises from temptation or opportunity never existing to violate the vow, would establish eastern customs and transform our houses into places of female confinement and servitude. 13.

How may seduction, fornication and adultery be effectually prevented and punished ?

13. How detestable is HUME's Atheism ! Instances of licence daily multiplying, will weaken the scandal with one sex, and teach the other to adopt the famous maxim, with regard to female infidelity: *Quand on le sait, c'est peu de chose ; quand on l'ignore, ce n'est rien.*

Very few females have the art to procure a direct promise of marriage from their suitors in writing; hence they must bear with desertion without any recompence. How the trifling damages which are generally awarded upon this occasion can compensate for the death of affections, and for the extinction of all expectation of marriage, from which every woman anticipates her comfort, admits of no explication except by him whose "gold is his God". He who will basely desert her, whose love he has with all assiduity cultivated, would, if other causes did not obstruct, rob her of her purity; and probably, female inflexibility is the cause of many separations which take place when the friends are waiting for the union. The completion of his design, for this fault is invariably in the man, leaves the deluded girl frequently without character, and often without hope. Virgin delicacy can be lessened, by the intercourse of kindness only; and maiden modesty can be undermined solely under the pretext of mutual attachment; and this loudly demands a more coercive law; which might remove the grand source of licentiousness: the woman should not be ex-

posed to want as a consequence of her imprudence, and be driven to prostitution as the means of support: and by the mutual re-action of society: less facility would exist for fornication.

The loss of female chastity and consequently the quantum of criminal intercourse are proportionate to the number of those who live in celibacy; hence the diminution of the unmarried would very materially eradicate the distemper. Without adverting to the old Jewish principle by which single males were considered disreputable, or the Lacedemonian regulation which overwhelmed, them with disgrace, or the Roman *jus trium liberorum*: a law should be enacted that would be both a penalty on bachelorship, and an encouragement to matrimony.

The pleas by which persons defend themselves who thus depart from the sensibilities of nature, the claims of society, the precepts of morality, and the requisitions of religion, are, obstruction to their exertions for aggrandizement or *self-esteem*; addition to their toil or *indolence*; and expence of maintenance or *avarice*. Therefore to mortify their pride, exact their labour, and tax their purses, would

cure the disease and be so oppressive that the chief good which has survived the fall, marriage, would be chosen rather than the other combined burden. 14.

All laws which regard the sexual intercourse are designed to guard female chastity, and the Mosaic code was admirably calculated to prevent previous fornication, and subsequent divorce. Criminal intercourse was punished before and after the contract and during marriage. If a woman had been betrayed, and deceived her husband with the pretensions of virginity when it afterwards appeared that she had been connected with a man, she suffered death for her fraud; but if he had slandered her that he might put her away with the appearance of more propriety, he paid a heavy fine to her father, and could not ever after discard her. Both parties were stoned, if the woman was affianced and willingly yielded to illicit embraces. exactly as if she had been

14. That man who resolves to live without a woman, and that woman who resolves to live without a man, are enemies to the community in which they dwell, injurious to themselves, destructive to the world, apostates from nature, and rebels against heaven and earth.

married ; for the law knew no difference between a woman who was contracted, and her who had completed the nuptials.

The renewal of Moses's law would probably produce the same effects, which formerly followed its adoption. During Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate in England ; adultery being succeeded by death, the women were chaste, and morality was more generally diffused throughout the kingdom than at any prior or posterior period. Charles the second abolished the law, became the example of licentiousness, and the higher orders were deluged with a flood of profanity and irreligion, the course of which has never since been effectually interrupted. This crime might in a great degree be hindered by declaring, that no divorce should be granted ; for this hope of separation is the grand incentive to adultery ; and might be punished by imprisonment, private whipping, and an exhibition in the pillory. 15.

15. It may be objected, that the disgrace of this punishment would not so much affect the Woman, as her injured husband and her innocent offspring ; but this is an insuperable argument in its favour : because no consideration would operate more powerfully upon female delicacy and sensibility, to urge her abstinence even from the appearance of evil.

With regard to her paramour, who had seduced her affections, trampled upon the most imprescriptible social right, and violated every individual and relative obligation; confiscation of property, accompanied by imprisonment, labour, corporeal punishment, public disgrace, and the total deprivation for life of all the privileges of a citizen should be his portion. This would intimidate the sons of lasciviousness from invading another's house, and effectually torture the offender.

But the only efficient preventative of all guilt is the general diffusion and influence of Christianity. This "lays the axe to the root of evil;" by circumscribing the thoughts, it destroys the influence; by purifying the affections, it deadens the energy; and by exacting holiness, it exterminates the love and indulgence of iniquity. The sacred volume which is the source of all the virtue and knowledge that exist among men, repeatedly and positively prohibits, impurity of thought, word and action; promises a neverending glorious remuneration to the obsequious, and menaces them who disobey the voice of the Son of God, with "the worm that never dieth, and fire unquenchable."

Multiplied instances are recorded and many living examples might be cited of those who after having been ingulphed in debauchery, have been transformed into the purest members of society by the regenerating efficacy of the glorious Gospel. The modes before proposed may curtail the branches; but "pure and undefiled religion" extirpates the tree itself of vitiation, and is a certain, irresistible and triumphant conqueror of all iniquity.

This view of the offences which obstruct and violate the hymeneal covenant forcibly corroborates the general position; that the union is indissoluble, and that it is unlawful to separate persons who are conjugated. If any thing exists in the nature of the relation which can promote a disjunction, the idea of a crime against it must be superadded, and the justice of punishment might therefore be questioned. Whether human laws notice matrimony or leave it to the control of superintending Providence, in this respect, is unimportant: its character, institution, object, and duties remain identical, and unalterable until the human family expires. Other alliances are subject to mutation; but marriage is the quintessence

of society: its obligations are equally compulsory as on the day when God created, Adam and Eve, and will continue invariable until the morning of the resurrection. A perpetual similarity distinguishes the connection in all ages, countries and climates, where libidinousness or artifice has not impeded its regular career. The junction of "two persons in one flesh"; the procreation and education of children; the constant endeavour to promote each other's comfort; and the re-union in futurity, after death shall have separated them in "this vale of tears," are features indelibly imprinted upon the conjugal cohabitation which cannot be obscured, much less obliterated. Hence it is irrefragable, that divorce is the offspring of sensual lusts and unrestrained appetites, injurious to the morals, and destruction to the happiness of man.

SHAKERS.



NO subject in the interior polity of the United States involves more interesting and delicate considerations than the conduct, of this society with regard to marriage. In combining their practice with the venerable solemnities of Christianity, the topic is become difficult to decide : and the legislatures realize the great responsibility which attends any authoritative interference by the civil power in a mode of life that is declared to be deduced and adopted from its conformity with the revelation which God has delivered for the government of his creatures. The principle upon which they act, comprehends a question of very high and lasting importance ; and requires a distinct examination.

In all cases which affect conscience, the laws of nations are not obligatory, if they counteract the sublime duties and awful sanctions of the Christian religion.

This truth is incontrovertibly confirmed by the voice of Revelation and Apostolic precedent.

The powers of government extend to the punishment of those practices which destroy the peace of society.

A vast distinction exists between a harmless prejudice and that error which subverts the felicity of mankind; the former may be left to the operation of reason to overthrow, the latter is a proper subject of legislative regard. Upon this conviction those human laws are framed which prevent and punish incentives to lewdness equally with profanity, intemperance and sabbath-breaking; because they remove from the mind those correct principles, from the heart those social affections, and from the conduct those pure characteristics, without which the ligaments of nations would all be severed, and the human race be extinguished.

Civil authorities have no right to interfere with regard to those particular articles of faith which men may form upon the doctrines of Christianity.

Religion is the belief of the Old and New Testaments of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as a system of devotional principles, which produces all valuable knowledge, and every sacred temper, mortifies every ungodly propensity, and

which is exemplified in a conformity with the example of him who was "holy, harmless and undefiled." No temporal power is justified to say on the diversified explication of Revealed truth what persons shall believe, to add penalties to the credence of some, or to give rewards for the subscription of others to any specified verities which may be propounded; and no one Christian sect ought to be supported or encouraged in preference to any other body of our Lord's discip'les. But Atheism, Deism, and the various grades of Scepticism and Infidelity which commence in a professed rejection of the Gospel and end in the darkness of Tophet only, should be legally restricted equally with gambling and duelling. The common notion that Society has no connection with the belief of its members is as unfounded as it is pernicious. That the law ought not to refer to speculative opinions upon religion is admitted: but the inquiry is not, may Government direct that any one Christian Society alone shall exist and be sanctioned, and all others be tolerated only or totally excluded? the real question is, what mode ought to be adopted to prevent the extension

of those Atheistical opinions which debase man beneath the beast, disseminate impiety, vice and corruption, cancel every social obligation, and if generally diffused would exterminate the race? Principles which deny the existence and superintendence of Deity, which discard all future retribution, which bury man in eternal annihilation, and which by totally separating him from the past, solely interesting him in the present, and excluding all hope of futurity, render him a selfish, sensual, and inexplicable brute.

To the operation of infidelity in its various influence are owing all the vices which disgrace human nature; for without the energy of sound sentiments, the actions of men will necessarily be corrupt. Hence, to veil the horrors of infidelity, a new topic is introduced; the grand interrogatory is not, shall government persecute any particular sect of religious professors; but shall the law counteract the effects of a detestable incredulity which destroys morality and society? Yet Infidels assert, that to oppose the influence of a system with which piety has not the smallest connection is to infringe upon the rights of men. The

chief object of punitory law is to impede vice ; therefore as defiling tenets are the cause of all impurity ; men who profess and disseminate sceptical dogmas, are as proper subjects of coercion as those who carry their wretched persuasions into public exhibition by an immoral conversation. The conclusion is inevitable ; that he who publicly denies and opposes the Gospel of Christ, is equally worthy of cognisance, as an offender against the national compact, with the gambler who robs his neighbour, the ruffian who seduces another's wife or daughter, or the murderer who in the dubious duel closes his brother's existence.

Government ought to counterbalance vice in theory and perpetration, notwithstanding the delinquents attempt to cloak their deformity under the garb of religion.

Immediately after the Reformation, persons arose who taking advantage of the civil and religious commotions taught, a community of property and women ; but the leaders of that ecclesiastical change disowned the corrupt effects which this principle engendered ; and the sword of justice interposed, that society itself might not be eradicated. Some of the chiefs

being ignominiously punished, the infatuation of their deluded followers ceased. Was this opposition to notions and conduct which were professedly the offspring of that light which Luther and his brethren had instrumentally diffused, justifiable? The answer is categorical—*It was the duty of the social government thus to interfere*: and the similarity of the Shakers to the old Munzerians renders them equally worthy of judicial coercion.

A common possession of property is not sanctioned by the example of the **Apostles**. Peculiar circumstances rendered the liberality which was then exhibited, the sacrifices which were then made, and the faith which was then realized necessary to the support of the Gospel, and the harmony of its disciples. In the primitive era, persecution rendered riches of so precarious a tenure, and the prolongation of life itself so uncertain, that confidence in the promise and providence of God supplied every exigency; and divine munificence never failed in the experience of his people. But after the church had been established, the miraculous powers had failed, and the instant intervention of God, which was in every

need displayed, was no longer indispensable to be exerted; the customs which had been found requisite for security in a period of excruciating perplexity were not useful; and the nation returning to its usual course, these modes of life, the consequences of universal tumult and incertitude, were altogether impracticable, and contrary to the condition of men and the general social relations.

The separation of the husband and wife, and the imposition of celibacy upon youth are the undoubted source of prodigious criminality. If the efficient were less odious, it might be resigned to the law to punish the effect alone; but in this case, it is an incumbent duty upon legislators to destroy the degenerate cause. The plea, that lawgivers have not authority to intermeddle upon this subject is invalid—because religion can no more be extracted from this depravation, than from the absurdities of Spinoza, or the indecency of Paine. Government can not precisely determine and declare what is religious adoration; but very little reflection enables us to define, what is not that “worship in spirit and truth” which God requires of his creatures. The various

bodily exercises which are permitted in the Shaker's meetings, must directly inflame the animal passions to the very highest degree ; and this cannot promote a perfect abstinence from the sexual intercourse.

But were it possible to prove that no promiscuous concubinage of the most destructive tendency does exist ; yet the evils to society are nearly identical. The wife departs from her husband upon an excuse that condemns the deed which it is alleged to authorize ; the husband discards his wife ; and the father and mother either forsake their children, or draw them into the same vortex of corruption. That greater purity is attained, is contradicted by the history of all ages ; for every generation of man has proved, that married life is much more favourable to devotion and piety, than a single state.

