

CLOTHE YOURSELVES
WITH THE SILK OF PIETY

THE BATH OF
SANCTITY, THE
PURPLE OF MODESTY

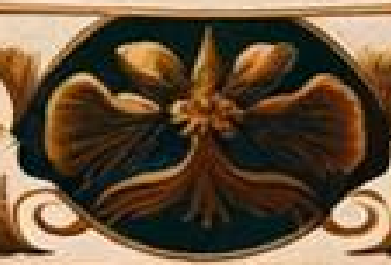


ORNAMENTS

FOR THE



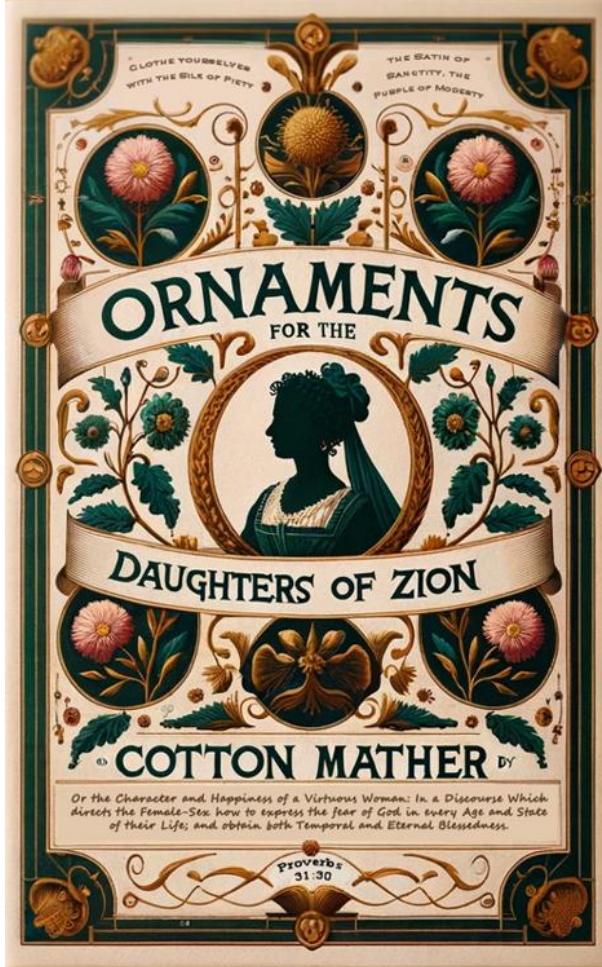
DAUGHTERS OF ZION



COTTON MATHER BY

Or the Character and Happiness of a Virtuous Woman: In a Discourse Which directs the Female-Sex how to express the fear of God in every Age and State of their Life; and obtain both Temporal and Eternal Blessedness.

Proverbs
31:30



Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion

Or the Character and Happiness of a Virtuous Woman: In a Discourse Which directs the Female-Sex how to express the fear of God in every Age and State of their Life; and obtain both Temporal and Eternal Blessedness.

Written by COTTON MATHER.

Tertullian's Advice for the Ornaments of Women.

Go ye forth now arrayed with such Ornaments as the Apostles have provided for you; Clothe yourselves with the Silk of Piety, the Satin of Sanctity, the Purple of Modesty; so the Almighty God will be a Lover of you.

London, Printed for Tho. Parkhurst at the Bible and Three Crowns, the lower End of Cheapside. 1694.

To the Most Virtuous and Accomplished, The Lady Elizabeth Rich.

This Pattern of her own Character and Happiness is most Humbly Dedicated.

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas (Logan West, David Jonescuc, Alex Sarrouf)
www.puritansearch.org

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original

languages are written in antiquated script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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The Preface.

'Tis very surprising to see and read, what a [Mundus, or] World of Pretended Ornaments, the Blessed Prophet Isaiah sets out The Daughters of Zion, which lived in his Days, as Rigged withal. But among all those One and twenty Ornaments, I find none of those which the Inspired Apostle Peter does Recommend unto the Women of all Ages, as Things in the sight of God of great price. And therefore as I did not wonder at the following Menace of the Almighty, I will take away the Bravery of their Ornaments; thus I also set myself to accommodate my Neighbors, with such Ornaments, as make up what Mary chose, even, The good part which cannot be taken away. They that shall Criminate an Undertaking to write a little Book for promoting the Fear of God in the Female Sex, do but show their Ignorance of what was done by Tertullian, by Jerome, by Austin in the Primitive Times, besides what has been done by several Renowned Pens of a later Date; and perhaps they forget, That one Book in the Sacred Bible was written for An Elect Lady. As for the Manner of my own Writing, 'tis Plain, Brief, Chaste; and not without an endeavor to imagine how such a Subject would have been handled by a Timothy, who was to address Women, and yet be an Example of Purity. But as for the Design of my Writing, 'tis purely to advance Virtue among those, who cannot forget their Ornaments, and yet often forget those things which are no less Necessary than Ornamental. Now may God prosper it.

ORNAMENTS FOR THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION.

OR, THE CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS OF A VIRTUOUS
WOMAN.

CHAP. I

Admonitions to be a Virtuous Woman.

From the words of the Wise Woman in Proverbs 31:30.

Favor is deceitful, and Beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth
the Lord, She 'tis that shall be praised.

It may well be reckoned the brightest Honor of that Sex, which the Holy Spirit of God has declared worthy of a Chaste and a Kind Honor from us; That when the Fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman. As a Woman had the Disgrace to go first in that horrid and woeful Transgression of our first Parents, which has been the Parent of all our Misery; so a Woman had the Glory of bringing into the World that Second Adam, who is the Father of all our Happiness. A Woman had the Savior of Mankind in the Circumstances of an Infant Miraculously Conceived within her; and of a Mary was born that Holy Thing, which is called, The Son of God. There is a Woman, whom we do now without the mistakes, which made that expression the occasion of many Antient, and no less furious than curious Controversies, call, The Mother of Him that is

God; in as much as that very Flesh which was born of her, and which the Trembling Heretics of this Age, do not now Tremble to vilify and nullify with frequent Blasphemies; I say, That Visible Tangible Flesh, is Personally United unto the Second Person in the Adorable Trinity. Though we do not like the Popish Idolaters, for this cause, imagine that Blessed Virgin to have been free from Original Sin, when she was on Earth, nor now Implore her Mediation and Intercession in Heaven for us; and though I do not think, that the Holy Ghost referred unto her peculiarly, as there are Expositors who think he does, when he says, The Woman that fears the Lord, she 'tis that shall be praised: Yet we may safely account the Female Sex herein more than a little dignified. And how should it encourage all Women to seek a saving Interest in that Redeemer, who was Born of a Woman! How should all Women make their Hearts a Lodging for that Lord, who in a Woman received The Body prepared for him!

The Second, or a privilege not far from the Second Advancement of that Sex, may be esteemed, the Share which it has had in Writing those Oracles, which make us wise unto Salvation. As one Woman was the Mother of him who is the Essential Word of God, so divers Women have been the Writers of his Declarative Word. Though the Apostle does abundantly intimate unto us, that such Inspirations as composed the Scriptures are not now to be expected, when he gives the prohibition so much Transgressed by the most Absurd Sect in our Days, That the Woman may not speak in the Church; yet our God has Employed many Women to Write for the Church, and Inspired some of them for the Writing of the Scriptures. We have not only seen Women doing service for the Tabernacle by such Ingenious Writings as we find mentioned in the Catalogues of Beverovicus, Hottinger, and Voetius; or such as that most accomplished Lady, Anna Maria Schurman has in our Age addressed the World withal; for even the Books published by that Sex, were enough to make a

Library far from contemptible; nor has even the New-English part of the American Strand been without Authoresses that would challenge a Room in such a Library: They to whom the common use of Swords is neither Decent nor Lawful, have made a most Laudable use of Pens; and they that might not without Sin, lead the Life which old Stories ascribe to Amazons, have with much praise done the part of Scholars in the World: But we sometimes also find a Woman among the Amanuenses or Scribes of that Spirit, who moved holy Men to write the most sure Word of Prophecy. And how much does this oblige all Women to study that precious Bible, to the curious Workmanship whereof, the hand of a Woman has contributed? How ready should Women be to Read the pages, upon which they may see transcribed the heavenly discoveries made by the God of Heaven to an holy Woman; rather than to misspend their hours, and infect their hearts by the revolving of such Romances, as commonly leave a sensible Taint upon the minds of their unwary Readers?

We have not only the Song of Deborah, the Song of Hannah, the Song of Mary, and the Prophecy of Huldah, in this matchless Book of our God; but the Instructions of Bathsheba too, are entered in these blessed Registers. The thirty first Chapter of Proverbs contains a direction of Bathsheba to her darling Solomon. Solomon that in the fourth Chapter of this Book, records the Counsels of his Father, now in the last Chapter adds the Counsels of his Mother thereunto. So careful will wise Children be to remember the gracious Counsels of their godly Parents: We have Solomon here addressed by the name of Lemuel, which name some Interpreters judge to be a little and a loving imitation of his true Name; as 'tis useful with our Mothers, from the names of Edward and William, and the like, to form affectionate Appellations for us; but others waving so small a consideration, do look upon Lemuel as one of the eight Names which the Jews do ascribe unto that Man of Name, and they tell us, that as

Jedidiah proclaimed his being Beloved of the Lord, Lemuel signified his Belonging to the Lord. Some famous persons in the World, have been signalized by that Character of being Mother taught; such a one was our Solomon, who had not only a Father, that left behind him Transcendent Songs for Solomon, but also a Mother, who taught him such things as the best should not be unwilling to learn. How free, how rich is the Grace of God unto Repenting Sinners! Bathsheba, after a very scandalous Fall, becomes a very eminent Saint, yea a Prophetess of the Lord. Although a Woman may have been remarkable and notorious for sin, yet let her endeavor to make her Peace with God: It may be made, and she may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, before others that have not had such wounds upon them.

'It is evident, that the nine first verses of the Chapter, are spent in Reciting the most prudent and winning Lessons of Bathsheba to her Solomon. But it is conceived that the rest of the Chapter is only Solomon's Reciprocation in the praises of Bathsheba. It is indeed a most lovely thing to see such Correspondences of Desert and Duty, as make Children to count their Mothers worthy of their honor: Noble Romans have sometimes made Florid Speeches at the Funerals of their Mothers, and professed, That they had never in their Lives been reconciled unto them, inasmuch as (they meant) they had never fallen out: It is the happiness of a Mother sometimes to have such Sons as Nazienzen and Austin were unto theirs, whose Names are by their means forever Celebrated: although for the most part we see in men's Readiness to Slight their Mothers, the Reason why the Mother is put first in that Charge of our God. Ye shall fear every man his Mother, and his Father. It is the Opinion of others, That the Conclusion of the Chapter, is also the Composure of Bathsheba; and that which confirms them in this Opinion is, The Skill in Household Affairs here manifested, which Carries a Little of a Female Aspect

with it. However it be, we have here the Description of, A Virtuous Woman, in twenty-two Verses, according to the Number and Order of the Letters, in the Hebrew Alphabet; Every letter in due sequence beginning a several Verse. 'It is reported, that Children among the Jews of old Learning to Write, had their Copies usually given them from those Portions of the Scriptures, which were drawn up with such an Alphabet of the Hebrew Letters in them; whether that were so, or no, I am sure that Women among the Gentiles in our Days, Learning to Live, cannot easily find better Copies to follow, than those which are in our Context here set before them. It were to be wished, That the Sex which so often looks into the Glass, would sometimes cast an eye upon this part of that Sacred Word, which is compared unto a Divine Glass; that they may see whether they have the Features, or Habits of The Virtuous Woman, on them. And I pray, let no Woman count herself so great a Lady as to put in her Exceptions, against that Stroke in the Character of the Virtuous Woman here; She seeks Wool and Flax, and Works willingly with her Hands, till she has procured the Alteration of the English Laws, wherein, Spinster, is a Term given to Women of the greatest Quality. When a Gentlewoman of Extraordinary Learning was presented before the first King of Great Britain, his first Question to her, was, Madam, Can you Spin? And several of the most Renowned Emperors have not only Obliged their Daughters to Spin, but also Wore such Garments as those Princely Hands had prepared for them. The Cards at which many Gentlewomen Play wickedly with their Hands, are far more Debasing, than those Cards which fit the Wool for the Wheel: and the Distaff is an Instrument of better Quality than the Dice. The Famous Queen Katharine, when persons of high Rank were sent unto her with a Message from King Henry, counted it no Disgrace to be found with a Skein of Red Silk about her Neck, at Work, with a Maid of Honor by her side. She that hath Bought a Field has not thereby Bought a Release from Domestic Businesses; the Hands which Carve

at the most Noble Tables, may be Laid unto the Spindle, without being Dishonorably Blistered or Dirted there.

'It is a foolish Custom which the Jews have in Reading Solomon's Book of Ecclesiastes; that they Print the Last Verse but One, of it, over again in the Close of all, because they would have the remembrance and Impression of that Verse to be Stronger upon them, than that of the terrible verse which follows it. But having laid before you the Description of A Virtuous Woman, which closes up Solomon's Book of Proverbs; I must upon another Account Print, and ask the Daughters of our Common Mother to Read the last verse but one, over again; 'tis this.

CHAP. II

A Virtuous Woman Shall be Praised.

Favor is Deceitful, and Beauty is Vain; but a Woman that Fears the Lord, She 'tis that shall be Praised.

The Words are, as one says of them, A Royal Garland set on the Head of a Virtuous Woman by the Hand of God. Some Interpreters do so Allegorize these Words, that they make this Virtuous Woman to be the Church of God. Indeed, there are more Women than Men, in the Church; and the more Virtuous they prove, the more Worthy will the Church be, to be figured by, A Woman that Fears the Lord. Some Interpreters again, do so Sublimate the words, that they understand every Holy, Pious, Devout Soul by this Virtuous Woman. And it were well, if Women were generally so Virtuous, as that they might worthily impart unto every Godly Soul, the Denomination of, A

Woman that Fears the Lord. Other Interpreters do suppose Virtue itself to be meant by the Virtuous Woman. But, we should be sorry, if a Virtuous Woman prove so rare a thing, as to afford a style for a Parable rather than an History. I confess, Virtue itself, and the Names of all Particular Virtues, are Grammatically of the Female Gender; and that the Things may Theologically abound in that Gender, is what we may thence take occasion to be wishing for. But after all, 'It is a Real, Proper, Gracious Woman, that has her Character and Blessedness in these words Exhibited unto us. —

CHAP. III

The Character of a Virtuous Woman.

The first thing with which we are here treated is,

I. The Character of a Virtuous Woman.

And this Character is both Negatively and Positively offered. Negatively, 'It is not a Deceitful Favor, or, a Vain Beauty that sets her off; Women that have none but those things to Value themselves upon, are driven out from The Temple of Honor, here. But, Positively, 'It is the Fear of the Lord that is her Commendation. 'It is implied, not only that Favor and Beauty are poor things compared with the Fear of God, but also that they who have the Fear of God, will not Value themselves upon their Favor and Beauty. Yea, that there is a Favor and Beauty Opposite, Contrary, Destructive to the Fear of God. We may reflect upon the whole, in these Conclusions.

Conclusion. 1. - The Virtuous Woman counts the best Female Favor to be Deceitful, the best Female Beauty to be Vain.

By Favor is meant, a Comely Presence, a Handsome Carriage, a Decent Gesture, a ready Wit agreeably expressing itself, with all other Graceful Motions, and whatsoever procures Favor for a Woman among her Neighbors. The Virtuous Woman is willing to have this Favor, so far as is consistent with Virtue; She counts it a Favor of God for one to be graced with it; But still she looks upon it as a Deceitful thing. She is careful, that She do not hereby Deceive herself into proud Imaginations, and into a Humour, Conceited of herself, or Contemptuous towards others. Careful She likewise is, lest hereby She Deceive Unwary men, into those Amours which bewitching looks and smiles do often betray the Children of men, especially those that are but Children of men, into.

By Beauty is meant, a good Proportion and Symmetry of the parts, and a skin well Varnished, or that which Chrysostom calls, A good mixture of Blood and Phlegm shining through a good Skin; With all that Harmonious Air of the Countenance, which recommends itself, as a Beauty to the Eye of the Spectator. The Virtuous Woman is not unthankful for this Beauty, when the God of Nature has bestowed any of it on her; and yet she counts it no Virtue for her to be very sensible of her being illustrated with such a Beauty. But still she looks upon it as a Vain thing. She reckons it so Vain, that she has no Assurance for the continuance of it; but that it is temporis & Morbi Ludibrium, as one of the Ancients has descanted on it; a thing neither Age-proof, nor Ague-proof. She sees that Vanity in it, which is upon the quickly Withering Roses and Lilies of the Field: Such a Vanity as that Sickbeds or Sun beams, or a thousand Casualties may soon destroy that Idol of the Amorites. And upon these thoughts, a

Virtuous Woman takes heed of becoming so Deceitful and Vain, as many Women are tempted by their Favor and Beauty to become.

