

An Homely of the state of
Matrimonye.



The worde of Almighty God doeth
testifie and declare, whence the ori-
ginall begynnyng of Matrimonye
commeth, and why it is ordeyned.
It is instituted of God, to thintent
that man and woman should lyue lawfully in
a perpetuall friendly felowship, to bryng forth
fruite, and to aboyde fornication. By whiche
meanes, a good conscience might be preserued
on both parties, in bydding the corrupt in-
nations of the fleshe, within the lymettes of ho-
nestie. For God hath strayghtly forbydden all
whoredome & vncleanness, and hath from tyme
to tyme, taken greuous pnyshmentes of thys
inordinate lust, as all stories and ages hath de-
clared. Furthermoze, it is also ordeyned, that
the Church of God and hys kyngdome, myght
by this kynde of lyfe, be conserved and entan-
ged, not onely in that God geueth chyldren by
hys blessing: but also in that they be brought
up by the parentes godly, in the knowledge of
Gods worde, that thys the knowledge of God
and true religion, myght be deliuered by suc-
cession from one to another, that finally, many
myght enjoy that euerylastyng immortalite.
Wherefore, soasmuch as Matrimonye serueth
aswell to aboyd synne & offence, as to encrease
the kyngdome of God: You, as all other which
enter that state, must acknowledge this bene-
fite of God, with pure and thankfull myndes,
for

the state of Matrimony.

Fo. 256

so that he hath so ruled your hartes, that ye
followe not the example of the wicked worlde,
who set theyr deuyght in feithynesse of synne,
where both of you stande in the feare of God, &
abhorre all fylthyness. For that is surely the
singuler gyft of God, where the comyn exam-
ple of the worlde, declareth howe the deuyl
hath theyr hartes bounde and entangled in di-
uers snares; so that they in theyr wisselesse
state run into open abhominations, without
any grudge of theyr conscience. Which sorte of
men, that liueth so desperately and fylthelye,
what dampnation taryeth for them, Saynt
paul describeth it to them, saying: Neyther
whoremongers, neyther adulterers shal inherite
the kyngdome of God. This horrible iudg-
ment of God ye be escaped throuwe hys mercie,
if so be that ye liue inseparately, accordyng to
Gods ordinaunce. But yet I would not haue
you carelesse, without watching. For the deuyl
wyl adde to attempte all thynges to inter-
rupte and hynder your hartes and godly pur-
pose, if ye wyll geue hym any entree. For he
wyl eyther labour to breake thys godlye knot
whiche begon betwixt you: or els at the leaste, he
wyl labour to encomber it with diuers griefes
and displeasures.

And this is his principal craft, to woorkie dis-
tension of hartes, of the one from the other:
That wheras now there is pleasaunt & swete
loue betwixt you, he wyll in the stede therof,
bryng in most bitter & vnpleasant discorde. And
surely

LII. ii.

surely that same aduersarie of ours, both as it were from aboue, assault mans nature & condition. For this folly, is euer from our tender age growen by with vs, to haue a desyre to rule, to thynke hyghly by our selfe, so that none thynketh it meete to geue place to another. That wicked vice of stubborne wyll and selfe loue, is moze meete to breahe and to disseuer the loue, of hart, then to preserue conoord. Wherefore, married persons must applye theyr myndes in most earnest wise to conoord, and must craue continuallye of God, the helpe of hys holy spirite, to rule theyr hartes, and to knyt their myndes together: that they be not disseuered by anye diuision of disoord. Thys necessitie of prayer, must be oft in the occupying and vsing of married persons, that oft tyme the one should pray for the other, lest hate and debate do aryse betwixt them. And because fewe do consider this thyng, but moze fewe do perfourme it (I say to pray diligently) we see howe wonderfully the deuyll deludeth and scorneth thys state, howe fewe matrimonies there be without chidinges, braulynges, tauntynge, repentynge, bytter cursynge, and fyghtynge. Whych thynges, whosoever doth commit, they do not consider that it is the instigation of the ghostly enemy, who taketh great delyght therein. For els they would with al earnest endeuour, striue against these mischiefes, not onely with prayer: but also with all possible diligence. Yea they would not geue place to the prouocation of wyath
whych

