DEATH OF DR. TALMAGE

Makes Appropriate Reprinting

HIS FAMOUS SERMON

Considered by Many the Masterpiece of the Great Pulpit Orator

"On the Choice of a Wife."

Marriage Not For All-Multitudes Who Never Will Marry, Who Are Not Fit to Marry-Some Eminent Blunderers-Avoid Matchmakers-Essential Qualities-Beauty a Benediction.

WASHINGTON, D. C .- The following Washington, D. C.—The following discourse is one of a series of sermons on domestic life delivered several years ago by the late Rev. Dr. T. De Witt Talmage, and by many admirers is considered his pulpit masterpiece. In commemoration of his death it is now republished. It was founded on the text, Judges xiv, 3: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Samson, the giant, is here asking con-

the uncircumeised Philistines:
Samson, the giant, is here asking consent of his father and mother to marriage with one whom they thought unfit for him. He was wise in asking their counsel, but not wise in rejecting it. Captivated with her looks, the big son wanted to marry a daughter of one of the hostile families, a deceitful, hypocritical, whining and saturnine creature, who afterward made for him a world of trouble till she made for him a world of trouble thi she quit him forever. In my text his parents forbade the banns, practically saying: "When there are so many honest and beautiful maidens of your own country, are you so hard put to for a lifetime partner that you propose conjugality with this foreign flirt? Is there such a dearth of foreign flirt? Is there such a dearth of lilies in our Israelitish gardens that you must wear on your heart a Philistine thistle? Do you take a crabapple because there are no pomegranates? Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

Excuseless was he for such a choice in a land and amid a race celebrated for female loveliness and moral worth, a land

male loveliness and moral worth, a land and a race of which self-denying Abigail and heroic Deborah, and dazzling Miriam, and pious Esther, and glorious Ruth, and Mary, who hugged to her heart the blessed lord. Lord, were only magnificent specimens. The midnight folded in their hair, the lakes of liquid beauty in their eye, the gracefulness of spring morning in their posture and gait, were only typical of the greater brilliance and glory of their soul. Likewise excuseless is any man in our time who makes lifelong alliance with any one who, because of her disposition, or heredity, or habits, or intellectual vanity, or moral twistification, may be said to be of the Philistines.

of the Philistines.

The world never owned such opulence of womanly character or such splendor of womanly manners or multitudinous instances of wifely, motherly, daughterly, sisterly devotion, as it owns to-day. I have not words to express my admiration for good womanhood. Woman is not only man's equal, but in affectional and religious nature, which is the best part of us, she is seventy-five per cent. his superior. Yea, during the last twenty years, through the increased opportunity opened through the increased opportunity opened for female education, the women of the country are better educated than the ma-jority of men; and if they continue to advance mentally at the present ratio, be-fore long the majority of men will have in finding in the opposite sex enough ignorance to make appropriate consort. If I am under a delusion as to the abundance of good womanhood abroad. consequent upon my surroundings since the hour I entered this life until now, I hope the delusion will last until I embark from this planet. So you will understand, if I say in this course of sermons some-

thing that seems severe, I am neither cynical nor disgruntled.

There are in almost every farmhouse in the country, in almost every home of the great town, conscientious women, worship-ful women, self-sacrificing women, holy women, innumerable Marys, sitting at the feet of Christ; innumerable mothers, helping to feed Christ in the person of His suffering disciples; a thousand capped and spectacled grandmothers Lois, bending over Bibles whose precepts they have followed from early girlhood; and tens of thousands of young women that are dawning upon us from school and seminary, that are going to bless the world with good and happy homes, that shall eclipse all their predecessors, a fact that will be acknowledged by all men except those who are struck through with moral decay from women, innumerable Marys, sitting at the acknowledged by all men except those who are struck through with moral decay from toe to cranium; and more inexcusable than the Samson of the text is that man who, amid all this unparalleled munificence of womanhood, marries a fool. But some of you are abroad suffering from such disaster, and to halt others of you from going over the same precipice, I cry out in the words of my text: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of from going over the same precipice, I cry out in the words of my text: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"

