

AMATRIMONIAL MISSTEP

One of the Twelve Stories of Solomon.

BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority—1 Kings 3:11:1-4.

SERMONETTE.

"Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David." Here was the first step in a course which was to work the ruin of Solomon's life.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is the Scriptural admonition. It was one of the laws of the Jewish dispensation on which great emphasis was laid, and it is one of the admonitions of the Christian dispensation which is clearly and positively set forth by the Apostle Paul.

Why should this be so? Why cannot we have happy, successful union between the Christian and the non-Christian? The apostle answers the question when he goes on to ask: "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

There is no relationship in life so intimate and close as that of husband and wife, and hence if such relationship is to be enduring there must be fellowship and communion between the lives thus linked together.

It is then a question as to what direction such fellowship and communion shall take. Will the righteousness dominate the unrighteousness, the light, the darkness? Or will the heart of the worldling lead away from God the one who has pledged himself to God? Will the worldliness stifle and quench the light of God's truth which has shined in the heart?

Almost invariably the marriage of the Christian with the non-Christian works disaster to the faith of the former.

Solomon's union with Pharaoh's daughter was a brilliant political marriage, with every reason from a human and worldly point of view to commend it. It gave him a powerful ally to the south, assuring not only protection from attack from that quarter, but strengthening his hands with the nations to the north and east. It gave a brilliant aspect to the reign of King Solomon and was the beginning of that splendor and magnificence which marked his entire reign. And further, it brought into the national life of Israel a liberal, progressive element which was broadening its influence, commercially and socially.

And yet in spite of all the temporary advantages which were to accrue, it was an unwise, unsafe, and unholily alliance.

Unwise, because counter to the explicit command of God, and certain it is that violation of God's command ultimately brings ruin.

Unsafe, because it was not only weakening the national ideals of a people wholly set apart to God, but a weakening also of the individual ideals which were going to make the second step away from God easier.

Unholy, because a violation of a righteous principle absolutely essential to the moral and spiritual uplift of the human race. Not even a king could transgress the sacred obligations to God and escape the consequences.

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is a command as binding upon those who occupy the exalted places of life as it is upon those of more humble station.

THE STORY.

THE choosing of a wife is one of the most important steps of life. It is a matter which must not be considered hastily. Sentiment must not be allowed to run away with judgment or expediency cover up the obligation which one owes to God and God's law. Where love is based on something deeper than mere physical beauty, and on something higher than mere human attainment; in other words, where love includes in its inspiration and its expression the thought of loyalty and devotion to God, then and then only is love a safe guide. Sentiment and passion are not love, and expediency and convenience are sign posts which point to the matrimonial whirlpool of disappointment and ruin. Man was intended for woman and woman for man, but God intended that they should be mated and not mismatched. What God joins together is never put asunder.

It was no secret in Israel that a wife was being sought for the young and handsome King Solomon. Since his coming to the throne it had been recognized as one of the important matters requiring solution. With the chief men of the nation and those

close to the king in the administration of the affairs of the nation it was a question as to where they should look for a consort for their king.

More than one of the chief men of the nation secretly wished that his own fair daughter might be the one selected to be queen, but each with becoming modesty refrained from openly advancing the claims of their respective daughters, so that apparently no progress was made in the quest for a wife for Solomon.

And perhaps the one least concerned over the matter was Solomon himself. His had been a busy life since coming to the throne. The earnest, devout spirit in which he had entered upon the great obligations of ruling a kingdom had kept him steadfast and faithful to his task. He felt his youth, his inexperience, his limitations, and with the benediction and blessing of the Godly David resting upon him and his example pointing him to God as the source of all wisdom and strength, he had sought the Lord with a great yearning to know and do the divine will. This had become known to all the nation, and after his return to Jerusalem from Gibeon after his remarkable vision in which God had promised him wisdom and riches and honor, he found the chief men and leaders of the people and the people themselves moved by one spirit of love and devotion to the upbuilding of the kingdom. So it had come to pass that the nation was solidified and strengthened and immediately began to feel the stimulus of that aggressive spirit which was to ultimately make of Solomon's kingdom the richest and most prosperous and most enlightened of any of the nations about.