whych styreth them eyther to such rough and sharpe wordes, or strykes, which is surely compassed by the deuyll, whose temptation, yf it be folowed, must nedes begyn & weaue the web of all miseries and sorowes. For this is moste certaynly true, that of such begynnings must nedes ensue the bryche of true conoord in hart, wherbyal loue must nedes shortly be banished, Then cannot it be but a miserable thing to behold, that yet they are of necessitie compelled to lyue together, whych yet cannot be in quiet together. And this is moste customably euery where to be sene. But what is the cause thereof: Forsoth, because they wyll not consider the craftie traynynge of the deuyll, and therefore geueth not them selues to praye to God, that he woulde vouchsafe to repress his power. Moreover, they do not consider howe they promote the purpose of the deuyll, in that they folowe the wrath of theyr hartes, whyle they threate one another, whyle they in theyr folly turne all by syde down, while they wyll neuer geue ouer theyr ryght as they esteeme it, yea, whyle many tymes they wyll not geue ouer the wrong part in dede. Learne thou therefore, yf thou desirest to be boyde of all these miseries, if thou desirest to liue peaceably and comfortably in wedlock, howe to make thy earnest prayer to God, that he would gouerne both your hartes by his holy spirite, to restraine the deuils power, wherby your conoord maye remayne perpetually. But to this prayer, muste be ioyned a singuler

1. Pet. 3.

Diligence, wherof Saint Peter geueth his precept, saying: Your husbandes deal with your wouies according to knowledg, geuing honoz to the wyfe, as vnto the weaker vessel, and as vnto them that are heyes also of the grace of Iyfe, that your prayers be not hyndred. This precept doth peculiarie pertayne to the husbande. For he ought to be the leader and author of loue, in cheryshyng and encreasyng concord, which then shall take place, yf he vse mesurablenes and not tirannie, and yf he yelde some thinges to the woman. For the woman is a weake creatur, not endued with like strength and constancie of mynd, therfore they be the soner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weake affections and dispositions of mynde, more then men be, and lyghter they be, and more bayne in theyr fantasies and opinions. These things must be considered of the man, that he be not to styffe, so that he ought to wyke at somethynges, and must gentely expounde all thynges, and to forbear. Howbeit, the common sorte of men doth iudge, that such moderation shuld not become a man. For they say, that it is a token of a womanly cowardnes, and therefore they thynke that it is a mans part to fume in anger, to fyght with fylte and stasse. Howbeit, howsoever they imagine, vndoubtedly Saint Peter doth better iudge what shoulde be semyng to a man, and what he shuld most reasonably performe. For he saith, reasoning shuld be bled, and not fyghting.

fyghting. Yea he sayth more, that the woman ought to haue a certayne honoz attributed to her, that is to say, she must be spared and borne with, the rather for that she is the weaker vessel, of a frayle harte, inconstant, and with a wyde sone stirred to wrath. And therfore considering these her freyties, she is to be the rather spared. By this, ys meanes, thou waite not only noy she conorde: but shalt haue her hart in thy power and wyll. For honest natures wyll soner be reteyned to do theyr duetic, rather by gentle wordes, then by stryppes. But he whych wyll do all thynges with extremite and ferocitie, and doth vse alwayes rigour in wordes, and stryppes: what wyll that auayle in the conclusion? Surely nothyng, but that he thereby setteth forward the deuylls worke, he banyseth away conorde, charitie, and swete amitie, and byngeth in dissension, hatred, and yllomnes, the greatest griefes that can be in the mutuall loue and felowship of mans Iyfe. Beyond all thys, it byngeth an other euyl therewith. For it is the destruction and interruption of prayer. For in the tyme that the minde is occupied with dissension and discord, there can be no true prayer bled. For the lordes prayer hath not onely a respect to particuler persons: but to the whole vniuersall. In the whych we openly pronounce, y we wyll forgeue them which hath offended against vs, euen as we ask forgeuenes of our synnes of god. Which thing, howe can it be done rightly, when theyr hartes

All. iiii.

