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ARTICLE I.

HOUSEHOLD RELIGION.

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WHEN Joshua, the renowned leader of the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan, was drawing near the close of his long and eventful life, he "gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God." Joshua recounted in their hearing the many instances of God's kindness towards them and their ancestors, from the calling of Abraham to their exodus from Egypt; the numerous miracles wrought in the wilderness for their benefit; and the extraordinary victories which he had enabled them to achieve in taking possession of their ancient inheritance.

This historical notice of God's mercies Joshua employs as the basis of an earnest exhortation to them to serve the Lord. "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." They had seen enough of Jehovah's power and majesty, to prove him to be infinitely superior to the gods of the heathen; and they had experienced in their own history, such manifestations of his kindness and mercy, as to place them under the strongest obligations to love and serve him.

But if after all their minds were vacillating between the true and the false; if they were still undetermined whether they would worship God alone, or would blend therewith the idolatrous worship of their heathen neighbours, he desired them distinctly to understand that his own mind was fully made up; that irrespective of the course which they might choose to pursue, he and his household would adhere to the service of the true God. "If it be evil unto you to

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still in gentleness, docility, and beauty, but ripe, or rapidly maturing in divine wisdom and knowledge. Family ties, once severed by death, are reunited, never again to be broken. Their tears, often shed below, are forever wiped from their eyes, and their countenances, which were here so often sorrowful, now beam with ecstatic joy. While in the flesh, they may have toiled hard, yet have received as their daily pittance less than was needful for the comfortable supply of their bodily wants. But now "they rest from their labours," they eat freely of "the hidden manna," and they drink of "the water of life." On earth, they may have occupied an humble domicile—now they have apartments in the "King's palace." In this world, their clothing may have been coarse and homely—now they are "brought to the King in raiment of needlework;" their "clothing is of wrought gold." While passing through this life, their habitations were not always luminous with their Redeemer's presence, even when they were offering him their homage. At best, they saw "through a glass darkly;" and sometimes, for just cause, he temporarily hid from them the light of his countenance. But now they see him "face to face;" they behold the "King in his beauty;" they are daily in "his temple;" they unceasingly celebrate his praise. With such glorious hopes as these, let Christian parents be prompted to perform with constancy and zeal the several duties involved in HOUSEHOLD RELIGION.

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ARTICLE II.

THE VALUE OF A GOOD WIFE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS BRAINEED, D.D., OF PHILADELPHIA.\*

*"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. So that he shall have no need of spoil."*—PROV. 31 : 11.

THE richest blessings are not always the most obvious. It is the hidden moisture which refreshes the flower. It is the hidden spring which supplies the well. It is the nutriment, buried in the earth, which feeds the fibres of the vine and tree, and thus develops the nourishing grape and the shady oak. The noisy cataract is not so beneficent as the gentle rill that glides almost without a murmur, and is best known by the lively green of its border, and the flowers which deck its meandering course. In the lightning's flash there is sublimity, but in usefulness it yields to the gentle taper, that lights up a cottage evening. Mankind are moved by exhibitions of power. They are affected by social changes, which

\* A Sermon preached in Pine Street Church, Philadelphia, on the sudden death of a female member of the Church.

leave their mark in the world. Hence they pause to moralize over the death of statesmen and heroes—over scholars and millionaires—but few have ever devoted time, and thought, and eulogy to mark their estimate of the value of a good wife—a good mother—a good woman.

In this respect, as in most others, the Bible is in advance of human wisdom, and above human aptitude and tendency. It selects for its most elaborate, carefully worded, and emphatic eulogy, the domestic virtues of a faithful wife and mother. As the light of home is almost the only radiance which cheers the darkness of man's earthly lot, King Solomon turns aside to pronounce a benediction upon her who presides as a guardian angel at that altar.

There was sufficient reason for this. What are the outside revellings of pleasure worth to him who is compelled to return to a filthy and disordered home? What is fame worth to him who meets discord and reproach at his own door and in his own chamber? What can wealth do for him whose household is devoid of taste, order, and comfort? What can the admiration of a crowd avail to him whose own fireside is heartless and desolate?

It is not wonderful, then, that the wisest of men, King Solomon, estimating things at their real value, should ask, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."

Elsewhere it is said, "A prudent wife is from the Lord," and the gift is worthy of the giver.

The text, speaking of such a wife, says: "The heart of her husband doth safely *trust* in her." There is a peculiarity in this language. Ordinarily it is the office of divine truth to weaken our confidence in earthly blessings. Thus it is said: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," "Trust not in man, whose breath is in his nostrils," "Put not your trust in princes," "Trust not in uncertain riches." Human friendships are treacherous. Wealth is too cold to fill a warm heart. Fame hangs on a breath of air, and comes and goes, rises and falls by the caprices of a crowd. God ordinarily represents all earthly things as vanity.

