

***Female Piety —  
The Young Woman's Guide  
through Life to Immortality***

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## FEMALE PIETY

### Introduction

Woman was the finishing grace of the creation. Woman was the completeness of man's bliss in Paradise. Woman was the cause of sin and death to our world. The world was redeemed by the seed of the woman. Woman is the mother of the human race; our companion, counselor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life; or our tempter, scourge, and destroyer. Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness, or our bitterest draught of sorrow, is mixed and administered by her hand. She not only renders smooth or rough our path to the grave, but helps or hinders our progress to immortality. In heaven we shall bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that blissful state; or amid the torments of unutterable woe in another region, we shall deplore the fatality of her influence!

This work was delivered originally in a course of monthly sermons, to which I was led by a conviction that woman, as regards her specific duties, is too much neglected in the ministry of the church; an omission which must be traced to a morbid delicacy unworthy of the pulpit. Happily this reproach does not appertain to the press, to which perhaps, in the opinion of some, this subject ought to be exclusively consigned. But why? Can any good and valid reason be assigned for shutting out from the house of God instructions to so important a class of the community? Many people almost instinctively shrink from such addresses, from a fear lest matters should be introduced at which modesty would blush, and by which the finer sensibilities would be wounded. There is a prudishness in such feelings which can be justified neither by reason nor revelation.

It may be as well to announce in the opening chapter that the whole course will be of a decidedly religious nature. For all the general directions and excellences of female character, I shall refer to the various works which on these topics have issued from the press. My *subject* is religion, my *object* is the soul, my *aim* is salvation. I view you, my female friends, as destined to another world, and it is my business to aid and stimulate you, *'by patient continuance in well-doing, to seek for glory, honor, and im-*

*mortality,'* and to obtain eternal life! I look beyond the painted and gaudy scene of earth's fading vanities, to the everlasting ages through which you must exist in torment or bliss; and, God helping me, it shall not be my fault if you do not live in comfort, die in peace, and inherit salvation!

### The Influence of Christianity on the Condition of Woman

*'There is neither Jew nor Greek — there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'*

- Galatians 3:28

I can think of no subject with which more appropriately to commence this work, than the influence of Christianity on the condition of woman.

Our first attention must be directed of course to the condition of the female sex beyond the boundaries of Christendom.

It would seem from the words of the original denouncement upon Eve for her transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, that while yet the first pair were innocent, there was a more entire equality of condition and rights between the sexes than there has been after the fall. *'Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.'* This sounds like something penal, though perhaps some would regard it as merely predictive, and intended to describe the cruel and brutalizing tendency of sin, in turning man, who ought to be the loving companion of his wife, into a tyrant. How fearfully, if predictive, this sentence has been fulfilled, the degradation of woman, her wrongs, her sorrows, and her vices, in many cases, most painfully attest.

History, which will ever be found to corroborate revelation, proves that in most Pagan and Mohammedan nations, whether ancient or modern, woman has been cruelly and wickedly sunk below her proper level in social and domestic life, *'hated and despised from her birth, and her birth itself esteemed a calamity; in some countries not even allowed the rank of a moral and responsible agent; so tenderly alive to her own degradation that she acquiesces in the murder of her female offspring; immured from infancy; without education; married without her consent; in a multitude of instances sold by her parents; refused the confidence of her husband, and banished from his table; on his death, doomed to the funeral pile, or to*

*contempt that renders life a burden.*' In such a condition she has been the household drudge, or the mere object of lust. She has ministered to the gratification of man's indolence or sensual appetite, but has not been his companion, his counselor, or his comforter. In barbarous countries she has been a slave; in civilized ones very generally little better than a kept mistress. Her mind has been left untaught, as if incapable or unworthy of instruction. She has been not only imprisoned in seclusion by jealousy, but degraded and rendered inferior and miserable by polygamy. Sometimes worshiped as a goddess; next fondled as a toy; then punished as a victim, she could never attain to dignity, and even with all her brightest charms could rarely appear but as a doll or a puppet.

Exceptions to some extent may be made in favor of the polished Greeks and proud Romans — but only to some extent; for did time permit, and necessity require, it could be shown that neither Athenian refinement nor Roman virtue gave to woman her just rank by the side of her husband, or her proper place in his affection, esteem, and confidence.

Neither Paganism nor Mohammedanism ever yet understood the female character, or conceded woman's just claims. In many nations the degradation has been excessive. You remember probably the reply of a Pagan mother, who having been expostulated with for the murder of her female child, contended that she had performed an act of mercy in sparing the babe the miseries of a woman's life. All travelers and all missionaries attest the fact of woman's humiliation, beyond the boundaries of Biblical revelation.

If we go to the Bible, we shall learn that it is to Christianity, as contrasted even with Judaism, that woman owes her true elevation. Polygamy is, and ever must be, fatal to female dignity and happiness — this, or at any rate concubinage, was practiced, no doubt under mistaken views, by the patriarchs; not that it was ever positively sanctioned by God, for from the beginning he made one woman for one man, and by the providential and remarkable fact of the general equality of the sexes as to numbers, he still proclaims in unmistakable language the law of monogamy. But to use an expression of the apostle, '*he winked at*' these things — he did not regard it as innocent or convenient, yet he did not say much about it, or punish it — but left it to punish itself, which it most certainly did. If we examine the Levitical code we shall find that even it, though a Divine

dispensation, contained some regulations which evinced that the time of woman's full emancipation from a state of inferiority had not yet arrived — and that it was reserved for the glorious and gracious economy under which we are placed, to raise the female sex to its just position and influence in society.

Christianity as in other things, so in this, is an enlargement of human privileges; and among other blessings which it confers, is its elevation of woman to her proper place and influence in the family and in society.

Let us now consider what there is in Christianity that tends to elevate and improve the condition of woman.

To the oppressive and cruel customs of Mohammedanism and Paganism, in their treatment of the female sex — Christianity presents a beautiful and lovely contrast; while to the partial provisions for female rights in Judaism it adds a complete recognition of their claims. It is the glory of our holy Christian religion, and a proof of its emanation from the Divine beneficence, that it is the enemy of oppression in every form and every condition, and gives to every one his due. It tramples on no right, it resents and resists all wrong — but no one of all the sons of men is so indebted to its merciful and equitable reign as woman. From Christianity woman has derived her moral and social influence — yes, almost her very existence as a social being. The mind of woman, which many of the philosophers, legislators, and sages of antiquity doomed to inferiority and imbecility, Christianity has developed. The gospel of Christ in the person of its Divine Founder, has descended into this neglected mine, which even wise men had regarded as not worth the working, and brought up many a priceless gem, flashing with the light of intelligence, and glowing with the lovely hues of Christian graces. Christianity has been the restorer of woman's plundered rights, and has furnished the brightest jewels in her present crown of honor.

Her previous degradation accounts, in part at least, for the instability of early civilization. It is impossible for society to be permanently elevated where woman is debased and servile. Wherever females are regarded as inferior beings, society contains within itself the elements of dissolution, and the obstruction of all solid improvement. It is impossible that institutions and usages which oppose and stifle the instincts of our nature, and violate the revealed law of God, can be crowned with ultimate success.

Society may change in its external aspect; may exhibit the glitter of wealth, the refinements of taste, the embellishments of art, or the more valuable attainments of science and literature; but if the mind of woman remain undeveloped, her taste uncultivated, and her person enslaved — the social foundations are insecure and the cement of society is weak. Wherever Christianity is understood and felt, woman is free. The gospel, like a kind angel, opens her prison doors and bids her walk abroad and enjoy the sunlight of reason, and breathe the invigorating air of intellectual freedom. And in proportion as pure Christianity prevails this will be ever found to be the case.

But all this is vague and general assertion, and I will bring forward proofs of it.

Christianity elevates the condition of woman by its genius as '*a system of universal equity and benevolence.*' When it descended from heaven to earth, it was heralded into our world by the angel's song, '*Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace and good will to men.*' The offspring of infinite love, it partakes of the spirit, and reflects the character, of its Divine Parent. Christianity is essentially and unalterably the enemy of all injustice, cruelty, and oppression — and the friend of all that is just, kind and courteous. The rough, the brutal, and the ferocious, are alien from its spirit; while the tender, the gentle, and the courteous, are entirely in unison with its nature. It frowns with indignant countenance upon tyranny, whether in the palace or the parlour, while it is the friend of liberty, and the patron of right. The man who understands its genius, and lives under its inspiration, whether he be a monarch, a master, a husband, or a father — must be a man of equity and love. Christianity inspires the purest chivalry — a chivalry shorn of vanity, purified from passion, elevated above frivolity — a chivalry of which the animating principle is love to God, and the scene of its operation the domestic circle, and not the public pageant. He who is unjust or unkind to any one, especially to the weaker sex, betrays a total ignorance of, or a manifest repugnance to, the practical influence of the gospel of Christ. It is a mistake to suppose that the faith of Jesus is intended only to throw a dim religious light over the gloom of the cloister, or to form the character of the devotee; on the contrary, it is pre-eminently a social thing, and is designed as well as adapted to form a character which shall go out into the world in a spirit of universal benevolence — to such a character the oppressor or degrader of woman can make no pretensions.

The incarnation of Christ tended to exalt the dignity of the female sex. His assuming humanity has given a dignity to our nature which it had never received before, and could not have received in any other way. Christ is '*the Pattern Man*' of our race, in whom all the lines of humanity converge and unite, so far as the existence of our race goes. When he took man's nature, he allied himself to all the members of the extended race by the actual adoption of a human body, which gave him relationship to them. He not only became like men and dwelt among them, but he became man himself, an actual descendant from their first progenitor. He was made man. Human nature became more precious. By the manner of his birth, he associated himself with our nature. This appears to be the meaning of the apostle in his quotation of the eighth Psalm in the epistle to the Hebrews, to show the dignity conferred upon humanity, by its being assumed by so glorious a person, as our Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature was.