Conclusion 2. - There is a Favor so particularly Deceitful, and a Beauty so remarkably Vain, as that a Virtuous Woman would be loath to be Deformed with it.

The Favor whereat a Virtuous Woman has a particular Distaste, is that which promiscuous Dancing is applauded for. The exercise of promiscuous Dancing is that which pretends to be a piece of Breeding which demands the Favor of Woman-kind; but a Virtuous Woman esteems them deceived who count it so; nor will she affect such an Exercise. Job recounts it as part of the Breeding which the Ungodly bestow upon their Children, in Chap. 21:11. Their Children Dance. Now the Virtuous Woman is not fond of being that way employed. We read the Haughty Daughters of Zion described and threatened in Isa. 3:16, as walking and mincing as they go. Very Renowned Expositors conceive that Scripture to refer unto the Haughty Carriages learned in the Dancing School. The Apostle Paul in Rom. 13:13, condemns Rioting; and the Apostle Peter, in 1 Pet. 4:3, condemns Reveling. Now the most Learned Critics in the Greek Tongue, judge Dancing to be the thing intended in the word there used by those Apostles. Moreover, the Reverend Assembly of Divines, in their Larger Catechism, very justly mention Dancing's among the things forbidden in the Seventh Commandment of our God. Nor does the Levity of Dancing's wherein persons leap and fling about so like Bedlams, that the wisest Men have called it, A Regular Madness, now agree well with the Gravity, which Holiness is to be accompanied withal. Such things as these are enough to make a Virtuous Woman to discard such Dancing's from among the things of good report; and leave them either to the Pagans, whose manner 'twas to Dance in the Worship of Bacchus, or to the Monkeys, whom

of old they brought forth to Dance at the Festival of Diana. Some of the more sober Papists have not stuck to say, The Dancer breaks the Covenant of God, made in Baptism; he promised to renounce the Devil, and his Poms: But when he enters into a Dance, he goes in the Pompous Procession of the Devil. They are not a few silly scrupulous Precisians, by whom these Dancing's have been stigmatized. In the Primitive Times, more than one or two of the Fathers thundered against them as a Diabolical practice; and whole Synods did prohibit the usage of them, even at Weddings as well as at other Seasons. Nor have Reforming Synods of later days in France, Holland, Poland, forborne to brandish the Sword of Church-Discipline, and provide Censures for any Dancers that might be found among their Communicants. Austin says, The miserable Dancer knows not, that as many paces as he makes in Dancing, so many steps he makes to Hell. And the blessed old Waldenses testified, In a Dance one breaks all the Ten Commandments of God. The most Eminent Reformers above a hundred years ago, concurred in witnessing against these Dances, as an Unlawful Recreation; and among the English Divines, yea among the English Bishops, they have been decried by a Cloud of Witnesses; they have branded our Dancers as the Capering Goats, that will not be found among the Sheep in the Day of the Lord. Shall we say it? Even the Antient Romans, although they were Heathens, yet reputed skill in Dancing an Infamous thing. Scipio called a Dance, Impudent; Salust called a Dance, Dishonest; and they cited it as a Note of Infamy. Tully could say, A Dancer is doubtless either drunk or mad; and he argued against some, that they must needs be Vicious, inasmuch as they were Dancers; nor did Seneca think it any other than a matter of bitter complaint, That there were Dancing-Schools tolerated in the City. These are considerations enough to deter a Virtuous Woman from the Dances, which are now become so acceptable to This Adulterous Generation. Pardon me this freedom; I had been worse

than an Infidel, if I had not used it; for I remember Plutarch himself enumerating the Qualifications of a Virtuous Woman; gives this for one, She must not be a Dancer. The Daughter of Herodias has been so stigmatized, that a Virtuous Woman will not be for Dancing after her.

The Beauty whereof a Virtuous Woman hath a remarkable dislike, is that which hath Artificial Painting in it. The usage of Artificial Painting is practiced by many Women, who think thereby to be valued for a Beauty, which they are not really the owners of: But a Virtuous Woman will not be guilty of such a Vanity. There is a wicked Book that pleads for this ungodly practice; but that good Lady uttered the Language of a Virtuous Woman upon reading such a Book, O Lord, I thank thee, that thou gavest me not Wit enough to write such a Book, unless withal thou hadst given me Grace enough not to write it. Although it be not unlawful for a Person transiently to preserve or to restore her Native Complexion by convenient Medicines, when she is in any special danger of losing it; yet for a Person to Paint herself, that she may make some ostentation of a Complexion which God has not made her the owner of, is a thing that has heard ill among the most godly Christians; nor will a Virtuous Woman easily be reconciled unto it; lest when the Saints Rise as Tertullian wished he might at the Resurrection of the Righteous, To see whether the Angels are then carrying any Painted Ladies in their Arms to meet the Lord Jesus Christ with Joy; there will be no such sight then to be met withal. The wicked Harlots of old Painted their Eyes, as 'tis said in Ezek. 33:40. Thou paintest thy Eyes; understand it of their Eye-brows and Eye lids, which they ting'd with a preparation of Antimony to blacken them, and beautify 'em. This was accounted an extraordinary Comeliness; and therefore about the Harlot is the Young Man advised in Prov. 6:25. Let her not take thee with her Eye-lids. Of such Eyes 'twas that Cyprian said, These are not

Eyes with which our God is to be looked unto! And Jerome reckons 'em among scandalous Harlotries. Now this is one Argument which the Virtuous Woman has against the Painting of her Face in any part of it; It is the Guise of a Harlot. An Adulterate Complexion is but agreeable to an Adulterous Condition. A Painted Face is but a Painted Sign hung out for advice to Strangers, that they shall find Entertainment there. 'It is often the Whores Forehead which admits Paint upon it. 'It is well if you do not find a Snake where you see a Painted Skin. Moreover, our Face is a Seat which has much of the Divine Image and Wisdom appearing in it; and it is a vile Affront unto God, for a Woman to Deface the Workmanship of the Almighty there; by such an Inversion, as the Hebrew word for this Painting signifies. Now, the Paint which is laid upon it, not only dis-figures the Face for the present, but also do's corrupt it and corrode it, and poison it, and hasten wrinkles and ruins thereupon: it will Rent the Face, as the Scripture speaks of it; and I am sure, it should Rent the Heart, of them that use it. Besides, Our Lord Rebuked it, as a base Hypocrisy for Persons to alter their Faces that they might appear to be Fasting, when they were so indeed; how much more basely Hypocritical is it, for Persons to alter their Faces that they might appear to be Comely when indeed they are not so? There is no Sincerity in these Butterflies. It is a Cheat which there is no enduring of. The more Moral Heathen showed a great Indignation at it; and shall we think a Virtuous Woman can allow of it? And alas, what a World of Precious Time, is thus thrown away, by poor Creatures, who are so taken up with Painting of the Sepulchers in which their Souls lie Dead, as that they do little or nothing for the Beautifying of those Black, Forlorn, Forsaken Souls? The sin committed in Paintings we must suppose committed in Patches too. When the Face is Patched the Heart is Rotten, the Heart has more Black Spots than the Face upon it. Some unhappy Ladies by the Just Judgment of God, have brought forth Children with Natural Patches on: so has

God been offended at them. The Ancients tell us, that the Devil was the Inventor of this Hellish Art; and it can be nothing but either Lust or Pride (both Brats of the Devil!) that shall dispose any to the using of it. If they that Please men, much more, I am sure they that thus Cheat men, cannot be The Servants of Christ; Tertullian well calls them, The Handmaids of the Devil; nor when they Paint their Bodies do they Glorify the Lord with their Bodies. A Virtuous Woman would be loath to follow no better Patterns than Jezebel or Maximilla, both of which Woeful Creatures have this related of them, That they Painted their Faces. For such would She leave these foul Paintings; and now the old Picts are dead, She would not help to Revive that Pagan Generation or make herself a Sister to the Squaws in the Thickets of America. Nor would She be in the way of such Thunderbolts, as Dr. Hall in Imitation of the blessed Ancients once darted against such Transgressors, Hear this, ye Plaster-faced Jezebel's; if you will not leave your Daubing's and your High Washes, God will one Day wash them off with Fire and Brimstone!

Conclusion. 3. - The Fear of God is that which the Heart of a Virtuous Woman is under the Power of.

The Female Sex is naturally the Fearful Sex; but the Fear of God is that which Exceeds (and sometimes Extinguishes) all other Fears in the Virtuous Woman. To state this matter aright, we are to know, That the Fear of God is an Old Testament Expression, as the Love of God is a New Testament one, for all true Religion whatsoever. It may then be said of a Virtuous Woman, That she is a Religious Woman; She has Bound herself again to that God, whom She had by the Sin and Fall of her First Mother departed from; She has a Love which does not cast out the Fear that is no Fault, but confirm and settle her in that Fear of God; That all kind of Piety and Charity is prevailing in her Disposition; That Sobriety, and Righteousness, and Godliness

are Visible in her whole Behavior; and, that She does Justice, loves Mercy, and walks Humbly with her God. But that we may speak somewhat more particularly.

First, A Virtuous Woman has Awful as well as Real Apprehensions, That there is a God. When Jacob of old perceived the Presence of God, it is said, in Gen. 28:17. He was Afraid. The Virtuous Woman in like manner Believes the Essence of God; and that thought, God is, it raises a Sacred Fear of Him in her humble and moved Soul. She sees the Being of a God proved from the Works of Creation: even as he that made the Image of Minerva engraved his own Name upon it so, that it could not be taken out without breaking all to pieces. The whole World is a Book, and all Creatures are the Letters in it, whereby She Spells out the Existence of a God. Even the Dumb, the Mute Creatures do loudly speak this Truth unto her she Considers, That the World had a Beginning; inasmuch as 'tis Older and Changing every Day: And that it could not have its Beginning from itself; inasmuch as Nothing would then be the cause of Something. So, She sees, there is a God; and She sees the Wisdom of a God, the Power of a God, the Goodness of a God, throughout the Universe. She sees likewise the Being of God plain in the Works of Providence; which preserves all things in a most Excellent Order, Subordinate and Subserving unto a Glorious End. She sees the World like a Vast Army Composed of Quarrelsome, Contentious, Contrary things, and yet holding well together; whereupon she concludes, There is a God who is the Wise General over all. She considers the extraordinary Occurrences in the World; and when She sees Prophecies that exactly foretell what comes to pass many Ages after; When she sees Miracles, that give Check to the Common Course and Road of Nature; When She sees Prayers extraordinarily Answered, Good Men extraordinarily Rewarded, Ill men Extraordinarily Punished, She cries out, The Finger of a God is here! She finds herself born with a

Notion of a God, wherein she has not been by any Tradition or Policy of others Imposed upon; and She graciously Cherishes that Notion. All Ancient Histories hardly mention above Twenty Professed Atheists; and of those that were counted such, there never was one, without frequent and vehement suspicions of a God. But all Tendencies to Atheism are most abominable to the Soul of a Virtuous Woman. She is not such a Fool, as to say with her Mouth, or to Think with her Heart, or to say in her Heart, and Wish, There is no God. The Being of a God is at once the Fear, and yet the Wish of her Godly Soul. If any Designing, Debauched Atheist, go to insinuate unto her; That the Notion of God, and Heaven, and Hell, and an Immortal Soul, is but a Trick of some cunning Divines. her Answer is with an Indignation, Speedy and Angry like a Flash of Lightning, Satan, be gone!

Next; A Virtuous Woman has a most Reverent Respect and Regard unto all that has the Name of God upon it. They that have the Fear of God in them, are by Him so styled, in Mal. 4:2. You that Fear my Name. The Name of God is all that, whereby He makes Himself Known unto us; and a Virtuous Woman will not Irreverently Use any such Thing, lest She should be held not Guiltless before the Lord. She will not utter the Titles of God in any Frothy and Foolish manner; nor will she have a low opinion of His Attributes; nor will she with a Carnal Spirit come unto his Ordinances. Yea, so far she is from Affronting the Name of God herself, that although she should be Dressed never so Fine, yet if she Chance to hear the Name of God Blasphemed, she can scarce forbear the Rending of her Clothes, as the Usage of the Jews was on such a Provocation; be sure, it causes the Reading of her Heart. Especially, the Word of God, is what she Fears to Despise or Control, or Disobey; it may be said of her, She Fears the Commandment; it may be said by her, My Heart stands in Fear of thy Word. Of the Precepts in that Word, it is then, Fear, Oh

let me not break them! Of the Promises there, 'tis her Fear, Oh let me not fall Short of them! Of the Menaces there, 'tis her Fear, Oh let them never take hold of me! And at the same time, the Virtuous Woman is very much Concerned, That the Name of God may be duly honored in the World. Sanctified be thy Name is the first Petition of her Soul unto her Lord. She would not for the most Massy Wedges of Gold, ever do anything, that may bring Reproach to the dear Name of God; but she Studies, Contrives, Labors to Advance that Blessed Name as far as ever she can; Oh (she thinks) How may the Name of my Good God, be by my means Exalted in the World!

Thirdly; A Virtuous Woman is very circumspect and solicitous to avoid what the God of Heaven may be offended at. The Wiseman takes notice of this, as one Ingredient in the Fear of God, Prov. 16:6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil. And it is accordingly the desire of the Virtuous Woman, to shun all that Evil which God may be displeased at. She flies from every Known Sin, as from a direful Serpent, or from a deadly Poison; because that she sees it offensive unto that God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity. What we read of Job, is likewise to be said of her, She is a perfect woman, one that fears God, and eschews evil. She cannot bear the thought of incurring the Anger of that God, who Overturns the Mountains in his Anger; and she trembles before that God, at whose Voice even the Pillars of Heaven do tremble. She had rather undergo any miseries, than incur the intolerable and interminable Torments which the Omnipotent God has to inflict upon them that provoke him to Jealousy; and upon that account she is fearful of everything that may be provoking to her Holy Father. When she over-hears the Lord, saying, Oh do not the Abominable things that my Soul hates, her answer is in words like those that Joseph had unto his Brethren, Oh I dare not, cannot commit such things, for I fear God! If other Women will speak vainly, dress

proudly, live lewdly, she can say as Nehemiah did of old, But so do not I because I have the Fear of God! The Exquisite Pen of a Dutch Lady hath Celebrated the Zeal of a Scotch Woman, who for her Zeal having her Leg tortured in that cruel Horrid Engine called the Boot, bravely said, My God I bless thee that thou hast given me a Leg to be thus used for thee! Thus would this Person rather have all her Bones broken, than to sin so against God, that like David she must cry out of, Broken Bones.

Fourthly, A Virtuous Woman Labors to Please and Serve the great God, with the greatest of her cares. The Fear of God, is thus described by the Apostle, in Heb. 12:28. Let us Serve God Acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear. And nothing is more Acceptable to the Virtuous Woman, than that she may Acceptably Serve her God. Let her be of never so High Rank, she thinks it no stoop for her, to be a Servant of that Lord, who has all the Angels in Heaven for his Ministers; nor do's her Opinion vary from that of those Apostles who chose, to be called, The Servants of Jesus Christ, when they might have been called, His Kinsmen; or of those Emperors, who valued it as one of their Prerogatives, to subscribe themselves, The Vassals of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let her be of never so Low Rank, She will not stoop to be a Servant of the World, or of the Flesh, or of the Devil; nor can she brook that the Curse of so being A Servant of Servants, ever should come upon her. When she contemplates that Lord, who is A greater than Solomon, she cries out, Happy are thy Servants; Oh that I might be one of them! And she would always be doing the will of God, in such a manner, as may be pleasing to Him. We read of One, He had this Testimony, that He pleased God. Now, That is the Testimonial to be given of the Virtuous Woman; She aspires after the Imitation of the Lord Jesus, in, Doing always the things that please the Father. It is the Name of a good man, The man that pleaseth God; and whatever Change the Name of this Woman may undergo, still

she keeps that Name, The Woman that pleaseth God. How so? Even because that she do's all she can in and for the Service of God; and she would not leave Room for that Expostulation of the Lord, If I be a Master, where is my Fear? No, as often as she says, Our Father, so often do's her Heart within her say, Our Master is in Heaven! We read in the Bible, concerning, certain Women that Ministered unto Jesus; and this Woman is Ambitious to be of that Blessed Company.