hartes

harts be at dissention: How can they pray eche
foze other; when they be at hate betwixte them
selues: Nowe, yf the ayde of prayer be taken a-
way: by what meanes can they sustayne them
selues in any comfort: For they can not other
wyse eyther resist the deuyl, or yet haue they
hartes stayed in stable comfort in all perylls
and necessities, but by prayer. Thus al discom-
modities as well worldly as ghostly, solow this
froward testines, & comberous fiercenes in ma-
ners, which be more meete for brute beastes,
then for reasonable creatures. Saincte Peter
doth not allowe these thynges: but the deuyl
desireth them gladly. Wherfoze take the more
heede. And yet a man may be a man, although
he doth not vse such extremite, yea, though he
shoulde dissemble some thynges in hys wyues
maners. And thys is the parte of a Christian
man, whych both pleaseth God, and serueth al
so in good vse, to the comfort of theyr maryage
state. Now as concernyng the wyues duetie,
What shal become her: Shall she abuse the gen-
ciellesse and humanitie of her husband: and as
her pleasure turne al thynges by syde downe:
No surely. For that is farre repugnant against
Gods commaundemēt. For thus doth Saincte
Peter preache to them: Ye wyues, be ye in sub-
iection to obey your owne husbände. To obey,
is another thyng then to comytroll or com-
maunde. Which yet they may do to theyr chy-
dren, and to theyr famylie. But as for theyr
husbādes, them must they obey, & cease from
com-

maundyng, and perforce subiection. For
this surely doth moze the con corde very muche,
when the wyfe is readye at hande at her hus-
bādes commaundement, when she wyll ap-
ply her selfe to hys wyl, when she endeuoureth
her selfe to seke his contentation, and to do him
pleasure, when she wyll eschewe all thynges
that myght offende hym. For thus wyll moze
truely be verfyed the saying of the Poete: A
good wyfe by obeying her husband, shal beare
the rule, so that he shall haue a delyght and a
gladnes, the soner at al tymes to retorne home
to her. But on the contrary parte, when the
wyues be stubborne, froward, and malapert,
theyr husbādes are compelled thereby to ab-
horre and flee from theyr owne houses, even as
they shoulde haue battayle with their enemies.
Howbeit, it can scantlye be, but that some of-
fences shall sometyme chaunce betwixt them.
For no man doth lyue without fault, specially
for that the women is the moze frayle parte.
Therfoze let them beware that they stand not
in theyr faultes and wyfulnes: but rather let
them acknowledge theyr follyes, and say: My
husband, so it is, that by my anger I was com-
pelled to do thys or that, for geue it me, & heraf-
ter I wyl take better hede. Thus ought wo-
men the moze redely to do, the moze they be re-
dye to offend. And they shall not do thys onlye
to auoyde stryfe and debate: but rather in the
respect of the commaundement of God, as S.
Paule expresseth it in this fourme of wordes:

All. 6.

Act

The Sermon of

Ephes, 5
1, Pet, 3
Let woman be subiecte to theyr husbandes as to the Lorde. For the husbande is the head of the womā, as Christ is the head of the Church. Here you vnderstande, that **GOD** hath commaunded, that ye should acknowledge the authoritie of the husbande, and referre to hym the honoz of obedience. And **S. Peter** saith in that same place afore rehearsed, that holy matrones dyd sometymes decke them selues, not with golde and syluer: but in puttynge theyr whole hope in **GOD**, and in obeying theyr husbandes, as Sara obeyed Abraham, callynge hym Lorde, whose daughters ye be (saith he) yf ye folowe her example. This sentence is very mete for women to print in theyr remembrance. Trueth it is, that they must specially feele the griefes & paynes of theyr matrimonie, in that they relinquish the libertie of theyr own rule, in the payne of theyr trauelyng, in the byrnyng by of theyr chyldren. In which offices they be in great peryls, and be greued with greete afflictions, which they myght be without, yf they lyued out of matrimonie. But **Saint Peter** saith, that this is the chiefe ornamente of holye matrones, in that they sette theyr hope and trust in **GOD**, that is to saye, in that they refused not from maryage for the busines thereof, for the griefes and peryls therof: but committed al such aduenturs to **GOD**, in most sure trust of helpe, after that they haue called vpon his ayde. O woman, do thou the lyke, and so shalt thou be most excellently beautified before **GOD**