If, then, manhood is honored by Christ assuming it, how much more is woman exalted, who, in addition to this, was made the instrument of giving birth to the humanity of Christ? It is emphatically said by the apostle, '*When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*' In the person of the Virgin Mary, and by her giving birth to the holy being born of her, the female sex was elevated. True, it was a personal distinction, that Mary should be the mother of our Lord's humanity — and (while she has been by the apostate Church of Rome wickedly exalted into an object of idolatrous homage) all generations justly call her blessed. Yet the honor is not limited to herself, but passes over to her sex, which she represented; and it is to this the apostles allude. He does not mention her, but dwells upon the abstract general term, '*made of a woman.*' Every female on earth, from that day to this, has had a relative elevation, by and in that wonderful transaction.

Woman was not the mother of God, as the Papists absurdly, and, as I think, blasphemously, say; but she was the mother of that human being who was mysteriously united with Divinity. And does not this great fact proclaim, '*Let the sex which alone was concerned in giving birth to the Son of God, and Savior of the world, be ever held in high estimation.*'

*The personal conduct of our Lord* during his sojourn upon earth tended to exalt the female sex to a consideration before unknown. Follow him through the whole of his earthly career, and mark the attention which he

most condescendingly paid to, and as condescendingly received from, the female sex. He admitted them to his presence, conversed familiarly with them, and accepted the tokens of their gratitude, affection, and devotedness. See him accompanying his mother to the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee. See him conversing with the woman of Samaria, instructing her ignorance, enduring her petulance, correcting her mistakes, awakening her conscience, converting her soul, and afterwards employing her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her neighbors. See him rebuking his disciples for discouraging the approach of mothers and their infants. See him compassionating the widow of Nain, and restoring her son to life. See him in the little family of Bethany, blending his sympathies with the bereaved sisters; and on another occasion entering into familiar conversation with this same Martha and Mary, and faithfully rebuking one and kindly commending the other. See him receiving the offerings of those women who ministered to him of their substance. Witness the attendance of pious women upon him in the last scenes of his life. It was to Mary Magdalene that the honor of the first manifestation of the risen Saviour was made; and thus a woman was preferred to apostles, and made the messenger of the blissful news to them.

*‘The frequent mention,’ says Doddridge, ‘which is made in the evangelists of the generous courage and zeal of pious women in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in those last scenes of his suffering, might very possibly be intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex, which probably in the sight of God has constituted by far the better half of mankind; and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyments of their lives.’*

Compare this behavior towards women — this chaste, holy, dignified conduct of our Lord — with the polygamy, licentiousness, and impurities of Mohammed, not merely as evidence of their respective claims, but as regards their influence upon the condition of woman — while the one did everything by example and by precept to corrupt, to debase, and to degrade them — Jesus did everything to purify, to elevate, and to bless them. The conduct of Mohammed, the Arabian zealot and impostor, and the boasts of

his followers and admirers, are too revolting for description, almost for allusion.

But on the contrary, what one syllable of the Savior’s utterances, or what one scene of his life, was there, which tainted the immaculate purity of his language, or left the slightest stain upon the more than snow-like sanctity of his character? What part of his conduct might not be unveiled and described before a company of the most modest, most delicate, and even most prudish-minded females in existence? But his treatment of woman raised her from her degradation without exalting her above her level. He rescued her from oppression without exciting her vanity; and invested her with dignity without giving her occasion for pride. While he allowed her not only to come into his presence, but to minister to his comfort; and while he conciliated her grateful and reverent affection, he inspired her with awe; and thus taught man how to behave to woman, and what return woman was to make to man.

The conduct of Jesus Christ towards the female sex was one of the most attractive excellences of his beautiful character, though perhaps it is one of the least noticed. To him they must ever point, as not only the Savior of their souls, but as the advocate of their rights and the guardian of their peace.

The actual abolition of *polygamy* by Christianity is a vast improvement in the condition of woman. Wherever polygamy prevails, the female sex must ever be in a state of degradation and misery. *‘Experience has abundantly and painfully proved that polygamy debases and brutalizes both the body and the soul, and renders society incapable of those generous and refined affections, which, if duly cultivated, would be found to be the inheritance even of our fallen nature.’* Where is there an instance in which polygamy has not been the source of many and bitter calamities in the domestic circle and in the State? Where has it reared a virtuous and heaven-taught progeny? Where has it been distinguished for any of the moral virtues — or rather where has it not been distinguished for the most fearful degeneracy? By this practice, which has prevailed so extensively through nearly all countries and all ages in which Christianity has not been known, or has not been paramount, marriage loses all its tenderness, its sanctity, and its reciprocal confidence; the cup of wedded felicity is exchanged for that of mere animal lustful pleasure; woman panders to the sensual appetite of

man, instead of ministering to his comfort — and the home assumes much of the character of a debased brothel.

There may be several mistresses, but there can be only one wife; and though there may be many mothers, they are without a mother's affection; presenting a scene of endless envy and jealousy, before which domestic comfort must ever depart, leaving mere sensual gratification. No stimulus to improvement, no motive to fidelity, no ambition to please, can be felt by a wife who may be supplanted the next month by a new favorite. And in such circumstances there is no room and little occasion for the display of those virtues which constitute female honor.

Here, then, is the glorious excellence of Christianity; it revived and re-established the original institute of marriage, and restored to woman her fortune, her person, her rank, and her happiness, of all of which she had been cheated by polygamy; and it thus raised the female sex to the elevation to which they were destined by their wise and beneficent Creator. True it is that Christianity has not effected this great change, so beneficial not only to the female sex — but to society, by direct, explicit, and positive precept; yet it has done so by an implication so clear that there can be no mistake as to the reality of the command, or the universality of its obligation, for all its provisions, precepts, and promises, proceed on the supposition of each husband being the husband but of one wife. And the springs of national prosperity rise from beneath the family hearth, and the domestic constitution is the mold where national character is cast, and that mold must of necessity take its form from the unity, sanctity, and inviolability of marriage.

The jealousy with which Christianity guards the '*sanctity of the marriage bond*' must ever be regarded as having a most favorable influence upon the condition of woman. Let this be relaxed or impaired, and that moment woman sinks in dignity, in purity, and in happiness. There have been nations in which the '*ease of divorce*' took the place of polygamy, and of course was accompanied with some of its vices, and many of its miseries too. This was eminently the case with ancient Rome after the early times of the Republic, and most instructive are the examples in the annals of its history, and the allusions to them in the pages of its poets. Let the nuptial tie be weakened, and the wife live in perpetual fear, because her union to her husband is placed in jeopardy by a law under which he may at any time,

at the instigation of passion or caprice, dissolve the bond between them, and without either penalty, remorse, or shame, dismiss her from his home — and there is an end to her peace, and perhaps to her purity. For it is to be recollected that it is she who has most to dread from the license of divorce. She is likely to be the victim of such a law. With what devout and reverential gratitude should she then turn to that Divine Teacher who has interposed his authority to strengthen the marriage bond, and to guard it from being severed at the demand of illicit passion, or the dictates of temperament or caprice. How should she rejoice to hear Him say, "*But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery,*" Matthew 5:32.

The indulgence of greater latitude and liberty in this matter granted to the Jews — was thus superseded by Christianity; a greater security was provided for woman's honor and felicity; and a broader basis laid for domestic harmony and happiness. If it were only for this, Christianity deserves the gratitude of mankind. But it is only half its glory that it has abolished the custom of having many wives — *its crowning achievement is that it has protected the rights, the dignity, and the comfort of the one wife*. It has shut out intruders from her home, and guaranteed the safe and permanent possession of it to herself.

I may surely mention the *equal participation of religious blessing* to which women are admitted by the Christian religion. How explicitly and how firmly has the apostle claimed for woman all the blessings obtained by Christ for the human race, where he says, '*There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*' There is the charter granting to woman all the blessings of salvation; there is the proof of woman's equality in the sight of God; there is woman's claim to her just rank in the institutes of man. There is not a blessing necessary to eternal life, which she does not receive in the same measure and in the same manner as the male sex. There is a popular tradition among the Mohammedans, prevalent among them to this day, that wives are not permitted to enter paradise — the '*voluptuously beautiful young women*' of that region being specially created in their stead. What degradation is there in such an idea! But it is consistent with the spirit, and harmonizes with the ideals, of Mohammedanism, which regards woman more as the slave of man's lustful passions — than as the companion of his

life.

Christianity places the wife by the side of the husband; the daughter by the side of the father; the sister by the side of the brother; and the maid by the side of the mistress, at the altar of the family; in the meeting of the church; at the table of the Lord; and in the congregation of the sanctuary. Male and female meet together at the cross — and will meet in the realms of glory. Can anything more effectually tend to raise and sustain the condition of woman than this? God in all his ordinances, Christ in his glorious undertaking, and the Holy Spirit in his gracious work, gave her her proper place in the world, by giving her a proper place in the church. It is for her with peculiar emphasis to say, *‘God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved US, has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places.’*

And well have women understood their privileges, for look into our congregations and churches, and see how largely they are composed of females. How many more of their sex, than of the other, avail themselves of the offer of gospel mercy, and come under the influence of religion. It is in the female bosom, however we may account for the fact, that piety finds a home on earth. The door of woman’s heart is often thrown wide open to receive the Divine guest, when man refuses Him an entrance. And it is by thus yielding to the power of godliness, and reflecting upon others the beauties of holiness, that she maintains her standing and her influence in society. Under the sanctifying power of religion she ascends to the glory, not only of an intelligent, but of a spiritual, existence; not only gladdens by her presence the solitary hours of man’s existence, and beguiles by her converse and sympathy the rough and tedious paths of his life; but in some measure modifies, purifies, and sanctifies him, by making him feel how attractive, goodness is.