The countenance which is attempted to be drawn from scripture is purely suppositious. When Paul delivered his opinion, that celibacy was preferable to the Corinthian disciples, - he beheld the certain persecutions which would speedily "try the patience" of them who remained "stedfast in the faith." The dreadful

additional torture which would necessarily follow individual suffering, if to it was added, the death of a wife and children; and the conviction, that not a day passed but the horrors of destruction might overwhelm them; would so strongly affect every feeling heart, as in some measure to demolish the strength of sensual desire. But, at this period, to sever the bands, which are the foundation of society; to permit a man to desert his wife, and to rob her of her offspring; to suffer a woman to leave her husband and children; to expose the parties to all the temptations of licentiousness incorporated into a system, and thus to exterminate the human species without censure, because the parties assume a sacred name to sanction their sensuality, is a dereliction of legislative duty. Theft and debauchery can with equal accuracy be allied to Christianity. A woman with a pretence which has no basis in morals, is seduced from her husband to join a connection of persons, the whole of whose habits of life are diametrically opposed to every contract which she has made; and to her dissimulation, she adds the most deliberate falshood, from which she exculpates her-

self by the pretended demands of religion ; as if Revelation which teaches the constant performance of every relative service, and proclaims her matrimonial compact indissoluble, sanctioned her abandonment of all virtue, and her insult of every divine attribute. Therefore, the excuse that Legislators ought not to notice these persons upon its simulated connection with evangelic institutes is ridiculous : between the dictates of the New Testament and the prohibition of marriage which is always succeeded by a deluge of uncleanness, no alliance can be formed ; there is the impassable gulf ; and to unite the holy doctrines of religion, with practices which subvert the ordinance of God, the constitution of man, and the existence of the church itself, is an attempt as irrational, as to fix Archimedes' standing place that he might move the globe by the end of his lever.

The selfishness of a few originates and the sensuality of the body supports all associations, of which a community of property and women forms the most striking feature. Whether we examine the Jezebelites of former periods, the successive generations of the Monkish orders,

or the Otaheitan Arreoyoys, this is its unvarying characteristic, and is the natural if not the genuine foundation of the Shaker's system. Therefore any persons who coalesce for purposes, which destroy the institution, end, and duties of marriage; notwithstanding all the awful appellations with which they may delude the thoughtless, and all the exterior appearance of sanctity which they may arrogate; cannot be actuated by evangelical principles; and being justly accusable with conduct which exterminates man, ought to receive effectual and condign punishment.

ILLEGALITY OF DIVORCE.



NO -civil government can justifiably dissolve marriage. The institution of the connubial relation declares, that polygamy and divorce are altogether incompatible with the connection, and superadded by the lascivious desires of man. A dissipation of the affections is totally averse from the ends of wedlock; which cannot be secured unless the perennity of the engagement be admitted. All acts of male and female cohabitation are predicated upon its stability, the education of children for future usefulness, and the cultivation of mutual happiness could not be secured, if the compact were by any mode, except death, liable to dissolution! And a crime against the nuptial union, if it be merely a civil contract, depending upon reciprocal fidelity is only venial. The grand defect which characterizes all discussions upon this subject, is the low station to which conjugal life is degraded:

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from the holiness of a Romish sacrament, marriage is now debased to a common bargain. 16

Divorce cannot be allowed upon this subterfuge: because it is directly opposed to several duties, which have a higher authority for their performance than general expediency. The obligations which devolve upon parents with regard to their offspring, are a law inseparably connected with the origin and existence of the species; and rest not upon the disposition of the parties; therefore to degenerate the unalterable constitution of mankind into a political stipulation, cannot pass the crucible of Christianity. Divorce divests the children of parental regard, and the mother of the affections and assistance of her descendants, from whom she is always separated; and from whom she is justified in expecting the return of her maternal care: but of this she is de-

16. "The law considers marriage in no other light than as a civil contract: and treats it as it does all others: allowing it to be good and valid in all cases, where the persons at the time of making it were willing and able to contract, and actually did contract in the proper forms, and solemnities prescribed by law." But is this legal decision deduced from the Gospel?

prived ; and whether by the sensuality of her husband or her own imprudence or criminality ; the effect is the same ; that which God has joined, is severed contrary to every divine injunction and the prolongation of society.

Divorce is excluded by the terms of the covenant ; but it is urged, that the condition might be inserted. What female could be sufficiently stupid to sacrifice her person and liberty upon the basis, that if her husband pleased he might put her away at any period ? would not this include an article which rendered the whole engagement void ? and which subverted every object of marriage. No man and woman anticipate on the day of their wedding that they shall be disjoined, or that they shall ever desire it ; a proviso granting this permission is not incorporated with the vow of fidelity ; and no exception being suffered in the promise of faithfulness, consequently none was intended.

Agreements are obligatory as long as the object of the Contractors requires the continuance of them ; and with respect to some of the ends and duties of marriage, this must be during their natural lives, because the last equally with the first day

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demands similar attention and exertion. It is replied, "no purposes of the contract, except the care of children, confine a man to a woman from whom he wishes to be released." Are the female's sensibilities of no value? Is the contempt which follows a divorced woman of no importance both to herself and her family? and are her dependence for comfort and her need of assistance no claim upon her husband's gratitude and the permanency of his tenderness? The adoption of this principle would render many females outcasts, deserted by their natural protectors, and bereft of their own children's favours and affection.

If marriage reposed upon no higher authority than the will of the parties, it is unreasonable to dissolve it, unless they be restored to that state in which they were at its formation. But this is impracticable; and the female experiences a total bankruptcy of comfort, character, and generally of hope. Besides, the contract itself contains a natural incapacity of dissolution by any mode which can be devised. As it does not depend upon either party violating the engagement, no apology can justify a severance. Each

promises independent of the other, and this precludes all disunion by mutual consent or at individual option. Divorce is not discoverable in the vow; and as it involves a serious, lasting, probably an irreparable injury to the female; a capricious voluptuary should not be empowered to destroy the perennity of that bond which includes all the comfort of a virtuous woman. Unchastity of wives almost always flows from the arts of an intriguing seducer, or the prior infidelity of the husband; who thus endeavors to irritate crime, that he may produce a separation. Extreme and very painful cases may occur, which so entirely revolt all human feelings that further cohabitation is impossible, and which justify a temporary departure from each other; but the denial of release *vinculo matrimonii* is an inflexible rule which never can be mitigated; for the happiness of the community demands this procedure: and it is more equitable that one or a few should be afflicted than that dissension, debauchery, and wretchedness should overflow the universe.

The effects which result from the systematical establishment of divorce are so corrupt and injurious, that they will cer-

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certainly intimidate a legislator from profanely laying his hand upon the ark. If men could be exempted from the subsisting engagements with their wives, no diversity in sensual indulgence would ever satisfy the desire of novelty; and no barrier against this vitiating principle exists, unless to obtain the object wished be rendered impracticable. To whatever cause the dissolution of the matrimonial contract may be imputed, it degrades the children, generally exposes the man to licentiousness, and conducts the female to prostitution with all its concomitant misery.

Divorce removes the strongest ground upon which nuptial harmony is founded. The conviction that the conjugal relation must be perpetual, makes an indivisible interest, and enforces the necessity of that urbanity and sympathy which are indiscerptible from domestic concord. If the permanency of these obligations be dilaniated, the abode of love would be transformed into the hell of the furies. The female would attempt to secure a fund which should be a resource, when her husband discarded her; mistrust with deception would corrode all connubial confidence; and the

possessions which she might have secretly acquired, would render her less cautious and expose her more readily to the solicitations of intrigue.

Mutual attention and forbearance form a grand portion of conjugal duty and delight ; but these are altogether mitigated or banished, if divorce be practicable : for discord, petulance, obstinacy and a want of submission would reign as soon as the fervour of love was chilled, or a new object was desirable ; and as these direful consequences are realized in one family, proportionably to extend the diffusion of them, would destroy society itself : but by unalterably declaring the union indissoluble except by death, the contrary beneficial effects necessarily follow.

But the restriction of divorce to adultery in the wife, renders the sexes unsymmetrical in their rights, because the perfidy of man is equally criminal. As no partition would be granted for the husband's unfaithfulness ; to dishonour a woman during life, for that infidelity which is ordinarily the reiteration only of previous guilt is not expedient : and by establishing upon any pretext a total dis-

solution of marriage, the female's comfort is endangered, and her virtue risked; all her hopes are rendered uncertain; the ends of matrimony are impossible to be attained; the duties of wedlock are not performable; the crimes against the connubial contract are with more facility generally perpetrated; and dissoluteness, treachery and corruption are permanently and universally diffused.

“The law of Moses for reasons of local expediency permitted the Jewish husband to put away his wife. Christ revokes this permission, as given to the Jews for “the hardness of their hearts,” and promulges a law which was thenceforth to confine divorces to the single case of adultery in the wife. This is the plain and strict meaning of Christ's words. The rule was new; it both surprised and offended his disciples; yet Christ neither relaxed it nor explained.”

“The divine revealed law expressly assigns incontinence as the only cause, why a man may put away his wife and marry another.”

Can this interpretation of Messiah's words be correct?

To ascertain the exact meaning of the sacred Scriptures; *no part of holy writ*

must be explained contradictory to the analogy of faith, or to the general concurrent testimony of those passages which are collateral.

Nothing upon the subject of divorce is recorded before the law of Moses ; and although the Jews were by the prophets Micah and Malachi, upbraided with this conduct ; no instance of a man's dismissing his wife "*for any cause*" remains in the Old Testament. Ezra narrates the separation of the strange idolatrous females immediately subsequent to the captivity ; but in this case a celestial precept which subjected the nation to remediless destruction had been directly disobeyed, and "to turn away the fierce anger of the Lord, they sent the women with their children to their own land." The illegality of divorce was well understood by Solomon, who equally condemns the banishment of a virtuous wife, with the marriage of an adulteress.

Sarah was taken from Abraham, and although her personal safety was not known to him, he discarded her not ; and Israel rejected not Bilhah, notwithstanding he was convinced that Reuben had defiled her. That adultery on the

part of the female is sufficient authority for divorce is expressly contradicted by remarkable instances in the sacred oracles. Samson's wife had been given "by her Father to his companion"; but he went and demanded her; and "a thousand Philistines at one time slain by the jaw bone of an ass", and his "smiting them hip and thigh with great slaughter" upon another occasion, were the eventual consequences of the refusal to restore her, although she was actually living in public adultery. The Levite also did not repudiate his concubine wife, nevertheless "she played the whore, and went away from him"; but pursued her, spake friendly unto her, and returned with her from her father's house towards his own habitation. Pardon was deemed more congenial with the law which he taught, than his requisition of the death to which she was doomed. When Abner proposed peace with David; the latter previously insisted that his wife Michal, whom Saul had forced from him to live with Phaltiel should be restored; and it was her subsequent insult which induced him not to live with her. His wives also whom Absalom had polluted were

not discarded, but remained as in a state of widowhood. The practice of antiquity is confirmed by the conduct of Joseph with the Virgin Mary. To complain of her as she was espoused, subjected her to the punishment of adultery, but a formal discharge exonerated her both from the imputation and consequences of that crime. The hesitation which he manifested is irresistible evidence that by the "just men" among the Jews; this privilege was considered impolitic and improper. John's narrative of the woman who was caught in adultery and brought to the Lord for his decision, affords no light upon Jesus' opinions; but proves only that the punishment of adultery with death was still enforced. Notwithstanding the non-existence of a precedent in the Old Testament to sanction Moses' law, the loose Jews interpreted the provision in the most unrestrained sense; understanding it so as to authorize divorce upon any occasion which the man pleased, even the most trifling offence or fault or "from any cause" however unfounded. The corruption, which was the operation of the indulgence given to libidinous desire, had so highly increased about the Christian

era, that the prescription was construed to extend to females, and many of them in Judea assumed the right to depart from their husbands.

The Mosaic regulation, includes a question of importance: what is meant by the words, "he hath found uncleanness in her?" 17. Some suppose that this was the very high crimes; but it was superfluous to ordain separation for guilt which was punishable with death. Probably the Mosaic indulgence arose from the general practice of the Eastern nations. Polygamy among them was universal; and no bounds were fixed to man's sensuality but the capacity of maintaining females for the gratification of his passions. The peculiar character of the Jewish people, as unbelieving, obdurate and disobedient,

17. *Harvath-dabar*, may be rendered, turpitude or immodesty of words, discourse or behaviour. Moses' indulgence might be designed to deter wives from that levity of language and conduct which would disgust their husbands; and to inspire a chaste deportment, which alone can preserve conjugal affection. This enforces our Lord's assertion; that the indocile temper and hardness of heart of the Jews, extorted the permission of divorce, which was manifestly contrary to the original object and institution of marriage.

would revolt from a restriction to which the surrounding inhabitants were not subject; and therefore to obstruct unlimited polygamy, and to render the pleas for fornication futile, this permission was granted; but connected with exceptions and impediments which must have counteracted its pernicious effects. To increase this obstacle, the censures of the prophets must powerfully have contributed; to which was added, the impossibility of quoting an example of exalted character or reputation, for thus departing from the original institution and violating the perpetual duties of the matrimonial contract.

