

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

Numbers xxx.

STATUTES BETWEEN A MAN AND HIS WIFE;
BETWEEN THE FATHER AND HIS DAUGHTER,
BEING YET IN HER YOUTH IN HER FATHER'S
HOUSE.

THERE are certain relationships used in the sacred Scriptures to show the nearness of blessed connection in which we are brought nigh to God.

Two of these relationships are used in this chapter.

First.—A daughter being yet in her youth in her father's house.

Second.—A woman having an husband, and being in her husband's house.

Provision is made in the grace of God for the infirmity and failure of the weak ones in these relationships, because of the sufficiency of those to whom they stand related—the father meeting the weakness and failure of his daughter, and the husband of his wife.

This failure in the man is not supposed, and no provision needed for it, because the man is Christ.

But provision for the failure of the woman is made—if a daughter being a youth in her father's house, or a wife, and in her husband's house, because these are the relationships into which the Church of God is brought.

And so, "If a *man* vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, *he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*" Heaven and earth

shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away: they are pleasing in the sight of God—"I do always those things that please him;" they are rich in blessing to us, and they shall stand for ever and ever.

"If a *woman* also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth: and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand."

The blessing of the inexperienced here is, that she is in her father's house, and that his ear is open to what she says, and that its stability depends on his approval. The wisdom of a loving father, is the blessing of a foolish daughter. If her words stand, it is the witness of her father's approval of them, not her's; for "if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her." Her relationship to her father, and her place in his house, secures, in the mercy of God, provision against the evil that is of herself, but not of her father.

And what is our blessing, as set in this relationship? That instead of our purposes being in our own self-will—foolish purposes, for they shall not stand—sinful purposes, for they need forgiveness—that instead of these, we should have communion with the mind of God our Father, and delight ourselves in doing His will.

The other relationship of blessing is that of a woman having an husband, and being in her husband's house, as the place of blessing: in this is the mystery of Christ and the Church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." In this endearing relationship "we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," and can each say, He loved me and gave Himself for me. In this relationship God has given us deliverance from the evil that would overwhelm us, if it was not for Him who bore our iniquity, and through whom we are forgiven.

This condition of blessing, in the type of it in Numb. xxx. is thus expressed, "And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it, then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect; and the Lord shall forgive her."

Well it is for us that Christ takes cognizance of all we do—well it is that all that is not right is known to Him who loves us, because it is disallowed and forgiven. Happy it is when He sees that which He will not disallow, because according to His own mind.

May the word of Christ dwell richly in us; and may we not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

In this Scripture there are two other conditions subject to judgment, because out of relationship to Christ. "But every vow of a *widow*, and of her that is *divorced*, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her."

Who is a widow in this sense* of it? and who is a divorced woman? with all their iniquity standing against them, and having no forgiveness of the Lord.

She who is a widow, has had no connection with Christ as risen. For Christ being raised from the dead *dieth no more*; death hath no more dominion over him: and we are married to Him who is raised up from the dead (Rom. vii. 4).

No widowhood awaits us, as He who in love has taken us to Himself, has triumphed over death; and so said He to John, "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore."

* In another sense, the condition is used for blessing (see Luke xviii. 1—8, where the widow represents God's elect; compare also Luke ii. 37, xxi. 1—4, 1 Tim. v. 5).

All other associations must end in widowhood, because united to dying objects : and such have none to stand before God for them ; all their guilt stands against them, and the judgment of it they must bear.

The other condition subject to judgment, is that of a woman that is divorced.

Such an one makes profession of union with Christ, but is not true to Him ; such have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

There is much which Christ has to disallow in those that are His own ; but still they are his own, He never puts them away, but loves them unto the end ; and such he keeps clean,—but He knew who should betray Him, and therefore said He, ye are not all clean. And so, “if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha” (1 Cor. xvi. 22).

He loved us and gave Himself for us. He has shown Himself worthy of our love, and that our sins are not, and that the world is not worthy of our love : He was bitterly stung by the one and the other, because in His love He would deliver us.

Woe be to him who with an adulterous heart leaves a loving Saviour for a faithless world.

“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

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