But the finishing stroke which Christianity gives in elevating the condition of women, is, by inviting and employing their energies and influence in promoting the spread of religion in the world; and thus carrying out, through them as well as men, the great purposes of God in the redemption of the world by the mission of his Son. To them, in common with men, the apostle says, *‘That you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.’* The honor so liberally bestowed upon the pious women of antiquity, of

ministering to the personal needs of the Savior, and of being so constantly in his presence, was the least of the distinctions designed for them by our holy religion. They bear an exalted place in the labors and offices enjoined and instituted in apostolic times for the setting up of Christ’s Kingdom in the world. How instructive and impressive is it to hear Paul say, *‘Help those women who labored with me in the gospel.’* What a register of names and offices of illustrious females do we find in Romans 16: *‘Priscilla, his helper;’ ‘Mary, who bestowed much labor on us;’ ‘Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labored in the Lord;’ ‘Phebe, the servant of the church at Cenchrea,’* who was sent to the church at Rome, and entrusted with so momentous a commission as to bear to that community of Christians that epistle of the apostle, which, if we may lawfully compare one portion of Scripture with another, is the most precious portion of Divine revelation.

In addition to all this, there can be but little doubt that in the primitive church, not only were women occasionally endowed by the Spirit with the miraculous gifts of prophesying, but they were also employed in the office of deaconesses. The Christian church in modern times, has gone backward in the honor put upon the female character. The original age of Christianity was in advance of ours, in the respect paid to the female sex by officially employing them in the services of the church, and in the wisdom which made use of their available and valuable resources. It has been said that the usages of society have somewhat changed since that time, so as to render the services of women to their own sex less necessary now than they were then, when the friendly and social communion of the sexes was more restricted, and females were kept in greater seclusion. Some truth, no doubt, there is in this assertion; but perhaps not so much as is imagined by some. Both general and sacred history represent women in the times referred, to as mingling in the society and sharing the occupations of the other sex.

I now remark that not only does Christianity thus tend, by its own nature and provisions, to exalt the female character, but it has accomplished this wherever it has prevailed. If we consult the pages of history, whether ancient or modern, whether eastern or western, we shall find that *wherever the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been successful, there it has achieved the emancipation of woman from her thralldom, and rescued her from degradation.* I refer to modern Europe and America in proof of this. What a contrast in this respect do those countries present to all Pagan and

Mohammedan nations! Is it not a triumph and a trophy of Christianity to be able to point to the most polished nations of the globe as being, at any rate, professedly Christian; and at the same time to say, '*Look at the improved condition of the female sex?*' And may I not affirm that woman's emancipation and elevation are in proportion to the purity of that Christianity which has thus been diffused?

If we refer to the records of modern missions, we shall find abundant proof of what the gospel does for the elevation of the female character. It has abolished the Suttee in India (that is — the custom of a Hindu widow willingly being cremated on the funeral pyre of her husband as an indication of her devotion to him). It has stopped the drudgery of the wives of all savage tribes, the incarcerating seclusion of Mohammedan and Papal nations, the polygamy, the infanticide, and the concubinage of all countries where it has gone. Yes, Christianity has in modern times proved itself, in all parts of the world — woman's emancipator and friend! It has brought her from under the disastrous influence of the pale crescent of Mohammed, the impostor of Mecca, and placed her in all the irradiating and enlivening splendor of the Sun of Righteousness. It has rescued her from the baleful power of the Catholic crucifix, and brought her within the elevating attraction of the cross.

But there is another way in which we may see that Christianity, even in this Christian and Protestant nation, has benefitted and raised the condition of millions of once wretched and degraded women; made such not by their own misconduct — but by the vices and cruelty of their *husbands!* How many wives have been reduced to a kind of domestic slavery by the drunkenness, infidelity, and tyranny of those who had pledged themselves to love and cherish them? Christianity has in myriads of instances, laid powerful hold of the hearts of such men, and changed them from vice to holiness — and the converted husband has appeared a much changed man. And among other evidences of the reality of the change, and the manifestations of its excellence — was his altered conduct at home, where his wife became his companion, instead of being his drudge, his slave, and his victim!

Christianity has thus carried out its genius and its precepts in the actual elevation of the female character wherever it has gone. The chivalry of the middle ages which combined religion, valor, and gallantry, whimsical as the

institution seems, no doubt did something to accomplish this end. I do not dispute the truth of the remark made by a French writer, quoted in a popular work entitled '*Woman's Mission*,' where he says that women shut up in their castellated towers, civilized the warriors who despised their weakness, and rendered less barbarous the passions and the prejudices which themselves shared. It was they who directed the savage passions and brute force of the men to an unselfish aim, the defense of the weak; and added humanity to courage, which had been the only virtue previously recognized. But even chivalry derived its existence in some measure from religion. And after all, how inferior in its nature and how different in its influence, was that system of romance — to the dignified principles and holy influence of Christianity. It did very well to figure at the joust and the tournament; in the hall of the baron, and in the circle of the fair; but its influence in the domestic scene was very slight as compared with that of the institutions of the New Testament. It was rather the exaggeration to extravagance of female rights and privileges, than an intelligent concession of them under a sense of justice, and in obedience to the Divine authority; and it may be questioned whether many an illustrious knight did not when the hour of imagination had passed away, and the ardor of passion had cooled, in the absence of Christian principles, crush and break the heart which he had been so anxious to win.

It is the glory of Christianity that, instead of appealing to the imagination, the senses, and the passions — it supplies principles which are rooted in the soul, and sway the conscience; and that instead of leading its possessor to expend his admiration of woman in the exciting scenes of public amusement, it teaches and influences him first of all to contemplate her where her charms are less glaringly adorned, in the retirement of social communion, and then to enjoy them within the hallowed circle of domestic life. It allows of no senseless adoration like that which chivalry promoted, and which from its very excess is likely to be followed by recoil or collapse. *What Christianity does for woman is to fit her to be neither the goddess nor the slave, but the friend and companion, of man, and to teach man to consider her in this honorable and amiable aspect.*

Do we not see in all this a beautiful exhibition of the transcendent excellence of our holy religion? In every view that we can take of Christianity, whether we contemplate it in its aspects towards the eternal



world or towards this present world; in its relations to God or society; in its sublime doctrines or its pure morality; we see a form of inimitable beauty, sufficient to captivate every heart — but that which is petrified by false philosophy, avowed infidelity, or gross immorality. But never does it appear more lovely than in its relation to woman. With what equity does it hold the balance between the sexes! With what kindness does it throw its shield over the weaker vessel! With what wisdom does it sustain the rank and claims of those whose influence is so important to society, and yet so limit their claims that they shall not be carried to such a length as to defeat their end! With what proper discrimination does it fix woman's place in the home — where her power can be most advantageously employed for the cultivation of her own virtues and the benefit of society!

*'Behold Christianity, then, walking forth in her purity and greatness to bless the earth, diffusing her light in every direction, distributing her charities on either hand, quenching the flames of lust and the fires of ambition, silencing discord, spreading peace, and creating all things new. Angels watch her progress, celebrate her influence, and anticipate her final triumphs! The moral creation brightens beneath her smiles and owns her renovating power. At her approach man loses his fierceness, and woman her chains; each becomes blessed in the other, and God is glorified in both,'*  
- Dr. Cox's Essay.

May we not affirm that the treatment of woman by Judaism and Christianity is one of the proofs of their divine origin? We have seen already how much superior the later dispensation was to the earlier one, as in other particulars, so in respect of the matter I am treating of here. But they must always be associated together. The spiritual religion of Christ was the development of the great truths prefigured in the symbols of the ceremonial religion of Moses. I have shown how both Mohammedanism and Paganism degrade the female character and sex. It would seem therefore that *man left to himself would never have set up a religion which dealt equitably and kindly with woman.* And what *has* infidelity, without a religion, done for them? What *would* it do for them? Degrade them by demoralizing them. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness, infidels at heart, have put on the cloak of the philosopher, and maxims the most licentious have found their way into works making high pretensions to morality, and assuming the office of teachers of the age. Atheism, the most undisguised, has made its appearance, and alas, that it should boast of a

priestess, entitled to distinction on other grounds, to conduct its worship at the shrine, and upon the altar, of *chance!* Before skepticism had reached this depth of error, and arrived at the gloomy region of a godless void, while yet it lingered on the shores of Deism, it manifested its demoralizing tendency. Hume taught that adultery, when known, was a slight offence; and when unknown, no offence at all. Bolingbroke openly and violently attacked every important truth and every serious duty; particularly he did what he could to license lewdness, and cut up chastity and decency by the roots. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the most serious of the early English deists, declared that the '*indulgence of lust*' is no more to be blamed than the thirst of a fever, or the drowsiness of lethargy. Nor have modern infidels been behind their predecessors. Godwin and Owen attacked the marriage tie. And let the annals of the first French revolution, that terrible eruption from the volcano of atheism, tell by the history of Mirabeau, the type of its morals — what infidelity would do to corrupt and degrade the female sex!

Woman's virtue, dignity, honor, and happiness, are nowhere safe but under the protection of the Word of God. The Bible is the benefactor of the female sex. Beneath this protection they are secure in their rights, their dignity, and their peace. It is their vine and fig tree, under which in calm repose they may enjoy the shade and relish the fruit. It protects their purity from taint, and their peace from disturbance.