But in the text he seems to make an exception in favour of a virtuous woman—of a true and faithful wife. He says: "The heart of her husband doth safely *trust* in her."

And for what may the husband trust in such a wife?

I. *He may trust in her unselfish and permanent affection.* I say it with reverence, God covets the love of his creatures; and man, made in God's image, craves the love of others, as essential to his own happiness. The man that asks no love is a monster. The man who expects none is a child of despair. There may be hearts so frozen by selfishness, or ossified by pride and egotism, or paralyzed by disappointment, as to be indifferent to affection.

But these are icebergs, drifting in darkness, on Polar seas; cold, barren, desolate. In them no tree or shrub plants a root; no flower sheds its fragrance there. No melody of living joy is chanted

there. God found that it was not good for man to be alone, chiefly because he needed the conscious affection of a female heart, to soften the asperities of his own, and thus give completeness to his being.

In the deep, full affections of a wife's heart, the husband finds that appreciation and interest which every soul covets. This stimulates his enterprises. This makes him brave in peril. This cheers his hard labour. This comforts him under irritation, slander, reproach, in the outside world.

To meet this craving of man, woman is adapted.

She is not ambitious of wealth or fame. She shrinks from great changes and great perils. She is not fitted for the struggles of the forum, the conflict of arms, or the labours of the field. Her home is her earthly heaven; and she holds a loving heart to cheer him, to whom God has given a loftier ambition, a deeper craving of earth's wealth, a stronger arm, and a higher courage.

Subjected, by the ordinance of God and the laws of the land, to abide a sterner will than her own, she is furnished with a wealth of affection which makes her burden of subordination light, and melts and moulds to tenderness the controller of her destiny.

"I am loved at home," says the husband or the son; and this thought nerves his principle in the hour of temptation, and gives solace to hardships on the land or on the lone sea.

The treasure of a wife's affection, like the grace of God, is given, not bought. Gold is power. It can sweep down forests, raise cities, build roads, and deck houses. It can bribe silence or noisy praise. It can collect troops of flatterers, and inspire awe and fear; but, alas! wealth can never purchase love. Bonaparte essayed the subjugation of Europe under the influence of a genius almost inspired—an ambition insatiable—and backed by millions of armed men. He almost succeeded in swaying his sceptre from the Straits of Dover to the Mediterranean; from the Bay of Biscay to the Sea of Azoff. On many a bloody field his banner floated triumphant; but you will all bear witness that his greatest conquest was the unbought heart of Josephine—his sweetest and most priceless treasure, her outraged but unchanged love. If man have failed to estimate the affection of a true-hearted wife, he will be likely to mark the value in his loss, when the heart which loved him is stilled by death.

II. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in a faithful wife for companionship.* The family relation gives retirement without solitude, and society without the rough intrusion of the world. It plants in the husband's dwelling a friend who can bear his silence without weariness—who can listen to the detail of his interests with sympathy—who can appreciate his repetition of events, only important as they are embalmed in the heart. Common friends are linked to us by a slender thread. We must retain them by ministering in some way to their interest or their enjoyment.

As we cannot always give novelty and interest to our conversation, as we cannot always make it for the interest, convenience, and pleasure of our friends to adhere to us, as we are liable to those pecuniary and social vicissitudes which may tax their patience or their purses, our ordinary friends, like summer birds, are liable to come and go; to be coldest when we most need sympathy, and absent and indifferent when we most need their support.

What a luxury it is for a man to feel that in his own home there is a true and affectionate being, in whose presence he may throw off restraint without danger to his dignity, he may confide without the fear of treachery, and be sick or unfortunate without being abandoned.

If in the outward world he grow weary of human selfishness, his heart can safely trust in one whose soul yearns for his happiness, and whose indulgence overlooks his defects. No wonder he says:

“My every earthly joy to blend,  
And harmonize my life,  
Give me a true, a tender friend,  
And be that friend. *my wife.*”

III. *The heart of a husband doth safely trust in a faithful wife for personal comfort.*

Who is it that gives care to the neatness, order, and tidiness of our dwellings, our halls, our parlours, our bedchambers? Who is it that consults our tastes, our affinities, our repellances, and so regulates our tables, our couches, our apparel, as to minister to our comfort?

Who is it that supplies our lack of interest in ordinary things, and sends us out into society prepared to meet the claims of decency, taste, and propriety? Who caters for our appetites and swelters in heated kitchens for our indulgence; and often, unthanked and unblest, plies the needle in the lone evening for our benefit.