The Pharisees who designed to ensnare our Lord into a contradiction of the Mosaic law, or into the sanction of a practice which they knew to be indefensible upon spiritual principles, inquired of him, "if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" or according to the general interpretation then admitted, "for spoiling his meat in cooking, or if another woman pleased him better, and was more handsome in his eyes". Jesus according to his usual practice evaded a direct answer, but referred them to the original institution of marriage. "God

who made them at the beginning made them male and female;" one only of each sex, from which divorce cannot be extracted; and from the nature of the union, he pronounced at its formation; "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh". The Judge of all the earth re-established the primitive doctrine; "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder". He declared, the man and his wife to be no longer two, but one person; and to have no more distinction, than any part of the human body has from the seat of life by which it is animated. Had our Lord replied affirmatively to the Pharisaic question, the licentiousness of the Jews would by his decision have been abundantly gratified; had he unequivocally responded in the negative, he would have been charged with "speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God". Emmanuel therefore directed them to an authority which they would not dispute; and from the Mosaic description, sanctioned by his own influence, invincibly forced them to

infer that all divorce was illegal. Their subsequent question evinces that this was the impression upon their minds. "We see your mode of convincing us against our will, and we grant that no divorce is proper, but that it entirely subverts the objects, ends and duties of marriage; but now we have obtained our desire; this is a direct censure of our Lawgiver; for if divorce is altogether improper, and contrary to the design of God in establishing matrimony, why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Christ retorted their perversion of language; "Moses permitted," not commanded "you to put away your wives;" and gave as the reason for this conduct, the most disgraceful character of themselves which could be devised, "hardness of heart;" which implies every disposition that is offensive to God, injurious to society, and destructive of the soul: and repeats that notwithstanding this allowance, it was not known in the beginning;" either before the flood, among the patriarchs, or in the early and purest periods of their own nation: and then added, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall

marry another committeth adultery ; and whose marieth her who is put away, committeth adultery” In the parallel passage; it is also declared ; “ that the man divorcing his wife, except for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery. 18.

Mark relates either the same, or another conversation. The Pharisees asked a similar question ; and the Lord immediately

18. The Syriac version translates the phrase, “ except for fornication,” who hath not committed adultery.” But if this be the correct meaning of our Lord’s words, and that they who lived immediately after his death understood it so, is evident ; it follows, that all attempts to sanction divorce by the above proviso are nugatory. And it will not avail to say, that the frequency of the crime and the removal of the power of life and death to the Roman Governor, had rendered the popular punishment of adultery no longer practicable, because from the example of Stephen, we are assured, that the Jews did exercise the immunity immediately, and without an appeal to the Imperial authority, to cleanse the land by the death of the sinner, from the pollution which they supposed it had contracted. Hence it is undeniable, that the Saviour intended peremptorily to declare, that the Jews ought not to dissolve the bond of marriage by any other mode than that which the law had devised ; the stoning of the delinquent, in conformity to the Mosaic command.

inquired, "What did Moses command you?" They rejoined, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away." Messiah answered, that in the beginning from their being one only, no such principle could exist; that from the identity of the husband and wife a dissolution of the relation was not intended; and that man had no right to separate that which God in his Providence had united. His Apostles were strangely perplexed; Jesus had declared the Mosaic law in a very important case unnatural, inexpedient and contrary to the will of Deity. In difficulties of this nature an elucidation was sought in private, and "the disciples in the house asked him again of the same matter." Alone with them, the Saviour proclaimed the standard of the church's conduct in all generations; and no evangelical regulation is more explicit and plain. "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." With this explanation, the passage in Luke exactly coincides. Our Lord had been instructing his fol-

lowers in some most important truths; the Pharisees who were the characters implicated, hearing, derided him. Jesus therefore reproved them in most severe language for their hypocrisy, stated the perpetual obligations of the moral law, and having no occasion at that period to avoid an express decision, determined, that "whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery." This public declaration sanctions the private instructions which he delivered. 19.

How may the words of Christ recorded by Matthew be justly explained, without an exception which destroys the whole theory?

The Pharisees' interrogatory referred not to the crimes which legally exposed the perpetrator to condign punishment; therefore our Lord's answer could not be intended to tell them that a man was per-

19. The total inadmissibility of disunion is here expressly affirmed: because if separation and subsequent cohabitation, whether legalized by the form of marriage, or in promiscuous intercourse were adultery, which was punishable by death, divorce in any form could not possibly subsist.

mitted to divorce a woman for adultery when she might be dead even before he knew of her guilt; because the law allowed them to stone the parties *instantly* if taken *ipso facto*. Jesus consequently declared, that as the crimes which subjected the offender to the penalty of the transgression were not concerned in their inquiry, the matrimonial bond was indissoluble. The disciples thus understood him, for they subsequently remarked, "if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." This was a strictness which eastern licentiousness in every varied form repelled; and to be bound to one female for life appeared to them most grievous. Nevertheless the Son of God neither retracted nor changed his sentence; but discommended the Pharisaic exposition, annulled Moses' permission, and affirmed the illegality of divorce. 20. Jesus might purpose both to destroy the unnatural licentiousness to which the system had extended, and to enable the husband to

20. Some of the Jewish Rabbins understand our Lord's words in the same sense, and make this total abrogation of the Mosaic indulgence, one objection to Christianity.

decide in the case of female unchastity previous to marriage, whether he should preserve her life by divorce or deliver her to the law for punishment: but this would be a merciful evasion only, by which the extreme severity of the rule could be mitigated, for a crime which might have been committed almost with reluctance and solely from the solicitations of affection. This is not now an impediment to marriage; the man marries with the conviction that every infirmity and incumbrance which his wife may possess upon the day of the union are transferred to him: which was not the case among the Jews; because a fornicatress and adulteress both were liable to death. This exception was not addressed to the disciples nor is it recognized by the Apostles; but was delivered in a conversation with the Pharisees, who attempted to ensnare him. When his disciples demanded the explanation, and when he subsequently declared the perpetual obligation of the moral code, the proviso was omitted. This fact in connection with every Apostolic injunction which relates to marriage, incontestably declares, that our Lord promulged to his disciples the

law, that the nuptial union once formed and consummated, death alone should dissolve.

This exposition is analogous to the sentiments of an Inspired Apostle. The perpetuity of the conjugal relation is asserted and exemplified by Paul; "the woman who hath a husband is bound to her husband as long as he liveth; so if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress." As man is not free from his obligations unto the law, until through Christ he dies to it and lives by faith; so the wife cannot be released from her husband until the extinction of vitality.

In reply to some inquiries which the disciples of the city of Corinth had propounded; the Apostle shews for what purposes marriage was instituted; the laws and true uses of the connection; the mutual obligations of the parties; and the indissoluble nature of the contract. In the primitive ages of the church, the distinction between a Christian and an Infidel was so great, that they could scarcely associate. Every thing which was connected with the Heathenish customs, almost instinctively repelled the tender conscience

of a Believer ; their habitual profanity, intemperance, idolatry and lasciviousness were altogether opposed to the spirituality and dictates of that revelation to which men owe allegiance. This was peculiarly afflictive to those persons whose consorts remained among the worshippers of Bacchus and Venus ; and the constant tendency of this licentiousness in an unbeliever to destroy the comfort of a christian partner, and probably an attempt to introduce into practice the doctrine of divorce, by the Apostle's Jewish adversary, were the basis of the inquiries which Paul answers. He assures them, that marriage was lawful, and preferable to celibacy for those who could not restrain the sensual desire : 21. and subjoins, "Unto the married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord. Let not the wife depart from her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife ;" and the reason is peculiarly energetic ; that the impurity which they supposed existed in the marriage was removed by the sanctifying influence of the believing

21. The Syriac version renders, "let every man *have* his own wife ;" "let every man *keep* his own wife ;" intimating that the Apostle's direction was rather against divorce, than celibacy.

consort. A cause of disjunction equally strong cannot possibly now exist. The husband or wife's adherence to the worship of the idols made every practice which destroys connubial comfort permanent, because it was connected with their religion, and public female prostitution with unlimited male indulgence in the worship of Venus, was directly opposed to every principle of christian purity. In the public festivities, the unbounded sensualities of the Bacchanals were alike destructive of domestic peace and of evangelic holiness ; but as this was part of the worship of their suppositious divinities, it afforded no ground for divorce among the Heathen Corinthians. Therefore, when one of the parties was converted ; the subject involved most serious considerations ; yet the Apostle so far from sanctioning a partition pointedly denies it ; admits of a separation under limitations only which render the permission nugatory ; and adds to enforce his decision, an argument which never can fail to excite christian philanthropy, and to induce submission to present trial ; the anticipation of being instrumental to save the unbeliever whom we fervently love.

Conclusive corroboration is derived from the Epistle to the saints who were at Ephesus. The worship of Diana was a peculiarly extravagant idolatry, and attended with all the immoralities which ever accompanied the superstitious ritual of the Heathens. Among the inhabitants of Asia Minor, were many Essenes; to whom may be imputed "the doctrine of devils which forbids to marry;" and its twin demon, the separation of those who are married. Paul therefore recapitulated the nature, duties and indiscreptibility of marriage; and because nothing corruptible bears any analogy to the durability of the covenant, he compared the connubial relation with the union between Christ and his church; transferred the contemplations of the Ephesian saints to its institution in Paradise; and stated the character of wedded affection; that the attachment of one to the other partner was self-love, that their identity of interest and cohabitation made them the same; and that the connection could no more be destroyed, than the love of Christ for his people can be exterminated.

Our Lord determines that divorce was altogether incompatible with the original

institution of matrimony; that the Mosaic indulgence was granted only because the Jews were so incurably vicious, that otherwise still more dreadful effects might have followed; that marriage which was an appointment of God cemented a man and woman as one flesh, the component parts of which cannot be separated except by dissolution; that it was a daring infringement of his supreme prerogative to put asunder that which he had joined; and that to cohabit with another while the real partner lived, was a crime which by the law was punishable with death: and Paul undeniably interdicts all disunion; for he affirms the perpetuity of marriage, its affections and duties, to be *quoad hoc* equally indestructible with the love of Immanuel for them whom "he hath redeemed from the wrath to come." Hence, divorce instead of being a concomitant is the destroyer of marriage; and is not sanctioned by the just interpretation of the Judge's doctrine or of apostolic declarations.

CONCLUSION.



THREE pleas alone can be offered against the general result of the arguments which have been adduced: former universal practice, the peculiar hardship of the case, and the supposition that Christ authorizes divorce for the crime of adultery in the female.

The latter excuse is without basis: that Jesus had no design to legalize a severance, is demonstrable from his using a word which includes not illicit indulgence after marriage; from his referring them to the original institution which *in toto* opposes it; and from his own decision, that being formed by God, no man should dissolve the hymeneal union.

The extension of the custom in antiquity, originated in the vicious desires of the Persian and other eastern empires. While the Prince indulged his voluptuousness amid an endless succession of females who were imprisoned for his gratification, and secluded from all enjoyment to satiate his lust; the poorer debauchee who could not maintain a continually accumula-

ting family of women; was permitted to discard his slave when his base passion ceased, that he might stimulate his exhausted sensuality by a novel incentive. That this ancient inordinacy, which has deluged every nation the inhabitants of which adopted it, with public instability, domestic discord and general incontinence; should be cited in behalf of a dissolution of the matrimonial covenant; for polygamy and divorce are identical in principle and effect; is a proof of degeneracy at which every man of purified sensibility must tremble, and every female of uncorrupted delicacy must shudder. In all ages, generations, countries and climates, the concatenations of an unlimited intercourse with females, and of the power to discard them for any supposed or real offence; have been similar. The violation of the original law of marriage, drowned the old world; seduced the Jews to idolatry and destruction; and overturned the Egyptian, Babylonian, Median, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires: it has depopulated all the noblest part of the inhabitable globe—the Turkish dominions; and it naturally introduces disorganization, prostitution, adultery, disease, revenge and murder.

Shall an apology for divorce therefore, be even silently listened to, when every virtuous man sickens with the fleeting thought, and every chaste woman almost faints at the momentary contemplation of the terrific consequences which must follow its universal extension: for if an individual possesses, all may claim a right to separation; and if a bond which is of itself indissoluble shall be broken, the Pharisees were guiltless, when they declared a "man might put away his wife for every cause." Therefore, instead of forming a basis for its continuance, this is a beacon to warn us of its danger, and an unconquerable objection to every measure that lays profane unhallowed hands upon the sacred institution of marriage, which is the pristine ordinance of God.

"A denial of divorce to a man, whose wife has been unfaithful to her vow; and especially if the criminal intercourse has produced offspring of another colour is intolerable." This is a flagitious crime; for which the most unfeigned repentance and long protracted subsequent virtue can scarcely atone to her family and society; and is probably the most lacera-

ting and affecting case which can occur : but it must in every possible calculation be so seldom exhibited ; that a female who can thus debase all characteristic distinctions, and discard even her natural senses with her modesty and duty, must be, *Rara avis in terris, nigroq. simillima cygno.*

The principal feature and that which was most indelibly imprinted on matrimony at its origin in Paradise, was the perpetuity and immutability of the covenant ; remove this character, a non-descript remains, not the relation which was instituted by Heaven. It would not be more ridiculous to expatiate upon the abilities, ingenuity and eloquence of a man decapitated, than to recommend a nuptial conjugation which was by any procedure frangible. Therefore, even this most painful and grievous case must be patiently borne, rather than that universal society shall be desolated ; for as the rule admits of no exception without a total subversion of the ends and duties of the conjugal cement ; marriage itself must not be destroyed for an individual's accommodation.