Let woman know her friend, and her enemy too. An infidel of either sex is the foe of our species, either individually or collectively viewed; but a female infidel is the most dangerous and destructive of the furies, from whom in her suicidal career the virtuous of her own sex recoil with horror, and whom the vicious regard as the abettor, though it may be unintentionally, of their crimes.

Woman! regard your Savior for the next world as your Emancipator for this present one — love the Bible as the charter of your liberty, and the guardian of your bliss — and consider the church of Christ as your asylum from the wrongs of oppression and the arts of seduction.

Let woman seek to discharge her obligations to Christianity. Grateful she ought to be, for immense are the favors which have been conferred upon her by it. It is enough to demand her thankfulness, that in common

with man, she is the object of Divine love, redeeming mercy, and the subject of immortal hope! But in addition to this, she is rescued from oppression and exalted to honor in the present world. In regard to this, your obligations to Christianity are immense. You owe infinitely more to it than you ever reflect upon, or than you will ever be able to cancel. Often as you look round upon your condition in society, and especially as often as you contrast your situation with that of women in Pagan countries, let a glow of gratitude warm your heart and add intensity to the fervor with which you exclaim, '*Precious Bible.*' Yes, doubly precious to you as your friend for both worlds.

How then shall woman discharge her obligations? In two ways. First, in yielding up her heart and life to the influence and service of her benefactor — in faith, holiness, and love. Female piety is the best, the only sincere expression of female gratitude to God. An irreligious woman is also an ungrateful one. She who loves not Christ, whomsoever else she may love, and however chaste and pure that love may be, is living immeasurably below her obligations, and has a stain of guilt upon her heart and her conscience, which no other virtue can efface or conceal.

Woman's obligations should also be discharged by seeking to extend to others that benevolent system which has exerted so beneficial an influence upon herself. Of all the supporters of our missionary schemes, whether they are formed to evangelize the heathen abroad, or reform the sinful at home, women should be, as indeed they generally are, the most zealous, liberal, and prayerful supporters. Wherever she turns her eye over the distant regions of our earth, at least wherever Paganism or Mohammedanism throw their baleful shadow, (and alas, how large a portion of the earth that is), there she beholds her sex degraded and oppressed! From China's vast domain, from India's sunny plains, from Persia's flowery gardens, from the snows of Arctic regions, from the sterile deserts of Arabia, and beneath the burning sun in Africa — woman lifts her voice amid her wrongs, her woes, and her miseries, piteously imploring, '*Come over and help us!*'

The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now, but her groans are deeper, her cries louder, than any others. Borne upon the wings of every breeze, and floated on every wave that touches our shores

from those regions of sin and sorrow — comes her petition to Christian females in this country for the blessings of Christianity. Cold, thankless, and unfeeling must be that heart which is unaffected by such an appeal, and makes no effort to respond to it; which prompts to no interest in our missionary schemes, and leads to no liberality in their support. The eternal world of glory will be especially woman's jubilee, and as no groan is deeper than hers during the reign of sin and sorrow, so no joy will be louder than hers under the reign of Christ. It belongs, therefore, to her to be most fervent in the cry of the church, '*Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!*'

## The Conspicuous Place Which Woman Occupies in Holy Scripture

*‘The holy women of the past.’* -1 Peter 3:5

It will probably be objected against some of the subjects selected for this work, that they are not exclusively appropriate to the class of people to whom they are addressed — that is, Young Women. This, however, so far from being a fault, is an excellence. Most conditions of human life are prospective, and have not only some proximate objects and duties connected with them, but also some ultimate ones to which the others are preparatory; and he who would lead people to the right discharge of the whole range of their obligations, must set before them the future as well as the present, especially when due preparation for after years must not only be made in the present, but must be considered to a considerable extent the object and design of the present. Neither childhood nor youth is an ultimate condition of human existence, but each leads on, looks to, and prepares for — manhood or womanhood. Surely it must be appropriate then to those who are already arrived at adult age, or are fast approaching it, to have the whole view of their future condition laid before them, at least in general outline. How else can they prepare for it?

Those to whom this volume is addressed, are supposed to have arrived at that period of youth, when the judgment is sufficiently matured and reflective, to be capable of studying and appreciating their future relations and duties — and therefore ought to have the subject laid before them. Who can be rightly educated for any future situation, if that is concealed until all its obligations and responsibilities burst suddenly upon them? True, there is in some minds an almost instinctive kind of perception of what is proper to be done in any new conjuncture of circumstances, so that, almost without training, they are prepared for whatever situation is before them. But this is not the case with all. The greater number of mankind must, as far as possible, be trained for their various situations in life. As in the education of a boy, especially when learning a trade or profession — the future tradesman, master, father, and citizen — must be set before him as that for which he must prepare himself; so *in the training of young women,*

*the whole of womanhood in its full expansion, ripened excellences, and complete relations, obligations, and responsibilities, must be laid before them.*

We know that there is much which can be learned only from experience — yet there is much also that may be learned by observation, reading, and reflection. Mothers, authors and preachers, who take up the subject, should ever bear in recollection, that the girl is to develop into the woman; and in teaching the girl, should ever have their eye fixed ultimately upon the woman, and should with all possible earnestness fix the eye of the girl also upon her future womanhood. Not that she is to be so taken up with the future as to neglect the present; or to acquire a premature matronly air and gravity, which will repress the ardor and vivacity of youth, and, by anticipated cares and solitudes, go out to prematurely meet the coming troubles of life. But remember, my young female friends, and the lesson cannot be too deeply impressed upon your minds — that the seeds of woman’s life-long virtues and excellences must be sown in the spring-time of existence; and it must be done in part by her own hand, when aided and taught by others to prepare the soil. The flowers of womanly virtues and excellences, which she would wish to grow in her future character, must be previously and carefully selected, and be contemplated and anticipated by her in all their full-blown beauty and their richest fragrance, even while she is yet in youth.

With these remarks as my justification in presenting to the younger of the sex what in fact appertains to the more advanced in years, I now proceed to the subject of the present chapter.

When we consider the importance of woman in the great human family, it would be strange if in a volume given by inspiration of God, for regulating the conduct and promoting the happiness of mankind, she had no place assigned to her commensurate with the influence she is formed to exert. The Bible gives us an account of the origin and construction of society, and is designed, among other and still higher purposes, to direct its movements, and promote its welfare. This it could not do, if it left out woman; or failed to bring her prominently forward; or did not prescribe with much form and detail, her rank, her mission, and her duties. In the coins which were struck in the reigns of our William and Mary, when the wife was ruling queen, the busts of both husband and wife were repre-

sented; the king in front, and the queen behind — and if a frontispiece were designed for the history of our race as recorded in the Bible, man and woman should be exhibited in something of a similar manner, with this inscription round the two-fold portrait, *‘Male and Female created he them.’*

The subject of this chapter was entered upon in the last — it will be here continued and expanded into wider dimensions. Man of course, is the chief subject of revealed truth. He occupies there, as he does in society, the first place. More is said of him, to him, and by him, than applies to woman. He is the prime actor, but not the sole one, in the great drama of Providence, as it is developed in the pages of inspiration. His *‘companion in pilgrimage’* is brought forward into notice, and is neither lost in his shadow, nor only occasionally peeps out from behind his more portly form and loftier stature. Her name and history; her virtues and vices; her services and sorrows, occupy a considerable space in the holy Book. She has no right to complain that she is overlooked or forgotten, or that she is thrust into a corner and hidden from observation. There is more than enough said about her to make her contented. She ought to be thankful, and without Divine grace, may even be tempted to be vain. She cannot be deprived of self-respect, or of the respect of others, on account of the manner in which she is treated in the Scriptures. In this respect the Bible stands in bright and beautiful contrast to the Koran.

We shall first of all advert to *the account which the Bible gives of woman’s creation and fall*, in the book of Genesis. We would, in passing, remark, that it is to Biblical revelation, and to that alone, that we are indebted for our knowledge of the origin of the human species. Without the Mosaic account of the creation, we would know neither the date nor the source of the family of man. There is no other oracle which can give a response to the question, *“Where did we come from?”* This furnishes an answer, and satisfies the enquirer — not as some would pretend, with a mere allegorical history, but with true historic fact. I need not recite the details of the scenes of Paradise, but only refer to them. It is at once a beautiful — and melancholy record. We there see woman as she came from the hand of the Creator, with a body combining every charm which could captivate the being for whose companionship she was designed; and a soul possessing every virtue that could adorn her character, and make her an object of reverent affection. Her creation was peculiar, but not unworthy of the Great Being who made her, of herself, or of him from whose own

body she was derived. Her origin seemed to dignify both her husband and herself. She was formed of organized and vitalized matter, and not of mere dust — here was her distinction. Who can describe, or who conceive, the thoughts or emotions of this holy pair at their first interview! Our great poet has attempted it in his immortal verse, where he says,

*‘I beheld her, not far off,  
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned  
With what all earth or heaven could bestow  
To make her amiable; on she came,  
Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen,  
And guided by his voice —  
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture dignity and love.  
I, overjoy’d, could not forbear aloud —  
You have fulfill’d  
Your words, Creator bounteous and benign,  
Giver of all things fair! but fairest this  
Of all your gifts! nor enviest. I now see  
Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself  
Before me — Woman is her name; of man  
Extracted — for this cause he shall forego  
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;  
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.’*

Painters and sculptors have joined with poets, to represent to the senses and the imagination the first woman in all her untainted loveliness. It is the Scriptures, be it recollected, that supply to them the enrapturing subject of their art.