the state of Matrimony

Fol. 260

GOD, and all his Angels and Sayntes, and thou nedest not to seke further for doing anye better woorkes. For obey thy husband, take regard of his requestes, and geue hede vnto him to perceane what he requyret of thee, and so shalt thou honoz **GOD**, and lyue peaceablye in thy house. And beyond this, **GOD** shall folowe the wyth his benedycion, that all thynges shall well prosper both to thee and to thy husband, as the psalme sayth: Blessed is the man which feareth **GOD**, and walketh in his ways, thou shalt haue the fruite of thynne owne handes, happye shalt thou be, and well shall it go with thee. Thy wyfe shall be as a vyne, plentifully spreading about thy house. Thy chyldren shall be as the yonge sprynges of the Olyues about thy table. So thus shall that man be blessed (sayth **Dauid**) that feareth the Lord. Chys let the wyfe haue euer in mynde, the rather admonyshed therto, by the appaiaile of her head, wherby is signified that she is vnder couert & obedience of her husbande. And as that appaiaile is of nature so appoynted to declare her subiectio: So biddeth **S. Paule**, that al other of her rayment should expresse both shamefastnes and sobrietie. For if it be not lawfull for the woman to haue her head bare, but to bere thereon a sygne of her power wherfoerer she goeth: more is it requyred, that she declare the thinge that is ment therby, And therfore these auncient women of y old world called their husbands lordes, & shewed the reuerence in obeying the. But

But peradventure she wil say, that those men loued theyr wyues in dede. I know that well ynough, & beare it well in mynde. But when I do admonyſhe you of your dueties, then call not to consideration what theyr dueties be. For when we our selues do teach our chyldren to obey vs as theyr parentes or when we reform our seruauntes, and tell them that they should obey their masters, not onely at the eye, but as to the Lorde: If they shoulde tell vs a gayne our dueties, we would not think it well done. For when we be admonished of our dueties & faultes, we ought not then to seke what other mens dueties be. For though a man had a companion in hys faulte, yet shoulde r of he thereby be without his fault. But this muste be only looked on, by what meanes thou mayst make thy selfe without blame. For Adam dyd lai the blame vpon the woman, and she turned it vnto the serpente: but yet neyther of them was thus excused. And therfore byg not such excuses to me at thys tyme: but applye all thy diligence to heere thyne obedience to thy husbande. For when I take in hande to admonish thy husbande to loue thee, and to cherysh thee: yet wyl I not cease to set out the laboe that is appointed to the woman, as well as I woulde requyre of the man, what is wrytten for hys lawe. So thou therfore about such thinges as becommeth the onely and webe thy self tractable to thy husbande. Or rather yf thou wylt obey thy husband for Gods precept, then alledeg
suche

such thinges as be in his duety to do: but persourme thou diligently those thynges, whych the lawmaker hath charged thee to do. For thus is it most reasonable to obey God, if thou wylt not suffer thy selfe to transgresse his law. He that loueth his selfe, semeth to do no great thing: But he that honoreth him that is hurtfull and hatefull to hym, thys man is woorthye much commendation. Euen so thynke thou, yf thou canste suffer an extreme husbande, thou shalt haue a greate rewarde therfore. But yf thou louest hym, only because he is gentle and sweete: what rewarde wyl God geue thee therfore? But I speake not these thynges, that I woulde wysh the husbandes to be sharpe towardes theyr wyues: but I exhort the women that they woulde patiently beare the sharpnes of theyr husbandes. For when epyther partes do their best, to persourme their dueties the one to the other: then foloweth the more greate profyte to theyr neyghbours, for theyr examples sake. For when the woman is redie to suffer a sharpe husband, and the man wyl not extremely entreate hys stubborne and troublesome wyfe: then be all thynges in quiete, as in a most sure haue. Euen thus was it done in olde tyme, that every one did their own duety and office, and was not busy to require the duety of their neyghbours. Consider I pray thee, that Abrahā toketh hym hys byothers sonne, hys wyfe dyd not blame hym therfore. He commaunded hym to go with hym a longe iourneye, he dyd not
gaine