“Female infidelity extinguishes the nature, objects and obligations of wedded life.” This never has been and never

can be demonstrated to be any thing more than a gratuitous assumption. Death alone really and totally obstructs the performance of matrimonial duties or the acquisition of the ends of marriage. To admit, "that an adulteress is in law with regard to her former husband dead, and that her perfidy so revolted his feelings that he could no longer cohabit with her, for the education of former children or for the procreation of others;" is substituting a circumstance which may be the consequence of the union, instead of the bond itself; as if at the formation of the contract, all the forced, as well as all the natural and usual effects were not included. On the wedding day, although it was neither anticipated nor probable, yet it was possible that the female would be unfaithful; the connection was formed with this incumbrance, equally with all the other disappointments, trials, vexations and troubles which are incident to every sublunary state. Had the junction been erected upon the basis of reciprocal fidelity; or that the relation should continue no longer than both parties were constant; the excuse for separation might be sustained: but Paradisaical marriage and this

temporary concubinage as completely dissimilar, as the Pharisaic explication is distinct from our Lord's interpretation of the law upon divorce.

But while the husband thus justly complains of his wife's violation of her contract; shall the chaste affectionate female be degraded to the standard of a Circassian animal, who is merely educated for the Haram? As virtuous women cannot discard their offensively worthless perjured husbands, who are at least a thousand times more numerous than faithless females—and who would increase a hundred fold if the principle of divorce were generally adopted; men ought not for a crime in their consort, which is in almost every case effected by their neglect or by an unprincipled debauchee's seduction, or prompted probably from the desire of retaliation, without reference to the dreadful results of this species of revenge, to have it in their power to dismiss their partners; but must bear the lacerating cross with patience and like the injured wife alleviate it with hope. This plea counterworking individual purity, domestic concord and national welfare, could not be admitted even upon the basis of

its general inexpediency ; but when to this invincible objection is added the unequivocal law of nature, sanctioned by all the awful solemnities of religion, and corroborated by the oath of the parties themselves ; the excuse must be either the offspring of inconsideration, or " the workings of Satan in the slaves of lust and the children of disobedience."

Marriage includes every blessing which man can enjoy during his abode in this pilgrimage state ; it diminishes his pains, excites his sympathies, purifies his desires, invigorates his exertions, unfolds his usefulness, duplicates his enjoyments, counteracts his vicious propensities, exalts his character, and animates his devotional principles and affections for present rectitude of conduct and future bliss everlasting ; but Divorce is the child of hell ; the parent of lust ; the destroyer of female chastity ; the enemy of virtue and religion ; ruin to families ; death to nations ; extinction to the church ; and universal extermination.

F I N I S.

INDEX.

	<i>Page.</i>
<i>Adultery.</i>	66
<i>Bachelors.</i>	65
<i>Christian Marriage.</i>	27
<i>Consanguinity.</i>	50
<i>Consent of Superiors.</i>	52
<i>Crimes against Marriage.</i>	54
<i>Crimes and Punishments.</i>	42
<i>Early Marriages.</i>	18
<i>Explanation of Scripture.</i>	89
<i>Fornication.</i>	57
<i>Illegality of Divorce.</i>	82
<i>Impediments to Marriage.</i>	49
<i>Incontinency.</i>	49
<i>Inconsistent Temper.</i>	19
<i>Influence of Christianity.</i>	68
<i>Institution of Marriage.</i>	9
<i>Marriage Ceremonies.</i>	15
<i>Matrimonial Duties.</i>	36
<i>Millennium.</i>	48
<i>Mosaic Code.</i>	44
<i>Natural Law.</i>	42
<i>Object of Marriage.</i>	23
<i>Obstinate desertion.</i>	61
<i>Parental and filial duty.</i>	16
<i>Pleas for divorce.</i>	107
<i>Prevention and Punishment.</i>	63
<i>Prior marriage.</i>	51
<i>Seduction.</i>	54
<i>Shakers.</i>	71

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INDEX TO THE APPENDIX.

	<i>Page.</i>
<i>Anecdote of Mallet.</i>	56
<i>Bachelors.</i>	18
<i>Celibacy.</i>	60
<i>Chesterfield's Character.</i>	49
<i>Concubinage.</i>	47
<i>Dissemination of Truth.</i>	59
<i>Effects of Divorce.</i>	61
<i>Evander and Theodosia.</i>	22
<i>Evil of Divorce.</i>	17
<i>Excuses for Celibacy.</i>	53
<i>Female Infidelity.</i>	39
<i>Friends of Divorce censured.</i>	63
<i>History of T. M.</i>	32
<i>Immoral publications.</i>	46
<i>Incestuous Marriages.</i>	42
<i>Irreligion discountenanced.</i>	58
<i>Licentiousness.</i>	43
<i>Malthus on Population.</i>	20
<i>Marriage described.</i>	64
<i>Modern Infidelity.</i>	54
<i>Moral Law.</i>	39
<i>Object of Marriage.</i>	16
<i>Parental Consent.</i>	17
<i>Paul expounded.</i>	61
<i>Prophecy.</i>	40
<i>Punishment of Prostitutes.</i>	52
<i>Scripture explained.</i>	5
<i>Shakers.</i>	60
<i>Thomas Newman's Courtship.</i>	37

☞ *A few unimportant typographical errors escaped notice : but the following mistakes affecting the sense, require correction :*

Page, 46 ; line 15. For insolence, read indolence.

Page 57 ; line 17. For Deceptions read Deceptious.

Page 101 ; line 4 from bottom. For wit, read with.

And in the Appendix.

Page 15 ; line 2 from bottom. For bansihed read banished.



APPENDIX.



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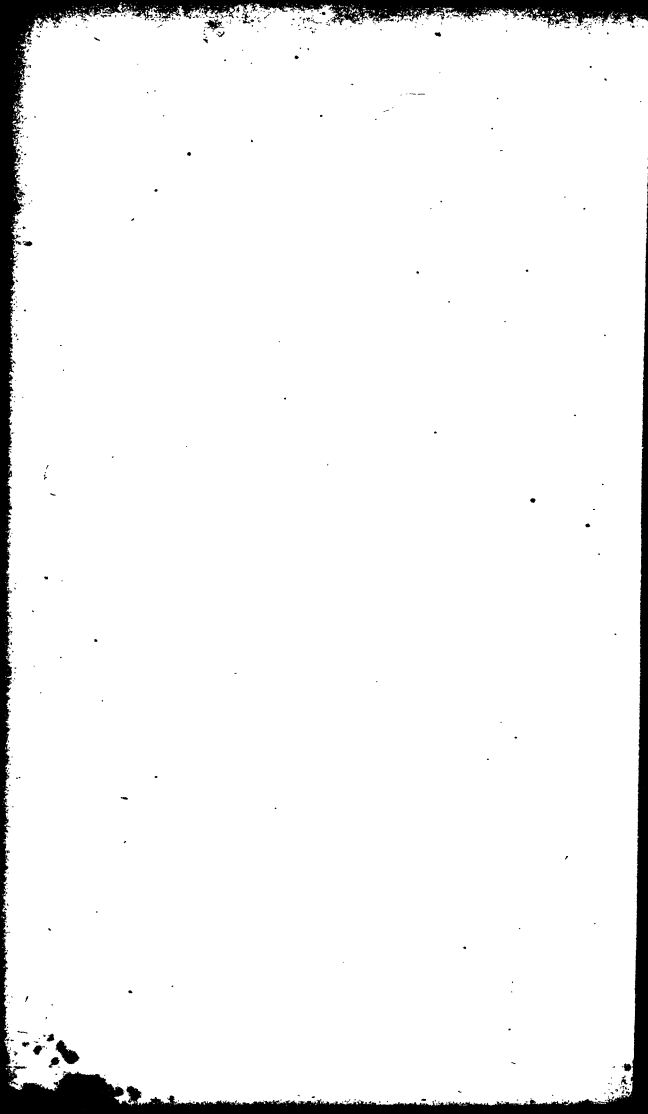
INTRODUCTION.



S*SOME* insulated illustrations in various works have been discovered; but they owe their present connected form, to that change which was indispensable to combination.

As this publication demonstrates the perpetuity, displays the objects, enforces the duties, and counteracts the violation of the connubial covenant, it requires no apology; and the general position, that divorce is in toto illegal, cannot be destroyed by the fermentations of sensuality or the cavils of scepticism.

This volume is humbly submitted to the blessing of HIM, who conducted Eve to Adam in paradise, and who performed his first miracle when he attended the marriage at Cana!



A P P E N D I X.

I. MANY commentators upon Scripture argue with great force against the dissolution of the matrimonial union ; but escape from the nuptial obligation, through the exception which is recorded by Matthew. That the laws of nature banishes divorce ; that the principles of the social compact forbid it ; and that general expediency characterises it as detestable, are positions admitted without hesitation : but a mode to dissolve the relation must be devised ; and hence a construction of three Greek words inconsistent with itself, incompatible with the spirit of the passage, and contradictory to the unvarying tenor of the Gospel must be adopted ; because it indirectly allows a less restrained indulgence of man's sinful propensities, and confines the female to a degrading unnatural servitude.

The utmost astonishment must be excited by reading the contradictory views of the most enlightened writers upon the subject of divorce : in one page, they execrate that pest to society, but in another, they defend its ratification. Few interpreters of the word of God, who have published

their commentaries since the reformation, can be cited, who are consonant with themselves upon the dissolution of marriage. One of the most remarkable instances of this self-confutation is a modern Lexicographer of the highest rank. He decides, that the original word is correctly translated *fornication* throughout both Testaments; but in the Sermon on the Mount, and in Jesus' conversation with the Pharisees, it means *adultery*. This mode of explication is obviously absurd, that it destroys its own validity: and yet it is solely by identifying the crimes of adultery and fornication, and considering the terms as synonymous, which is transforming luminous language into the confusion of Babel, that any practicability can exist, or even be supposed, by which the hymeneal union can be destroyed.

Some oppose the restriction of the original words to one meaning; and contend, "that the term rendered *fornication* is in many places used in a general sense to imply all uncleanness; and in some passages necessarily requires to be interpreted *adultery*." The Scriptures referred to in proof of this hypothesis, are, one striking characteristic of Jehoram; the prophetic descriptions of Judah's and Ephraim's idolatry; and Paul's rebuke of the incestuous Corinthian.

With respect to the first quotation, a mere perusal of the narrative; II. Chronicles. 21: 10—13.

amply manifests that fornication is figuratively applied : but were it a literal phrase, it would not justify the double meaning ; unless it could be shewn, from the mythological records of the ancient idolatrous nations, particularly Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia and the Canaanites who surrounded Palestine, that adulterous as well as unmarried prostitutes formed a part of the Idol's regular retinue.

From the style in which the Prophets delivered their messages, no argument can be deduced in support of the vulgar construction of our Lord's language : but could it even be demonstrated, that a few isolated sentences in the Hebrew and Chaldee text, cannot be clearly elucidated, according to our comprehension, without assenting to this proposition ; *that can never be recognized as a standard rule of scriptural illustration, which justifies the establishment of a most important and eventful doctrine upon the metaphorical use of a single word ; and especially, when in many similar pictures of Israel's infidelity, alluding to their state previous and subsequent to the promulgation of the old covenant, their violation of the first command is emphatically declared to have been fornication in Egypt, and adultery in Canaan. A strong preponderance a priori, always exists against the importance, if not the truth of any principle which must be extorted from the sacred volume by elaborately strained criticism ; and this pre-*

sumption is greatly augmented, if the aid which is thus furnished, is procured solely through the medium of a trope.

The language of the Apostle, in reference to him who lived with his Father's wife, adds nothing more determinate in favour of understanding the word *fornication* generically, when it is used in the sacred volume. It does not even appear, that his Father was living, or that the parties were formally married; not that the latter circumstance would have diminished the criminality of the intercourse. The epistolary notice of the subject sanctions the belief, that the woman was not a christian professor, as no directions with regard to her are given; that the man was unmarried; and that, notwithstanding his connection with the Saints, he still held the depraved notions of his fellow citizens. Paul particularly admonishes the Corinthians against idolatry and fornication; crimes at Corinth almost inseparable, and not duly reprobated: otherwise, a person guilty of incest would not have been permitted to retain his station in the church.

But if it be conceded, that the Greek phrase includes the idea of marriage, the opposition receives no assistance: for by the Roman laws, the nuptials could not have been celebrated: and therefore, the Apostle might justly charge him with fornication, though of an egregiously abomi-

nable character. How could the matrimonial ceremony in these circumstances possibly have been performed? It must have been solemnized under an abhorrent perversion of the ceremonial law. "The Rabbis pretended, that a proselyte becomes a descendant of Abraham in so strict a sense, that all former relations immediately cease: hence they concluded, that a Heathen was at liberty to marry his mother, or his own sister, as soon as she was regenerate by baptism." Upon this tradition, the union might have been consummated; and the church had approved it, probably through the influence of Paul's Jewish adversary.

The Mosaic codes rendered a connubial connection of this nature totally impracticable, because discovery of the illicit intercourse was the signal of instant death to both the criminals; and as by the Jewish, Roman and Christian statutes, such cohabitation was completely prohibited and summarily punished, Paul would not even dignify a deteriorating distortion of Scripture, by granting that the delinquents, odiously guilty as they undoubtedly were, had ever been married, and consequently could not be chargeable with adultery.