Fifthly, A Virtuous Woman does attend the Worship of God, with an Unwearied and Exemplary Diligence. The Proselytes, that of old were brought unto the Worship of the True God, are thus distinguished, in Psal. 115:11. Ye that Fear the Lord. And the Virtuous Woman accordingly expresses her Fear of God. by Worshiping of Him that is Worthy to be Feared. It may with only the necessary Variation, be said of her, as it was of Cornelius long ago, She is a Devout Woman, and one that Fears God, and Prays to God, always. As the Almighty God was called, The Fear of Isaac; because He was Worshiped by that Renowned man; so may He be called, The Fear of the Virtuous Woman; because this Woman will observe all the parts of that Worship which is due unto the Lord. There is the Natural Worship of God, whereto she is no less Piously Affected, than Constantly Accustomed. She is a Woman full of Prayer, and Perhaps it may be said concerning every Room of her House, She has Perfumed it with her Prayer. Prayer is what she will be Early as well as often at; and she is every Morning Jealous, lest like Origen, she give the Devil an advantage by omitting of it. She makes not her Closet a place for mere Trifles and Pictures, but for Prayers with Devoutest Meditations. She retires into her Closet every Day, that she may there have a Visit from the Eternal Bridegroom of her Soul; and whatever Exercises may be at any time upon her mind, She does as Hannah did; She Pours out her Soul unto the Lord, that she may be no more sad. Yea, she is not unacquainted with solemn

Humiliations, and solemn Thanksgivings, upon the Just Occasions of them. She is a Woman whom Scriptures and Sermons are very dear unto: and it is not every Trifle (as the want of a Garment, or a dread of the Weather) that she will make her excuse for her Absence from the means of Grace. How fain would she be with Mary, always hearing the sweet Admonitions of her Lord, about, The One Thing Needful, and The Good part which cannot be taken away! The Sabbath she calls Her Delight; nor will she waste the Sacred hours of it, in the Naughty Superfluities of Diet and Rayment; but be as often as well she can, in the Congregation of, The People of God; and there, as her Voice makes a sound that shall be no Base, for the Music of the Public Psalms, thus her Heart is an Altar from whence, during the whole Solemnity, there ascend unto God, The Sacrifices which He desires. There is likewise, the Appointed Worship of God, whereto she counts herself most Indispensably Obligated. She cannot bear to be shut out from the Church of God, any more than Miriam from the Camp of old; but whatever Longings ever may disturb her, she never has anymore Craving and Raging ones than this, Oh God, Thou art my God, my Soul Thirsteth for thee, my Flesh Longeth for thee, to see thy Power and thy Glory in the Sanctuary! Indeed among the Turks the Women do never go to Church; but Christian Women would count it Hell upon Earth to be so debarred. She is Desirous to Eat and to Drink, where she may not Speak; and having been Baptized, she is not satisfied until she come to Eat among the Friends, to Drink among the Beloved, of the Lord Jesus Christ. She will not make part of that Unworthy Croud, which throng out of Doors, when the Supper of the Lord is going to be administered, as if they were Frighted at it; or had cause to say, The Table of the Lord is Polluted. She dares not indeed come without a Wedding Garment, but she will not stay away like those, whose only Real Apology can be, They are loath to be at the Pains of putting the Garment on. Although she sometimes counts herself as a Dog, yet like that

Syrophenician Woman, she will ask for some Crumbs from the Table of the Lord. Having had her Soul Purified by Regeneration, she brings her Offerings to the Tabernacle. She presents unto the Church (if it be asked for) a sensible Account, like another Lydia, of some never to be forgotten Things which God has done for her Soul; or at least, she makes the Church to understand, like Ruth of old, That she would come to Rest under the Wings of the God of Israel. Nor would she let the Buffetings of the Devil altogether discourage her from joining herself to some Holy Society of Believers, where she may have her Soul bound up in the bundle of Life. She was a Noble Woman of Bohemia, that left her Friends, her House, her Plate, and all, and because the Gates of the City were Guarded, Crept through the Common Sewer, that she might Enjoy the Institutions of the Lord Jesus Christ at another place where they might be had. Such is the esteem which a Virtuous Woman has for the Institutions of our Lord, she can say, Lord, I have loved the place where thy Honor dwells! And when she cannot Go, yet she'll Creep to, The Habitation of His House.

This is the Virtuous Woman! It was very cruelly spoken by those two very Ancient Poets; the first of which usually [in his Comedies] represented Women as very bad; but the latter usually represented them, very good; saying, The first represented what they are, the latter what they should be. I hope I have in this Discourse represented, not only, what all Women should be, but also, what very many of them Are. And for their Encouragement, we will now pass on unto,

CHAP. IV

The Happiness of a Virtuous Woman.

And this happiness is here summed up in that Word, She shall be Praised. Praise, Reputation, Commendation, is that which a Woman is very tender of; 'tis most appositely then, that the Recompenses of a Virtuous Woman, are set forth by the Praise that should and shall be given her. Said the Apostle of old, If there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, Think on these things. Truly where there is Virtue, there will be Praise; and the Virtuous Woman will have her Fear of God, recompensed with Praise from God, and be forever Glorious. We have these Conclusions therefore now before us.

Conclusion. 1. - The Fear of God will recommend a Woman to the Praise and so to the Choice of such men, as it may be desirable to have the good Opinion of.

For a Woman to be Praised, is for her to be Married, in Scriptural Phraseology; thus 'tis Lamented among the Judgments of God, in Ps. 78:63. Their Maidens were not Praised unto Marriage. Now the Fear of God is the best way for a Woman to dispose of herself to such a Marriage, as men usually Court none, but such as they hear much Praised, unto. When the Scripture speaks of the Marriage which Antichrist forbids unto his Filthy and Wicked Clergy, it calls it. The desire of Women. 'It is that which Women that have any regard unto honor, will Desire, with Disdain to be otherwise enjoyed; like that ingenious Woman, who having her Chastity Solicited, gave that answer, You must first give me, what you neither have, nor can have yourself, and what yet you can give to me; That was, A Chaste Husband. The Truth is, to be Married unto a Vain, Wild, Ungodly man, is that which no Discreet Woman will Desire; any more than to dwell with a Dragon. The Excellent Basilla chose to be beheaded, rather than Marry a Pagan Husband. But as for Prudent and Pious

Men, 'twill be their Desire to be Married unto such a Woman as is eminent for the Fear of God. There was a Woman of whom it could be said, in Ruth 3:11. All the Town does know that thou art a Virtuous Woman; and you know that this Woman was not long without a good Husband, who had first been taken with her Praise. We say, Matches are made in Heaven; and indeed the Woman who by the Fear of God, has made sure of a great Interest in Heaven, is most like to meet with such a Match as may give her cause to thank Heaven all her Days. 'It is possible, that Unsanctified men, may Marry only for Portion or for Prettiness; how often do those Respects give us to see Matches made in Hell! And yet there are few men so Profane, as to look upon that Grace as undesirable in a Wife, of which they themselves are destitute! But men that have the Fear of God in themselves, when they choose the Companions of their Lives, will ordinarily choose to have such, as they shall hear Praised for, The Fear of God; when they do otherwise, the God of Heaven often pays 'em severely for it. It is an old Rule,

Non solum est Oculis ducenda sed Auribus Uxor. (i.e.) He that would Marry, and be wise, Must choose by Ears, as well as Eyes.

When a man of Understanding, does understand that a Woman is praised for the fear of God, this is more than all other Favor and Beauty to him; and so she comes to that Room in his well-guided Affection, which will survive the Death of all other Favor and Beauty whatsoever; and which many Waters cannot Quench. Instead of saying as many do, There's Money, and we'll hope the fear of God will come in Time; such a man will say, There's the fear of God, and we'll hope that all these things will be added: and if he be an Isaac, who prays much over and before his Marriage, he will pitch upon such a Wife as will not Hinder but Assist his Prayers afterwards. Moreover, the Woman that has, The fear of God, need not Fear, but

that she should be praised among multitudes of her other Neighbors whom yet she cannot be Married unto. If any do Deride her, they are none but those absurd, foolish, giddy Creatures, that will one day change their song, and with bloody Tears will then wish, O that I had feared God like such a one! All that have any sense of True-worth, or, whose good word is of any worth, will be sure to Admire her; 'tis a property in every Citizen of Zion, He honors them that fear the Lord; but a vile person [Such a one as does not Fear the Lord] is contemned in his Eyes.

Conclusion. 2. - The Wisdom which is in the fear of God, makes Praise to be the due of the Woman that is adorned with it.

A wise Woman is justly a Praised Woman, and a Prized one, all over the World. The Wise Woman in the City of Abel, doubtless was more than a little Praised in the United Acclamations of that City. 'It is said in Eccles. 8:1. A man's Wisdom makes his Face to shine, and a Woman's Wisdom does as much. No Favor, no Beauty is comparable to Wisdom; and though' a person were all over sparkling with peerless Pearls, yet this is a Favor and a Beauty before which, No mention shall be made of Pearls; for the price of Wisdom is above Rubies. Now, who or where is the Wise Woman? Or what is true Wisdom? The Claim has been long since laid, by many sorts of witty plodders, and crafty people in the World; but the Apostle has put in that Bar unto their claim, That professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools. If the Politician may challenge the praise of Wisdom, doubtless those four Maries which in the last Age Swayed the Scepters of so many Kingdoms with the Profoundest Policy, were Wise Women, and the Elizabeth which came after them, came not behind them. Thomyris that could lead an Army against the Persian, and Zenobia that could head an Army against the Roman Emperor, were Wise Women. The Sabinian Women which directed the Senate

out of inextricable Difficulties, were Wise ones. It was a Wise Woman of Tekoa which could manage an Intreague at Court for the Lord General of Israel. If the Philosopher may Challenge the Praise of Wisdom, doubtless those were Wise Women who were Tutoreses, if I may call them so, to the old famous Professors of all Philosophy. The Daughter of Pythagoras who made Comments on her Fathers Books, was a Wise Woman; and so was Hippatia formerly, who taught the Liberal Arts, and wrote some Treatises of Astrology; and so Sarocchia more lately, who was ordinarily Moderatrix in the Disputations of the Learned men at Rome. The three Corinnae, which Equaled, if not Excelled the most Celebrated Poets of their Times, were Wise: and such Ladies as Olympias, or Trota, whose Physical skill, was the wonder of the Universe. The Empress Eudocia, who Composed Poetical Paraphrases on divers parts of the Bible, was a Wise Woman; so was Rosuida, who compiled the Lives of Holy men, and Pamphilia who Penn'd no Despicable Histories; and the French Lady, who a while since, published Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews; and thus was the Lady Jane Grey, who so admirably could Read the Word of God in its Originals. There is Wisdom in these things; and the Women which have had it, are therefore to be Praised. But, as the Apostle said, yet I show unto you a more excellent way; so I say, there is a greater Wisdom than all of this. It is the Assertion with which the Wise Man Begins the Book of Wisdom, in Prov. 1:7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge. Or as the Words of his blessed Father, whom he much Imitated in his Expressions, were, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. Or, as it may be read, the chief part of it. Here then, even in, the fear of God, is the Prima Sapientia, the chief, prime, grand Wisdom of a reasonable Creature. 'It is a true saying, Non qui multa, sed qui Fructuosa scit, sapit; Wisdom lies not so much in the Knowledge of many things, as in the knowledge of Useful ones. Now this is the Wisdom of a Woman that has the fear of God; she has the Science

that will carry her safe thro' all the Storms, all the Harms, all the Temptations of this World, unto the Haven of Heaven at the last; she has the Wisdom, to Consider her latter End, and she is Wise unto Salvation. That admirable Woman, Olympia Fulvia Morata had very great accomplishments; but that which most accomplished her, was, her embracing of true Religion with all manner of Persecution for it; so that she could say, the World is now become contemptible to me. 'Twas this alone which Enabled her, when she lay a dying, at near thirty years of Age, to see Heaven open for her, and say to her Excellent Husband, I am now full of Joy, and Sir, I know you now no more! This then is the Praise that belongs unto such a Woman; it is noted unto the praise of Abigail, She was a Woman of a good Understanding, and she was of a Beautiful Countenance. As for the Woman, that has a Beautiful Countenance without a good Understanding, as for her that is, Fair and Foolish, you can find where she is compared unto, A Swine with a Jewel in her Snout. But if a Woman have the fear of God, you now see, that whether she have a Beautiful Countenance or no, yet she has a good Understanding. And therefore such a Woman shall be praised among those Ladies whose Beautiful Aspect is particularly mentioned in the Scripture; and whose Names make that Hexameter verse,

Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Abigail, Bathshu, Abishag, Esther.

Conclusion. 3. - The Benefits obtained by, the fear of God, procure praises for the Woman that is endued with it.

Said the Psalmist, in Psal. 31:19. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! Such a profitable thing as the fear of God, must needs be a praiseworthy thing. Let us a little specify the Blessings, and so the praises, which, the fear of God, is

attended with. As for the Woman that has the fear of God; attend now unto the praises of such a Woman.

This is the Woman whom the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ becomes, A Sun of Righteousness unto. 'It is said in Mal. 4:2. Unto you that Fear my Name, shall the Son of Righteousness arise. We find among the Representations of the Church, A Woman clothed with the Sun. Thus do you now see this Woman Clothed! And as by Union she is got into the Lord Jesus Christ, who like the Sun is the Center of the World, and who like the Sun gives Life and Warmth, and Growth, unto her Soul; so she is by him Clothed with all that Righteousness which Delivers from Death. She not only has an Inherent Righteousness, from the Lord Jesus Christ; or a principle disposing her to render both unto God and Man their Dues; but she also has the Imputed Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and being by the Grace of God allowed an Interest in the perfect Obedience of her Lord, as she now stands as without Fault before the Throne of God, Well may she be a praised Woman, who shall be such a Righteous one. We say, The Wife shines with the Husbands Rays. Behold here a Woman whose Husband is, The Sun of Righteousness.

This is the Woman whom the Angels of Heaven do most gladly Encamp about. We have received Information from the Invisible World, by Psal. 34:7. That the Angel of the Lord Encampeth about them that Fear Him, and delivers them. A Woman is usually by Law under Covert; but it is an Angelical Covert which this Woman has by the Law of Heaven placed over her. She sometimes has an occasion for a Deliverance; and the best Angel in Heaven, perhaps the same Angel that visited Mary of old, is upon the Wing to hasten it unto her. She has a continual, though' it may be an Insensible Conversation, with Angels of better Account, than the Sons of God, which were entangled with the Daughters of Men, in the Antediluvian World;

these are her Guardians, her Protectors, and her Monitors. When she was first Converted unto God, she made Joy among the Angels, because of another Spirit come in to fill up the Room left in Heaven by the Apostate Legions: It gave a Triumph unto those Morning Stars, to see one that shall shortly come to move in Their Orb. And now she has Praise among the Angels; they shout and say, Here is an Heir of Salvation; and we have the welcome and happy care of looking after her.

This is the Woman, who takes a most Laudable course for her own Temporal prosperity. She is to be Praised as a Woman that prolongs her own Life. 'It is said in Prov. 19:23. The Fear of the Lord tendeth to Life. It keeps her from hastening an Untimely Death, upon herself, either by rash Wishes to Dye, or by the overmuch Wickedness which by the sentence of Providence become Capital, or by the Lusts which either Drown the Lamp, or Burn or Wear the Thread of Life away. She is to be Praised as a Woman that Consults her own Health. 'It is said in Prov. 3:7, 8. Fear the Lord—It shall be Health to thy Navel, and Marrow to thy Bones. It keeps her from the Sins, which by being the Parents of Crudities and Obstructions, are the grand Parents of all Diseases; and being thus forgiven her Iniquity, 'tis likely she will not say, I am sick; or be forced like the Woman in the Gospel, To spend all upon Physicians. She is to be Praised as a Woman that Preserves her own Reputation. 'It is said in Prov. 22:4. By the Fear of the Lord is Honor. It makes her acknowledged for one that has the Image of Christ and God upon her; which is The One Thing that renders Honorable; and while she makes it her business like another Dorcas to Honor her Master, He fulfills that word unto her, Them that honor me, I will honor; and leaves her not cause for that complaint, Reproach has broken my Heart. She is to be praised as a Woman that effectually lays in for herself a Competent and Convenient Portion of Worldly Comforts. 'It is said in Psal. 101:5.