The Sermon of

gainstay it, but obeyed his precept. Agayne af-
ter all those great miſeryes, labours, & paynes
of that iourney, when Abraham was made an
Lord ouer all: yet dyd he geue place to Loth
hys ſuperiouritie. Whiche matter Sara toke
lyttle to grieſe, that ſhe neuer once ſuffred
her tongue to ſpeake ſuch wordes, as the common
manner of women is wont to do in theſe daies,
when they ſee their husbandes in ſuch roumes
to be made vnderlynges, and to be put vnder
theyr yongers. When they obeyde them with
comberous talke, and call them fooliſhes, daſton-
des, and cowardes for ſo deying. But Sara
was ſo farre from ſpeaking any ſuche thing,
that it came neuer into her mind and thought
ſo to ſaye, but allowed the wyſedome and wyll
of her husbande. Yea, beſyde all thys, after ſhe
ſayde Loth had thus hys wyll, and left to his
vncle the leſſer portion of land: he chaunced to
fall into extreme peryll. Whiche chaunce, when
it came to the knowledge of thys ladye, ſhe
archo: he incontinentlye put all hys menne in
harnelle, and prepared hym ſelfe, with all hys
familye and frendes, agaynſt the hoſte of the
Perſians. In which caſe, Sara dyd not coun-
ſayle hym to the contrary, nor dyd ſay, as ſhe
myght haue ben ſayde: My husband, whyt
goeſt thou ſo vnauiſedlye: whyt runneſt thou
thus on head: whyt doeſt thou offer thy ſelfe to
ſo great perilles: and art thus redy to looſe
thyne owne lyte, and to peryll the lyues of all
thyne, for ſuch a man as hath done thee ſuche
wrong.

The ſtate of Matrimony

Fo. 262

wrong: At leaſt way, if thou regardeſt not thy
ſelfe, yet haue compaſſion on me, which for thy
loue haue forſake my kindred and my countrey,
and haue the wante both of my frendes and
kinſefolkes, and am thus come into ſo farre
countreys wyth the. Haue pitye on me, and
make me not here a widowe, to caſte me to
ſuch cares and troubles. Thus might ſhe haue
ſayde. But Sara neyther ſayde, nor thought
any wordes: but ſhe kepte her ſelfe in ſciſence
in all thynges. And ſhe was ſo
of her vncle all that tyme when ſhe was
barren, and toke no payne as other women
dydde, by bryngynge forth ſeuell in hys
houſe: what dydde ſhe? She complayned not to
her wyfe: but to almyghty God. And conſi-
der howe epyther of them dyd theyr duties: as
became them. For neyther dyd ſhe beſyde Sa-
ra becauſe ſhe was barren; nor neuer dyd caſt
her teeth. Conſider agayne howe Abra-
ham expelled the handmayde out of hys houſe
when ſhe requyred it. So that by thys I may
trulye proue, that the one was pleaſed and
contented with the other in all thynges. But
yet lette not your eyes onely in thys matter:
but loke further. What was done beſore thys,
that Agayn beſyde her myſtreſſe diſſyfuſly, and
that Abraham hym ſelfe was ſomewhat pro-
uoked agaynſt her, which muſt needs be an in-
tolerable matter, and a paynefull to a free
banded woman, and a ſhame. Lette not
therefore the woman be to buſye to call for
the

the duetie of her husband, wher we should redye to perforce her owne, for that is not worthy any great commendation. And eue agayne, let not the man onely consider what longeth to the woman, & to stand so earnestly gaing theron. For that is not his part of duetie. But as I haue sayde, let eue parties be redy and wylling, to perforce that which longeth specialy to them selfe. For yf we be bound to hold out our left cheke to strangers which wyll smite vs on the ryght cheke: we much more ought we to suffer an extreme and unkynde husband. But yet I meane not that a man should beate his wife. God forbid that. For that is the greatest shame that can be, not so muche to her that is beate, as to hym that dothe the dede. But yf by suche fortune thou chauncest vpon such an husband, take it not so heauely: but suppose thou, that therby is lad by so small reward hereafter, and in this tyme no small commendation to thee yf thou canst be quiet. But yet to you that be men, thus I speake. Let there be none so greuous faulte to compele you to beate your wyues. But what saye I your wyues, no, it is not to be borne wyth, that an honest man should lay handes on his mayde seruaunt to beate her. Wherefore, yf it be a greateshame for a man to beate his bounde seruaunt, much more, rebul it is to lay vyolent handes vpon his freer woman. And this thyng may we well vnderstand by the lawes whych the paynims hath made,