Such remarkable development and progress could not but arouse the interest, if not apprehension, of the neighboring kingdoms, and eagerly steps were taken to show friendly spirit towards the nation of Israel and to invite exchange of treaties whereby both the commercial and the political interests of the two would be served. Thus rapidly did these develop a system of trade relationships, so that there was a constant stream of merchantmen passing to and from Jerusalem. And in this way the matter of choosing a wife for King Solomon became known to the nations about, and it was not long ere brilliant embassies were arriving at Jerusalem with proposals of marriage with the princesses of the neighboring nations, even Egypt sending an offer of the hand of the daughter of Pharaoh.

Good old Nathan, the prophet, was not a little perturbed by this latest development of the situation, and lost no time in reminding King Solomon of the restrictions which the Mosaic law placed upon marriage with the nations about. He would have been glad if the king would have summarily bundled the whole company of ambassadors back to the kingdoms from which they had come, but Solomon was too keen a diplomat for that, and while he did not ignore the admonitions of Nathan, he felt attracted by the brilliant prospects which a foreign alliance offered. And where the soul comes face to face with the question of religious duty or expediency which promises rich and glorious present reward, there is apt to be the struggle which only too often is decided finally in favor of expediency, with the hope and purpose that the religious obligations shall not be forgotten or neglected. So it was with Solomon, and when the messengers came from the king of Egypt they found him more than willing to listen to their proposals.

And again the good and faithful Nathan came to the king and urged upon his heart the absolute claims of God, and with a fast parting appeal he left him just as the evening shadows were gathering.

Long the young king sat while the struggle went on in his heart. He was too devout and loyal to God to willfully and absolutely violate the command of God, but he let questions arise in his heart as to whether the word of God meant just what Nathan urged it did. Was the law of God intended to narrow the life and limit the possibilities? Was serving God a hindrance to success and power? And so as he let the questions and doubts arise it obscured his vision of right until the heart became less sensitive to God's claims and more alive to the advantages to be gained by following the course which desire and reason indicated.

"Why cannot I make this alliance and still maintain my loyalty to God? And what a splendid opportunity it will be of bringing the knowledge of the true God to the Egyptians. See how such alliance will not only advance the material prosperity of the kingdom of Israel, but how it will advance the cause of the God of Israel."

Thus there grew upon his vision the picture of what Israel was yet to become and again he asked himself the question whether he would be doing right not to take advantage of every opportunity of advancing the material prosperity of his kingdom? And as the matter became settled in his own mind, gradually the voice of God ceased to struggle with him on that point, and so a peace came and a settled conviction that the policy of expediency was the right policy.

And so to Nathan the next day the king sent, saying:

"This thing seemeth good to me. See what glory and honor it will bring to the nation of Israel."

And King Solomon dismissed the messengers of the king of Egypt with rich presents for the princess, and sent his courtiers to prepare for the approaching nuptials.

LONDONERS HIT THE PIPE



THE ASSOCIATION ROOM AT WONG'S

Chinatown of New York, and of San Francisco, and even of Chicago, is known throughout America as one of the sights worth seeing on a visit to any one of the cities named. And foreign visitors to this country always feel a special curiosity to go through the queer section of the cities, and think perhaps that no city of Europe can in any way duplicate the sights, the people and the customs. And yet London it seems has its Chinatown, as much as either New York or San Francisco, though perhaps not so extensive a scale.

There are four opium dens of "Hop Joints" in London which cater for the public. Three of these are controlled by a syndicate of Chinamen, members of a "Tong" or society. The other "joint," perhaps the most luxuriously appointed place of its kind in existence, is owned by a notorious Chinaman of great wealth, Ah Wong, who, until the great feud in San Francisco three years ago between two powerful "Tongs," which led to wholesale murder, was known there as the mayor of Chinatown. This man's establishment was furnished by a well-known west end firm at a cost of \$10,000. Whereas the cost of a "layout" or use of one, ranges from ten cents to \$1.25, according to the amount of opium used, in the "syndicate joints," Wong's charge is \$5.00. All these places are within a stone's throw of each other. The Oriental sailor has less than a hundred yards to walk from the docks to reach the cheaper "joints," while Wong's place in Limehouse is just round the corner in an old-fashioned three-story brick building, formerly used as the freight offices of a world-famed shipping company. The day trade is composed mostly of sailors or Chinamen residing in the neighborhood, for the latter are barred at night, much as the residents of Monaco are denied the privilege of gambling at Monte Carlo. By three o'clock the places have been cleaned and put right for the coming night trade, and a little later the sallow-faced, hollow-eyed habitués are returning—for they have a "yen yen," which means that the terrible craving has come on them, and there is no denying it.