The Lord hath given Meat unto them that Fear him. She will not be one of the Idle Souls that suffer Hunger; but according to God's Promise, which is her Storehouse, her House has in it, all the supplies which are needful for her Glorifying of God; and having as much Manna as will carry her through the Wilderness, she do's not Crave after those Cumbersome Additions, which may hinder her passing through the Eye of the Needle: the Young Lions have not so good a Table! She is to be praised as a Woman that procures a special Guard of God upon her, in an Evil Day. 'It is said in Psal. 33:18, 19. The Eye of the Lord is upon them that Fear him, —to deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine. Let things go never so bad, she can with Isaiah sing, the Forty Sixth Psalm, as being one of the Alamoth, or Head Persons, concerned in it; she has the Blood of our Passover applied unto her, and so she is preserved in Christ Jesus, when the Destroying Angels are the Executioners of the Divine Wrath abroad; She has Rahab 's Threed for her Defense in the midst of Wasting Plagues, and she has a Mark upon her Forehead [which I am sure the Garish Attire there used in our Days is not!] for her Preservation.

This is the Woman, who takes a most Laudable way for her own Eternal Prosperity too. She is to be praised, as a Woman that has made her Peace with God. It is said in Psal. 103:11, 12. Great is his Mercy towards them that fear him, As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our Transgressions from us. He that was Born of a Woman has made satisfaction for all the Wrongs that her Sins have done to the most Holy Lord; God for the sake of Christ has Released her from whatever Punishment was ever due unto her, for whatever Transgression of his Law; and thus, Being Justified by Faith, she has Peace with God. If any Afflictions come upon her, there are not Vindictive or Destructive, but purely Medicinal; She sees they are to do her good in the latter end; they are to make her

partaker of God's holiness; they are to Work for her a far more Exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory. She says like the Martyr, God is now Scouring of me, to set me bright on an high Shelf in Heaven forever. She is to be praised as a Woman that is heard in her Prayer to God. It is said in Psal. 145:19. He will fulfil the Desire of them that fear him, he also will hear their Cry, and he will save them. She is one who has her Hearts Delight in God, and so she has her Hearts Desire from God. Her Prayers are the Breathings which the Spirit of God have Enkindled in her, and the Power, and Wisdom of God, either in the Letter, or in the Better gives a good answer to them all; the Almighty gives her a Right Will, which inclines her to ask of him, thing according to his Will; and then he says, as unto Her of old, Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. She is to be praised, as a Woman that gets her Soul Replenished with such Comforts as have a Fore taste of Heaven in them. It is said in Act. 9:31. They were Edified, walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost Seals her with well-grounded and effectual persuasions of God's having Loved her with an Everlasting Love. Hence, whatever troubles do come upon her, she feels a Word set home upon her, which causes her like Hannah, to be no more sad. She is to be Praised, as a Woman whom the Day of Judgment will bring Wonderful Glories and Rewards unto. It is said in Rev. 11:18. The time of the Dead, that they should be Judged is come, that thou shouldest give reward unto them that Fear thy Name, small and great. She shall be one of the Early Risers in that Morning of the great Day; when the Change for which her departed Soul has been waiting, is come, her Lord-Redeemer, shall say to her, Awake and Sing thou that dwellest in the Dust; and she shall then be marvelously Changed into the Likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; She shall be made what Moses and Elias appeared in the Mount of God; The Lord Jesus will then openly Absolve her and Applaud her; and she shall sit with him on a Throne in the

Regeneration; her Heart may now even spring like John in his Mothers Belly, when she foresees the Approaches of the Lord. She is to be Praised, as a Woman who is to be made partaker of Life Eternal. It is said in Prov. 14:27. The Fear of the Lord, is a Fountain of Life, to depart from the Snares of Death. Her Spirit shall be entertained with a transforming and refreshing Vision of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, amidst the Celestial Regions of Light, with all the Sacred Inhabitants of those Regions. Her Body, shall also be made Incorruptible, and more Immortal than ever Eves in Eden was; it shall be made Powerful, Fulgent, Nimble, Subtle, Spiritual, and after a sort Angelical. So shall she have a Fulness of Joy in the Presence of God, and Pleasures at his Right Hand forever more. Here is the Woman that has the Fear of God! This is the Praise that belongs unto her.

CHAP. V

Application and Counsels.

But shall it now be seen, that Women will more generally aspire after this Character and this Happiness? The petulant Pens of some Froward and Morose Men, have sometimes treated the Female Sex with very great Indignities; Blades, I guess, whose Mothers had Undutiful Children, or whose Wives have had but cruel Masters. I am loath to show my Catalogue, nevertheless whole Volumes have been written, to disgrace that Sex, as if it were, as one of those Unnatural Authors calls it, The mere Confusion of Mankind. Yea, 'tis not easy to recount how many Licentious Writers, have handled that Theme, *Femina nulla bona*, No Woman is good! [or the men were bad that said so] But, behold, how you may recover your Impaired

Reputation! The Fear of God will soon make it evident, that you are among the Excellent in the Earth. If any men are so wicked (and some Sects of men have so) as to deny your being Rational Creatures, the best means to confute them, will be by proving yourselves Religious ones. I do assure you, and I have more than Luther to consent and concur with me, in this assertion, That the Actions of even the meanest Milk-maid or Cook-maid, when done in the Fear of God, are in the Account of God more Noble Things than the Victories of a Caesar! Thus do I set before you, the way for you to be Enabled; and thus Ennobled, many of you already are. When the Golden-mouthed Ancient had so far forgot himself as to call a Woman, An Unavoidable Punishment, a Necessary Evil, a Desirable Calamity: With more such Iron words, he sees cause to add, *Sermo est de muliere mala*;—My Speech is of a bad Woman; and not of a good; for I have known many ready to every good Work. 'It is an Observation of Solomon's which has been somewhat Improved against you, in Eccles. 7:28. One man among a Thousand have I found, but a Woman among all those have I not found. Nevertheless, in your own Vindication, you may reply, that Solomon speaks of what is usual about the Courts of Princes; and perhaps about his own Court especially; A good man in such a place is a rare thing; but a good Woman there, is a black Swan indeed; Solomon himself Particularly had a Thousand Women to satiate his Exorbitant Lust; and possibly he may intimate, that among all those he did not find One Woman truly Virtuous. Or, if this Reply be not satisfactory, you may inquire, whether Solomon spake not of such as are by Repentance recovered from the Snares of Whoredom, when once they have been therein entangled. For a Man to be reclaimed from the Sin of Uncleanness when once he has been given thereunto is rare; but for a Woman to be snatched out of the Unclean Devils Hands, when once he has had any full Possession of her, is more extraordinary! However it be, 'tis plain, that as there were three Mary's to one John, standing under

the Cross of our Dying Lord, so still there are far more godly Women in the World, than there are godly Men; and our Church Communions give us a little demonstration of it. I have seen it without going a Mile from home, that in a Church of between Three or Four Hundred Communicants, there are but few more than One Hundred Men; all the rest are Women, of whom Charity will think no Evil. Possibly, One reason of it is, because there are more Women in the World than Men; but this is not all the reason. It seems that the Curse in the Difficulties both of Subjection and of Child-bearing, which the Female Sex is doomed unto, has been turned into a Blessing, by the Free Grace of our most Gracious God. God sanctifies the Chains, the Pains, the Deaths which they meet withal; and furthermore, makes the Tenderness of their Disposition, a further occasion of serious Devotion in them. Now, God forbid that any of You, into whose Hands this little Treatise may come, should Contradict that Charitable Observation. And let me tell you, that most of You, have more Time to employ in the more Immediate Service of your Souls, than the other Sex is owner of, You are Ordinarily more within the House, and so may more mind the Work within the Heart, than We. Although I must Confess, 'tis often otherwise; Yet it is as often so, that you have little more Worldly Business, than to Spend [I should rather say, to Save] what others Get, and to Dress and Feed [should I not also say, to Teach] the little Birds, which you are Dams unto. And those of you that are Women of Quality are excused from very much of this Trouble too. Oh! How much might you do for God if you duly considered, The Price in your Hands to get Wisdom.

Well then,

Counsel. 1.

The First thing unto which I would persuade you, is, to Pray most Instantly, Constantly, Importunately that the Fear of God, may be Planted in your Souls. The Fear of God, is indeed already begun in that Soul, which is insatiably desirous to be therewith replenished; and Unutterable Groans after that Fear, will augment the Power of that, which it already argues the Presence of. Said Nehemiah, in Chap. 1:11. O Lord, be Attentive to the Prayer of thy Servants, who desire to Fear thy Name. The Woman that most affectionately lays this desire before God, O that I may Fear thy Name, is already among the Servants of that God, and shall certainly have her desire accomplished. Pray Read, Believe, Practice that Word of God, in Prov. 2:3, 5. If thou Cryest after Knowledge, then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord. Crying is that which your Sex has its particular Easiness unto; Behold, what your Cries, your Tears are best employed about. May it then be said about you, Behold she prays. and may your Prayer to the Lord put in suit that Promise of the Lord, in Jer. 32:40. I will put my Fear in their Hearts. O plead earnestly for the fulfilment of that Great and Precious Word of our God, and say, Lord, Be it unto thy Handmaid according to thy Word.

Counsel. 2.

Having obtained the Fear of God, it should be your Ambition to be continually exercising of it. You are thus advised in Prov. 23:17. Be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the day long. Let your whole walk every Day, be a Walk with God; and let every action in the day, be so done in the Fear of God, as that Holiness to the Lord, may be written thereupon. Be sure to Begin and Conclude the Day with God; Rob him not of his Daily Sacrifice. In the Morning be able to say, Oh God, when I awake I am still with thee; take a Mornings Draught of Communion with God, first in your Closets, and then with your Houses, and of resolution to behave yourselves as having The Lord

always before you. In the Evening, recollect the Mercies which you have newly received of God; and Examine whether you have been so Zealous, Watchful, Fruitful before God, as you should have been? And whether you can lie down in Peace with Him? Throughout all the Day, Interweave a Conscience of Duty, into all your motions, all your affairs. Let every Meal, every Sleep, every Visit, and all your Domestic Businesses, though it be but the Rocking of a Cradle, be done with an Eye to this, This is the Thing wherein I may perform a Service to God, and expect a Blessing from God; This is what my God would have me to be about. Here withal, intermingle many Salleys of Soul, towards Heaven every day; by raising of some serious gracious, divine Thoughts from the meanest occurrence that are before you; and by Pertinent Ejaculations to God, both in a way of Petition and of Thanksgiving upon all Occasions. This 'tis to be, In the Fear of the Lord all the Day long, and Holy in every Turn!

Counsel. 3.

But at the same time you should use a good Caution against those that would Seduce you from the Fear of God. It is mentioned as the singular unhappiness of Women, in 2 Tim. 3:6. Men having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof, —These Creep [like Serpents, as they are] into Houses, and lead Captive Silly Women, laden with Sins, led away with diverse Lusts. 'It is noted of Seducers, that like their Father the Devil, the Old, the First Seducer, they have a special design upon the Weaker Sex, who are most easily gained themselves, and then fit Instruments for the gaining of their Husbands, to such Errors as cause them to lose their Souls at last. Simon Magus Traded with his Helena, and Montanus with his Maximilla, for the more effectual Propagation of their Heresies, as Jerome long since observed; and as Ephiphanius tells us, Arius promoted his Blasphemies by first Proselyting seven hundred Virgins

thereunto. That it is no new thing for Women to become very mischievous Adversaries unto the Truth, and so unto the Fear of God, is intimated from that instance in the Apostolical History, Acts 13:51. The Jews stirred up the Devout and Honor able Women, and raised a Persecution against the Ministers of God. Indeed a Poison does never insinuate so quickly, or operate so strongly, as when Woman's Milk is the Vehicle, which 'tis given in. But may You be always upon your Guard, against the False Teachers in these Days; and therefore become so well principled in your Catechisms, as that it may not be said of you, They are ever Learning and never able to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth. If you find yourselves unable to fathom some Controversies which you see agitated in the Church of God, and if you must cry out, I have nothing to draw with, and the Well is deep, the most likely way to be kept from going out of the Way, is This; mind what has the most obvious tendency to advance the Fear of God, in your Hearts and Lives; mind what most magnifies Christ and nullifies Man, and recommends Practical Godliness; 'tis the Doctrine according to Godliness, which is the True Doctrine. Or if thou cannot Penetrate so far, then mind how those men which are most eminent for the Fear of God, are most generally inclined; mind what is most generally grateful to the Sober, Gracious, Patient, Heavenly, Mortified part of Mankind; and on the other side, what the most Loose, Proud, Carnal, Railing, Profane, party choose to fall in withal; to Walk in the Way of good Men: is most probably to Walk in the good Way.

Counsel. 4.

While you thus maintain the Fear of God, let it very particularly discover itself in your keeping the purpose of the Psalmist, I will take heed unto my ways that I Sin not with my Tongue; I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle. May it be as much a Causeless, as it is a

Common report concerning you, that your Tongues are frequently not so governed by the Fear of God, as they ought to be. The Faculty of Speech is of such a Noble and of such a signal Figure in the constitution of Mankind, that it is a thousand pity's, it should be Abused; but Womankind is usually charged with a peculiar share in the Worlds Abuses of it. It is indeed a piece of great Injustice, that every Woman should be so far an Eve, as that her Depravation should be imputed unto all the Sex. Nevertheless it highly concerns you to do your part, that in Fames Trumpet, which is a Speaking One, you may be better spoken of, as to the matter of your speaking. The attainment which therefore I recommend unto you, is that in Prov. 10:20. The Tongue of the Just, is as choice Silver. A Woman is often valued according to the Silver that she has to bring unto them that will call her their Mistress, in order to their being Master of that. 'It is a few Pounds, Shilling and Pence, that makes her weigh heaviest in the Scale of the vulgar Estimation. But a Woman of a Silver Tongue is the person of whom we may most reasonably say, She is not of little worth. As your Speech ought always to be True, and there should be no less an agreement between your Hearts and Words, than between your Words and Things, ever speaking as you think, though' it may be not All you think; lest you put Brass or Tin instead of Silver: so your Speech ought likewise to be Rare, like Silver, which is not so common as Copper or Iron is. Be careful that you don't Speak too soon, because you cannot fetch back and eat up, what is uttered; but Study to Answer. And be careful that you don't Speak too much, because that when the Chest is always open, everyone counts there are no Treasures in it; and the Scripture tells us, 'tis the Whore that is Clamorous, and the Fool, that is full of words. Let there be a comely Affability and Ingenuity at the same time, in all your Speech, that it may be as grateful as a Bag of Silver would be to the Receivers of it; and O let there be no Dross in your whole Communication. The Dross of your own Wrath, vented in scolding,

fury, vile names; the Dross of your own Worth, vented in boasting, bragging, self-ostentations; the Dross of all Filthiness, vented in Baudy Talk about the Things which 'tis a shame to speak; let all this Dross be purged out of all your Speech. But instead thereof let your Speech, have so much Use in it, that your Discourse may bring as much Emolument as ready Silver to the Hearers of it; that your Lips may Feed many, your Mouth may be a Well of Life, and your Tongue may be Health: and that ordinarily your Companions may not be a Quarter of an hour with you, before they may have cause to say of you, Her Discourse has been Meat, Drink and Physic to my Soul! O that when you are talking you would imagine what the Prophet says, The Lord hearkened and heard, and acknowledge what the Psalmist owns, There is not a Word in my Tongue, but behold O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. I remember Tertullian relates, That the Primitive Christians did use to season their Feasts with very savory Discourses; and he gives this reason for it; Ita fabulantur, ut qui sciant Dominum audire; They Talk as knowing that the Lord Hears. Pray carry that in your Minds, and that will prevent the Impertinent Gossiping which you have been reproached for, that will make you bring forth such things as you may with Joy find entered in The Lord's Books of Remembrance.

Counsel 5.

There is one particular thing more, which you shall see that your fear of God, extends itself unto; and that is, your Apparel, which you are often accused for transgressing in. Where the fear of God sanctifies the Heart, it will doubtless regulate the Habit. Pray let the fear of God, make you able to stand before the Word of God; where Women are commanded in 1 Pet. 3:2,3,4. to have a chaste Conversation coupled with fear; whose Adorning ('tis added) let it not be the outward Adorning, but let it be the hidden man of the heart. For after

this manner in the old Time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves. And in 1 Tim. 2:9. That they adorn themselves in modest Apparel with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 'It is true, that more Indulgence may be given to Women and Children in point of Apparel, than to Men; they were the Wives, and the little Sons and the Daughters, which we find wearing most of Ornament among the Antient People of God; and yet unto you also, has the God of Heaven given a Law, agreeably to which you are to Attire yourselves. You shall permit me to lay before you, a few Maxims, every One of which are so many just Consequences from the Scriptures that have been given you.