That marriage is the destination of the

That marriage is the destination of the human race is a mistake that I want to correct before I go further. There are multitudes who never will marry, and still greater multitudes who are not fit to marry. In Great Britain to-day there are nine hundred and forty-eight thousand more women than men, and that, I understand, is about the ratio in America. By mathematical and inexorable law, you see, millions of women will never marry. The supply for matrimony greater than the demand, the first lesson of which is that every woman ought to prepare to take care of herself if need be. Then there are thousands of men who have no right to marry; because they have become so are thousands of men who have no right to marry; because they have become so corrupt of character that their offer of marriage is an insult to any good woman. Society will have to be toned up and corrected on this subject, so that it shall realize that if a woman who has sacrificed her honor is unfitted for marriage, so is any man who has ever sacrificed his purity. What right have you. O masculine any man who has ever sacrificed his purity. What right have you, O masculine beast! whose life has been loose, to take under your care the spotlessness of a virgin reared in the sanctity of a respectable home? Will a buzzard dare to court a

But the majority of you will marry, and have a right to marry, and as your religious teacher I wish to say to these men, in the choice of a wife first of all seek divine direction. About thirty-five years ago, when Martin Farquhar Tupper, the English poet, urged men to prayer before they decided upon matrimonial association, people laughed. And some of them have lived to laugh on the other side of their mouth. But the majority of you will marry, and

mouth.

The need of divine direction I argue from the fact that so many men, and with have The need of divine direction I argue from the fact that so many men, and some of them strong and wise, have reversed their lives at this juncture. Witness Samson and this woman of Timnath! Witness Socrates, pecked of the historical Xantippe! Witness Job, whose wife had nothing to prescribe for his carbuncles but allopathic doses of profanity! Witness Ananias, a liar, who might perhaps have been cured by a truthful spouse, yet marrying as great a liar as himself—Sapphira! Witness John Wesiey, one of the best

men that ever lived, united to one of the most outrageous and scandalous of women, who sat in City Road Chapel making mouths at him while he preached! Wit-ness the once connubial wretchedness of

mouths at him while he preached! Witness the once connubial wretchedness of John Ruskin, the great art essayist, and Frederick W. Robertson, the great preacher. Witness a thousand hells on earth kindled by unworthy wives, termagants that scold like a March northeaster; female spendthrifts, that put their husbands into fraudulent schemes to get money enough to meet the lavishment of domestic expenditure; opium-using women—about four thousand of them in the United States—who will have the drug, though it should cause the eternal damnation of the whole household; heartless and overbearing, and namby-pamby and unreasonable women, yet married—married perhaps to good men! These are the women who build the low club-houses, where the husbands and sons go because they can't stand it at home. On this sea of matrimony, where so many have wrecked, am I not right in advising divine pilotage?

Especially is devout supplication needed, because of the fact that society is so full of artificialities that men are deceived as to whom they are marrying, and no one but the Lord knows. After the dressmaker, and the milliner, and the jeweler, and the hair-adjuster, and the dancing master, and the cosmetic art have completed their work, how is an unsophistic and would have avoided?

Hu they are a decived that this will amount to would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the would have avoided?

Wait until you are fascinated and the equisition of your soul is disturbed by a magnetic and exquisite presence, and the voice of God.

If you have this prayerful spirit you will mistake your own infatuation of the woice of God.

If you have this prayerful spirit you deline the voice

pleted their work, how is an unsophisticated man to decipher the physiological hieroglyphics, and make accurate judg-ment of who it is to whom he offers hand ment of who it is to whom he offers hand and heart? That is what makes so many recreant husbands. They make an honorable marriage contract, but the goods delivered are so different from the sample by which they bargained. They were swindled, and they backed out. They mistook Jezebel for Longfellow's Evangeline, and Lucretia Borgia for Martha

line, and Lucretia Borgia for Martha Washington.

Aye, as the Indian chief boasts of the scalps he has taken, so there are in society to-day many coquettes who boast of the masculine hearts they have captured. And these women, though they may live amid richest upholstery, are not so honorable as the cyprians of the street, for these advertise their infamy, while the former profess heaven while they mean hell.

There is so much counterfeit womanhood abroad it is no wonder that some cannot tell the genuine coin from the base. Do you not realize you need divine guid-

Do you not realize you need divine guidance when I remind you that mistake is possible in this important affair, and, if made, is irrevocable?