whych

which doth dyscharge her any longer, to dwell with such an husbande, as bynought bye to haue anye further companye with her, that doeth smyte her. For it is an extreme poynt, thus to byde to entreate her like a slaue, that is selde to thee of thy lyfe, and so conynged vnto thee before tyme in the necessary matters of thy lyving. And therfore, a man may well lyken such an man, yf he may be called a man, rather than a wythe headed to a kyll of his father or his wyther. And whereas we be commaunded to forsake our father and mother, for our wyues sake, yet therby do we doo them none iniurye, but do fulfill the lawe of God: How can it not appeare the to be a poynt of extreme madnes, to intreate her thus, for whose sake God hath commaunded thee to leaue parentes? Per who can suffer such despayre: who can worthely expelle the inconuenience that is, to see what wringings and waylinges be made, in the open streets, when neyghbours runne together to the house, as to brulye an husbande, as to a boling man, who goeth about to ouerturne all that he hath at home? Who woulde not thinke, that it were better for suche a man to walke the ground to open, and to swallowe wyne, then once euer after to be sene in the market. But peraduenture thou wilt obiecte, that the woman prouoketh thee to this poynt. But consider thou againe, that the woman is the heade of the house, and thou art therfore made the talle and head quer her, to beare the weatines

33213

in m. i.

of

offes in this her subiection. And therefore shouldest thou to declare the honest commendation of thine auctoritie, whiche thou canst not wayes better do, then to forbear to biter her in her weakenes and subiection. For when as the kyng appeareth to muche the more noble, the more excellent and noble he maketh his officers and lieutenantes, whom if he should dishonour, and despyle the auctoritie of his dignitie, he should despyle hym selfe of a great part of his owne honoure. Euen so, if thou doest despyle her that is set in the nexte rounde belyde thee, thou doest much derogate and decaye the excellency and vertue of thine owne auctoritie. Recount all these thynges in thy mynde, and be gentle and quiete. Understand that God hath geuen thee chyldren wyth her, and art made a father, and by suche reason appeale thy selfe.

Doest not thou see the husbände men, what diligence they vse to tyll that grounde whiche once they haue taken to farme, that he it be neuer so full of faultes. As for an example, though it be drye, though it bringeth forth weedes, though the soyle cannot beare so much wette, yet he tylleth it, and so wyth the fruite thereof. Euen in lyke maner, if thou wouldest vse lyke diligence, to instruct and order the mynde of thy spouse, if thou wouldest diligentely applie thy selfe to weede out by lytle and lytle, the noysome weedes of vncouthly maners out of her mynde, with hole some preceptes

ceptes: it could not be, but in tyme thou shouldest seeke the pleasaunt fruite thereof, to bothe your comfortes. Therefore, that thys thyng chaunce not so, perfourme this thyng that I do here counsaile thee. What soeuer any dyspleasaunt matter tyleth at home, if thy wyfe hath done ought anysse, comfote her, and increase not the heauynesse. For though thou shouldest be greued with neuer so manye thynges, yet thou shalt fynde nothyng more greuous, then to wante the beneuolence of thy wyfe at home. What offence soeuer thou canst name: yet shalt thou fynde none more intolerable, then to be at debate with thy wyfe. And by this cause most of al, oughtest thou, to haue this loue in reuerence. And if reason moueth thee, to beare any burthen at any other mens handes: muche more of thy wyues. For if she be posse, obreyde her not. If she be symple, taunt her not: but be the more courteous. For she is thy body, and made one fleshe with thee. But thou peradventure wyll say, that she is a wrathfull woman, a dyonharde, a beastesye, withoute wytte and reason: for thys cause, wyll she be the more. Chase not in anger: but praye to almyghty God. Lette her be admonished and holpen with good counsaile, and do thou thy best endeuyour, that she may be deliuered of all these afflictions. But if thou shouldest beate her, thou wouldest increase her euill afflictions. For frowardnes and warynes is not amended with frowardnes: but wyth softnes