Who is it that schemes by a rigid economy to get the most elegance and comfort from the least tax on our incomes? Who furnishes the ready pin, the napkin, the bandage for our wounds, the cup for our thirst, the friction for our aching head, the medicine for our pains? What angel of mercy is it that watches by our sick pillow, bears all our complaints and irritations, and moves with muffled step when we slumber?

The assiduities of a faithful wife are so common, so various, so cheerful, so unexact, that husbands are likely to regard her kindness as they do the sunlight and the dews of heaven—matters of course—to be received without gratitude. But the constancy which makes them familiar—to a rightly constituted mind—deepens the sense of obligation. While the husband safely trusts in the companion of his years for his personal comforts, she has a right to expect that her beneficence shall be appreciated. If not, he will be likely to find her worth in her loss. Her absence or death is,

to the little world of home, like the loss of the glowing sun, which alone protects our earth from eternal darkness and frost.

IV. *The heart of a husband doth safely trust in a faithful wife for counsel.*

It is difficult to find a friend who is so deeply interested in our welfare as to take the trouble to study our perplexity—so conversant with us and our affairs as to understand our wants and dangers—so morally brave as to venture to tell us unwelcome truths—so perfectly disinterested as to assure us that no selfishness prompts his advice—and so persevering as repetitiously to urge that which is for our benefit.

A wife is such a friend, and a wise man will often seek her counsel.

Her love casts out fear. Her confidence inspires boldness. She is always at hand with her aid. Her eyes have seen all. Her ears have heard all. Her heart has felt all that pertains to our interest or our reputation. She is the husband's other self at a different angle of vision, watching with earnestness for his welfare.

And there is something in the ready, instinctive impressions of an intelligent wife which no sane husband should ever despise. She does not pause to collect facts, weigh arguments, and draw inferences. Her impressive nature, which renders her indisposed slowly to reason, is furnished with an instinctive perception of the right, which is better than logic.

It is wonderful how often, in nicely balanced cases, when we appeal to the judgment of a wife, how instantly she decides the question for us, and how generally she is *right*. In ordinary affairs within her province, the judgment of a wife is almost an instinct of propriety; or, rather an inspiration from Him who ordained "that by her counsel she should be a helpmeet for man." Pilate was embarrassed in the struggle between his sense of justice and his desire of popularity; but his *wife* said at once, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." Had he heeded her counsel Pilate's hands would not have been stained with the blood of the Son of God.

In questions affecting the health of a husband—his good name—his morals—his companionships—his business enterprises—his religion—how often has the ready counsel of a wife held him back from danger, disaster, ruin. And how sad must be the brother here from whom such a counsellor hath been recently removed by death.

V. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in a faithful wife for competence.*

It is true, there are some wives who cannot thus be trusted. Actuated by a foolish vanity of dress, furniture, and equipage, and reckless of a husband's toils, anxieties, and pecuniary embarrassments, they will sustain a certain style in the present, even if they have to trample on a husband's broken heart and ruined reputation

in the process. These are the wives that drive husbands to wild speculation, to fraud and embezzlement, to debts never to be paid, to lottery gambling, to desperation, and a premature grave.

But I am happy to believe that such cases are few. As a general fact, the principle of justice, economy, and thrift, is strong in the heart of a woman. Her home-destiny qualifies her for a minute regard to the details of domestic economy, and her love for her husband and regard for the welfare of her children dispose her to use wisely and well the earnings intrusted to her control. She is the one that obeys Christ in "gathering up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Hers is no hireling's eye and hand. The husband lays his purse in her lap, assured that the comfort and respectability of his house, and the interest of his property, are safe in her keeping. He hath, says the text, "no need of spoil." He has no need of false pretence—of tricks of trade—of grasping speculation—of over-trading and debt—of over-tasked energies and feverish dreams; for his wife regulates his family expenditures by his fair income, and is contented with her lot. How crushing is the augmented responsibility, when a husband realizes that such a care-taker is no more at the head of his household!

VI. *The heart of a husband can safely trust a faithful wife in the care and training of his children.*

A father regards his children as a heritage from the Lord. His sense of parental responsibility, his yearning and absorbing affection, their dependence, their perils, their inexperience, their confidence—all combine to press them on his heart. But while these little ones, dearer to him than his own life, demand constant tenderness and care, this father must be abroad for their support. He is a soldier, and must dwell in camps. He is a sea captain, and must for months and years make his home on the deep. He is a merchant, and from morn to night must go where merchants congregate. He is a banker, and must be found at the desk. He is a mechanic, and must ply his trade. He is much abroad; when he returns he is too absorbed, too weary, too impatient, to sympathize with his little ones, to teach them their prayers and smooth the pillow for their slumbers.