"It could not be illegal in itself to eat the meat which had been offered to idols; for the consecration of flesh or wine to a stock or stone, did not make it the property of the idol; it being *nothing*, and therefore incapable of property. But the Cor-

Corinthians, not content with this liberty, thought it lawful to go to a feast in the Heathen Temple, which was a place of resort for venereal purposes, and to eat the sacrifice while praises were sung to the imaginary Deity : this was the public participation of idolatry against which Paul warned them. The majority of the heathen world considered *fornication as indifferent*. Venus had a temple at Corinth, in which thousands of women were supported in honor of that demon, for the gratification of the adorers. Some Corinthian Christians more openly transgressing, were disposed to prosecute this worship, and extended the maxim, "all things are lawful," which was true of *meats*, as far as *fornication*. Paul therefore found it necessary often to censure that vice, and to declare it unlawful."

Hence, so far is the objection from being evident ; that a critical investigation of the subject would evince the propriety of adhering to the exclusive interpretation ; for by no other means, can the rectitude of biblical language, and the self-consistency of revelation be preserved : and to this uncertainty of explication, the confusion and contradictions of authors upon the legality of divorce may indubitably be attributed.

That our Lord's language which persons plead as authority for repudiation in the case of adultery is not correctly understood, is irrefragable. Un-

chastity before and after marriage is expressed by different words in the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac and Greek tongues; and so contradistinguished, that in the comprehension of the Apostles and the Pharisees whom the Saviour addressed, the crime of fornication could not be perpetrated by a wife.

“Whosoever, said Jesus, divorces his wife except for fornication, which must be committed before marriage, and marries another, is an adulteror: and this allowance implies, that the law for putting to death criminals of this class, is not in operation under the New Testament dispensation. Consequently, they who either separate themselves from their wives or husbands, or counsel others to do so, whatever specious arguments they may use, most evidently act in direct violation of Christ’s mandate. His conversation with the Pharisees is forcible evidence against the practice of divorce; for notwithstanding all his caution to escape the snare which his enemies laid for him, it unfolds his decision; that the Mosaic permission was a stigma on the national character, a testimony to the depravity of human nature, and a departure from the original institution of marriage, and the meaning of the moral law.”

Nothing can be more obvious, than that the Great Head of the Church intended to discourage the practice of divorce in every possible form: yet the common view of our Lord’s design makes him

contradict himself, and what is still more repugnant to propriety is an impeachment of his ineffable wisdom. One reason of this incongruity in developing Christ's purpose is oblivion of the Pharisees' character to whom he replied, and inattention to the object which they wished to attain.

The Son of Man was not then engaged in delivering a course of instructions to a mixed auditory; but was evading a dubious question which his adversaries propounded, with no other view, than to derive from his answer, a basis for an accusation, which might furnish a plausible pretext for his condemnation and death. His response evidently produced the full effect; it censured their vice, and disappointed their malignity: and its force is not apprehended, because persons now substitute themselves instead of the Jews of that generation. If a similar case in the present era be supposed, it will perspicuously elucidate the propriety of this exposition of Messiah's doctrine.

By the hypothesis, it is a provision of the national law, that a desponsated as well as a married woman suffers death if she is proved to have indulged a criminal sexual intercourse: and a female who had been seduced, and deceives her husband with pretensions to virginity which she really possesses not, is also obnoxious to the same punishment. But the lascivious appetites of men be-

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ing strong, they are authorised to divorce their wives by certain formalities publicly prescribed. From the period that this permission was granted, the Legislators had been constantly employed in devising measures to counteract the evils which inevitably followed from the indulgence. A moral teacher arises, whose decisions upon all casual cases and ethical questions are *oracular*. He is asked, whether it is lawful for a man to repudiate his wife, for any cause which he might deem sufficient? A direct reply exposing the Sage to the malevolence of the Inquirers, he refers them to creation when one alone of each sex existed; to the nature of matrimony, which necessarily involves a complete and indivisible concentration of the affections; and to the primeval and supreme command, that what God unites, man shall not sever. To repel the conviction which at once flashes upon their minds, they retort the liberty which their law imparts, to divorce their wives if they find uncleanness in them. Their Instructor subjoins; if you had been continent, submissive and obedient, this immunity would not have been granted: but your Governor concluded, that it would be preferable for you to learn your folly by experience, and to punish you by your own desires; until the miseries which issued from it, induced you to unite for its extirpation. **But I**

assure you, if you dismiss your wives except for fornication, you commit adultery, are liable to death, and are responsible for all the guilt which she contracts, whom you force also to live in iniquity. The Tempters, like the ancient Pharisees, would be astounded; their practice was condemned, their consciences terrified, and their expectations frustrated.

Could this circumstance occur, no individual would understand that the Moralist merely informed the people that they might put away their wives for a crime, from the doom of which, if the laws were obeyed, no earthly power could exonerate them. He might by a laboured deduction at length conclude, that the legislative expositor allowed him to rescue his wife from disgrace and death for simple fornication; but he could never fancy that this extended to an abrogation of all natural and social institutions; and he would necessarily infer, that this relaxation of the laws would continue no longer than the object for which the code was originally established could be attained.

This suppositious instance will convey nearly that correct idea which must have impressed the minds of those who heard the Lord's discourse with the Pharisees. And this statement of the interview and its result is forcibly corroborated

by the consideration that Canaan was a typical country; and as into the heaven of which Palestine was a figure, nothing that polluteth can enter, so Jehovah denounced immediate punishment against every inhabitant who defiled the land with uncleanness, that impurity might not contaminate that part of our globe in which he dwelt by a divinely glorious manifestation. But between the Mosaic and evangelical regulations, exists one remarkable distinction: many sins, if committed by the Jews, instantaneously insured to the perpetrators of them, that vengeance with which God had menaced impenitent and obdurate offenders. Christianity on the contrary, directs no particular penalty to be awarded against those who commit any crime which the Most High has expressly interdicted: thereby implying that temporal severity was incompatible with the system; and lucidly indicating that as the peculiar design for which the ceremonial law was delivered would be extinct when the nation was banished from Judea, so all authority for divorce should simultaneously cease.

II. "According to the original institution of marriage, the nearest of all relations, and the proper source of all the rest, men in every subsequent age would leave the immediate society of their parents to lay the foundation of new families, and thenceforth all other relative affections and duties must be regulated in subordination to the affection and duties of the new relation. Thus one man and one woman are so closely united as to become one flesh: so that according to the original institution, nothing can separate them but that which dissolves the union of soul and body, and even divides the component parts of the body from each other. *Neither polygamy nor divorces can accord with this original institution.* "In the beginning it was not so:" nor would such things have been practised but for the sinful lusts of men. Equally unscriptural are constrained celibacy and needless restraints upon marriage. The records of former times, and impartial observation on the present, evince, that still it is not generally "good for man to be alone." The mutual inclination of the sexes for each other, which was originally implanted by the Creator, however debased by sin, when regulated by the law of God, and free from other restraints, becomes the foundation of all the relations of life, the source of the most rational of our

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earthly comforts, and equally beneficial to individuals, families and nations." *Scott.*



III. Polygamy and Divorce are inconsistent not with the forms and letter only, but with the essence of the marriage compact, which is an union of love and friendship between two alone. If the most express and solemn contracts are allowed to be broken, upon which persons when they marry do so far depend, as in confidence of their being religiously observed, to alter quite their condition, begin a new thread of life, and risk all their fortune and happiness; there is an end of all faith, the obligation of oaths, not more binding than marriage-vows ceases, and no justice can be administered. *Woollaston.*



IV. Next to the word of God, the concurrence of parents is generally requisite to render the marriage relation, honourable and comfortable. But they ought to act with consideration and kindness; and if constrained to refuse their concurrence, should give convincing and important reasons, which may prove that their refusal springs from wisdom and affection not from caprice and severity; from an unwillingness that their children should make an imprudent choice, not from any disposition to bind them against their will to a single life. *Scott.*

V. The law of Moses did not oblige the Jews to marry, yet, obedience to the primitive command, "increase and multiply," was always considered by them indispensable. A man of twenty years of age unmarried was considered culpable of any irregularities to which females might be tempted. "Who is he that prostitutes his daughter? He who keeps her too long single, or gives her to an old man."

Lycurgus rendered celibacy infamous. The Bachelor walked naked in the depth of winter through the forum; singing a song to his own disgrace; and in old age, the youth refused him honour, because he had no children to respect them in the vale of life.

The facility with which men were separated from their wives, after the general adoption of divorce among the Romans, introduced a flood of corruption that overflowed all parts of the empire, and peculiarly the metropolis. To check the debauchery of the youth, and to encourage matrimony, Augustus enacted a law, which secured many exemptions and privileges to Parents of legitimate children, and heavily taxed those who after a certain age remained single. Against these provisions, the most grievous complaints were uttered; and the Knights, *whose aversion from wedlock proceeded from licentious-*

ness earnestly intreated him to abolish that statute. In consequence of this request, Augustus assembled the whole equestrian body; and observing the Bachelors to be considerably more numerous than those who were married; he addressed *these*: saying, "that they alone had served the end of nature and civil society; that mankind was ordained male and female to prevent mortality; that as the species could not subsist without children, so no commonwealth could be supplied either with men for war or civil employments." He added, "that they alone deserved the name of *men and fathers*; and promised to prefer them to offices which they might transmit to their offspring." To *those* he remarked, "that he knew not by what name to designate them; *not by that of men*, for they had performed nothing that was manly; *nor by that of citizens*, since the city might perish for them; *nor by that of Romans*, for they seemed determined to extirpate the race." He assured them, that their crime equalled all other iniquity combined; for they were guilty of *murder*, in not suffering those to be born, who should proceed from them; of *impiety*, in abolishing the names and honours of their Fathers and Ancestors; of *sacrilege*, in destroying their species and human nature, which owed its origin to supernal power, and should be con-

APPENDIX.

secrated to his service ; that, by celibacy, they overturned *divine worship* ; dissolved the government, by disobeying its laws ; betrayed their country, by making it barren ; and utterly demolished the city, by depriving it of inhabitants :” and he closed by declaring, “ that he was well apprized, their single life did not proceed from virtuous sentiments, but from a wantonness, which ought not to be tolerated by any civil government.”

To give immediate energy to these opinions, he doubled the rewards of the legal Fathers, and additionally fined those who were unmarried ; with no exemption from the penalty, unless during the year, they complied with the law.



VI. Mr. Malthus' information may enable us to contrast the wretchedness and misery of European climes with Columbia's enjoyments : but the design of his essay on Population cannot be sufficiently condemned. The fundamental principle upon which all his arguments are built ; “ that there is a natural tendency in the human race to increase in a greater ratio than the quantity of provisions which is necessary for their support,” never can be admitted, until indolence and waste are banished from our world. But the grand conclusion which is drawn from his survey,

“that persons should not marry until they are advanced in years,” is one of the most iniquitous and destructive positions, that ever was promulgated under the name of moral and political philosophy. “Early marriages are the soul and chief prop of empire:” and universal history certifies, that prostitution, with all its dreadful consequences, is in exact proportion to the number of the unmarried; and what multitudes might be maintained, if the whole earth were as highly cultivated as some of those gardens which furnish vegetables for their neighbouring cities, cannot be estimated by any comprehensible arithmetic! To a believer in Christianity, no other refutation of these volumes is necessary, than a reference to the glory of the Millennium. The various adventitious modes by which the existence of man is destroyed will then cease: the life-speaking truths of the Gospel will kill suicide; all the diseases which flow from intemperance and sensuality will be unknown, and Christian peace will exterminate private murder and general war: hence, when every vice shall be extirpated, and every evangelical virtue shall constantly and irresistibly predominate, this continent will support innumerable more families than those which now exist on the face of the globe. A sagacious politician expressed a forcible and an undeniably correct judg-

ment of Mr. Malthus' elaborate publication, when after an impartial and attentive perusal, he exclaimed with great energy, "*that is a wicked book.*"



VII. The subsequent narratives justify the apostolic decision, *be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*; irrefutably strengthen and enforce the admonition, *marry only in the Lord*; and excite deep humility, close self-examination, sedulous watchfulness, and agonizing prayer.

"EVANDER and THEODOSIA were both the offspring of pious parents. Their union was a natural one: it had all the qualities that accompany an attachment founded not merely on similarity of religious views. It was such an affection as they could neither suppress, nor direct to another object. But though their attachment was not produced by their religion, it was nourished by it. Whatever they saw in each other's person or temper to unite their hearts, was heightened by the satisfaction they had in each other's piety, and the consequent prospects of spending a harmonious life, and a blessed eternity together.

Their hands were joined; and the delicate reserves that religion taught them hitherto to observe in each other's company now being unne-

ecessary; they entered on a state blessed with all the enjoyments that an unshackled affection could yield to minds seasoned with the benevolence and purity of christianity. Their equal regard to God diminished not one enjoyment in which a fond couple could share, but was, on the contrary, an additional source of pleasure. They delighted in God, and they delighted in the society of each other.