The worst predicament possible is to be unhappily yoked together. You see it is impossible to break the yoke. The more you pull apart, the more galling the yoke. The minister might bring you up again, and and in your presence read the marriage ceremony backward, might put you on the opposite sides of the altar from on the opposite sides of the altar from where you were when you were united, might take the ring off of the finger, might rend the wedding veil asunder, might tear out the marriage leaf from the family Bible record, but that would fail to unmarry you. It is better not to make the mistake than to attempt its correction. But men and women do not rerection. men and women do not reveal all their characteristics till after marriage, and how are you to avoid committing the fatal blunder? There is only one Being in the blunder? There is only one Being in the universe who can tell you whom to choose, and that is the Lord of Paradise. He made Eve for Adam, and Adam for Eve, and both for each other. Adam had not a large group of women from whom to select his wife, but it is fortunate, judging from some mistakes which she afterward made, that it was Eve or nothing. There is in all the world some one who was made for you, as certainly as Eve was

and willfully upset his astronomical ap-paratus, so that he turned to the audience "Ladies and gentlemen, I have the misiortune to be married to this woman;" by the fate of Bulwer, the novelist, whose wife's temper was so in-compatible that he furnished her a beaucompatible that he furnished her a beau-tiful house near London and withdrew from her company, leaving her with the dozen dogs whom she entertained as pets; by the fate of John Milton, who married a termagant after he was blind, and when some one called her a rose, the poet said: "I am no judge of flowers, but it may be so, for I feel the thorns daily;" by the fate of an Englishman whose wife was so determined to dance on his grave that he determined to dance on his grave that he was buried in the sea; by the fate of a village minister whom I knew, whose wife threw a cup of hot tea across the table because they differed in sentiment—by all is tell these scenes of disquietude and domestic night.

ishing in almost every community. De-pend upon your own judgment divinely illumined. These brokers in matrimony are ever planning how they can unite im pecunious innocence to an heiress, or celi bate woman to millionaire or marquis, and that in many cases makes life an unhappi-

maker instead of the divine guidance, and you may some day be led to use the words of Solomon, whose experience in home life was as melancholy as it was multitudinous. One day his palace, with its great wide rooms and great wide doors and great wide hall, was too small for him and the loud tongue of a woman belaboring him about some of his neglects, and he retreated to the housetop to get relief from the fungal bombardment. And while there he saw a poor man on one corner of the roof with a mattress for his only furniture, and the open sky his only covering. And Solomon envies him and cries out: "It is beter to dwell in the corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house." And one day during the rainy season the water leaked through the roof of the palace and began to drop in a pail or pan set there to catch it. And at one side of him all day long the water went drop! drop! drop! while on the other side a female companion quarreling about this, and quarreling about that; the aerimonious and petulant words falling on his ear in ecseless pelting—drop! drop!

"A continual dropping in a very rainy"

day and a contentious woman are alike If Solomon had been as prayerful at the beginning of his life as he was at his close, how much domestic infelicity he would have avoided?

not go twice.

A woman, not a Christian, but a respecter of religion, said to me: "I was persuaded by my husband to go and hear an infidel lecture once, but going home I said to him: "My dear husband. I would not go again though my declination should result in our divorcement forever." And the woman was right. If after all that Christ and Christianity have done for a woman, she can go again and again that Christ and Christianity have done for a woman, she can go again and again to hear such assaults, she is an awful creature, and you had better not come near such a reeking lepress. She needs to be washed, and for three weeks to be soaked in carbolic acid, and for a whole year fumigated, before she is fit for decent society. While it is not demanded that a woman has a Christian before years are seen. woman be a Christian before marriage, she must have regard for the Christian religion or she is a bad woman and un-worthy of being your companion in a life charged with such stupendous solemnity and vicissitudes.