I. For a Woman to expose unto Common-View those parts of her Body, which there can be no good End or Use for the Exposing of, is for her to expose herself unto the Vengeance of Heaven. There is indeed a covering of the Skin, which is but a black Mark of one that never yet had a covering for her Sin. The black Patches worn by too many Females, are indeed so many blew ones; they are the Tokens of a Plague in the Soul. They are not, the spots of God's Children, but the Dapples of a Leopard that will never, learn to do well. They are for the most part upon the Faces that never were washed in the Blood of the Lamb without Spot; nor do they argue the Soul within to be one unto whom our Lord may say, Thou art all fair there is no spot in thee. But there is a Nakedness of the Skin which is also, and as much to be accounted Criminal. The Face is to be Naked because of what is to be known by it; the Hands are to be Naked, because of what is to be done by them. But for the Nakedness of the Back and Breasts, no reason can be given; unless it be that a Woman may by showing a Fair-skin enkindle a Foul Fire in the Male Spectators; for which cause even Popish Writers have no less Righteously than

severely Lashed them; and for Protestant Women to use them, is no less inexcusable than it is abominable: nor did a Golden Mouth of old stick to say, The Devil sat upon them.

II. For a Woman to put herself into a Fashion, that shall prejudice, either her Health, or her Work. is to break all the other Eight Commandments as well as the Sixth and the Eighth, which are thereby notoriously violated. They that say, Pride feels no Cold, do often catch a Mortal Cold that they may please a foolish Pride, and the Heat of Hell flames is that which they thus hasten upon themselves. They that profanely say, As good out of the World as out of the Fashion, often follow such a Fashion as either hurries them out of the World, or unfits them for living in it. Creatures yet, than which none would be more loath to put on such a Pitched Coat of Martyrdom, as Nero clapped on the Backs of them that Worshipped our blessed Jesus to burn them in it. But what account can they give at last? When Women go so, that they cannot Eat or Breath, be sure they cannot Work; and it is just with God that they who cannot thus Work, should not be permitted long to Eat or Breath.

III. For a Woman to Wear what is not evidently, consistent with Modesty, Gravity, and Sobriety, is to wear not an Ornament, but a Defilement; and she puts off those Glorious Virtues, when she puts on the Visible Badges of what is contrary thereunto. The command which requires any Grace, requires also the Sign of that Grace; hence for a Woman with her Garish, Pompous, Flaunting Modes, to hang out the Sign, upon which every Rational Beholder thinks he has Liberty to Read, There dwells a Proud, Light, Vain, Giddy, Trifling Soul, in that Carcass! This is not according to God; who says, Whatsoever things are Venerable, whatsoever things are Lovely, whatsoever things are of Good Report, think of these things. They

that would approve themselves. The Daughters of Abraham, are to be The Daughters of Sarah too.

IV. As a Poor Woman may not aspire to go with a Bravery, which a rich or a great Woman may be allowed in, so neither may a rich or a great Woman extend her Bravery, beyond the allowance which God has given her. There is a Soft-Clothing which our Lord Jesus does not seem to deny unto such Persons of Quality as are in Kings-Houses. But you have doubtless heard, what came of the Frog, which would not be content, except she might look as big as the Cow. The Ranks of People should be discerned by their Clothes; nor should we go in any things but what may be called Suits. The Woman which will go as none but those who are above her, do or can, shows herself to be as much out of her Wits as out of her Place. And she that will not Cut her Coat according to her Cloth, does but put a Fools Coat upon her; she that will have more on her Back, than can readily come out of her Purse, deserves to be stripped as the Fine Jay was of her borrowed Feathers. Nevertheless, Vainglory may insinuate itself into the rich and great, as well as the poor; and I am to Charge Them, That they be not High-minded.

V. A Woman, whose Raiment is too Costly to leave her capable of attending the Duties of Justice and Mercy, commits but a piece of shining Thievery, in that cheating and cruel Finery. She that through Excesses in Attiring of herself, is unfitted for the payment of what she owes, either to her private Creditors, or to the support of the Government and the Ministry, by which her Civil and Sacred well-fare is watched unto, is utterly unworthy, either of Credit, or of any Civil or Sacred advantages. But there are Works of Charity as well as Works of Righteousness, which a Woman is also under such obligation to, that all Superfluities are to be retrenched for the sake thereof. It seems but reasonable that whenever we lay out anything

for purely Ornamental Superfluities, we should lay out as much in Clothing and Feeding the distressed Members of the Lord Jesus Christ; I doubt we shall make up very mean Accounts about our Talents, if we do not so.

VI. For an old Woman to flaunt it in a Youthful dress, is altogether as prodigious a Disorder, as for the Flowers of May to appear among the Snows of December. A Summer Dress will not suit a Winter Age. The Aged show themselves to be twice Children, indeed, if they go like Children, and not put away Childish things. For a Woman that knows herself near her Winding Sheet, still to affect a Wedding Robe, is a Lightness than which there can be nothing more uncomely.

VII. For a Pious Woman to Preserve no Distinction from a Debaucht one, in her Apparel, where it may be done, is to leave herself without a Distinction which might preserve her when the common and wasting Judgments of God are Punishing the strange Apparel in her Neighborhood. It was well advised by Tertullian to the Matrons in his Days, *Ut sit inter Ancillas Dei & Diaboli Discrimen*, that the Handmaids of God would go so as to distinguish themselves from the Handmaids of the Devil; and believe it, the plagues which come upon the Haughty Daughters of Zion, will make no difference between those that make none for themselves. We read concerning the Attire of the Harlot; and the Woman that will Wear like such a one, will probably Fare like her in her Calamities. The Courtesans in some Nations of old, were known by Vails of a particular shape; and it is pity but that Virtuous People should agree to avoid such Habits, as Vicious persons have signalized themselves withal.

VIII. When a Woman finds her Superfluous Accoutrements, to excite any Lust in herself, she should no longer carry about her the Flint and Steel that strike Fire into the Tinder of her Corruptions. If

Mary's Locks have entangled herself or others, it becomes her to turn them into a Towel for the feet of the Lord Jesus. To nourish and foment any Distemper in our minds, is for us to Wrong our own Souls, with a Phrensy greater than that of the Possessed Creature, which kept Cutting and Wounding himself among the Monuments of the Dead. For a Woman to indulge herself in a Gaiety, which as often as 'tis put on, disposes her Soul to such a Vanity, as indisposes her to Devotion, or throws her into a frame disagreeable to that of a Stranger and a Pilgrim in the World; this truly does not Adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior.

IX. The Woman that must be the Highest or the soonest in every New Fashion, will herein always keep the Old Fashion of a Proud Fool. It is required of us, Let your Moderation be known unto all men, but for a Woman to betray such a Levity, that nothing will please her but Changeable Taffata; and it shall be as easy to make a Coat for the Moon as to accommodate her fickle Humour with One unto her mind; or for her to betray such an Ambition, that none shall come to her Dimensions without an observable Exorbitancy. —This is quite contrary to a Christian Moderation. If when our Lord should say, She seeks me early, 'tis only the Gallantry of the Age that can say, She is an early seeker of me; if when our Lord asketh of her, What dost thou more than others? All her Answer must be, I flaunt it more, and I brave it more! 'tis but a miserable story that is to be told of her.

X. If a Woman spend more time in Dressing, than she does in Praying, or in Working out her own Salvation, her Dress is but the Snare of her Soul. A Holy Person among the Ancients, beholding of one that had been long standing at the Glass, fell a Weeping, and gave this Reason for it, There's one that has this Morning spent far more time for her Body than I have done for my Soul. How many

Ladies would retire from their Glasses with Weeping Eyes, upon their own Account, if their Eyes were ever turned Inward upon themselves, or Upward unto an Angry God, or Down-ward unto a Gaping Hell, as they are turned Awry to Behold Vanity! When a Woman must be set out with almost as much Tackling, as would serve the Royal Sovereign, and must be so taken up with Decking a Body which is very shortly to feed the Worms, that her Soul which is to live through Eternal Ages, cannot be well Provided for, she loses her own Soul, and yet gains nothing of that, which if it were all gained, would not make up the loss.

XI. In times of terrible and general Calamity, 'tis fit a Woman should abridge herself of that Liberty in her Garb, which at other times may be allowed unto her. When the People are in Danger of Ruin, the voice of God unto them is, Put off your Ornaments. And as for a Woman to be splendidly Arrayed upon a Day of Humiliation, is an Affront not only to the Angels that see how we look in our Sacred Congregations, but also to the God of Angels, before whom we should then appear in what is equivalent unto Sack-cloth; so for her ordinarily to glitter with Costly Array, at a time when we are peculiarly to Humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, is to make herself like that Midianitish Doxy, who had Zimri for her Gallant in the Face of the whole Congregation, which were Weeping before the Lord.

XII. The best Robes of any Woman are but vile Rags, if they either do find her Destitute of, or do not make her Concerned for The Clothing of her Soul. When Athanasius beheld a Woman gorgeously Attiring of herself, he melted into Tears, For (said he) all this preparation is for her Destruction. Truly a Woman is but Equipping herself against a Day of Slaughter, if a Bodily Equipage be all that she is furnished with. If she do not Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, what signifies all her

Provision for the Flesh? If she be not Arrayed in the Fine Linnen clean and white, which is the Righteousness of the Saints. the Lamb of God will disdain to take notice of her. If she have not on The Wedding Garment, the King of Heaven will not acknowledge her as a Guest of His. Let her be, All glorious within, and from the Needlework of the Holy Spirit, Let have an under garment of Grace, upon which an upper garment of Glory shall shortly be induced, or else the Lord will see no Beauty in her. If she had no more than a Peasecod out of which to make her a Gown and Hood, she would not be so unhappy, as if her Soul go without the White Rayment, which the Lord Jesus has Counseled her to Buy (that is, to Beg) of him.

These are the Lessons, by the Remembrance and Observance of which, you may be kept from such Transgression in your Apparel as may say, There is no Fear of God before your Eyes.

Counsel. 6.

But, without your Faith in Christ, your Fear of God, is utterly to be despaired of. No good Fruit is to be expected from you, nor do I expect any good Fruit of all the persuasives unto the Fear of God, now used with you, unless by a Believing on, you come to an Union with, your Lord Redeemer, who has told you, without me you can do nothing. Whoever pretends to Write the Calling of a Virtuous Woman, and forgets to urge Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Root and Source of all true Virtue, has finely left out the One Thing Needful. There is nothing so needful for Women to be advertised of, as a Message like what was carried from the Lord Jesus to that Woman of old, Arise, the Master calleth thee! The last thing which therefore is now set before you, is mentioned last because 'tis the first thing that you are to set upon the practice of; 'It is that of Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ; 'tis the answering of the

Invitations which that Blessed Lord has given you, Look unto me that you may be saved, and Come unto me that you may have Rest. We are told in Heb. 11:6. Without Faith it is impossible to please God; and we may therefore say, without Faith it is impossible to Fear God. It was when Faith in the promised Messiah was working in the Heart of our Father Abraham, that the Lord said, Now I know that thou Fearest me. Those two things are joined by the Psalmist, in Psal. 115:11. Ye that Fear the Lord, Trust in the Lord. Except we come to a Trust in the Lord, for all our Blessedness to be graciously Communicated unto us through the Mediator. We discover ourselves to be without the Fear of the Lord; neither shall we ever grow in Grace, if we have not a sensible, affecting, fiducial Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. O that it may now be said of you, Woman, great is thy Faith! And that whereas, Faith is not of ourselves it is the gift of God, you may beg of God this Gift, with a most becoming Importunity, Lord I would Believe, help my Unbelief.

That you may not want a Description of that Faith, with which you should so apply yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, as that it may be said of you, Who is this Leaning upon her Beloved? Let me distinctly entreat you, to pursue the experience of these two Attainments.

First, Get a Lively sense of your own Spiritual Death, Sinfulness and Wretchedness. Behold yourselves hunted and haunted by the Avengers of Sin, and ready to be Destroyed if a Refuge be not provided for you. When you hear the Voice of God, as a Judge enquiring after you, let it make you as much Afraid as your first Mother in the first Garden was. Take a view of your own Condition, as the Word of God has represented it; and let no Creatures whatsoever then quiet the Agonies thence arising in your minds. Think on the terrible Wants and Woes of your Souls; think on the guilt, and filth, and slavery wherein you are perishing every day;

think on the ever-burning Fire, and of the never dying Worm, which you are every day in danger of going down into; think till you cry out, Oh Wretched Woman that I am! Who shall deliver me? Let not all the Pleasures and Profits, and Honors of this World allay the Distresses which your Souls are now cast into; call 'em all, Miserable Comforters! And Lying Vanities! And Physicians of no value! If Self now offer to procure your Deliverance, treat that Idol with Contempt, and unspeakable Disdain. As for any Righteousness of your own to answer the demands of the Law, acknowledge, 'It is all filthiness; as for any Strength of your own, to fulfil so much as the Commands of the Gospel, acknowledge, I have no Sufficiency! Pronounce yourselves Lost, and write yourselves, Wretched and Poor and Miserable, and Blind, and Naked.

Being thus Humbled, or having your Security in your Natural Estate so far disturbed, that you feel you must renounce all but Christ, all for Christ, then cast yourselves upon the Lord Jesus Christ for all manner of good. Humbly, Hopefully, Joyfully go to him for all the Sure Mercies of the New Covenant; for all the Benefits whereof it has pleased the Father there should in him all fullness dwell; for all the Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption which he is to be made unto us. First, Accept the Lord Jesus Christ in His Word. When you hear the tender of a Jesus made unto you, Reply upon it, Lord, let me have a Jesus upon any Terms! And like the Dying Martyr say, None but Christ! None but Christ! Ponder seriously, how the Lord Jesus Christ Executes the Office of a Prophet, and of a Priest, and of a King; and when you are asked, whether you are willing to enjoy the Instruction of that Prophet, the Atonement of that Priest, and the Government of that King, let your sincere answer be, Lord, with all my Heart! And then, Present the Lord Jesus Christ, in your Prayer. When you make any Request unto the Almighty, let the Merit and Virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ, be the Ground of your

Hope to speed in all. The Mediation of the Lord Jesus, let that both Embolden your Applications to, and encourage your Expectations from, the God of Heaven. Particularly, when you Pray for the Favor of God, let this be your Dependence, The Lord Jesus Christ has made Satisfaction for us by his Obedience, and now he ever lives to make Intercession for us. When you Pray for any Counsel or Conduct, Rely upon this, Unto us a Savior is given, whose Name is Wonderful, Counselor! When you Pray for any Succor or Supply, Rely upon this, There is a Man upon the Throne, by whom all the Wheels in the World are managed! Oh let the view of a Sweet Jesus cause you to silence all your Despair of Mercy, and say, Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, Hope in God, since he has provided a Jesus for thee. This is the Faith of God's Elect. We read in 2 Tim. 3:6. concerning Silly Women, Laden with Sins; Creatures indeed, which do not feel their Load. But it is the Call of our Lord, in Mat. 11:28. Come to me, all ye that are Heavy Laden. May you find your Souls Heavy Laden with a Mountainous Weight of Sins upon you; and may you carry such awakened Souls unto the Lord Jesus, as unto him whom God has Exalted, that he may bestow both Repentance and Remission of Sins upon his Israel.