Their unanimity, their visible, though unstudied interchanges of kindness, their peace, and unaffected abstinence from whatever was immoral, had an assimilating influence on their family; and served to give considerable effect to that religious order they had established. The invisible world being in a great measure habitually before them, they both in their respective departments attended to those who were under them, whether children or servants, as having the charge of immortals.

Such was their behaviour towards their children, that it seemed as if the training them for an *eternal* state was, in their views, the principal purpose for which divine Providence gave them offspring; and to this business they applied themselves with pleasure. They began *early* with the infusion of religious ideas *into* the minds of their children, wisely limiting themselves, at first,

to those few great principles which are the foundation of all religion. On these points, simple as they are, they did not expect to produce *conviction* in the infant mind. Yet they conceived, that one way to prevent the introduction of evil, was to pre-occupy the mind with that which is good. And it never came once into their thoughts that they should be blamed for enforcing a truth on children, because the disciples were too young to see that truth in as clear a light as their instructors did. They had none of the quirks and refinements of sceptics in their method of education. They went to work in a straight forward way: what they had learned they taught: they trusted they knew the way of salvation, and they endeavoured to lead their children in the same path.

Impressed with the infinite importance of this part of a parent's duty, they *took pains* in it. To conduct a business of such consequence, in a desultory way, was, in their opinion, but a smaller degree of that criminality which neglects it entirely. It therefore did not content them, to inculcate religious ideas; they aimed, in dependence on God, to induce moral habits. The *genuine christian* as distinguished, not more from the children of this world, than from those equivocal religionists, who seem to belong neither to the church nor to the world, was the model they

kept in their eye. To see this simple character in their children, to see them avowedly on the Lord's side, yet free from all affectation; evidently desirous of living a useful life, yet neither vain nor obtrusive; was a hope they expected not to realize, without great pains taken on their part. They counted the cost and determined to pay it; hoping thereby to obtain that divine blessing on their endeavours, for which they constantly prayed; as fearing, from what they knew of the depravity of human nature, that, without it, their labours would fail of success.

But this pious care was not confined to their children; it extended to every member of their family. They had the reward of seeing the most blessed effects follow their ruling over their house in the fear of God. It was subject, like other houses, to mortality; but this event was softened by the manner in which it was met, both by those who departed and those who were called to give them up: the former being enabled to die rejoicing in the truths of that gospel which had been inculcated in the family; and the latter, to find a relief under the painful stroke that separated one friend from the other, in the well-grounded hope of meeting again in a better world.

Among other events of this sort that inter-

rupted the enjoyments of the family, was the death of Theodosia.

Her disease was of the lingering kind; a circumstance of peculiar advantage, for manifesting the influence of religion in death. Evander approached her bed-side one morning as usual, to inquire how she had passed the night; to whom she replied in the following terms: 'Thank you, dear Evander. I should be glad for your sake to be able to say, I had a better night than usual. I know how such a report would gladden your heart, but I am not able to give such an account of myself. Indeed, I find myself going apace, and I had determined before I had the pleasure of seeing you this morning, to endeavour, before my illness renders me any weaker, to gratify a wish I have almost through life indulged. I have never felt much solicitude about the kind of death with which I might finish my course. One thing only I have been desirous of; that I might not leave the world without being able to make such a declaration of the mercies of God, as might encourage those who are walking in his ways, and admonish those who are not.' She was going to tell her husband what was the wish she desired to gratify, but was interrupted by seeing the tide of grief suddenly rising in his breast. They

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grasped each other's hand; and some minutes were spent by them both in the silent indulgence of tears.

When this effusion had in some measure subsided, she began: 'We have thought of this before; and I trust we shall both be sustained in this last conflict. To you, indeed, the hardest part of the trial is allotted. You love me; and therefore unworthy as I am of such a regard, you will feel a loss. I have, indeed, something here, for which I could think it worth while to live. It is you. It is my children. But there is One above, for whom I can willingly leave you all, dear as you are to me. I hope to be with him. Unworthy as I am of the least of his mercies, I trust I may warrantably rejoice in him, as the God of my salvation. I have endeavoured to know him. He has not suffered me to live in a state of indifference towards him. Grace has taught me what I am, and what I want. It has taught me to look for present peace and everlasting happiness, in making the mediation of a crucified Saviour the ground of my trust, and his example the pattern of my conduct; and that grace encourages me to hope for the forgiveness of my sins through his blood. In this hope of salvation through him, and the sense I have of my infinite obligations to the God of all grace, I re-

joyce in the prospect before me. I have a confidence in you that sets me at ease with respect to the care necessary to be taken of my dear children; but above all, I am enabled to leave them with God. Thus have I little to lose, in comparison of what I have to gain, in leaving this world; but you, my dear Evander, have yet to maintain the christian conflict. Be, however, of good cheer, God is all-sufficient. You have often encouraged me in my religious course, permit me to make my last recompence to you in kind. God, I know, will bless you. He will keep you amidst the snares of life, direct you in all the labours and difficulties of the family, and support you in the last hour as he does me. Then shall we meet again. I do rejoice in this expectation. I thank you for all your tenderness, care, and kindness; for all your admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; for all the candour with which you have interpreted my feelings. I am thankful for the example you have been enabled to set me, and for the care you have taken of my soul. You have watched over me in this respect, and I trust I shall have reason, as a creature designed for a future state, ever to bless God for bringing us together. She meant to say more, but her affections weakened the power of utterance; and she withal saw it was too much at present for Evander. He

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would have replied, but the occasion allowed him no command of himself. He would have prayed, and fell on his knees by her bed-side; but stopping in the middle of the first sentence, he wept and retired.

Reflection and prayer in his closet, restored to him the power of supporting another interview with Theodosia. He rejoiced with her in the prospects of everlasting felicity. He thanked her for having so well filled up her station in life; and kneeling down he blessed the Father of mercies, for having vouchsafed to them that knowledge of himself, the influence of which had hitherto sweetened their society, and now relieved them both under the pain of separation.

When he had risen from his knees, Theodosia expressed a desire that all the family might be admitted into her chamber, when *Paternus*, their minister, should make his visit, 'For, said she, 'our family worship has been one of my greatest enjoyments. I should like to join once more with all my household in this act; and if I leave it to another day it may not be practicable.' Not long after *Paternus* entered the room; to whom, after the customary inquiries were answered, the proposal of Theodosia was mentioned. *Paternus* was pleased with it.

In a little time all were ready. Every domestic was admitted into the chamber. The servants were arranged at some distance from the bed, but in sight of Theodosia, who was raised by pillows, supported by two of her children. Paternus began by reading a portion of the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel, to which he added a few reflections, calculated to infuse into the minds of this little congregation a desire to 'die the death of the righteous.' They were preparing to conclude when they were desired, by Theodosia, still to keep their seats. 'Paternus,' said she, addressing herself to the minister, 'will you permit me to interrupt you for a few moments, while I declare, in the hearing of my family, my faith in that Redeemer whom you have preached unto us?' She was desired by Paternus to proceed.

'The testimony of a dying woman,' said she, 'ought to have some weight with those who hear it. I here then declare, that nothing supports me in the prospect of an approaching eternity but faith in a crucified Saviour. On him alone I depend for salvation. On the merits of my Redeemer, I ground all my hopes of future happiness. And this I declare, in presence of my husband, children, and servants, that they may remember that what I professed through life, I rejoiced in, in death. Blessed Redeemer! accept my grate-

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ful acknowledgments of that love which led thee to die for me, and fit me to enter that society of glorified saints, who to eternity shall ascribe their salvation to him who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood !' Paternus then kneeled down and prayed, and thus concluded the last act of family devotion in which Theodosia joined.

- Paternus retired. The servants, bathed in tears, were preparing to withdraw, but were desired to stay. Theodosia thought that an admonition from her, in her present circumstances, might impress their minds and be long remembered. She was unwilling that such an opportunity should be lost ; but there was a native modesty in her that always led her to make towards her point by delicate approaches. She chose, therefore, to cover her intention ; which she did, by calling first one, and then another of her servants, to her bed-side, and making those kind inquiries about their health, which seemed to be occasioned merely by their being for some time invisible to her through her confinement. When she had thus gone round her inquiries, she began to speak of her own case. She told them of her supports, of the goodness of God, and the blessedness of religion. She admonished them, in the most affectionate terms, not to neglect religion, nor to be inattentive to the

instructions of Paternus, to whose zeal, humility, and benevolence, she bore witness. She encouraged them to seek the kingdom of God, by referring them to that composure which they now saw in her, who knew not whether she had a day to live. 'Thus peaceful,' said she, 'will you be in the last hour, if you make it the main business of life to know and serve God. We may not all meet together again here; but be followers of Christ, and we shall meet around his throne in heaven.'

Bean.

T. M. lived in an unawakened state during twenty years. It then pleased the Father of Mercies to convince him that his life would lead to destruction, and that it was high time to "seek the Lord while he might be found, and to call upon him while he was near." He thought it his duty to join the church of God; and he walked in all the means of grace during several years; at length unhappily chose for his wife, a stranger to seriousness, who acceded to his request because of his family, and personal appearance, presuming that after marriage, she could cure him of his "religious frenzy."

She began by observing, that if they meant to be esteemed by their friends, they ought not to neglect or refuse, when they were invited to parties of amusement; that christians were despised

by persons of respectability; that his neighbours laughed at so much reading and praying in his house; and she added, "I married to be happy with you, but I utterly despair of it, unless you will be like other people." He told her that happiness was his desire and for it he sought; that he never attained it in those objects which she esteemed; that it was derived from God and religion alone; that it would ever be his delight to make her comfortable; and that joy arising from the customs and manners of this world was not substantial, it might afford present imaginary sweetness, "in the end it would be bitter as death." To mildness, harshness succeeded. She attended not family devotion. He grieved, wept, and in secret prayed for her; she used every stratagem which could be invented; and persisted until she wearied him. Thinking it vain longer to resist, he concluded that he would go to heaven alone, if she would not accompany him; but her pursuit reached his closet, and every other retreat, until he finally relinquished every religious duty.

Then, corruption discovered itself; and he at length gratified her in every request, by greater transgressions, than those which he had perpetrated previous to his conviction. A sermon preached upon a particular occasion some time subsequent to his departure from the path of mo-

ality, entered into his feelings, and "brought his sins to his remembrance." He promised to serve the Lord, amid all opposition. But his difficulties were greater, and he had much less strength to counteract them : his wife redoubled her efforts, and again he relapsed. With little remorse of conscience, he continued in sin; lost his desires for all the means of grace; entirely forsook the company of God's people; and regardless of decency, yielded to the customs and maxims of the world.

He was laid upon the bed of affliction, and of his life, himself and his friends despaired. In this state, his fears were alarmed, his sins were dreadfully coloured before him, and he viewed them with so much horror, that he scarcely dared to invoke the Saviour for mercy. "How can I expect that God will pardon me when I have run counter to his will, grieved his spirit, and have gone farther in sin since, than I ever did before I pretended to religion? O that I had my time to live over again! O that I had never been born!" His disorder increased, and his anxiety was transformed into terror. "If God would give me another trial, I would amend my ways; if he will not hear me, perhaps he will listen to the prayers of his people in my behalf;—O send for them that they may supplicate for me! How can I stand

before the avenger of sin in this lamentable condition!" His friends visited him, the "Lord heard the voice of prayer," and he recovered; but as bodily strength returned, conviction subsided, and upon his restoration to health, he practised all his former vices.

Several years after this sickness, he was asked what he thought of death in his present state? "As sure as God is in heaven," said he, "I shall be damned." His friend replied; "do you mean to die in this condition; do you never think of changing your course of conduct?" He answered; "I have no desire for any thing that is good, or for the service of God; and I as much believe that my damnation is sealed, as that I am conversing with you. I know the very time when the Holy Spirit took his flight, and I am no more troubled about it, than if there was not a God to punish sin, nor a hell for the torment of sinners." His friend was speechless, but observed his air of indifference; and notwithstanding he spake with confidence and his words made irresistible impressions, his own heart appeared to be unfeeling as a stone. An immortal spirit sealed to eternal damnation! who once enjoyed the day of grace, and the offers of mercy; but against whom the door of heaven is now shut, never to be opened! Salvation

was presented; his time and talents were ~~im-~~ improved; God judicially withdrew them; and abandoned him to a hardness of heart and a blindness of mind;" which mercy could not allure, nor judgment terrify.

Two years after this conversation, death arrested him, his conscience roared like thunder, and every sense within him was awakened to torment. His sickness was short; his end tremendous. His christian friends visited him, and administered consolation; but he was comfortless. They told him that perhaps he was mistaken. "Ah!" said he, "would to God I was mistaken, happy would it be for me: but can I be deceived about my affliction? Is it fancy that confines me here? Are my pains imaginary? They are *reality*, and I am as certain of my damnation, as of my affliction." Some persons offered to pray; he forbade them, and charged them against the attempt. "For the moment you lift your hearts to God in my behalf, I feel the flames of hell kindled in my breast. You might as well importune for the devil as for me, you would have as much success. Do you think to force God, and to unclothe the gates of heaven, which are barred by justice against me? Your petitions shall return upon your own heads, I want none of

them." The distress of his mind absorbed that of his body: he requested neither pity nor prayer, and continued in this situation until the day of his exit. After rolling, during some time, from side to side, with horror depicted in every feature, he called to his wife to bring him "some cold water;" and remarked, "in an hour I shall be where I shall never get another drop." She delivered it to him; he drank it with voracity; then returning the cup with his trembling hand, staring her in the face, while his eyes flashed terror around; "Rebecca, you are the cause of my eternal damnation;" with an awful groan left the world, and departed into boundless eternity.