What you want, O man! in a wife, is not a butterfly of the sunshine, not a not a butterfly of the sunshine, not a giggling nonentity, not a painted doll. not a gossiping gadabout, not a mixture of artificialities which leave you in doubt as to where the humbug ends and the woman begins, but an earnest soul, one that cannot only laugh when you laugh, but weep when you weep. There will be wide, deep graves in your path of life, and you will both want steadying when you come to the verge of them, I tell you. When your fortune fails you will want some one to talk of treasures in heaven, and not charge talk of treasures in heaven, and not charge upon you with a bitter, "I told you so." As far as I can analyze it, smeerity and earnestness are the foundation of all worthy wifehood. Get that, and you get all Fail to get that, and you get not be the control of the control

Don't make the mistake that the man of the text made in letting his eye settle the question in which coolest judgment directed by divine wisdom are all-important. He who has no reason for his wifely choice except a pretty face is like a man who should buy a farm because of the dahlias in the front dooryard. Beauty is a talent, and when God gives it He inmade Eve for Adam, and Adam for Eve, and both for each other. Adam had not a large group of women from whom to select his wife, but it is fortunate, judging from some mistakes which she afterward made, that it was Eve or nothing.

There is in all the world some one who was made for you, as certainly as Eve was made for Adam. All sorts of mistakes occur because Eve was made out of a rib from Adam's side. Nobody knows which of his twenty-four ribs was taken for the nucleus. If you depend entirely upon yourself in the selection of a wife, there are twenty-three possibilities to one that you will select the wrong rib. By the fate of Ahab, whose wife induced him to steal; by the fate of Macbeth, whose wife pushed him into massacre; by the fate of James Ferguson, the philosopher, whose wife entered the room while he was lecturing and willfully upset his astronomical apparatus, so that he turned to the audience.

The dam had not at lend, and when God gives it He intends it as a benediction upon a woman's face. When the good Princess of Wales dismounted from the rail train last summer, and I saw her radiant face, I could understand what they told me the day before, that, when at the great military hospital where are now the wounded and the sick were cheered at her coming, and those who could be roused neither by doctor nor nurse from their stupor, would get up on their elbows to look at her, and wan and wasted lips prayed an audible prayer:

"God bless the Princess of Wales. Doesn't she look beautiful?"

But how uncertain is the effont door princess of Wales of a kerosene lamp turns it into sacrification, and a scoundrel with one dash of vitriol may dispel it, or Time will drive

vitriol may dispel it, or Time will drive his chariot wheels across that bright face cutting it up in deep ruts and gullies. But there is an eternal beauty on the face of some women, whom a rough and ungal lant world may criticise as homely; and though their features may contradict all the laws of Lavater on physiognomy, yet they have graces of soul that will keep them attractive for time and glorious through all eternity.

There are two or three circumstances

n which the plainest wife is a queen of beauty to her husband, whatever her stature or profile. By financial panic or betrayal of business partner, the man goes down, and returning to his home that evening, he says: "I am ruined; i am in disgrace forever: I care not whether I live or die.' It is an agitated story he is telling in the household that winter night. He says: "The furniture must because they differed in sentiment—by all these scenes of disquietude and domestic calamity, we implore you to be cautious and prayerful before you enter upon the connubial state, which decides whether a man shall have two heavens or two hells, a heaven here and heaven forever, or a hell now and a hell hereafter.

By the bliss of Pliny, whose wife, when her husband was pleading in court, had messengers coming and going to inform her what impression he was making; by the joy of Grotius, whose wife delivered him from prison under the pretence of having books carried out lest they be injurious to his health, she sending out her husband unobserved in one of the book cases; by the good fortune of Roland, in Louis' time, whose wife translated and composed for her husband while Secretary of the Interior—talented, heroic, wonderful Madame Roland; by the happiness of many a man who has made intelligent choice of one capable being prime counselor and companion in brightness and in the right way He will send you agood, honest, loving, sympathetic wile; or if she is not sent to you, that you may be sent to her.

At this point let me warn you not to let a question of this importance be settled by the celebrated matchmakers flourishing in almost every community. Depend upon your own judgment divinely illumined. These brokers in matrimony are ever planning how they can unite impecunious innocence to an heiress, or celi.

are nowhere.

There is another time when the plainest wife is a queen of beauty to her husband. She has done the work of life. She has bate woman to millionaire or marquis, and that in many cases makes life an unhappiness. How can any human being, who knows neither of the two parties as God knows them, and who is ignorant of the future, give such directions as you require at such a crisis?

Take the advice of the earthly matchmaker instead of the divine guidance, and you may some day be led to use the words of Solomon, whose experience in home life was as melancholy as it was multitudinous. One day his palace, with its great wide



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