That so the Address now made you, may as well be Agreeable as Effectual, give me leave to press it, under the Notion of a Marriage whereof the Son of God now makes you most Condescending Overtures. Never were you treated with such an Important and Concerning Affair, as that which I now challenge your Earnest Heed unto; and therefore let the Words once used by a Woman, be now with a little Alteration Mine, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for I must prevail with thee to take my God and my Christ, as thine forever. The Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ are called, The Friends of the Bridegroom; Now let one of them inform you, That the Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory, the King

of Heaven, makes unto you, even unto sinful worthless you, a Motion of a Marriage with Himself. O do not slight the Motion of such a Transcendent Match! But, that I may speak in the Apostles Language, Let me Espouse you to one Husband, that I may present you, as a Chaste Virgin to Christ. We read in Rev. 19:6, 7. There is A Voice as it were of a Great Multitude, and the Voice of Mighty Thunders, saying, Hallelujah, let us be glad and rejoice for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife has made herself Ready! Could I speak with a Voice like that of Mighty Thunders, I would now call upon a Great Multitude that they would make themselves ready for a Marriage with the Lamb of God. O don't refuse a Match with the Lamb, lest you incur the Wrath of the Lamb; or indeed, lest He become a Lion, and He Tear you to pieces, while there is none to Deliver. Methinks, there should not need many Arguments to persuade you unto such a Marriage as you now have the Tenders of. If there do, then Consider the Necessity of this Marriage. The Apostle speaking of a Woman, being not married unto another Man in a time of Raging Persecution, says, in 1 Cor. 7:40. She is happier if she so abide. But for a Woman that is not Married unto the Lord Jesus Christ, woe to her, if she so abide! She is horridly undone, and interminably and intolerably ruined, if she so abide! If this be not enough, then Consider the Utility of this Marriage. When a Woman is Married unto a Neighbor, she is made owner of what he is, and of what he has; and a Beggar may be made an Empress when a mighty Prince has taken her. But let a Woman be Married unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and what follows? 'It is no less than that in 1 Cor. 3:22,23. All things are yours, and ye are Christ's. Oh! What unsearchable Riches, are you made presently partakers of. If this avail not, Consider, then the Excellency of the Person, who Courts you to the Marriage. 'It is said of Him, in Cant. 5:16. He is altogether lovely; and cannot you Love such an one? He is, the Desire of all Nations; and will not you Desire Him? He is, The Pearl of great

Price; and will you set no Price upon Him? He is, The Christ of God; and O why should not you say, Let Him be my Christ forever? And if none of all this will break your Hearts, let it be Considered, that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who has made the First Offers of this Astonishing Match. We forlorn Creatures, by the Hedges and in the Ditches of Hell, never durst have dreamt of such an Exaltation, if that Glorious Monarch himself had not made the First offers of it; He was himself Made of a Woman, on purpose that so he might be Married unto the Children of Men; and the Souls of Women as well as of Men are capable of this Mystical Marriage. This Illustrious Lord, who is infinitely Higher than the Kings of the Earth, does now himself do so strange a thing, as to Beseech you, That you would accept of him as the Husband of your Souls; and that you would be willing to have an interest in that privilege, Thy Maker is thy Husband, and thy Redeemer; The Lord of Hosts is his Name; and thy Redeemer. O Heart of Adamant, which these Considerations do not Overcome and Mollify!

But it is possible the Women to whom I write, may find their Hearts complying with the Proposals of the Blessed Savior, when they see those Proposals more distinctly laid before them. It is therefore Desired, First, That you would Renounce all other Lovers besides the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Demand of our Lord Jesus, in Hos. 3:3. Thou shalt not play the Harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee. You have indeed given your First Loves, unto the Idols of your Souls; but O where are your Wonderments that the Son of God should not be averse after all, to make you, His! Although the Priest of old, might not Marry a Widom; yet our Magnificent High Priest, Jesus, is willing to Marry a Soul that has been fearfully Vitiated and Prostituted; Thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord. But that which the Lord now expects of you is, to forsake

and shake off, all the old Oppressors of your Souls forever. Unto the Flesh now say, I will not have thy Lusts to be my Laws anymore! Unto the World now say, I will not seek my chief good among thy Vexatious Vanities anymore! And unto the Devil say, I will no more be among thy Slaves, whom thou leadest Captive at thy will! Resolve, that if ever these Other Lord's do after this obtain anything from you, it shall be by the Violence of a Rape, which you will never cease crying to Heaven for help against. And it is Then, desired that you would receive the Lord Jesus Christ, With and For all His Mercies. Receive him with the Wish of your Souls, to be by him Furnished and Provided with all manner of good, and by him to bring forth Fruit unto him. Receive him freely, fully, firmly, hoping to live on him, to him, and with him World without End. Fall down like Mary in the Garden crying out, Rabboni; O my Lord! My Lord! With a Transported Affection say unto him, Lord, be thou mine, make me thine, and let my Jesus be forever the Beloved of my Soul! And upon your own Souls lay that charge continually, Hearken, O Daughter; He is thy Lord, and Worship thou him! But receive him also very Thankfully; for if when the Servants of David came to Abigail, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him, to Wife, 'tis reported in 1 Sam. 25:41. She bowed herself on her face to the Earth, and said, Behold, let thine Handmaid, be a Servant, to Wash the Feet of the Servants of my Lord. Much more, when our Heavenly David, sends to Marry your Souls unto himself, it becomes you, most humbly to cast yourselves at His Feet, and adore his goodness with never ending Hallelujahs. It was uttered with some Ecstasy, by that Woman of Old, Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me! But surely then, you have cause to say with as Rapturous Elevations and Acclamations of your Souls. O whence is this to me, that my Lord himself, should not only come, but also give himself, to such a Wretch as I am! In the meantime, let not your want of a Dowry discourage you from receiving of that Rich Lord,

who has infinitely more than The Earth and the Fulness thereof. Many a Poor Soul is Afraid of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, because they have nothing to bring unto him; they see themselves vile, forlorn, loathsome, and think they, Will the Glorious Jesus Look upon such a One! Yes, that he will; nor will he look upon any but such as count and feel themselves to be such: and can venture to throw themselves into his Arms. notwithstanding their being so. You must come to the Lord Jesus, with such Acknowledgements as these; Lord, if thou Marry me to thyself, I have horrible Doubts upon me, which thou must answer for. I have nothing but Guiltiness, Wretchedness, Ignorance and Slavery, to recommend me to thy favors, that, and some little sense of that, is all that I have to bring unto thy Majesty. With all that, I now cast myself upon thee, and according to thy Glorious Grace, I must now be thine forever.

I Pray, that this matter may be brought unto a happy Issue before we part. Reader, As an Ambassador, for Christ, I do in the stead of Christ beseech you, That you would be Married unto that Lord Redeemer. Will you give your Consent unto the motion? Give but that and the Match is made; and so, Blessed you, that ever you were Born? Let your Hearts within you, now answer, I will, and you will make this, The Day of your Espousals, and the Day of the Gladness of your Hearts. Hear the sweet Voice of the Lord Jesus, from the Lofty Battlements of Heaven, this Day calling upon you. His Voice is, Art thou willing, that my Righteousness, and Satisfaction, and Intercession, be that alone which may purchase for thee all thy Blessedness? Reply, Lord, I am willing. His Voice is, Art thou willing that my Teaching and my Eye-salve, should lead thee in the way of peace? Reply, Lord, I am willing. His Voice is, Art thou willing, that I should set up my Kingdom in thee, and strengthen thee against all the Enemies thereof? Reply, Lord, I am willing. Behold. the Knot is now tied; and it would not be long before the Consummation of it,

and your Cohabitation with the Lord. The Lord Jesus will shortly fetch you away to the Mansions in his Fathers House; and so you shall Be forever with the Lord. What shall I say more? Let me plead with you like a Servant of my Lord: If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; Will you go to the Son of God for Life, or no? What is your Answer? Oh! Let it be like that which Rebekah made, in Gen. 24:42. I will go. I have only this to tell you, That you will spend Eternal Ages in Praising of God for sending this little Book into your hands. If this may be the Result and Effect of your perusing it. But Oh! The incredible Torments of that Wrath, which is reserved for, The Children of Unpersuadableness.

I Therefore now bow my Knees unto thee, O Father of Spirits, That a Day of thy Power may come unto the Reader of these Lines, and that she may be made willing in this Day of thy Power, to give her Self and her Love unto the Eternal Son of thy Love; Amen. And let her that Reads also say, Amen and Amen.

Counsel. 7.

And yet there is this one thing more, which Women are to be advised unto; Namely, To maintain, The Fear of God, in every condition of Life, into and thorough which the, will of God may carry them. There are particularly, Four States, in one of which all Women are, and to most of which, perhaps most Women come. Let there be set before you, the portraiture of, A Virtuous Woman, in each of those Four States; and let it be your study to answer that portraiture by the Fear of God, in all. While I manage this Discourse, I shall take the liberty to touch now and then upon the signification of such Names as are most usual with the Female Sex; partly, because it is a Curiosity which you would willingly be entertained with; but chiefly, because I may make some Lessons the more easily remembered, yea, and the

more thoroughly attended by that Curiosity. At least I hope, I shall not meet with such a hard Fate, as that German Divine who telling his Auditory, that Ursula signified, A little Bear, a Woman of that Name caused such an Up-roar among the Women against him, as drove him out of the Town.

CHAP. VI

The Virtuous Maid.

'Tis the wish of the Psalmist, in Psal. 144:12. That our Daughters may be as Corner Stones, Polished after the Similitude of a Palace. The Name of Pernel, [or Petronella] which signifies, A pretty little Stone, has been sometimes put upon a Daughter. And now behold, A Virtuous Daughter is here stiled, A Polished Corner Stone by the Spirit of God; She is indeed a Margaret, that is to say, A precious one. It seems 'tis a thing that more than a little sets off the happiness of a People, when the Young Women among them have Accomplishments which render them, like the Tall, Fine, Costly Pillars, that are usually at the Gates of Palaces. The most Christian Jew in his Translation of that place, makes the wish to run, That our Daughters may be—the Building of the Temple. And indeed it is no small happiness unto a People, when the Young Women among them, do Build the Temple of God, and become Stones fit for a Room in that Building. It has doubtless been a most Encouraging thing unto someone Gathered Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to see about Thirty or Forty Gracious Young Women, in two or three years time (as perhaps there have been seen) Addressing them for their Sacred Communion at the Table of the Lord. Now 'tis by, The Fear of God, that a Maid may become one of these Happy Daughters. A

Virtuous Maid, will not Count herself too Young to be concerned about, The Fear of God, but she Obeys that Call, Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth; She believes that word, Behold, Now is the accepted Time, Behold, now is the Day of Salvation! And let us now see what her Carriage is.

I. Such is her Devotion, that while she prudently avoids the Reading of Romances, which do no less Naturally than Generally inspire the minds of Young People with Humours, that are as Vicious as they are Foolish; on the other side, she Piously Reads the Bible Every Day, and she thence fetches those Humble and Holy, and serious Prayers which do obtain for her, all manner of Grace to help in a Time of Need. The Name of Agatha, of A good one, is that which for this cause pertains unto her; and she is an Anna, or a Hannah, which is to say, A gracious one.

II. Such is her Purity, that while she will not suffer the least Behavior or Expression to proceed from her, which may Savor of obscenity; so neither will she Permit, much less Invite, the Dalliances of any Wanton Creatures which may design anything besides what is Honorable on her; nor will she Endure to hear any talk that shall not sound innocently, without bestowing the rebuke of, at least that which for her sake we style, A Maiden-Blush upon it. She is an Agnes, that is, A Chaste one. The Name of Catharine, that is, A Puritan, agrees well unto her; and she had rather have it, though with a scornful Nick-name, than go without it.

III. Such is her Modesty, that she chooses to be Seen rather than Heard wherever she comes; And instead of that Confidence in Repartees and Railleries which passes for Good-breeding with a Debauched Generation, or instead of being like those who (as one says) More Bridle in their Chins, than their Tongues, she counts

Tace, which in English is, Hold your Peace, a Name sometimes worn by some of her Sex, to be a Rule always to be heeded by herself. But if she be constrained at all to speak, she still is an Eulalia, or, A Well-spoken One; and though she will not be, As a Hind let loose, yet she will ever, Give Goodly Words.

IV. Such is her Industry, that she betimes applies herself to learn all the Affairs of Housewifery, and besides a good skill at her Needle, as well as in the Kitchen, she acquaints herself with Arithmetic and Accomptanship, [perhaps also Chirurgery] and such other Arts relating to Business, as may enable her to do the Man whom she may hereafter have, Good and not Evil all the days of her Life. If she have any Time after this to learn Music and Language, she will not lose her Time, and yet she will not be proud of her Skill; though the Name of Lora, that is, Learning, (which the Saxons had in use among them for their Women) should justly belong unto her. She would with all good Accomplishments be a Ruth; which is to say, A Filled one.

V. Such is her Discretion, that while 'tis too absurdly counted a Great Curse to be an Old Maid, she makes her Single State a Blessed one, by improving her Leisure from the Encumbrances of a Family, in Caring for the Things of the Lord, that she may be Holy both in Body and in Spirit: And when she sees what Liberty she thereby has, To serve the Lord without Distraction, she calls herself a Beatrice, that is, A Blessed Woman. She does not Vow a perpetual Virginitie, lest her Vow should happen to expose her; while there are Devils as well as Angels, which do not Marry, nor are given in Marriage. But yet instead of using any Hasty Method to get into the Married Row, and instead of taking a Bad Husband merely to avoid the little Reproach of having None, she does by her Gravity and Holiness, convince all the World, that her present circumstances are of Choice rather than

Force; and the longer she is in them, the more she does Consecrate herself unto the Lord

VI. Such is her Obedience, that as 'twas none of her manner to seek a Match for herself, by putting herself into a Flaunting Dress, knowing that such a Dress would make a Wiseman afraid of her, and it were better to have no Husband, than to have such a Buzzard as could be caught by any Cassandra's [or Women that set Men on fire] in the Snares of an extravagant Gaiety and Bravery; so when a Match does offer himself unto her, she wisely leaves it unto the Reasonable Judgment of her Parents or Guardians, whether he be indeed a Match for her, or no; nor will she dispose of herself without their Consent, Conduct and Blessing in it. Indeed she reckons this is a proper Test, by which a Real and a Worthy Lover may be tried; Let my Superiors, that have the Disposal of me know your Mind! So doth she make herself an Abigail, or her Fathers Joy: and not a Dinah, that is, a Judgment unto him.

This is a Virtuous Maid! And those Virgins which are so Sacred among the Ancient Romans; as to be made the Sanctuaries of the greatest Reverence, did not more deserve all Respect and Honor, than the Virgins which thus manifest, The Fear of God. But we hope it will not be long before she becomes a Wife; which will render her a Mary, that is, an Exalted one; and let us now see, what a Virtuous one.

CHAP. VII

The Virtuous Wife.

When Mr. William Whately, was going to Publish a Book which insisted much on the Duties of a Wife, he Dedicated the Book to his Father-in-law; and in the Epistle, after Solemn Thanks unto him for his bestowing on him, A most Excellent and Virtuous Wife, he adds; I have been the better able to show, what a Good Wife should be, by finding the full Duty of a Wife continually performed unto me, in my own House; most easily therefore might I set out a Picture of that (says he) which is hourly conversant before my Eyes. I cannot say that I am any farther; but I have cause to render unto Heaven my daily and Hearty Thanks, that I am thus far, advantaged for my describing of A Virtuous Wife; and if I thus Publish this Mercy of God unto myself, the unworthiest of Men, let me not be Censured as if my Freedom were a Folly; not only because those Eminent Persons Budaeus and Pareus have before me, in Print Celebrated each of them the worth of his Virtuous Wife, but also because the Wise Man reckons it among the privileges of a Virtuous Wife, in Prov. 31:28. Her Husband also, he Praiseth her.

It was a great abuse which the Ancients who doted upon Virginitie, put upon those words of the Apostle, in Rom. 8:8. Those that are in the Flesh cannot please God; when they supposed all Married Persons to be those intended. A Virtuous Wife is one that pleaseth God, as much as if she were cloistered up in the strictest and closest Nunery; and therewith, yea, therein she pleaseth a Virtuous Husband also; she studies to render herself a true Mabel, or Amiable person, in his Eyes; and a Right Evodias, or, One of a Good Savor to him. You shall now hear her Qualities.

I. As for her Love to her Husband, I may say, 'It is even strong as Death, many waters cannot quench it. neither can the Floods drown it. She can like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, freely leave all the Friends in the World for his Company; and she looks upon that charge of God

unto his Ministers, Teach the Young Women to Love their Husbands, as no less profitable, than highly reasonable. When she reads that Prince Edward in his Wars against the Turks, being stabbed with a poisoned Knife, his Princess did suck the poison out of his Wounds with her own Royal Mouth; she finds in her own Heart a principle disposing her to show her own Husband as great a Love. When she reads of a Woman called Herpine, who having her Husband Appoplex'd in all his Limbs, bore him on her back a Thousand and three Hundred English Miles to a Bath, for his Recovery; she finds herself not altogether unwilling to have done the like. When she reads of those famous Women, who after a hot Siege in the Castle of Winsberg, having obtained this liberty from their enraged Enemies, That they might themselves go out, and also take any one thing they could carry with them; very bravely took up each one her Husband. and so delivered them: She applauds the Example and would follow it. And when she reads of that Generous Young Woman, Clara Cerventa, who having for her Husband one Valdaura, that proved full of most loathsome Diseases, yet she tended him with all the care and cost imaginable, and sold her Jewels to maintain him; and at his Death, after ten long years of Languishment, she replied unto her Friends who would rather have Congratulated her Deliverance, That she would freely lose the best of her Enjoyments to purchase her Dear Valdaura again! She resolves the Imitation of such a Carriage, while she bestows an Admiration on it. Her Affections were not at first founded on the Estate or Beauty of her Husband; and therefore These happen to be consumed, Those do out-live their Funeral, 'It is her Piety towards the Commandment and Ordinance of God, that Inspires her Affections; and so they do not grow cold like a Smiths red hot Bar of Iron, when taken out from the Fire of a misplaced Lust. When she addresses him, with such a Compellation, as, Love, her Heart goes with her Lips, and she means what she speaks.