Thus far we see woman, man’s companion in holiness and bliss, tenanted with him the garden of Eden, enjoying its beauties, and helping to preserve them. With him, joining in the morning hymn and vesper song. Confessing no sin, for they had committed none; and disburdening themselves of no care, for none pressed upon them. All was praise, while their own notes of thanksgiving, blended with the melodies of the grove and the music of the fields, led even the ear of God to listen with delight, and to say, *‘It is good.’*

Alas, how soon and how suddenly changed was this scene of Paradisaic bliss! Man was placed in Eden — not as we shall be in *heaven*, if we are so happy as to reach it, in a state of confirmed happiness — but as we are now upon *earth*, in a condition of trial. His submission to God must be tested; and this was done in a manner that exactly suited his condition. A garden as a residence became his state of innocence — and the fruit of a particular tree equally well suited his circumstances for the testing of his entire and implicit obedience and subjection. The test was as easy as it was rational and suitable. Traditions of the state of primeval felicity are current among many nations. They are discoverable in Grecian and Roman history and in the pleasing fiction of the poet's golden age.

To induce Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit was the scheme of Satan for his fall. It is difficult to conceive in what other way he could tempt them. And how did he succeed? You know the melancholy sequel. The assault of the tempter was made upon woman. She was the selected victim of his wiles. It is evident, therefore, that he regarded her while in a state of innocence, as more easily to be vanquished than man; and considered her, even then, as the weaker vessel. At the same time, does it not seem as if he had marked her out from the beginning, as the chief instrument for accomplishing his future purposes of mischief towards the family of man? Events have justified the sagacity of his malice — for to her influence how much may be traced of the crimes and calamities which desolate our earth. He saw in the conduct of the first pair, the love which woman inspires and cherishes in the man — and was confident that if he could subdue her, he might leave her to subdue the him.

The apostle in referring to this event, says, '*Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression.*' From the very creation, woman has shown a feebler power of resistance, a greater pliancy of disposition, than man. How Satan knew this, we are not informed; but that he did know it, is evident from his commencing the assault on Eve instead of Adam. The passage just quoted seems to imply all this. It is not meant that Adam did not sin, and was not deceived by the tempter — but that the woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than the man would have done; and that the temptation as applied to her mind, would have been ineffectual on him. To tempt and seduce him to sin, there needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the

serpent — but through her irresistible allurements.

Some have supposed that Adam was not at all deceived by the tempter — that he saw at once all his suggestions were lies; but that foreseeing what Eve had done, how she had plunged herself into ruin, he, out of mere love to her, and with his eyes open, determined to share her fate. But the apostle's words do not necessarily convey this — but merely that he was not deceived first, nor directly, by the tempter — but afterwards, and by his wife. Her fall was occasioned by the deception of Satan alone; his by the deception of Satan, aided by the persuasion of the woman.

Having considered the Scriptural account of woman's condition at the creation, and the means by which, through her, the human race was brought into its present state of sin and misery — we may next notice the very explicit and frequent mention which is made in the Scriptures of *her numerous relations in social life, with the descriptions it gives of the various characters of women*. It certainly tends deeply to impress us with the importance of woman, and to raise her in her own and in our estimation, to see how constantly she is brought before us on the sacred page, in every part which she fills in life, as if the duties connected with each were of vast consequence to society. Not one is omitted; all are recognized and dwelt upon. Woman is ever before us in one or other of her many relations to the community.

Not only is there much said about the son — but also about the *DAUGHTER*. This relationship is not only included in the generic term of '*children*,' but it is also set out by itself. How commonly is it mentioned in connection with female children — '*the sons and the daughters*' are spoken of. A beautiful instance of which we have in the words of the psalmist, '*that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; and our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*' Or, as '*corner-pillars, wrought like those of a palace,*' that is in their fittest and best proportions, combining strength, beauty, and symmetry — both of body and of soul — than which, no comparison can be more elegant and delicate. In the exquisite poetry of the Hebrews, how commonly is this relationship employed as the metaphor of countries, states, and cities! Jerusalem comes before us as '*the daughter of Zion*,' sometimes jubilant in her prosperity, at others, as in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, covered with sackcloth and bathed in tears.

The word *SISTER* occurs almost in every portion of the Word of God, like a flowerlet, lowly and lovely amid others of larger growth and more imposing form and color. How sweet and gentle a spirit is sometimes seen in a sister's form amid her brothers' more robust ones; and what a softening influence does the spell of her fascinating tenderness throw over their cruder natures. We are thus reminded by Scripture, that the younger female branches of the family are to be thought of as having their separate claims upon parental regard and brotherly affections. How many families are laid open in the Bible to our view, of which the sisters, as well as the brothers, are brought prominently into notice.

How much may it be supposed would be said about the *WIFE* — and how much is said about that close and endearing relation. To form the character, and direct the conduct of the wife, is worth all the pains that have been bestowed by innumerable writers; and we might have been very sure, even before we had read a page of Scripture, that much would be there found concerning this relationship. The book of Proverbs, that admirable directory for domestic and social life, is quite a manual for wives, as well as for every other member of the family circle. Unusual pains seem taken for the right formation of her character. How frequently and how impressively does Solomon refer to woman, as sustaining this close and tender relation. In what exalted and glowing terms does he speak of it, when it comprehends the graces and the excellences which it should always possess, *'Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing;'* *'A prudent wife is from the Lord.'*

Who has ever read, or can read, without admiration, the beautiful description of a virtuous woman, in the closing chapter of the Proverbs? Can we wonder that he who had this elevated idea of the value of such a companion, should again and again exhort a husband to live joyfully with the wife of his youth, and forsaking all others, cleave to her alone? In this he did but copy the beautiful and poetic picture of wedded happiness which had been furnished to him by his father David, if indeed he was the author of the Psalm, *'Your wife will be like a fruitful vine, flourishing within your home. And look at all those children! There they sit around your table as vigorous and healthy as young olive trees.'* *'The vine,'* says Bishop Horne, *'a lowly plant raised with tender care, becoming by its luxuriance, its beauty, its fragrance, and its clusters — the ornament and glory of the*

*house to which it is joined, and by which it is supported, forms the finest imaginable emblem of a fair, virtuous, and faithful wife. The olive trees planted by the inhabitants of eastern countries, around their banqueting places in their gardens, to cheer the eye by their verdure and to refresh the body by their cooling shade, do no less aptly and significantly set forth the pleasure which parents feel at the sight of a numerous and flourishing offspring.'*

On the other hand, Solomon directs all the powers of his bitter eloquence and irony, against the degraded woman, whose deadly work none has ever renounced with more holy indignation. How does he brand the crime of the harlot in the second and fifth chapters of the book of Proverbs; and with what awful correctness describe the conduct of the adulteress in the seventh. Nor does he stop here, but descends to the characters of women, who, though less guilty than those to whom we have just alluded, are still deserving of severe reprobation, *'The foolish woman who plucks her house down with her hands.'* *'The quarrelsome woman, whose society is more intolerable than dwelling in a corner of the house-top, or in the wilderness.'* *'The woman who makes ashamed, who is a rottenness in the bones of her husband.'* *'The odious woman, whose marriage is one of the four things for which the earth is disturbed, and which it cannot bear.'* *'The beautiful woman without discretion, whose beauty is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout.'* *'The contentious wife — as annoying as the constant dripping on a rainy day.'*

This same Solomon, at the period when he had reached a penitent and reformed old age, and when all the events of his life had passed in review before him, is compelled to confess, that he had sought in vain for a woman after his own heart — *'I discovered that a seductive woman is more bitter than death. Her passion is a trap, and her soft hands will bind you. Those who please God will escape from her, but sinners will be caught in her snare.'*

*'This is my conclusion,'* says the Teacher. *'I came to this result after looking into the matter from every possible angle. I found one upright man among a thousand — but not one upright woman among them all.'* Let not this passage, however, be mistaken, as if it meant that it was Solomon's opinion that the number of good women is inferior to the number of good men. Observation and general testimony assure us that this is not the truth.

We are to consider where he made his enquiry for female virtue, and under what circumstances it was made. He who had crowded his court with wives and concubines, could little expect to find female excellence in such a situation. Instead of concentrating his affections on one woman as his wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, and seeking his happiness in drinking with her the sweet cup of wedded bliss, he had gathered round him in his harem, for pride and sensuality, a multitude of women, amid whose jealousies and contentions he could no more find happiness, than he could find virtue amid their illicit pleasures. From such a scene virtue would retire abashed and weeping. If, therefore, in this passage, he satirized the female sex, he did it on unjust, unwise, and unmanly grounds.

‘But,’ says Dr. Wardlaw, ‘*I am far from thinking that he here speaks the language of a disappointed and waspish satirist. He rather utters the feeling of an abased and self-dissatisfied penitent, of one who had felt it to be ‘an evil and a bitter thing’ to depart as he had done from God; who remembered ‘the wormwood and the gall;’ who perceived and lamented the folly and the wickedness of all those ‘inventions,’ by which himself and others had sought to find out happiness apart from the favor and the ways of God.*’

If we speak of woman as a *MOTHER*, how often does that endearing relationship come before us in holy Scripture; both literally and metaphorically; in the Old Testament and in the New; in the way of example and of precept. The maternal relationship is the theme of constant reference, both for the sake of illustrating other subjects, and for enforcing its own claims as those of the female head of the household. Had this character been omitted, or only introduced occasionally, and then invested with no more than a second-rate importance, the Bible would have been lacking in one of its sweetest harmonies with the feelings of nature, and one of its strongest appeals to the sympathies of humanity — and we would have doubted if it had come from him who created woman and gave her as a helper for man.