The visitor to "Chick's" establishment—one of the "joints" controlled by the Chinese syndicate—pays 60 cents and is given half a walnut-shell filled with opium. He then enters a large room, the floor of which is covered with rows of mattresses, and chooses his favorite bunk; and "Kip," a well-known personality in Chinatown, who acts as a sort of servant, approaches with the "lay-out." This consists of a small square Japanese tray, containing an oil lamp, a "stem," or pipe and bowl, two needles about five inches long, much like a woman's hat-pin, known as a "yen hok," and "shying needle," and a glass of water. The smoker now lights a cigarette, and proceeds to "cook a pill" by turning the needle with a small ball of opium rapidly about in the flame of the lamp. Every few moments the needle is withdrawn, and the small ball of opium it contains is rolled on the edge of the bowl for the purpose of removing a certain amount of poison and also to give the pill conformity. When properly cooked, and emitting the peculiarly pungent smell so sickening to the uninitiated, the pill is placed directly over the small hole in the bowl and the needle is pushed through; then the smoker, placing the bowl over the flame of the lamp, inhales the fumes into his lungs. A beginner usually takes short, quick pulls; but the habitue takes what is known as the "long draw," never stopping to take a breath until the pill is consumed. The bowl is then rubbed over with a small damp sponge, and the performance repeated until the smoker has had enough.

The second of these "joints" is presided over by a person known as "Kid Lee," a half breed Chinaman, who was at one time valet to a famous Yankee jockey. Under his management this place has become the rendezvous of foreign "crooks" and "grifters," pickpockets, touts and confidence men. This place is known to the fraternity as the "Dream Shop," and is run on a slightly better plan than "Chick's," the charge being \$1.25. Partitions divide the smokers, the surroundings also are somewhat better, the "alls clean-

er, and the paraphernalia of a better kind, and there are two exits for use in case of emergency, unknown as yet even to the habitués. A fair estimate would show Lee to do a daily or nightly business of some three hundred "shells," or \$375, for many of his customers call for a second and third "shell of hop." Fifty per cent of this is profit, and many of the "regulars" purchase opium for home consumption.

The third of the cheaper "joints" is found six doors further down, and this time, instead of descending to the basement, one ascends the stairs of a comparatively new house, the ground floor being occupied by a fried fish shop. This place, known as "Hop Harbour," is exclusively used by Orientals, and a white man finds it exceedingly difficult to gain an entrance. Each of these places has a manager, the Chinese syndicate which owns them remaining in the background. A certain amount of opium is carefully weighed out each day to the managers by the representatives of the owners, who collect a money equivalent. The manager receives his commission daily, and the assistants their wages at the same time. This is the Chinese method—no books, no accounts, just business. John is far from being a fool.

At Wong's there is no secret password, no special knock is necessary, for almost the moment you approach the door it opens, two Chinamen in ordinary clothes look you over, and, being satisfied, bow you to a second door, which opens silently. The hall is lighted by four large lamps bearing red shades; the walls are covered with Chinese hanging screens and ornaments, while a red sign with black lettering reads: "Chinese Restaurant." On the first floor to the right of the entrance hall is a dining room containing eight tables. Chinese lanterns hang from the ceiling; the decorations are in red and black, and even the floor is painted black with a border of red around the room. Here come any number of respectable people to dine a la chinoise. They have not the remotest idea of what goes on above the dining room floor, though others use the restaurant only for a blind, and, later on, smoke a pill or two upstairs. The food is excellent: "Chopped chicken and rice," "Yokie May," and Chinese tea being served; but the great dish is "chop suey," a most palatable mixture. To this place come many prominent persons; army officers who have been in China, society people, popular jockeys and sometimes politicians.