II. But her Love to her Husband, will also admit, yea, and Produce the Fear of, A Cautious Diligence never to Displease him. 'Twas this which the Apostle Peter meant when he recommends unto the Women, A Chaste Conversation Coupled with Fear; and Paul, when he requires of the Woman, To Reverence her Husband. While she looks upon him as Her Guide, by the constitution of God, she will not Scruple with Sarah to call him Her Lord; and though she do's not Fear his Blowes, yet she do's Fear his Frowns, being loath in any way to grieve him, or cause an Head-ache in the Family by offending him. She would have that famous Decree of the Persians mentioned in the Sacred Bible, That all the Wives give to their Husbands Honor, both to great and small; to be as a Law of the Persians, altogether Unalterable. In every Lawful thing she submits her Will and Sense to his, where she cannot with calm Reasons convince him of Inexpediencies; and instead of grudging or captious contradiction, she acts as if there were but One Mind in two Bodies. If her Abraham give order, Make ready quickly three Measures of Meal or the like, 'tis as quickly done; If her Jacob say to her, I must have you go with me, she most readily yields unto him. If his Unreasonable Humours happen to be such, that she must give some diversion to them, she remembers that Rule, In her Tongue is the Law of Kindness; 'tis by the kindness, the sweetness, the goodness of her expressions that she gives Law unto him. If she speaks of him, 'tis not in such Terms as the Harlot uses in Proverbs, The Man; but it is with all manner of respect: She will not Blaze any Infirmity of his, nor will she Blast his Reputation; being indeed sensible that whatever Ignominy she cast upon him, it infallibly Rebounds and Redounds upon herself: Here she is a true Milea, that is, A Woman of Counsel. If she speak to him, 'tis not with Talkative and Unhandsome Interruptions, nor with any other misbecoming Insolencies; though he be never so much a Churl, yet she ever treats him with the Language of an Abigail. Though she be a Sarah, that is, a Mistress; yet she owns that she has a Master:

And like a Sarah of old, she will not so much as take in, or cast out a Servant without Consulting Him; nor will she receive any Guests or Goods into her House, unless like the Shunamite, she may have her Husbands Approbation; and she will have at least some Implicit or General Consent of His, before she will exercise any Secret Bounties with his Possessions. His Anger will not cause her to swallow a Reproof with discontent, and his Fondness will not make her to forget the Honor that she owes unto him. Indeed there is a Store of Michols in the World; Michol, is as much as to say, Who is all (in the House) but She? But let us leave it unto such Michols alone, To despise their Husbands in their Hearts; God will punish them.

III. But her Fear of Displeasing her Husband, most remarkably appears in the Peace that she preserves with him; and her Antipathy to all Contention, unless it be that of Provoking one another to Love and Good works. A Susan she is, that is, A Lily; but never A Briar to him: Nor will she give him cause to call her Barbara. She will have no such Passion towards her Husband as may make her worthy to be called, A Fury; but if he be himself in a Passion, she strives with the Soft Answers of Meekness to mollify it first, and so to overcome it: She is a true Rachel, that is to say, A Sheep under the greatest Exasperations. A Reverend Person seeing once a Couple that were very Choleric, yet live most lovingly and peaceably together, demanded of them Whence it was? And the man made him this Answer, Sir, When my Wife is in a Passion I yield unto her; and when I am in a Passion she yields unto me; so that we never are in our passionate fits together! The Good Woman will make it her endeavor to attend the last part of this Contrivance; and will give small or no occasion for the first. The Mariners Counts it Bodes well to see Two Fire-Balls appearing in a Ship together; but our Good Woman counts Two Fire-Balls in an House together, to Bode ill as the worst of Omens; nor will she be a party to maintain a Civil War within the

Walls of her Dwelling. She thinks that if there be nothing but Fire! Fire! In the House, 'tis a sign that God, who is The God of Peace, is not graciously present there; as the Jewish Rabbins have noted upon the Hebrew Names of Ish, an Husband, and Ishah a Wife; out of which if you take the two Letters which make the Name of Jah, there will remain only Esh, Esh, that is, Fire! Fire! The old Heathen took Gall from the Nuptial Sacrifices and threw it behind the Altar, to intimate that all Bitterness is to be thrown away by all Married People; Mercury, or good Language, is to stand by Venus. And this Woman accordingly, puts away All Bitterness, Anger, Clamor, and Evil speaking; She is a Right Rebekah, which carries the blunting or hindering of Contention in the signification of it; and a right Shelomith, which is to say, A Peaceable one.

IV. But she is for Plenty as well as Peace in her Household; and by her Thriftiness makes an Effectual and Sufficient Reply unto her Husband. when he does ask her, as he must, Whether he shall Thrive or no? She is a Deborah, that is, A Be for her Diligence and Industry in her Hive. As on the one side she will have none in her House to Want, so on the other side, she will have all of them to Work; or as the Holy Spirit of God expresses it, She looks well to the ways of her Household, and Eats not the Bread of Idleness. Her Husbands Gains are so managed by her Housewifery and Providence, that he finds it his advantage to let her keep the Keys of all; and she will so regulate all the Domestic Expenses, that he shall not complain of anything Embezzled. Her very Fore-cast is as useful as much of her Husbands Business; and the Pennies that she saves do add unto the heaps of the Pounds that are got by him. He has a rich Portion with her, merely in her Prudence; that is it which renders her a Jerusha, or an Inheritance unto him. She is particularly careful, that she do not bear such a Sail of Gallantry, either in her Table or Apparel, or her Furniture as may sink her Husband; nor will she be one of those

Women, who (as one says) are now such skillful Chemists, that they quickly turn their Husbands Earth into Gold; only they pursue the Experiment too far, making that Gold too volatile, and let it all Vapor away in insignificant, though Gaudy Trifles. That Woman deserves the Name of Delilah. that is, Poverty; [unless you will enter upon so hard a Name as Jezebel, that is, A woe to the House;] whose Discretion shall not be better than a Dowry to her Owner.

VI. And this Thriftiness is accompanied with such a Fidelity to her Husband, as that she will not give a Lodging to the least straggling or wandering Thought of Disloyalty in his Bed; lest by her parling with wicked Thoughts, the Devil should insensibly decoy her to the Deeds which God will Judge. She is a Dove, that will sooner die than leave her Mate; and her Husband is to her, The covering of her Eyes, at such a rate, that she sees a Desirableness in him, which she will not allow herself to behold or suppose in any other; neither will she look upon Another, any more than the Wife of Tygranes, who after the Wedding of Cyrus, whom everyone did commend as the rarest Person in the Company; being by her Husband asked What she thought of him? Answered roundly, In truth I looked at no Body there, but you, my Husband. A Wanton had as good Eat Fire, as go to Enkindle any False Fire, or Fools Fire in her Holy Breast; she accounts Adultery to be as the Law of Moses adjudged it, A Capital Crime; and if the Egyptians of old cut off the Nose of the Adulteress, or, if the Athenians tore her in pieces with wild Horses, rather had she undergo the Pain of such things than commit the Crime. She is a Gertude, or All true, in the Marriage Covenant. Yea, she will even Abstain from all appearance of Evil; and as 'tis abominable unto her to entertain the least groundless and causeless Jealousy of her Husband, or to Torture and Expose her own Soul by the uneasy Frenzy of uncharitable surmises concerning him; so she will not give him the least opportunity to think hardly of her. She will not

therefore be too much from Home, upon concerns, that perhaps to him are Unaccountable: But if the Angels do Enquire, where she is, her Husband may reply as once Abraham did, My Wife is in the Tent. Although her Husband be not such an Egyptian as to deny her Shoes; yet her usage of them is, as if like a Scythian, she had the Axle-tree of the Chariot which carried her home after her Wedding, burned at the Door; and she is willing to be painted as the Wives of the Ancients were, with a Snail under her Feet. She affects to be an Esther, that is, A Hidden One. But if a foolish and froward Husband will wrong her with unjust suspicions of her Honesty, she will thence make a Devout Reflection upon her Disloyalty to God; but at the same time very patiently vindicates her Innocency to man: And the more patiently, because the Water of Jealousy procures greater Blessings to those that have it Unrighteously and Abusively Imposed upon them.

VI. But her Fidelity is nowhere more signalized, than in her Solitude for the Eternal Salvation of her Husband. O how unwilling she is that the Precious and Immortal Soul of her poor Husband, should go from her Arms, to make his Bed among the Dragons of the Wilderness forever! The Apostles Exclamation, What knowest thou O Wife, but thou mayest save thy Husband? Is her Prayer, O that I may! Chrysostom's note upon it is, That the Wife is to remind her Husband of what was delivered in the Church. Truly, though a Woman may not Speak in the Church, yet she may humbly Repeat unto her Husband at Home what the Minister Spoke in the Church, that may be Pertinent to his condition. Thus every Paul may have Women that labor with him in the Gospel. Vast Opportunities are those that a Woman has to bring over her Husband unto real and serious Godliness. And a Good Woman will Use those Opportunities. An Esther, a Witty Esther, what cannot she do with the most haughty Husband in the World? What may not a Godly Domitia, or a Godly Monica do, for the Souls of their Unconverted Husbands? If her

Husband be a Carnal, Prayerless, Graceless man; she will not leave off her Ingenious Persuasions, till it may be said of him, Behold he I raise! If her Husband be under the Power of any Temptation, she will do what she can to prevent his Destruction, as that famous Woman did for the City of Abel. She would merit the Name of a Eunice, that is, A good Conqueror, by Conquering of her Husband unto the liking of all that is Good. Instead of saying to him, Curse God? She pursues him with Loving, Winning, Unwearied Solicitations to Fear God, and Serve God, and Never be weary of well doing. Instead of being a Delilah, that shall entangle him in the Cords of Death, she do's all she can to be a Priscilla, that shall more fully acquaint him with the Things Pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

This is a Virtuous Wife! And such a one she will be, although her Husband should be very disobliging to her; She considers, 'It is to the Lord I confess the difficulties that some Unhappy Wives do meet withal, are such that if they be not very Virtuous Wives they cannot possibly conform to these Directions; but this I would say, their being Virtuous is the most likely way to provide against their being Unhappy. But if the Case of any such Wife should be so remarkably hard, that her Husband proceeds to abuse her with a Cudgel [a Hard Case indeed! That a Brides Bush ever should have any Cudgels growing in it!] I know not what further Advice to give her: Only This; Let the Candidness of her Behavior be her Charm against the Assaults of such a Devil; and if that would further help to lay such a Friend, I am content she should Read unto him, not only the Laws of God and Man against that Barbarity, or the Opinion of old Cato That for a man to beat his Wife, was as bad as Sacrilege; but also the Emphatical Words of the Blessed Ancients in the Church of God, Loudly Thundring against this Inhumanity; and particularly those of the Renowned Chrysostom, which are to this Purpose; (if you will allow me the Translating of them)

It is the highest Ignominy, not of the Wife, but of the Man, for a Man to beat his Wife. But if thou hast an Husband that will do so, bear it patiently; and know thou shalt have Rewards hereafter for it, as well as Praises here. As for You, Man, Let me admonish you, that there is no Fault so great, as may compel you to beat your Wives. Your Wives did I say? 'It is a Dishonor for a Man to bestow blows upon his Maid; and much more upon his Wife —We might learn this from the Law-givers among the Gentiles, who take away a Wife from the Man that has beaten her, for indeed he is a Man unworthy of a Wife. Such a Man, if he may be called a Man, and not rather a Beast, is to be counted a Murderer of his Father or Mother. If a Man must leave his Father and Mother for the sake of his Wife, by the Ordinance of God; what a mad wretch is he that shall abuse Her, for whom his very Parents were to be forsaken? Indeed there is not a simple Frenzy in this thing; an Intolerable Disgrace does also accompany it. At the Sighs and Cries of the Abused Wife, all the Neighborhood run to the Base Fellows House, as for the rescue of a Prey fallen into the Talons of a Wild-Beast that had broken in. And such a Rascal were better be Buried alive, than show his Head among his Neighbors anymore.

See Hom. l. 26. in 1 Ep. ad Corinth.

But wishing all Good Women, a deliverance from such Monsters of Husbands, we will suppose our Virtuous Wife now grown a Mother; and see how she acquits herself.

CHAP. VIII

The Virtuous Mother.

The Apostle Wills, That the Younger Women Marry, and Bear Children; and as 'tis too soon for them to Bear Children till they Marry, so 'tis ordinarily expected, that they will Bear Children when they Marry. If a Virtuous Wife be denied the blessing of Children, her not Bearing is not a Trial that she cannot Bear. She humbly addresses the God of Heaven, like Hanah, for that Gracious and Powerful Word of his which makes Fruitful, as remembering, That Children are a Heritage of the Lord, and the Fruitful Womb is his Reward; But she will not impatiently long like Rachel, Give me Children or I die, lest she die by her having of those Children. Much less, will she have so little Wit as to suspect her own Eternal Happiness, because of her Natural Barrenness, like those mistaken little Women who having thus argued from that Scripture, She shall be saved in Child bearing; Very fine indeed! As if Child-bearing were no less a condition in the Covenant of Grace, than Repenting and Believing! But her Natural Barrenness is rather improved by her as an occasion of her Eternal Happiness, by the Spiritual Fulness whereto she is thereby excited and assisted; it causes her to be more Fruitful in all the good works of Piety and Charity; more Fruitful in her endeavors otherwise to Serve her Generation after the will of God; more Fruitful in all these things whereby, The Heavenly Father may be Glorified: And she will consider with herself, What Service of God, and his People, and my own Soul have I now a Leisure for?

Nevertheless if our Virtuous Woman become a Parent, we shall see what a Virtuous Mother she will approve herself.

I. She is no sooner sensible that she has Conceived, but she presently and solemnly, and perhaps with Fasting as well as Prayer, applies herself to the God of Heaven, that he would with his own Holy Spirit Fill and Shape what is in her; and that what is to be Born of her, may be An Holy Thing. She accounts the Treasure now lodged in her to be

of more account than all the Riches of a Thousand India 's, inasmuch as 'tis a Never dying Soul, by which the Almighty God may forever be Glorified. And as therefore she carefully avoids all that may prejudice the Formation of the Infant in her, so she loves it aforehand with a due Earliness and Earnestness that the Infant may be Sanctified in the Womb. She is not inordinately set upon having an Infant of one Sex, more than another; but her great concern is that which a Big-bellied Woman once recorded in a Legacy left written as her Desire for her Unborn Infant, That she may be a Mother to one of God's Children! Suppose it be a Daughter, which usually (and perhaps needlessly) is less longed for; yet if it may be a Bethia, that is, A Daughter of the Lord; or a Diana, that is, A Daughter of God, she has her Choice; and she is freely willing that God should have the Proportioning of Sexes in the World.

II. That she may be Saved in Childbearing, She continues in Faith, and Charity, and Holiness, with Sobriety, all the Months of her Time; and puts her Husband also upon the exercise of those Virtues, that it may not only be [She] but [They] that so Continues. By Faith she relies upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who was Born of a Woman, for the Salvation both of her Soul and of her Babe, if God should not permit her to out-live the Dangerous Agonies of her Travails: By Faith she depends upon the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, for her seasonable Deliverance. Like Sarah, Judging him Faithful who has promised. The Burden which is in her, she does by Faith Transfer into the Omnipotent hands of that God, whose invitation to her is, Cast thy Burden on the Lord; and she searches the Bible, especially the Psalter, for words to plead with the Lord upon this great Affair: That word particularly is a support unto her, Isa. 41:10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; Be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of my Righteousness; and that word in Psal. 34:22. and

that in Psal. 37:5. and that in Psal. 42:11. and that in 1 Cor. 10:13. and that in 2 Cor. 12:9. and that in Heb. 13:5. And her Faith or Faithfulness to her Consort, is at the same time such as does Adorn the Doctrine of God her Savior By Charity she professes to the Lord Jesus Christ, Thou knowest that I love thee; and she can say as that Martyr, who unto the Persecutors that threatened they would bereave her of the Companion of her Life, answered, Christ is my Husband, you cannot strip me of him! By Charity she Loves the Brethren, and by suitable kindnesses engages them that have an interest in Heaven, to Pray for Prosperity. The Sacred Fire of her Charity flames especially towards the Man of her Desires, whom she Loves with a pure Heart fervently; and this Charity helps her To endure all things. Her Holiness causes her to Dedicate all that she has as well as all that she is, unto the Service of God; her Holiness makes her spend her time in much Devotion, and use all manner of Exactness and Watchfulness over all her ways; her Holiness disposes her to be ready for whatever Event the Sovereign God may order for her; and so Ready, that she can without amazement Lay by the Linnen wherein she would be Laid out, in case like Rache! She have such Hard Labor, that her Soul Depart. Her Sobriety renders her a true Sophronia, and causes her with Modesty to govern all her Speeches and Passions; with Temperance like Manoah's Wife, to forbear noxious excesses in Eating or Drinking; and with Chastity to Mortify all inclinations unto whatever shall be Loose, Lewd, Lascivious. Being thus prepared for the Hour, when The Anguish of bringing forth her Child is upon her, she is then found composing herself with hope in God; and resolving Lord, at what Time I am afraid, I will put my Trust in thee! Indeed the blessed Sabina, crying out when she Travelled in Prison, and being asked, How she would endure the Torments and Burnings which her Enemies had prepared for her? Answered, I now bear the punishment of my Sin; I shall then suffer Martyrdom for my Savior. But a pregnant Christian will

moderate her Complaints in the Hour, when Pangs take hold on her, because They have been brought by Sin, and because, There is a Savior who thus came into the World.