softnes and gentlenesse. Furthermore; consider what reward thou shalt haue at Goddes hande: for wher thou mightest beate her, and yet for the respect of the feare of god; thou wilt abstayne and heare patiently her great offences, the rather in respect of that lawe, which forbiddeth that a man should cast out his wife; what faulte soeuer she be combed with: thou shalt haue a very great reward. And before thy receite of that reward, thou shalt feele many commodities. For by this meanes, she shall be made the more obedient, and thou for his sake shalt be made the more meke. It is wyrtten in a storye, of a certayne straunge Philosopher, which hadde a cursed wyfe, a frowarde, and a dionharde. When he was asked, for what consideration he dyd soo beare her euill maners: He made aunswere. By thys meanes (sayth he) I haue at home a scoolemaster, and an example howe I shoulde behaue my selfe abroad. For I shall (saith he) be the more quyet with other, being thus daylye exercised and taught in the forbearyng of her. Surely, it is a shame that Daynymes should be wyser then we, we I say, that be commaunded to counterfaiyt Angels, or rather God hym selfe, thowowe mekenes. And for the loue of vertue, this sayd Philosopher Socrates, woulde not expel his wife out of his house. Yea some saye, that he dyde therefore marry his wyfe, to learne thys vertue by that occasion. Wherefore, seyng manye men be farre behind the wisdom of this man:

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my counsell is, that fyrr and before al thinges, that man do his best endeouour to gette hym a good wyfe, indued with all honestie and vertue. But yf it so chaunce, that he is deceaued, that he hath chosen suche a wyfe as is neither good nor tollerable: then let the husbände followe this Philosopher, and let him instructe his wyfe in euery condition, and neuer laye these matters to syghte. For the marchaunte man, except he fynde be at composition with his factour, to be his interaffaires quietly, he wyl neither stirre his wyffe to sayle, nor yet wyl lay handes vpon his marchandise: Euen so let vs do al thynges, that we may haue the felowship of our wyues, which is the factor of all our doynges at home, in great quiet & rest. And by these meanes, all thinges shall prosper quietly, and so shall we passe through the dangers of the troublous sea of this worlde. For this state of lyfe, wyl be more honozable and comfortable then our houses, then seruaunts, then money, then landes and possessions, then all thynges that can be tolde. As al these with sedition and discord, can neuer worke vs anye comforte: So shall all thynges turne to oure commoditie & pleasure, yf we drawe this yoke in one concord of harte and mynde. Where vpon do you best endeououre, that after this sorte be se your matrimonie, and so shall ye be armed on euery side. Ye haue escaped the snares of the deuyl, and the vnlawfull lusses of the fleshe. Ye haue the quietnesse of conscience by

M m. iii.

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The Sermon of

thys institution of matrimonye, ordeyned by God. Therfore use ofte prayer to him, that he would be present by you, that he would continue concord and charitie betworte you. Do the best ye can of your partes, to custome your selues to softnes and mekenes, and beare well in worth such ouersyghtes as chaunce. And thus shal your conuersation be most pleasaunt and confortable. And although (whych can no otherwyse be) some aduersities shall folowe, and otherwhyles nowe one discommodyte, nowe another, shall appere: yet in thys common trouble and aduersitie, lyft by both your handes vnto heauen, call bypon the helpe and assistance of God, the aucthour of poure marriage, & surely the promise of reliefe is at hande. For Chyist affirmeth in his Gospel: wher two or thre be gathered together in my name, and be agreed, what matter soeuer they praye for, it shalbe graunted them, of my heauenlye father. Why therfore shouldest thou be a feard of the daunger, wher thou halt so ready a promise, and so nye an helpe? Furthermore, you must vnderstande, how necessary it is for Chyistian folke to beare Chyistes crosse: for els we shal neuer seele how comfortable gods helpe is vnto vs. Therfore geue thanks to God for his great benefite, in that ye haue taken vpon you this state of wedlocke, and pray you instantly, that almyghty God may luckely defende and mayntayne you therein: that neyther ye be ouercomed with anye temptation, nor with a

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the state of Matrimonye.

nye aduersitie. But before all thynges, take good heed that ye geue no occasiō to the deull to lette and hynder your prayers, by discorde and dissension. For there is no stronger desire and staye in all oure lyfe, then is prayer, in the whiche we maye call for the helpe of God, and obtene it, whereby we maye wyne his blessing, his grace, his defence and protection, to continue therein to a better lyfe to come.

Whiche graunte vs he, that dyed for vs al, to whome be all honour and praye for euer and euer.

Amen.

¶ In m. iiii.

In

the name of the father, Amen. And thus ended the sermon of the state of matrimonye, whiche was preached by the right honorable maner of Thomas, lord of Cromwell, in the church of St. Dunstons, in London, the xxij. daye of the month of Maye, the vij. year of the reigne of King Henry the eighth.