He may be rich; but can money buy a heart to love these little ones as he loves them? Who will listen to their hundred grievances? Who will be unwearied by their clamour? Who will settle their little controversies? Who will answer their thousand questions? Who will watch their incipient ailments, and patiently abide their nights of fever? Who will guide their opening intellects and train to strength their forming minds? Who will impress daily and hourly lessons of taste, refinement, self-control, benevolence, and piety? Who will teach their lisping tongues to pray? Who will bear them, in tears and entreaty, to the altar of Him who on earth took little children in his arms and blessed them?

The heart of a husband safely trusts all this to a faithful wife

and mother. She represents all his affections, and more than all his patience and care.

The highest confidence ever implied by one human being in another, is exhibited in the satisfied, confiding security with which a father gives up his children—his greatest treasures—to the sole guidance of a mother.

When such a mother is removed by death, when the eyes that watched are dim, when the heart that yearned is still and cold, where can the husband and father find solace, but in resignation to the mysterious will of God?

Such a wife and mother hath been suddenly cut down in this church. An intelligent, amiable, sincere, true-hearted wife and mother, is a treasure not alone to her family, but to the world; and in the loss of such an one, we have all occasion to mourn to-day.

In view of this subject, I would ask wives and mothers now present, to remember that *life is uncertain*. Valuable as they are to their husbands, their children, they are liable, like their sister, at any time to lie down and die. How carefully and prayerfully should they then live! How much do they need a practical and earnest piety, that their responsible duties may be all done and well done! As their children are liable to be handed over to the care of strangers, how necessary that they be led early and safely to Christ.

In view of this subject, I would ask husbands here, to appreciate those who make the joy of their dwellings. Are not the kindnesses of wives often unnoted, unthanked, unregarded? Remember, that these companions of your existence fill offices of dignity and high usefulness. They are shut out from the world's applause; let them rest in the assurance of your gratitude and consideration.

When you see them still and cold in death, it will not grieve you to remember that your love has thrown sunshine into the shade of their allotment, that your prayers and example have given them aid in the right training of your children.

In view of this subject we see how much necessity exists for personal and family religion. Wives are torn from their husbands, mothers are separated from their darling children. The wand of death leaves the most cheerful family circle cold and desolate.

There is but one relief. The pious dead are not lost, and in our deepest sorrows we are allowed to look up and say—

“There is a world above,  
Where parting is unknown;  
A long eternity of love,  
Formed for the good alone;  
And faith beholds the dying here  
Translated to that heavenly sphere.”

At the grave of the good, we may well adopt the language of the Apostles: “Lord, to whom shall we go? for thou alone hast the

words of eternal life!" Life here is a shadow—Heaven is a fixed and immutable reality; and "Blessed are the dead that have died in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

In respect to her whom we all mourn, we may say—

"Now take thy rest in thy shadowy hall,  
In thy mournful shroud reposing;  
There is no blight on thy soul to fall,  
No mist on its light is closing.  
It will shine in glory when time is o'er,  
When each phantom of earth shall wither,  
When the friends that deplore thee sigh no more,  
But lie down in the dust together.  
Though sad winds wail in the cypress bough,  
Thou art resting calm and untroubled now."

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ARTICLE III.

MOTIVES THAT SHOULD INFLUENCE THE  
CONDUCT OF A NURSE.

BY MRS. HOARE, OF ENGLAND.\*

WE are taught in the Scriptures (Coloss. 3 : 22), that, "whatever we do, we are to do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;" that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15 : 3); and that "He will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Eccles. 12 : 14.)

A real faith in these fundamental truths; a practical sense of the immediate presence of God, and of the unspeakable importance of our duty to Him, alone can fit us to adorn the station in which we are placed, or enable us to render, at the last, a good account of our stewardship. Every other motive is variable, and comparatively weak; whether it be the desire of reputation and esteem, a sense of self-interest, or the dictates of natural affection. These may render us respectable in our outward conduct; they may produce some temporary good effects; but the foundation is wanting: the root is defective, and so will be the fruit. Religion alone can supply a principle unchanging and unceasing: a principle which, depending not on the approbation of man, influences as powerfully in his absence as in his presence: a principle that enables us still to go forward in the race set before us; "not weary in well-doing," but, for duty's sake, bearing trials and discouragements; surmounting difficulties, and overcoming temptations. When treating of the

\* Extracted from "Hints for the Improvement of Early Education and Nursery Discipline." Sixteenth edition, London, 1853.