You pay your bill, then ascend the heavily carpeted stairway to the rooms above. At the top of the first flight, in a small recess, sits a Chinaman spotlessly dressed in white. He gives you a keen glance and awaits your pleasure. "I wish to rest awhile, Loo; let me have a room." Loo bows, and an attendant comes forward and leads the way into a small but luxuriously furnished apartment fitted up as a sleeping-room, the bed, however, being a divan raised some six inches from the floor, with a silk-covered mattress and silk cushions, or a pillow. The attendant waits for further orders. "Bring me a lay-out." With a bow the man departs, to return with the paraphernalia. The tray is a work of art, the stem is inlaid with ivory, and the "shell" is a mollusc's "shell I cook for you, sir?" inquires the servant; but the visitor has been there before, and requires no assistance. Should the attendant be called upon to do the necessary "work," and added fee of \$1.25 is necessary. The man then says: "One guinea (\$5.00) please," and, taking the money, leaves the visitor to himself. There are some six private rooms at Wong's, the second floor being a sort of "association" smoking-room, used by parties who come only for the fun of the thing. This room has some ten couches beautifully upholstered, the floor is heavily carpeted, and the walls are hung with silk curtains. All the couches are arranged in a circle, the pillow end to the wall, and each couch is sufficiently large to hold two persons, as often a servant is called in requisition to "cook."

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What Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound did for Mrs. Muff, it will do for other suffering women.

The Matter With It.

"What is the matter with my poem?" asked the amateur contributor. "Isn't the meter all right?"

"Oh, yes," replied the editor, "the meter is excellent."

"I think if you look again you will find that the rhymes are faultless."

"The rhymes are very good, quite ingenious, I might say."

"Then why do you decline it?"

"You have forgotten to say anything."

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Had Its Uses.

"I love to whiff the aroma of the burning leaves," said the poetical girl, as she strolled through the park.

"So do I," replied her tall escort; "it drowns the odor of gasoline from the automobiles."

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A man who says a mean thing about another man isn't half as mean as the man who repeats it.

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For he that once is good is ever great.—Ben Johnson.



WISE WORDS FROM RUSKIN.

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In resolving to do our work well is the only sound foundation of any religion whatsoever.

Obeys something; and you will have a chance some day of finding out what is best to obey.

A common book will often give you much amusement, but it is only a noble book which will give you dear friends.

Too Sharp a Dividing Line.

Elder (discussing the new minister's probation discourse)—In my opinion he wasna justified in dividing folk into the sheep and the goats. I wadna just say, Jamie, that I was among the unco guld, and I wadna say that you were among the unco bad. So whar do we come in? He'll no do for us, Jamie. We'll not vote for him.—Punch.

Wise Provision of Nature.

The skin of the men and women of some nations is much thicker than that of others, particularly in hot countries. The Central African negro has a skin about half as thick again as that of a European. That of a negro is thickest over the head and back—evidently to form protection from the sun.

For the Alimony Brigade.

"There's a lot of talk in the papers," said Mr. Dumley, "about the necessity for uniform divorce laws." Wonder what they mean by that? "Probably," suggested Mrs. Dumley, "it's to compel divorced people to wear a uniform so other folks can recognize 'em."—Catholic Standard and Times.

Angry Adjectives.

It was not a young woman novelist, but Charles Sumner of whom the late E. L. Godkin, the New York editor, said: "He works his adjectives so hard that if they ever catch him alone they will murder him."—Youths Companion.

Defamation.

I never yet heard man or woman much abused, that I was not inclined to think the better of them and to transfer any suspicion or dislike to the person who appeared to take delight in pointing out the defects of a fellow creature, says a writer.

Takes Some Smartness to Do That.

Whenever we hear a woman boast that her husband winds the clock wiper the dishes and puts the children to bed we wonder if he is smart enough to know how to do anything else.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Farmer Jones (to amateur hunter)—There wasn't a better water dawg livin' until you shootin' gents took to borrowing 'em. Now 'is 'ide's that full of shots, he'd sink to the bottom like a brick!—The Bystander.

"Dey give him ten years fer stealin' a 'possum," said the colored brother, "an de worst of it wuz he didn't get ter eat it."

He must see the difference between unfair representation and a desire to market goods to the best of his advantage.

We get no good by being ungenerous, even to a book.—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

A genius is a man who can ten/2 a furnace so that it will not send up gas. St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

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