VIII. THOMAS NEWMAN'S mode of seeking a wife is an example to youth, and instructs the unmarried.

Farmer. Where did you meet with your wife?

Thomas. At church.

Farmer. Surely you did not go to church to seek for a wife!

Thomas. After I began to know the value of my soul, I went there only to seek for salvation; but a year and a half after I was converted from

my sinful courses, I used to see a decent dressing young woman, who came from Mr. Blindman's parish to our church; and I thought if I married, that the Lord might intend her for my wife; and as I used to meet her at Mr. Lovegood's house, I once plucked up courage, and plainly told her what I wished; but I could get nothing out of her, but that she could not think of it until she had made it a matter of prayer; then thought I directly this is the damsel for me, for I also made it a subject of prayer. A little after this, she went and consulted Mr. Lovegood about my offer; and one evening Mr. Lovegood sent for me to his house while she was there; when I saw her, my heart went pit-a-pat, in a manner I never felt before. We then talked over the matter before him; and he shewed us the duties there would be between us; then he prayed with us; after this we promised each other marriage; and as soon as we were outasked, we were married. They say, matches are made in Heaven; and I verily think ours' was made there, for I have been happy ever since: nothing makes us miserable, for we can praise and bless God for every thing."

Hill.

IX. "A woman an infidel! What self-degradation. Need she be told her obligations to Christianity? What has raised her so high in the scale of importance? What system has done such justice to her claims? In what country have the provisions of legislation lost sight of the distinction of male and female; looked at both with the same aspect; rendered one as personally responsible as the other; and entitled them equally to the same rights and privileges? When a woman steps on this sacred ground, she becomes free; is her own; a party; and treats for herself. Her reproach is rolled away; and she is the daughter of the Lord Almighty, redeemed with an infinite price, and destined to possess a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. *Jay.*"



X. A double force is given to the moral law, from the consideration that the Jewish polity and people were typical of christianity as experienced in the heart and exemplified in the conversation of its disciples: and notwithstanding all the contempt with which Atheists have affected to treat many minor observances which Moses ordained, no precept can be quoted from the Pentateuch that is not calculated to inspire and quicken every virtuous principle, affection and practice; to guard

female chastity; to preserve the Israelites from idolatry, or to distinguish them from surrounding nations.



XI. Prophecy, a testimony which confirms revelation, cannot by any artifice or dexterity be counterfeited. Its characters are so plain, its principles so obvious, and its proofs so tangible, that it equally convinces the learned and the illiterate, the wise and the ignorant. Infidelity has never dared to lift its puny pointless spear against this invulnerable shield of christian faith. Immovable as Caucasus, the predictions of Scripture stand; every attempt to degrade their credibility has confounded the assailant; and the solidity of divine truth has been no more impressed by the ridicule and opposition of eighteen hundred years, than a rock could be moved by a ball—it breaks not the adamant, but rebounds to the injury or death of him who discharged it. If the possibility or reality of a previous discovery of events yet contingent be admitted, that development declares the writing from “the finger of God;” and consequently that the system which it supports must be divine. Those however, who have yielded to evidence, a mode to begin the re-

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futation of which has hitherto baffled all human ingenuity, are by persons who,

“ Spike up their inch of reason on the point

Of philosophic wit, called Argument,

And then, exulting in their taper, cry,

“ Behold the Sun,” and Indian like adore ;”

denominated credulous, and despised for weakness of intelligence ; while their revilers boast of their free thinking, their enlarged minds and their irreligion. The Christian believes in the sacred Scriptures, without contradiction the best book extant ; because it is testified by the depositions of those who sealed its truth with their blood ; assured by the conversion of millions ; and verified by the accomplishment of vaticination, which is the only quality of truth that imposture cannot imitate. He cultivates faith, with ALL MEN OF EVERY AGE, who have been expanded in intellect, dignified from morals, or purified by devotion.

“ For piety has found

Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer

Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.”

Infidels ; and the whole catalogue of them does not furnish ONE pious, moral and wise man ; “ believe in all unbelief ; that there is no God, that matter is God, and God is matter, and that it is no matter whether there be any God or not ; that the world was not made, that the world made itself,

that it had no beginning and that it will last for ever; that man is a beast, that the soul is the body, that body is the soul, and that after death there is neither body nor soul; and that there is no religion, that natural religion is the only religion; and that all religion is unnatural." This is the noble creed of those who renounce the Gospel; who have not faith to receive the truth, but a vast credulity which can swallow a chaos and an abyss of absurdities.



XII. "The marriage of parents and children or grand children in all their varieties, nephews with aunts, and uncles with neices has something in it at the first glance unnatural; and would be destructive of all authority and subordination. Collateral relations who are forbidden to marry, are brothers and sisters by whole or half blood, or affinity legitimate or illegitimate. The first marriages of Adam's posterity must have been of brothers and sisters; and therefore we cannot pronounce them immoral in themselves. But as human nature now is, it is very expedient that those who are so much together in youth, should by such a restriction be taught to look upon all intercourse as prohibited and incestuous; which must assist in keeping out temptations to evil. It

APPENDIX.

is desirable, that by intermarriages, relationship and its endearments and benevolence should be diffused, and an unsocial separation of families prevented. These laws are therefore to be considered as moral in themselves, or so nearly connected with moral obligations, as to be proper to be observed by all mankind: and are all the restrictions on marriage, which are contained in the divine law; and such as pride, covetousness or human policy have superadded, do not seem to have proved beneficial to mankind.”

Scott.



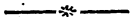
XIII. De Witt Clinton eloquently depicts the progress and consequences of licentiousness. “It ought to be your special object, to search out those parent offences, which produce greater and more flagrant ones, by infecting the character with incurable and odious depravity. A skillful physician will endeavour to probe the cause of the disease, before he applies the remedy; and if we can discover and suppress those prominent crimes which produce contamination of the public morals, and lead to all kinds of guilt, then we shall have reason to congratulate ourselves upon having discharged a great duty, and in having effected a great good. If evils cannot be removed, they may be lessened; their pernicious influence may

be circumscribed, and their peculiar/malignity diminished. The most dangerous principles of depravity are taught and acquired in those schools of vice, called disorderly houses. Whether devoted to gambling, to drunkenness, to prostitution, or to obscene and wanton revelries; there young men and women are initiated into all kinds of wickedness, and are taught the first elements of destruction. Vice must receive its wages; and without pecuniary resources, no admittance can be had into those doors of infamy. The unhappy females derive their means of supply from the prostitution of their persons. The young men must either spend the compensation of their employments, levy contributions on parental affection, rob the desks or betray the confidence of their principals; and when any extraordinary call is made upon their resources, then extraordinary means must be resorted to, in order to meet the demands made on them. What these means are, the history of our criminal courts declares in language that cannot be misunderstood. The debt of the gamester must be paid with scrupulous punctuality; and the company of the meretricious is attended with unceasing expence. The pressure of false notions of honor, and the allurements of libidinous women, thus impel to dishonesty. And although parental affection always conceals,

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and the compassion of the injured frequently overlooks the offence, yet the records of our prisons will sooner or later contain the names of the unhappy victims ; who, after inflicting inexpressible torture on their friends, after being abandoned by the virtuous part of the community, spend their last breath in an alms-house or prison. Many persons derive their support from administering alimony to vice and profligacy : dancing houses, frequented by lewd women, are opened in various places to the annoyance of public virtue and decorum : and houses of assignation are kept for the seduction of young women, and for the gratification of vice. Although it is not in our power, to banish these evils entirely from the community, yet their malignity and virulence may be diminished ; their progress may be restrained ; their number may be lessened ; and public decorum may be preserved, by preventing the audacious exhibition of open profligacy. The ear of chastity may be protected from open violation ; and the cheek of modesty from blushes. And if you can save one victim from the altar, and restore one prodigal son or erring daughter, to the bosom of parental affection, to the paths of virtue, and to the esteem of the world ; then is it highly important to employ your exertions. You will find your reward in the grateful feelings which ever accom-

pany righteous deeds, and in the smiles of the great disposer of all good."



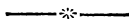
XIV. All incentives to fornication are justly condemned. Every obscene book, writing, picture or conversation whether dressed in the garb of modesty or more indecently expressed is an accessory to this vice; and while the dissemination of impurity by the press is so alarming and extensive, few practices are so lightly censured, although no mode of diffusing corruption admits less excuse or contracts more guilt.

Almost all the Latin and Greek writings which are used in education are a compound of absurdity and immorality. We despise the Heathen Mythology; we are disgusted at its deleterious defiling tendency; and we clearly perceive all the dreadful consequences which would follow from the restoration of the ancient order of things; yet the licentious Poets who without disguise relate these corruptions are given to youth for study at a period when they ought to know no sexual distinction.

The value of these languages is not found in Homer's or Virgil's fables, but in their connection with the sacred Scriptures and ecclesiastical history. A considerable diminution of unholy

principles and uncleanness of life would follow the substitution, for the common elementary books, of the New Testament, Grotius de Veritate, Buchanan's and Johnston's Psalms, the Septuagint Version, Origen contra Celsum, Eusebius' works, and the apologies of the Fathers. The continued examination of the authors denominated classic, not estimating the loss of time, has a powerful tendency to destroy the moral principles, to augment the influence of sensuality, and to obstruct the progress of the Christian religion. Every thing which defiles the mind and corrupts the heart being expressly and *in toto* prohibited by our Lord and his Apostles—all the ancient Mythological, Theatrical, Amatory, and even the Philosophical treatises should be separated in a distinct partment, with Paul's inscription affixed at the entrance—

“ Touch not, taste not, handle not.”



XV. “ There is a species of cohabitation, distinguishable from vagrant concubinage, and which by reason of its resemblance to marriage, may be thought to participate of the sanctity and innocence of that estate ; the case of “ kept mistresses,” under the favourable circumstance of mutual fidelity ; which is defended by this apology.

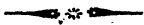
That the marriage rite being different in every

country, among the various sects, and with some scarce any thing, and not being prescribed or even mentioned in Scripture can be accounted only a form and ceremony of human invention: that consequently if a man and woman betroth and confine themselves to each other, their intercourse must be the same, as to moral purposes, as if they were legally married: for the addition or omission of that which is a mere form and ceremony, can make no difference in the sight of God, or in the actual nature of right and wrong.

To which it may be replied: if the situation of the parties be the same thing as marriage, why do they not marry? If the man choose to have it in his power to dismiss the woman at his pleasure, or to retain her in a state of humiliation and dependence inconsistent with the rights which marriage would confer upon her, it is not the same thing to her or to her children. With respect to the rite not being appointed in Scripture—fornication, which is cohabitation without marriage is forbidden; and it is left to the law of each country to pronounce what is or what makes a marriage, so far as it depends upon arbitrary or mutable forms. It is immoral, because it is pernicious that men and women should cohabit without undertaking certain *irrevocable* obligations, and mutually conferring certain civil rights; if there-

APPENDIX.

fers the law has annexed these rights and obligations to certain forms, so that they cannot be secured or undertaken by any other means, for nothing but the marriage ceremony can make the promise irrevocable, it becomes immoral, that men and women should cohabit without the interposition of these forms." *Paley.*



XVI. Lord Chesterfield is a remarkable instance of the extent of immoral principles. After his death, a large collection of epistles which had been written by him to his son, was published, and have very powerfully contributed to the increase of fornication. "They contain positive evidence, that with all his honours, learning, wit and politeness, he was a wicked man, whose heart was filled with uncleanness and deceit."