The *paternal* character and relation are maintained in their primary rank, authority, and dignity — no invasion is made upon the prerogative, or usurpation of the rights of the father; he is not called to yield his place of rule, his supremacy of condition, to the mother; and yet how is all her proper rank and station and influence maintained. There she is exhibited as

being in the family circle, if not the circumference which includes all, yet in one sense as *the center in which husband and children all meet*. How resonant are the Scriptures with that sweet and tender name, how redolent with the fragrance of that odoriferous word, how rich with the ornament of that beautiful term, mother. There, is sustained the poet’s declaration — ‘*A mother is a mother still — The holiest thing alive.*’

If the mother’s importance be not known, her claims not conceded, her influence not felt, her duties not rightly discharged, it is not the fault of the Bible, which is the friend of society by exalting the maternal relationship. Nor is the mistress of the family overlooked or forgotten nor her duties left out of consideration.

The *WIDOW*, that name of desolation, that sorrowful epithet, that type of woe, meets us at every turn. She passes before us in her mourning garments and in her tears, leading in her hand her fatherless children, and saying to us, ‘*Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God has touched me!*’ More is said about, and for, and to, this bereaved one, than any other class of women — a circumstance which exhibits with uncommon force and beauty the compassion of God. But there is a discrimination on this subject which shows the wisdom as well as tenderness of God. Young widows are admonished, while aged and helpless ones are comforted.

Nor is the female *SERVANT* left out. A place for her is found among the various other and higher ranks and conditions of her sex. Her humble lot is recognized amid the provisions and commands of the Law, and was announced and defended by the thunders of Mount Sinai. We find it protected by precept and illustrated by example, as if woman in the lowest grade of society should not be overlooked in the Bible, that blessed and glorious charter of rights and privileges. There the *little maid* lifts up her head among the queens and princesses of Scripture history!

But the most impressive and important point of view in which the subject can be placed, and the most convincing proof of the effect produced by the Scriptures with regard to woman, is the *very great number and variety of female examples* which they contain. It is one of the surpassing excellences of the Bible, that it is replete with narrative, history, and biography, and thus, apart from its sacred character and its momentous

importance, is one of the most interesting books in the world. It is full, not only of precept, but of living acting patterns of the *virtues* which it inculcates — and of the *vices* which it prohibits. It is a complete picture gallery, in which we see portraits of every size, from the miniature to the full-length painting; and in every degree of representation, from the mere outline to the most finished production of the artist's brush.

Among these it would have been strange if female characters had been lacking. And they are not missing. There, amid kings, priests, warriors, and prophets, are to be seen the portraits of '*the holy women of the old time, who trusted in God,*' as well as of those who disgraced themselves and dishonored their sex. In the great drama of life, as it passes before us in the Bible, no trivial or inconsiderable part is assigned to female characters. Woman's place among the dramatic personages is not that of some airy vision which lights upon our path, and after surprising and dazzling us for a moment, immediately vanishes and is seen no more — but of one of the veritable actors in almost every place and every scene.

The sacred volume opens, as we have already seen, with *Eve* in Paradise — all beauty, innocence and smiles — as its lovely frontispiece. And then shows us that same Eve, impelled by the vanity which she has bequeathed as a mournful legacy to her daughters, reaching forth her hand, at the instigation of the tempter, to pluck that fruit which was the test of her obedience — and the seed of all our woe — and thus exhibiting to us the sad association of beauty with sin.

In tracing woman's history, as it is set forth on the page of Scripture, from Paradise as the starting point, we will look first at the darker side of the narrative. How soon do we see *Adah* and *Zillah*, consenting to be the joint wives of Lamech, and thus giving, for anything we can tell, the first example of that bane of domestic happiness — polygamy!

Then come the '*daughters of men,*' the women in the line of Cain, who made no profession of religion, but lived in atheism, seducing and corrupting the '*sons of God,*' the male line of Seth and the professors of godliness — and thus by their unsuitable and incongruous marriages and the universal corruption that followed — creating the necessity for the waters of the deluge to wash away the moral filth of the old world.

*Hagar* comes next, troubling the faith, charity and peace of Abraham; persecuting the child of promise; and at the same time punishing by her waywardness, the weakness of the patriarch, whose concubine she was.

Then that family of *Lot*, the poor, earthly-minded wife and mother, who was so wedded to Sodom as to cast the lingering, longing look behind, which transformed her into a pillar of salt; and the disgusting conduct of her incestuous daughters, who showed too well how they had been corrupted by the place of their abode — and how careful all parents should be to remove their children from the polluting influence of evil examples.

What a revolting pattern of an adulterous woman, and of a cruel slanderer to hide her shame — is *Potiphar's wife*!

Then there was the ensnaring and successful temptation offered by the *daughters of Moab* to the children of Israel in the wilderness.

How mighty and how fatal were the powers of harlotry in *Delilah* to subdue the strength and extort the secrets of Sampson! And what a forcible picture of man's weakness before woman's vicious wiles, have they furnished to all coming ages!

Who does not think of *Bathsheba* consenting to David's wicked proposals, and thus causing him for awhile to cease to be David, the man after God's heart?

And then come the immoral women who threw even the mighty intellect of *Solomon* into the awful eclipse of idolatry!

And *Jezebel*, that Zidonian idolatress, who instigated her husband to the murder of Naboth, and exasperated the mind of Ahab to a more intense degree of wickedness than he would otherwise have attained to!

And *Athaliah*, that turbulent and idolatrous queen mother, who counseled her son to do wickedly, and was put to death by command of Jehoiada, the priest!

I have forbore, of course, to *dwell* on these examples and descriptions of female immorality recorded in the Scriptures. It has been a matter of



surprise, perhaps almost of regret, to some, that such instances of depravity should have been left on record. But shall we dispute either the wisdom, goodness, or purity of God in these histories? Are not important ends to be answered by them in the moral government of God — and in the religious history of man? *A profligate woman is at once the most odious, mischievous, and hateful member of the community!* Is it not every way proper, and even desirable, that such a character should be held up to detestation and scorn, as a warning to her sex — and that God should thus set a brand upon her with his own hand, and bear his indignant testimony against her vices? The examples of this kind are all for our warning, to show in instances from actual life the excessive odiousness of female depravity. This is done in a manner the least likely to do harm, and the most likely to do good. The descriptions of female turpitude in the word of God contain nothing to inflame the imagination, or to stimulate the passions; nothing to make vice seductive, by a half concealment of its odiousness; nothing to beat down the guards of virtue, by associating sin with an amiable or interesting character, or screening it by sophistical and insidious excuses or defenses. Vice is left in all its naked and revolting deformity, all its nauseating loathsomeness, to inspire disgust, and cause even ordinary virtue to recoil from the ugly and filthy object.

How different the case with many works of fiction, both prosaic and poetic, in which, though there may be a less particularity of sinful detail, there is immeasurably more to corrupt the moral principles, to pollute the heart, and to lead astray the youthful mind from the paths of virtue! What female reader of the word of God can rise from contemplating even the worst characters, and perusing the most vivid descriptions of the sins of her sex, without a stronger love of purity, and a more deeply rooted hatred of iniquity? This is the answer we would give to infidels, who sometimes affect to be prudish, and complain of the descriptions and examples of female criminality which are contained in the sacred volume. The use which every virtuous woman will make of them, is to be inspired with a greater abhorrence of transgression, and a more holy and intense desire to be kept from the most distant approach to it.

Coming forward to the New Testament, we meet with Herodias, exhibiting the malignant and revengeful passions of a shameless woman, against the servant of God, who had dared to reprove her paramour, and impelling Herod, against the protest of his judgment, heart, and conscience,

to put John the Baptist to death, and so involve them both in murder. And here also we read of the Jewish women that encouraged and stimulated to violence the mob that persecuted Paul and Barnabas — and ‘*That woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and taught and seduced God’s servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.*’

In such instances as these, female pride, wherever it exists, may find some check to its exercise, and some motive to humility. To those females who are prone to think of their sex more highly than they ought, we present these examples of woman’s frailty, which the pen of inspiration has drawn upon the page of Scripture. While to those of the other sex, if there are any, who are apt to glory over fallen women, we would, after reminding them that some of these instances are the result of their own seductions, present the brighter side of the picture. We would also call upon women to contemplate for their own encouragement the *beautiful specimens of female excellence*, with which, like so many stars of various magnitudes, the skies of Scripture is studded.

There is *Sarah*, who, notwithstanding her many failings, was unquestionably a good and even a great woman. In her case, as in many others, her beauty became a snare to others, if not dangerous to her own virtue, and placed the life of her husband in peril. Still she is presented by the apostle Peter as one of the holy women of old, who were patterns of domestic virtue and piety. For her defects, which consisted of a weakness of faith, leading to some strange domestic arrangements that brought their own punishment, were surrounded with the brightness of many excellences, in which, if they were not entirely lost, they were at any rate diminished. She was a pattern of conjugal fidelity, sweet simplicity, and a just matronly jealousy towards the stranger who had been brought for awhile so unwisely into her place. Her faith in God’s promise was strong, though shaken for a moment by the improbabilities of the promised blessing.

*Rebekah’s* earlier and latter life presents to us a somewhat painful contrast. None can read the beautiful account of the mission of Abraham’s servant to her father without admiration of the good qualities of the damsel who is the heroine of the story, her industrious habits, her unaffected and artless simplicity, her genuine yet not silly modesty, her graceful courtesy, her humane consideration of the comfort of the brute creation. What a bright pattern is here for the imitation of young people. But oh! her

unbelieving, injudicious, and sinful contrivances to bring about the bestowment of the Divine blessing upon the heir of promise, by the wicked imposition which she practiced upon her aged and blind husband! Mothers, read it, and learn to guard against sinful contrivances to get good for your children. Rebekah, however, was a good, though a mistaken woman.