III. When she is well Delivered, she is a true Judith or a Praising One; Oh! How is that Thankful Question immediately working in her Breast, What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? When she finds herself strong enough to Hear and Think, she makes The hundred and Sixteenth Psalm to be Read unto her; and when she Contemplates what a Million of Mercies there are in the Birth of one Perfect Child, she would, if it were Proper, Name everyone Mehetabel, that is, How good is God! However she now Devotes her Child unto God, saying with Hannah, I have lent it unto the Lord as long as it Lives; even every Daughter shall be a Bathsheba, that is, A Daughter of an Oath, to God, that so she may be a Bathshua, that is, A Daughter of Salvation from the Lord. And she desires the Baptism of it, not as the Formality of putting a Name upon it, nor as an opportunity for Dressing and Showing of it, but that thus Coming into the Bond of the Covenant, it may Pass under the Lord's Tything Rod, as a Lamb set a part for him. And how Ardent are her Groan's as if she were even Travelling in Birth again, that her Child may be washed in the Laver of the New Birth betimes!

IV. Her care for the Bodies of her Children, shows itself in her Nursing of them herself, if God have made her Able for it, and it Easy for her. She is not a Dame that shall scorn to Nourish in the World, the Children whom she has already Nourished in her Womb: If like Sarah she be a Lady, yet she counts it not below her to be a Nurse. If God have granted her Bottles of Milk on her Breast, she thinks that her Children have a Claim unto them. It shall not be her Niceness, but her Necessity and Calamity, if she do not Suckle her own Off-Spring; and she will not from Sloth and Pride, be so Unnatural as to

give Cause for that Exclamation. The Sea Monsters draw out the Breast, they give suck to their Young ones; But the Daughter of my People is become Cruel, like the Ostrich in the Wilderness, who is hardened against her Young ones, as though they were not hers. Now having Nursed her Young ones, 'tis her next care that they be well provided, as with such Conveniences as belong to their present state, so with such Callings and Portions as may hereafter make them serviceable in their Generation; and when they are grown Marriageable, her Discretion and her Tenderness is yet more Eminently seen in her Matching of them.

V. But her Zeal for the Spirits of her Children, is that which do's most Eat her up; O how concerned she is, that they may be Brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord! When she first received her Children, she imagined the Immortal God committing them to her charge, as the Princess of Egypt unto the Mother of Moses, Here, Take this Child, Nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy Wages. Wherefore she becomes a Martha, that is, A Teacher, to them all. She begins with them while they are upon her Knees, and instructs them how to fall down in Prayer upon their own. She will not put them upon Revenge, by asking them to give her a Blow that she may Beat anything that vexes them; but she fears they will soon Learn That, and every other Vice without a Teacher. The First Liquors that she puts into those Little Vessels, are Histories and Sentences fetched from the Oracles of God, and Institutions How to Pray in Secret unto their Heavenly Father. She then proceeds to make 'em Expert in some Orthodox Catechisms, and will have 'em Learn to Read and Write, as fast as ever they can take it; and so she passes to the other parts of an Ingenuous Education with them. She is like another Bathsheba, always instilling into their Children something that is Wise and Good; and she keeps up that Authority over them that they Fear as well as Love her; and they dare not Refuse what she shall

Command. Unto her Instruction she also joins an Inspection of them; so that she is very gravely Inquisitive into their Employments, their Companies, their Experiences: Nor will she spare Corrections where their Miscarriages do call for the Rod; and she will not overlay them with her Sinful Fondness, lest God make them Crosses to her, for her being afraid of Crossing them in their Exorbitances. And besides the Example of all Virtue that she sets before them, she is frequently Praying with them, as well as for them, That they may be saved. She pursues the Lord with such Cries for her Children as the Canaanitess used, Lord, Heal my Child, that is annoyed by a Devil! And such as Monica used for Aushtin, upon which a great Person said unto her, 'It is impossible that a Child of so many Tears should ever Perish! And she will carry them one after another alone into her Closet with her, where she do's wrestle with God for them all, professing I will not let thee go, except thou Bless them. Her Children being thus well Brought up, she will do as the Lady Cornelia did unto the Ladies who expected she would show them her Jewels, as they had shown her theirs; even Bring forth her well Educated Children as her Jewels.

VI. If she meets with any Disasters in her Children, by her Patience and her Piety she turns them into Benefits. 'It is possible her Children may Sin, but this causes her presently to reflect upon the Errors of her own Heart and Life, and especially upon any defect in her conduct unto them; So she is put upon The Repentance which is not to be Repented of. 'It is also possible her Children may Die, but she is not then like the overwhelmed Women of Bethlehem, Weeping for their Children, and not willing to be Comforted because they are not. Instead of saying like Jacob, All these are against me; she rather says with Joseph, God may mean it unto God. She do's not Roar like a Beast, and Howl, I cannot bear it; but she rather says, I can take anything well at the hands of God. She follows them to the Grave as a

very moderate Mourner, with Hopes that God is carrying on the Everlasting designs of His Grace in her Soul by these Dispensations; and with Hopes that their Souls are gone to be With Christ, which is by far the best of all. She looked upon her Children as mere Loans from God, which he may call for when he please; and she quietly submits, if God say, Give them up, you have had them long enough! Of old such as could not Encounter an Affliction patiently, were condemned therefore, To wear Womens Clothes; but the Clothes of our Good Woman, will not be a Bar to her bearing of this Affliction patiently. She parts with her Children in such Terms as Jerome on that occasion directs his Friends unto; Lord, thou hast now taken from me, the Children which thou hadst first given to me; I do not complain that thou dost now Receive them; I give Thanks that ever thou didst at first bestow them. She has already plucked out a Right Eye, and cut off a Right Hand for God; and so she can readily part with another Limb at a call of his: Yea, though the Death were never so awfully circumstanced, yet she says, The will of the Lord be done! And she will not let one Sorrow swallow up the sense of a Thousand, a Million of Mercies, but she approves the Temper of that Good Woman, who having Two Children by a violent stroke taken from her, handsomely took up the Third, and said, Blessed be God that has left me this! If they were Infant Children; whereof she is bereaved, she Assures herself, that the Lord is their God, and so they cannot be miserable. No, Let me go to them, (saith she) They shan't return to me. If they were Adult Children, she Comforts. herself that they might have The Root of the Matter in them, under whatever Clods of Airiness or Bashfulness it might have been concealed; and that whatever suspicious marks might have been upon them, they might seek and find mercy, Between the Stirrup and the Ground. So she takes that Counsel, Refrain thy Voice from Weeping, and thine Eyes from Tears, for thy Work shall be Rewarded.

This is the Virtuous Mother; And she is one that also counts her Servants to be after a sort her Children too: She Guides the House according to her Office prescribed by the Apostle; so that with a Motherly Deportment unto them, with an Obliging, but yet Reserved Carriage towards them, and with a Charitable Regard unto the Everlasting Welfare of their Souls: You may see her acquitting herself evermore as a Virtuous Mistress likewise in the Family. But there is danger lest she become a Widow before she die; if she do, let us now take notice of her Frame and Mein, in the Sorrowful Condition that is now come upon her.

CHAP. IX

The Virtuous Widow.

The Vast Numbers of Poor Widows in every Neighborhood, make it very suspicious that our Virtuous Mother may at some time or other taste the Sad, Sour, Tear-full Cup of Widow-hood. If this be the Portion of her Cup, we must suppose that she gives her Husband a Decent Burial; that is, as on the one side, a Funeral that shall not be below his Figure, so on the other side, a Funeral that shall not be above her Estate; and while she dislikes the expensive Humours of Poland, where two or three Funerals coming one upon another, are so extravagantly Chargeable as to Ruin a whole Family: She nevertheless will give as Honorable an Interment as ever she can to the Forsaken Mansion of the Soul which was dearer to her than the World.

Conceiving our Virtuous Woman to have her Widows Vail upon her, we may behold her demeaning herself as a most Virtuous Person in

it.

I. Her Grief on the Death of her Husband is Great, and yet Wise, and as Wisely Great as Greatly Wise. Her Mourning is more like a still Rain, than a loud Storm; and instead of Bellowing Passions which usually molder away into a total and the coldest Forgetfulness, faster than the Corpse of the Husband in the Grave; she has a Silent but a Lasting sorrow; and yet that sorrow moderated by a Filial Submission to the hand of that Glorious God, before whom she Opens not her Mouth any more than humbly to say, Lord, thou didst it. She will not by intemperate Vexations and Afflictions of herself, make herself like the Frantic Women in the East-Indies, which burn themselves to Death in the Fire wherein they consume the Dead-Bodies of their Husbands; but yet she calls herself Marah, saying, The Lord has dealt bitterly with me!

II. It is now her main study and solace to have an Interest in that Promise, Isa 54:5. Thy Maker is thy Husband. And therefore like her whom the Apostle calls A Widow indeed, she Trusteth in God, and continueth in Supplications and Prayers Night and Day. She considers herself as now more than ever belonging to the Family of God; with a persuasion that he will certainly and Faithfully Provide for her. Hence also the time that she formerly spent in Conversation with her Husband, she now spends in Supplication to, and Meditation on her God; and by an extraordinary Devotion, she seeks to find all that in the All-sufficient Jesus, which may repair the absence of the best Husband upon Earth. She is an Elizabeth, or one to whom the Fulness of God in the Promise of God is enough.

Moreover, if she be capable of it, she will now more abound in all the Exercises of Charity towards her needy Neighbors; whether she have the Name of Alice or no, yet according to the signification of it, She'll

be Noble: And she will be an Helena, or an Eleanor, which is to say, as much as Pitiful: Her Visits, her Bounties, and her Succors to the poor are now increased rather than abated, with her new Leisure for them; and if she be a Person of Quality, she becomes yet more excellent for this Quality - What is a Lady in true and old English, but a Loaf-dian, that is, A Bread server? Or one that will give Loafs of Bread unto the Indigent. She is both an Anna a Widow which departs not from the Temple, but serves God with Fasting's and Prayers Night and Day; and a Dorcas, A Widow full of Good Works and Alms-Deeds. Thus will she to better purpose than once another Woman did, explain the Riddle of Samson by finding Honey in a Carcass: Promoting the Life of her own Soul, by the Death of him whom she loved as her own Soul. Much less will she ever venture to do anything unworthy the Character and Relation of that Person (if he were a Worthy Person) whose Relict she is now become.

III. She reckons that she must now be Father as well as Mother to the Orphans with whom she is left Entrusted; and their Fathers beloved Image on them, dos farther Augment, yea, Double her Care concerning them. While her Husband was Alive she still acted as a Deputy Husband, for the maintaining of all good Orders in the House, when he was out of the way. And now her Husband is Deceased, she thinks that upon the Setting of the Sun, the Moon is to Govern; and there shall not be one Prayer the less performed, or one Fault the more indulged among her poor Lambs, because he is gone. The Kindred of her Expired Husband are also still welcome and grateful to her, upon his Account. But she is now particularly more Solicitous than ever to teach her Children how to obtain that Favor of God, When my Father is gone, the Lord shall take me up. Some Women have the Names of Men a little altered, as Jaquet (from Jacoba) Joanna, Joan, Jane, Jennet (all from John.) Thomasin, Philippa, Frances, Henrietta, Antonia, Julian, Dionysià, and the like.

But all our Widows are thus put upon doing the Works of Men; may their God help them!

IV. She is not Forward and Hasty now to take the Liberty which the Scripture does Give unto Younger Widows; that is, to Marry. While she has one Eye Weeping for her Departed Husband, she has not the other open to see Who comes next? Nor will she think an Ephesian Matron a fit Copy for her. She counts it no hard Law, which even the Ancient Pagans kept with great severity; That no Widow should Marry within Ten or Twelve Months after the Death of her Husband: And she wonders that any Christians ordinarily can Marry sooner. If she had a Good Husband, his Memory has been so Embalmed with her, that she cannot presently make room in her Affections for another. If she had a bad Husband, the Cross felt so heavy, that she will be Slow to be Sure that it be not renewed upon her. But if after a convenient stay she do Marry, it shall be, Only in the Lord; unto a Man that shall be neither Heretical in his Principles, nor Exorbitant in his Practices; and unto one that may be proper for her. Wherefore also if she be very Old, she will not without special causes marry one that is very Young; suspecting that such a pretended Lover may Court Hers more than Her; and that if there be too much (as perhaps a score of years) Inequality of Age, it may otherwise Prove as Temptatious, as it Looks Indecent. Indeed Jerome tells us of an Old man at Rome who had Buried Twenty Wives, which he took one after the Death of the other; and that he then took the Twenty first, who also had Buried Nineteen Husbands; but me thinks they were an Ugly Couple. And the Woman whereof Buxtorf relates in his Talmudic Lexicon, that she Buried Eleven Husbands, and had then an Epitaph of Eleven Verses bestowed upon herself, deserved sure the last stroke of her Epitaph, which was to this purpose, A Woman fit to have no Bed but a Cold Grave.

V. When she is Matched unto a Second Husband, whom she will never twit with any Reflecting and Uncomely Remembrances of her First; She is more than ordinarily solicitous to be A Good Mother-in-Law, if she must be one at all; and so do her part for the removing of those Imputations which Mother-in-Law have generally labored under. She knows that the way for her to have the Blessing of Heaven upon Her Children, is for her to make herself a Blessing to His; and Unkindness's to the Motherless little Birds which now call her their Dam, will certainly be repaid by the Just Revenges of God. She is therefore so far from the partiality of that Mother-in-Law, who when her own Child hurt a Child of her Husbands by throwing of a Stone, Whipped the Child that felt the Stone, for standing in the way of the Child that slung it; that she makes no observable difference between his Children and hers; unless it be This, that she Corrects hers herself, and refers his to him; and yet for her at any time to inform her Husband of any ill Manners in his Children, is a thing whereto she has an Aversion so extreme, that she will never do it, unless upon extreme Necessity. Indeed she Essays to be such a Wife unto him, that she may not merit the Name which the Second Wise of Lamech had; Namely, Zillah, or, but A Shadow of a Wife: Much less would she be as the First of them was called, an Anah, that is, An Afflicter to him.

VI. At length Old Age comes upon her; and Prisca, or Priscilla, that is. An Old Woman, is her Title; but by a Hoary Head found in the way of Righteousness it is that she now Challenges the Honor of a Saint, even from those abusive Tongues, which use to traduce for A Witch, every Old Woman, whose Temper with her Visage is not eminently Good. She thoroughly studies every particle of the Apostolical Charge, That the Aged Women, be in behavior as becometh Holiness; not make bates, not given to much wine, Teachers of good things; That they may Teach the Young Women:

And the nearer she comes to her End, the more acquainted she is with Him that is from the Beginning. She is not impatient of being Esteemed Old; and styled Bilhah, that is, Fading; nor do's it offend her, as once an English Queen, to be told that, That Age hath sprinkled its Meal upon her Head. But she keeps longing for the Day, when the Lord Jesus will send his Angels to fetch her unto the Regions of Everlasting Light and Life, and keeps wishing Oh come Lord Jesus! Till she arrive to be Forever with the Lord.

This is a Virtuous Widow. God grant that our Widows may not be Multiply' d; but for them that are, God grant that they may be thus Virtuous! That is it which will render them all Jochebeds, which is, Most Glorious Ones.

I now Praise thee, O my God for thy Assisting my Endeavors to describe the Praises of the Virtuous Woman; and rely upon thy Grace in thy Son, that these my poor Labors may be Accepted and Succeeded among the Daughters of thy People. Amen.

FINIS.

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