The following extracts should alarm those, who permit their children to peruse his volumes. "Learn even to compose your *countenance* to the respectful, the cheerful and the insinuating. An air, a tone of voice, a composure of countenance to mildness and softness, which are all easily acquired do the business; and without further examination, and possibly with the contrary qualities, that man is reckoned the gentlest, the modestest, and the best natured man alive." **SINCERITY!**

“ I should desire nothing better in any negotiation, than to have to do with a man of warm quick passions ; which I would take care to set in motion. By artful provocations, I would extort rash unguarded expressions ; and by hinting at the several things I could suspect, infallibly discover the true one, by the alteration it occasioned in the countenance of the person.” HONESTY! “ Address yourself to some woman of fashion and beauty wherever you are, and try how far that will go. If the place be not secured beforehand and garrisoned, nine times in ten you will take it.” Sometimes he directs his son to address two females at the same time, one to instruct him in the modes of intrigue, and upon the other to exercise his arts. Madame de Blot was expressly designated in his letters as a woman whom he ought to seduce, “ because although she had been married more than a year, she still retained a perverse fidelity to her husband.” PURITY! Mrs. Chapon with all the energy of irritated female feeling and indignant virtue, thus censures the hoary voluptuary. “ Intent on those worldly advantages which cannot be attained without the good will of mankind, he unweariedly recommends and enforces the *appearances* of all that he thinks engaging ; but forgets that those appearances must be the result of real excellencies which he takes no pains

to inculcate. Sweetness of countenance, he thinks may be put on and adjusted at the glass; and all the charms of liberal and ingenuous youth possessed by his son, while in reality he regulates his friendships by his views of future advancement; conceals every passion and sentiment of his own heart, and takes advantage of those of others; sets no bounds to his flattery, but the credulity of his companions, and lavishes every mark of attention and admiration, of kindness and good nature, with no other motive or end but his own advantage. The favorite maxim which his lordship so often repeats, "the countenance open, the thoughts close," he thinks as practicable as it is convenient; forgetting that an open countenance is the index which nature gave to an open ingenuous heart; and that the best teacher can hardly bring a youth of nineteen to such perfection in hypocrisy, as to give his face and air the frankness proper to his age, and his mind the cunning of an old statesman. But we are not constituted to be the dupes of every shallow artifice; and a hypocrite under twenty has very little chance of making the "world his bubble." Scarcely even the weakest of that sex whom his lordship considers far below rationality, would be much charmed with a youth who had been tutored by his father to make love wherever he went, because it

was cheaper and safer to have an arrangement with a married woman of fashion, than to keep an opera girl. It is impossible to think of this in a moral light, without a degree of horror, which obscures its ridicule. That such precepts should have been the instructions of a *father to his son*, and that they should be publicly offered *by a woman* to the youth of a nation where the sacredness of marriage, and the bonds of family love are not yet entirely exploded, are indeed most alarming symptoms of corruption."

These sentiments are confirmed by the decision of Dr. Johnson: "*Chesterfield's letters*," he observed, "*inculcate only the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master.*"



XVII. No mode would produce so much effect in impeding a prostitute's wretched course of life, as solitary confinement and employment. A public whipping or a disgraceful exhibition would not affect the sensations of her who had drowned them in the continued practice of that iniquity which exterminates all moral sentiment; but solitude necessarily produces reflection, which might be attended with genuine repentance and subsequent usefulness. All the objects attainable by human laws, to inspire dread

in others by a terrifying example, and amendment in the offender ; would certainly follow the adoption of this regulation. The fear of detection and punishment would powerfully obstruct and consequently diminish the crime of fornication, while the increase of marriage would necessarily be the result.



XVIII. No objection can be urged from the rights of individuals. The obligations of marriage are more binding than any others, because they are coeval with the commencement of mankind ; and hence celibacy is an unnatural state. At the formation of man, the Lord created them male and female ; whose mutual aid and support were necessary to their comfort if not to their existence ; and by leaving them alone in the universe he declared matrimony to be a standing law of the world which none can justifiably transgress. Obedience to Deity's declaration is implied in the very constitution of man, demanded by the nearly Providential equalization of the sexes in number, and inseparable from the existence of the race. Therefore to talk of a right, which contravenes an indiscerpible characteristic of the species, which perverts the very design for which the passions were implanted, and counteracts one object of the

constant interposition of divine wisdom, and which destroys not the civil and moral relations only, but the rational world itself is preposterous: and when this supposed immunity constantly diminishes the comfort, exhausts the strength, and augments the corruption of society, the insignificance of the plea, is equalled by the depravity alone of the motive from which it is offered.



XIX. "The system of Infidelity is a soil as barren of great and sublime virtues, as it is prolific in crimes. It destroys a taste for moral excellence; promotes the growth of those vices which are the most hostile to social happiness, especially vanity, ferocity and unbridled sensuality; and sinks to inconceivable degree the importance of human life. Hence to extinguish it by the hand of violence, must be quite different in the eyes of a sceptic from what it is in those of a Christian. With the Infidel it is nothing more than diverting the course of a little red fluid called blood; it is merely lessening the number by one of many millions of fugitive contemptible creatures. The Believer sees in the same event, an accountable being cut off from a state of probation, and hurried perhaps unprepared, into the presence of his Judge, to hear that final, that irrevocable sentence, which is

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to fix him for ever in an unalterable condition of felicity or woe. Settle it therefore as a maxim never to be effaced or forgotten, that atheism is an inhuman, bloody, ferocious system, equally hostile to every useful restraint, and to every virtuous affection; that leaving nothing above us to excite awe, nor around us to awaken tenderness, it wages war with heaven and earth; its first object is to dethrone God, its next to destroy man. Under every possible aspect in which infidelity can be viewed, it extends the dominion of sensuality; it repeals and abrogates every law by which divine revelation has under such awful sanctions, restrained the indulgence of the passions. The disbelief of a supreme, omnipotent Being which it inculcates, releases its disciples from an attention to the heart, from every care but the preservation of outward decorum; and the exclusion of the devout affections, and of an unseen world leaves the mind immersed in visible sensible objects. The infatuated eagerness and parricidal zeal of Infidels to extinguish a sense of Deity, must excite astonishment and horror. Is the idea of an almighty and perfect Ruler unfriendly to any passion which is consistent with innocence, or an obstruction to any design which it is not shameful to avow? Eternal God! on what are thine enemies intent: what are those enterprises of

guilt and horror that for the safety of their performers, require to be enveloped in a darkness which the eye of heaven must not pierce! Miserable men! proud of being the offspring of chance, in love with universal disorder, whose happiness is involved, in the belief of there being no witness to their designs, and who are at ease only, because they suppose themselves inhabitants of a forsaken and fatherless world? Jesus Christ seems to have "his fan in his hand and to be thoroughly purging his floor;" and *nominal* Christians will probably be scattered like chaff. But *real* christianity has nothing to fear. Have not the degenerate manners, and corrupt lives of multitudes in the visible church been the principal occasion of scandal and offence? Infidelity is gradually removing this reproach; possessing the property of attracting to itself the morbid humours which pervade the church, until the christian profession on the one hand is reduced to a sound and healthy state, and scepticism on the other, exhibits nothing but a mass of putridity and disease." *Hall.*



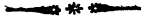
XX. Revealed religion is indispensable to morality. "There was a striking peculiarity in Mr. Mallet's conduct that ought not to be omitted. He was a great free thinker, and a very free

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speaker of his free thoughts; and he made no scruple to disseminate his sceptical opinions wherever he could introduce them. At his own table, the lady of the house who was a staunch advocate for her husband's opinion, would often in the warmth of argument say, "Sir, we Deists." The lecture upon the *non-credenda* of the free thinkers was repeated so often, and urged with so much earnestness, that the inferior domestics became soon as able disputants as the heads of the family. The fellow who waited at table, being thoroughly convinced that for any misdeeds he should have no after account to make, resolved to profit by the doctrine, and stole many things of value, particularly the plate. He was so closely pursued, that he was brought back with his prey to his master's house, who examined him before some select friends. At first the man was sullen, and would answer no questions put to him; but being urged to give a reason for his infamous behaviour, he resolutely said, "Sir, I have heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state; and that after death there was no reward for virtue, nor punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery." "You rascal, replied Mallet, had you no fear of the gallows?" "Sir, said the fellow, looking sternly at his master, what is that to you, if I had a mind to venture

that? You had removed my greatest terror, why should I fear the lesser?"

Garrick.



XXI. "Let no man be compelled to become a Christian, in strict truth he cannot. Every man not only ought to have, but must have the right of private judgment. As it is the absolute duty of Christian states, even for social and political purposes to endeavour, as much as possible, to convert all their subjects to the true religion, so it is contrary to duty, that men should be forced to profess what they do not believe; because hypocrisy will be the certain, and an augmented enmity, the probable consequence. It is one thing however to leave a man at liberty, whether he will be a believer or not; another to allow him to propagate infidelity and idolatry. So it is one thing to violate conscience, by absolutely insisting on and extorting confession of faith; and another to preserve sacred institutions from being derided and profaned. Government has a right to restrain men, and oblige them to keep their irreligion to themselves; the same right as to oblige vessels to perform quarantine, when there is reason to suspect the plague. Theodosius compelled no man, he only restrained: Pagan emperors before him,

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and Popish princes since, not only restrained, but also compelled. The former is not persecution; the latter is, and ought to be cordially detested."

Milner.

"Those opinions which are hostile to the interests of society, by debasing the minds of men, and undermining their noblest hopes; should not be suffered to be propagated."

Shrubsole.



XXII. "If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be requisite to obedience, he who withhold this knowledge cannot be said to love his neighbour as himself. He that voluntarily continues ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces, as to him who should extinguish the tapers of a light-house might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwreck. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good, but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit for a year or a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which the world has yet had no example, except in the practice of *Negro-*

dealers, a race of mortals whom no pious man wishes to resemble." *Johnson.*

XXIII. That single individuals of both sexes live chastely is certain; but that large associations can thus exist, is contrary to fact. The records of celibacy which detail the secrets of abbies and nunneries, demonstrate that all attempts to disunite the sexes under the pretence of additional purity, are the source of a torrent of licentiousness.

XXIV. How far the prohibition, to rob the remaining partner and the children, of the property which should furnish support for them, will be effectual, time will discover. The man who tempted a woman to this sacrifice of every feminine sensibility, and to conduct so injurious to society, should be punished as if he had seduced her; and the husband who deserted his family, should surrender all his wealth to them, and be disfranchised until he returned to the performance of his domestic obligations. This is not laying unhallowed hands upon religion; for piety is as contrary to the Shaker's creed, as it is distinct from Atheism; and consequently, it is the indispensable duty of Legislators to make their conduct the subject of animadversion.

XXV. History affords a very striking demonstration that the most evil effects attend the adoption of divorce as part of the civil regulations of any country. The Roman senate at a period, when a great physical force was declared to be necessary for the war of extermination in which they were engaged, enjoined upon all the citizens to endeavour by every mode to multiply children; and a man dismissed his wife, because she was barren. This first dissolution of the marriage contract, happened five hundred and twenty years after the foundation of the city, though it had been permitted for various causes from the time of Romulus; and it was repeated, until female chastity and male virtue were nearly extinct. All writers agree in their detail of the common enormities in the subsequent ages; and their full-length picture is certified by the miniature portrait which the Apostle has drawn in his Epistle, "to all who were in Rome."



XXVI. "In the beginning God ordained, that a man without a wife should be a half creature only, and should feel destitute of indispensable assistance; and the Apostle determines that every woman should have her own husband, and asserts their mutual duties. If this law of marriage be perpetual, that a man has no power over his

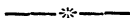
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body, but gives it to his wife, how can he be permitted to unite with another? The bond is indissoluble; for he condemns all the divorces which were daily allowed by the philosophers, and not punished by the Mosaic law among the Jews. "A man shall not discard his wife, nor she depart from her husband:" why? Because they are united in an indivisible relation. "Not I but the Lord;" this direction is in the law of which God is the author: for when Jehovah testified in the beginning that the conjunction of a man and woman was so sacred that he should leave his father and mother for his wife, he asserted that the relation is indestructible. A son is bound by nature to his father and mother, and cannot be relieved from the yoke, much less can he be released from the tie of matrimony, which the Apostle denies can be destroyed either by dissensions or divorce. It is a covenant consecrated in the name of the Lord, which neither stands nor falls by the will of men. Other contracts depending upon human sanctions may be broken; but those who are joined in marriage cannot be separated nor live in any other state; and the believer ought to remain with the unbeliever, because divorce is averse from the Christian profession. When Paul asked, if he were not at liberty to lead about a sister wife; he declared the holiness of the union; how affectionate should be the connection between pious part-

ners, who were conjugated by this double chain; and how great ought to be their purity and esteem? He forbids the extermination of the conubial contract; and commands all persons willingly to perform their nuptial duties; because a female being bound during the natural life of her husband, and released but by his death; the law pronounces the married relation of a man and woman impracticable to be destroyed. *Calvin.*



XXVII. Apollonius stigmatizes the heretic Montanus, as the first man in the church who defended the dissolution of marriage. Tertullian, Augustine, the council of Florence, and latterly, even the council of Trent prohibited divorce upon any pretext; and the Scriptures explicitly sanction their interdict.



XXVIII. "The chief of all relations is that between a man and his wife. Paul argues from nature; to exhort men to respect their partners. Self-esteem is natural; but no man can love himself who is not equally attached to his consort, as the Lord is to the church. This is the law of marriage instituted by God; which makes two one; and affirms the connection, to be sacred and inseparable." This energetic comparison is

intelligible by all, except those, who have eyes and will not see, ears and will not hear, and hearts and will not understand.

XXIX. Marriage is a voluntary and perpetual compact of private social life, between an individual of each sex; by which they unite their mutual interest, persons and affections; and which is usually ratified by devotional ceremonies. It originated in Paradise; its duration is sanctioned by the word of God; which discovers the precepts that relate to it, and the examples of its perpetuity. In its nature it is civil and moral, congenial to virtue, and peculiar to man. Sacred are its principles, and its effects purifying. It includes all the tenderness incident to this terrestrial condition; and combines a variety of joys and sorrows. A congeniality of character, is necessary for the regular discharge of its duties. It demands a constant assiduity to give and receive satisfaction; to bear each other's frailties with candour and patience; and with pious scrupulosity to educate their children. A virtuous, affectionate, and intelligent pair will join their exertions, and invoke the blessing of God on their matrimonial connection; of which reason and religion indicate the obligations, and which both pronounce to be indissoluble."