In *Miriam*, the watchful sentinel beside the waters of the Nile, of the ark which contained the infant Moses, we see first the dutiful daughter and anxious sister; and, in after life, the coadjutor of her illustrious brother, leading the chorus of women by her timbrel and her voice, in his triumphal song, on the borders of the Red Sea — afterwards, in conjunction with Aaron, she became his opponent through envy — but we may hope was restored to her better and earlier mind, through the chastisement she received from the Lord. How much mischief may *envy* do to spoil the best of characters, and to poison the happiness of families!

In *Deborah*, we contemplate the religious heroine, and the inspired poetess, raised up by the special Providence of God, for the deliverance of his people; an instance of exalted piety in an age of depressed religion, and still deeper national distress.

Should it be asked by any one, what we are to say of Jael, celebrated by the poetess Deborah, in her lofty strain of praise, I scarcely know what answer to give. Nothing less than a Divine mandate, which she may have received in some unknown and unrecorded manner, could have justified the deed. Apart from this, even the stratagems of war would not clear the heroine from the charge of treachery of the blackest kind. True, Sisera was an enemy; but he had trusted himself to her protection, and she slew him while sleeping under her guardianship. I leave the matter therefore as I find it, without either justifying or condemning it, for I know not all the facts of the case.

What a pattern of filial obedience, piety, and patriotism, have we in *Jephtha's daughter* over whose affecting story hangs so deep a mystery. Whether, according to the opinions of some, she was actually offered up in sacrifice; or according to others, was only consecrated by perpetual virginity to God, her beautiful character shines out with equal brightness, in all that is amiable, dutiful, and submissive.

But now turn to that touching and melancholy group of widows in the land of Moab; *Naomi*, *Ruth*, and *Orpah*. What pen but that which has done it, and done it with such inimitable simplicity, could do justice to this sweet and touching story? Rarely in the history of families does such a scene of affliction as this occur — a widowed mother, and the widows of her two sons! A sad proof how precarious are all the scenes of dear domestic bliss we fondly call our own. How tender, how dignified, and how thoughtful, is the conduct of Naomi! What nobleness of resolution, what daughter-like attachment, and what piety, do we see in Ruth! If in her after-conduct there was that which would not suit the meridian of our age and country, there was nothing contrary to the strictest purity of intention, or modesty of conduct, if we take into account the circumstances of her time, and the provisions of the Jewish law under which she lived. The whole narrative presents a beautiful episode in Jewish history, and an attractive specimen of the simplicity of early manners.

Can we fail to sympathize with *Hannah* in her sorrows, her insults, and her joys, or to admire her zeal for the Lord, in devoting her child of promise to his service? What a pattern for parents willingly to give up their sons for ministers and missionaries!

*Abigail* furnishes us with a striking example of the singular prudence of a woman who was unhappily associated with a drunkard and a churl, and of her diligence and tact in averting from her family the evils impending over it from her husband's vices.

What an instance of respect, gratitude, and affection for the ministers of religion, of female influence, rightly exerted over the mind of her husband in the cause of religion, and of submission to the will of God, is the *Shunamite*! Who can read that touching account of the death of her only son, and her own collected, composed, and energetic conduct on the occasion, without deep feeling and high admiration? We find in her no overwhelming or distracting grief preventing her from adopting the best, the only means for obtaining relief, but a faith which sustained her courage, and directed all her actions. Multitudes in every age and country, where the story has gone, have been instructed by her language, and stimulated by her example; and amid their deepest sorrows, have echoed her few noble monosyllables in reply to the question, '*Is it well with you? With your husband? With your child? And she answered and said, 'It is well.'*'

And then what a pattern of fidelity, and piety, and kindness, do we find for female servants in the very next chapter, in the simple and beautiful story of the *little Hebrew captive girl*, who was nurse-maid in Naaman's family! All, and especially those who occupy a similar situation, may learn, by what weak and humble instruments God may accomplish his purposes, and work out the schemes of his Providence. To how many a charity sermon in these remote days has that incident furnished a text; and thus the little Jewish slave not only brought healing to her master, and a knowledge of the true God into Syria, but became a pattern to myriads of children in our own country!

Nor less to be admired are the generosity and faith of *the widow of Sarepta*, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil stand out in such relief, among the brightest pictures of Old Testament history. In what a coruscation of glory does the name of Esther blaze forth upon us, for conjugal fidelity, piety uncorrupted by prosperity, and queenly influence consecrated to the cause of true religion!

Now open the page of the New Testament. Is Christianity destitute of female worthies, women of holy renown? It would be very strange if it were. Strange, indeed, if His religion, who, though he was the Son of God, was born of woman, did not raise up many who should shine forth in all the mild and heavenly radiance of female piety.

Though, as I have said in the last chapter, we ascribe no divine honors and offer no idolatrous homage to the Virgin Mary, nor set her forth in the beauties of painting and sculpture; nor call her, with a singular mixture of absurdity and blasphemy '*the Mother of God*.' We revere her as blessed and exalted among women, to give birth to the humanity of Christ, the Savior of the world; and ascribe to her every holy and general excellence as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a godly believer. (In an age when Popery is lifting up its head in triumph, and with hope, no fair opportunity should be lost to expose its pretensions and refute its errors. There is no part of this dreadful system more contrary to Scripture, or more insulting to God, than its *Mariolatry*, or worship of the Virgin Mary. She is titled, '*Mother of God*,' '*Queen of Seraphim, Saints, and Prophets*,' '*Advocate of Sinners*,' '*Refuge of Sinners*,' '*Gate of Heaven*,' '*Queen of Heaven*.' And as the same titles are ascribed to her, or nearly so, as are ascribed to Christ; so is the same worship paid to her as to the Savior. Churches are built to

her honor; her shrines are crowded with devotees, enriched with their gifts, and adorned with their votive offerings. Prayers are offered to her, her praises are chanted in hymns, thanksgivings are addressed to her, and blessings are asked from her, as one who has power to bestow them. Seven annual festivals celebrate her greatness, and keep alive the devotion of her worshippers. So that Papists almost shut out the worship due to the Father and the Savior by their idolatry of her. Now where, we ask, is one single example, command, or even hint, for all this, in the Word of God? Is it any wonder the Scriptures are kept from the people, when the most common understanding could see that nothing of all this is to be found in that sacred volume? The Acts of the Apostles make mention of her name but once, and that without any mark of eulogy; and in the Epistles she is not mentioned at all. Yes, how contrary is all this to the declaration that there is only one Mediator between God and man, the Man Jesus Christ. '*This doctrine of the worship due to the Virgin*,' says Wylie, in his admirable work on the Papacy, '*has been exhibited in symbol, and that in so grotesque a way that for a moment we forget its blasphemy. In the dream of St. Bernard, which forms the subject of an altar-piece at Milan, two ladders were seen reaching from earth to heaven. At the top of one of the ladders stood Christ, and at the top of the other stood Mary. Of those who attempted to enter heaven by the ladder of Christ, not one succeeded, all fell back. Of those who ascended by the ladder of Mary, not one failed. The Virgin prompt to support, stretched out her hand; and thus aided, the aspirants ascended with ease.*'

We cherish also a high veneration for *Elizabeth* her cousin, the wife of Zacharias, and the mother of John the Baptist. In the piety of old *Anna*, we see a bright pattern for aged widows in her posture, believing and waiting for the consolation of Israel, and an example for an aged saint, ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ — the zeal, so worthy to be imitated by every reclaimed sinner, of the *woman of Samaria*, after she had believed in Christ, for his honor, and the conversion of her countrymen — the melting penitence of the *woman who had been a sinner*, whose history teaches us that the most abandoned people may be reclaimed, and find mercy, and that penitence, gratitude, and love, should be in proportion to the guilt contracted and forgiven — the invincible faith of the *Syro-phenician woman*, which received such admiration from Christ, and will teach the latest generations of mankind the power of importunate, persevering, and believing prayer — the generosity of the *poor widow* who cast in two mites,

the whole of her substance, into the treasury of the temple — the beautiful account of the *two sisters*, *Martha* and *Mary*, and the delineation in it, of the characters of the careful and troubled housewife, and the anxious inquirer after salvation — the pouring out of the box of spikenard by one that loved Christ so much as to give her costliest offerings to his person — the grateful, devoted attention and ministrations of *Mary Magdalene* and the *other Mary* to Christ. What an array of female excellence is here!

Passing on to the Acts of the Apostles, what delightful mention is made of *Dorcas*, full of good works and alms-deeds which she did, as evinced by her coats and garments for the poor, and the tears which were produced by her death, and which embalmed her memory — and of *Lydia*, who resorted to the place of prayer at Philippi, whose heart the Lord had opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul, and who afforded the rites of hospitality to the apostle and his companion — and of the chief women, not a few, at Thessalonica, who believed in the apostle's doctrine concerning Christ. Nor are the epistles barren of female names deserving ever to be held in remembrance for their piety, zeal, and good works. There we find *Phoebe*, the deaconess and bearer to Rome of the epistle to the church in that city; and *Euodia*, and *Syntycha*; *Lois* and *Eunice*, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, renowned for the sincere faith which dwelt in them; and those women also that labored with Paul in the gospel. And what shall we say more of *Priscilla*, Paul's helper in Christ, and the instructress of the eloquent Apollos; and *Mary*, '*who bestowed much labor upon him*,' and *Tryphena*, and *Tryphosa*, and *Julia*, '*who labored in the Lord*'?

No, my female friends, you see, we repeat, the Scriptures of truth have not passed over your sex in silence, nor thrust it into a corner, nor thrown it into the shade. On the contrary, the sacred page is rich and luminous with bright and beautiful examples of female excellence. You stand there side by side with man in the practice of piety, and are exhibited as not a whit behind him in all that appertains to the grandeur of humanity!

In the Bible, we have now proved that woman is seen in every gradation of rank, from the queen upon the throne, to the menial grinding at the mill — in every variety of condition, the maid, the wife, the mother, and the mistress; in every circumstance of grief and joy, the happy bride, the mourning widow — in every phase of moral character, the faithful spouse and the shameless adulteress — in every scene of active duty,

whether in the family, the church, or the world — in every changeable aspect of fortune, rolling in affluence or pining in poverty — there she is seen enlivening the sacred page with her narrative, adorning it with her beauty — sometimes darkening it with her crimes, at others brightening it with her virtues — now calling us to weep with her in her sorrows, then to rejoice with her in her joys. In short, woman is everywhere to be found wrought into the details of God's Scriptures — a beacon to warn us — or a lamp to guide us.

And all the notices being written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are to be considered as his testimony to the excellence and importance of your sex, and the influence it is intended and destined to exert upon the welfare of mankind. Had the Bible, I will not say been against you, but had it passed you over in silence, or only referred to you incidentally, or looked at you with sidelong glances, you would have sunk in general estimation; and man's neglect of you would have been defended or excused by that of God himself. But now no one can plead the example of the Bible for any attempt to neglect, despise, or oppress you. While it protects woman from the insults, the injuries, and the oppression of the other sex, it saves her with no less care and benefit from the sad effects which would arise from the assumption of prerogatives which do not belong to her, and from those excesses of ambition to which her own vanity might otherwise prompt her. It guards her dignity from being trampled down by others, and equally prevents her from lowering it herself, by pretensions which would only make her ridiculous. It describes with accuracy the circle within which it is the will of Providence she should move; presents to her the mission which she is sent into the world to fulfill; furnishes her the rules by which she is to act; proposes to her the rewards which she may legitimately seek and surely expect, if she be faithful to herself — and offers her the assistance necessary for the fulfillment of her high and holy vocation. What this is will be the subject of our next chapter.

In the meanwhile, let me exhort you not only to study the Scriptures, to learn the way of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, but to study them, in order to form your own character as women, by their precepts and their examples. Many and precious are the volumes that have been written for your benefit by your own sex. Female pens have been most happily and usefully employed in delineating female excellence, in writings which you would do well to read. But after all, there is no guide for the formation of

female character, morally or spiritually considered, like the inspired one. A woman unacquainted with the Bible, and ignorant of its contents, as affecting her own conduct, character, and history, has yet to know the finest patterns of female loveliness. *The Bible is the best mirror by which most accurately to know what you are, and to become what you should be;* before which you may adjust all the moral clothings of the soul, and from which you may go forth adomed with all the beauties of holiness, clothed with the garment of purity, and decorated with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. (The author is indebted for some things in this chapter and the next to an incomparably beautiful little work by Adolphe Monod, formerly professor of Theology at Montauban, but now Minister of the French Reformed Church in Paris).

## Woman's Mission

*'The Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'*  
- Genesis 2:18

*'What, in the great, and diversified, and busy world, is my place and my business?'* is a question which every one should ask. For every one has a place to fill, and a part to act. And to act his part well, according to the will of God, in the lofty drama of human life, should be the ambition, solicitude, and prayer of each of us. It is the first lesson of wisdom, to *know* our place; the second, to *keep* it. And of course, corresponding with this, to ascertain the duties of our place and to discharge them. There are generic '*class*' duties for women, as well as '*individual*' ones, and the latter are generally to be more accurately learned by an intelligent apprehension of the former.

Woman, as such, has her mission. What is it? What is precisely the station she is to occupy — what the purpose she is to fulfill, above which she would be unduly exalted, and below which she would be unjustly degraded? This is a subject which should be thoroughly understood, in order that she may know what to claim, and man what to concede; that she may know what she has to do, and he what he has a right to expect.

I shall endeavor to answer this question, and point out *the nature of woman's mission*. In doing this, I shall consult the infallible oracle of Scripture, and not the speculations of moralists, economists, and philosophers. I hold this to be our rule in the matter before us. God is the Creator of both sexes, the constructor of society, the author of social relations, and the arbiter of social duties, claims, and freedoms. And this is admitted by all who believe in the authority of the Bible. You are content, my female friends, to abide by the decisions of this oracle. You have every reason to be so. He who created you is best qualified to declare the intention of his own acts, and you may safely, as *you should humbly allow him to fix your position, and make known your duties*.

*In common with man, woman has a heavenly calling to glorify God as the end of her existence, and to perform all the duties and enjoy all the*

*blessings of a religious life; like him, she is a sinful, rational, and immortal creature, placed under an economy of mercy, and called, by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life. Religion is as much her vocation as that of the other sex. In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are on a level as to obligations, duties, and privileges. In common with man, she is called, where she is unmarried and dependent, to labor for her own support; a condition to which large portions of the community are necessarily subject by the circumstances of their birth. Diligence in labor is as incumbent upon her as upon the other sex, and indolence is as inexcusable in her as in man.*

*But in the married state, her sphere of labor, is her FAMILY — and it belongs to the husband to earn by the sweat of his brow, not only his own bread, but that of the household. In many of the uncivilized tribes, where the ameliorating influence of Christianity is not felt, the wife is the drudge of the family, while the husband lives in lordly sloth; and even in this country, at least in its manufacturing portions, manual labor falls too often, and too heavily upon married women, greatly to the detriment of their families. An unmarried woman, however, without fortune, must provide for herself in some way or other, according to the circumstances of her birth and situation; and let her not consider herself degraded by it. Honest industry is far more honorable than pride and sloth.*

*But neither of these is the peculiar mission of woman, as appertaining to her sex. To know what this is, we must, as I have said, consult the page of revelation, and ascertain the declared motive of God for her creation. The Lord God said — ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ This is further expressed, or rather repeated, where it is said, ‘And Adam,’ or ‘Although Adam, had given names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; yet for Adam there was not found an suitable helper for him.’ Nothing can be more clear from this, than that woman was made for man.*

*Adam was created a being with unmet social propensities, which indeed seem essential to all creatures. It is the sublime peculiarity of Deity to be entirely independent for happiness of all other beings. He, and He only, is the theater of his own glory, the fountain of his own felicity, and a sufficient object of his own contemplation, needing nothing for his bliss but self-communion. An archangel alone in heaven would pine, even there, for*

*some companionship, either divine or angelic. Adam, surrounded by all the glories of Paradise, and by all the various tribes it contained, found himself alone, and needed companionship. Without it his life was but a solitude, Eden itself a desert. Endowed with a nature too communicative to be satisfied from himself alone, he sighed for friendship, for support, for some complement to his existence, and only half-lived so long as he lived alone. Formed to think, to speak, to love, his thoughts yearned for other thoughts with which to compare and exercise his soaring aspirations. His words were wearisomely wasted upon the wanton air, or at best awoke but an echo which mocked instead of answering him. His love, as regards an earthly object, knew not where to bestow itself; and returning to his own bosom, threatened to degenerate into a desolating egotism. His entire being longed, in short, for another self, but that other self did not exist; there was no helper suitable for him. The visible creatures which surrounded him, were too much beneath him — the invisible Being who gave him life was too much above him, to unite their condition with his own. Whereupon God made woman, and the great problem was immediately solved.*

*It was, then, the characteristic of unfallen man to want someone to sympathize with him in his joys, as it is of fallen man to want some one to sympathize with him in his sorrows. Whether Adam was so far conscious of his wants as to ask for a companion, we are not informed. It would appear from the inspired record, as if the design of this precious blessing originated with God; and as if Eve, like so many of his other mercies, was the spontaneous bestowment of God’s own free and sovereign will. Thus Adam would have to say, as did one of his most illustrious descendants many ages afterwards, ‘You go before me with your goodness.’ Here, then, is the design of God in creating woman — to be a suitable helpmate to man. Man needed a companion, and God gave him woman. And as there was no other man than Adam at that time in existence, Eve was designed exclusively for Adam’s comfort; thus, teaching us from the beginning, that whatever mission woman may have to accomplish in reference to man, in a generic sense, her mission, at least in wedded life, is to be a suitable helpmate for that one man to whom she is united.*

*It was declared from the beginning, that every other tie, though not severed by marriage, shall be rendered subordinate, and a man shall ‘leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.’ If then, woman’s mission in Paradise was to be man’s companion*

and joy, such must be the case still. Her vocation has not been changed by the fall. By that catastrophe, man needs still more urgently a companion, and God has rendered this, her mission, still more explicit by the declaration, '*Your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you.*'

It has been often shown that by being taken from himself, she was *equal* to man in nature; while the very part of the body from which she was abstracted indicated the position she was intended to occupy. She was not taken from the head, to show she was not to rule over him; nor from his foot, to teach that she was not to be his slave; nor from his hand, to show that she was not to be his tool; but from his side, to show that she was to be his companion. There may perhaps be more of ingenuity and fancy in this, than of God's original design; but if a mere conceit, it is at once both pardonable and instructive.

That woman was intended to occupy a position of *subordination* and *dependence*, is clear from every part of the Word of God. This is declared in language already quoted, '*Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.*' This referred not only to Eve personally, but to Eve representatively. It was the Divine law of the relation of the sexes, then promulgated for all time. The preceding language placed woman as a punishment for her sin, in a state of sorrow; this places her in a state of subjection. Her husband was to be the center of her earthly desires, and to a certain extent, the regulator of them also — and she was to be in subjection to him. What was enacted in Paradise, has been confirmed by every subsequent dispensation of grace. The Old Testament fully supports this truth, in all its provisions. And Christianity equally establishes it.

I shall here introduce and explain the words of the apostle, '*I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man.*' He then goes on to direct that women should not, unveiled and with their hair cut off, exercise the miraculous gifts which were sometimes bestowed upon them; and adds, '*A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God but the woman is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*' For the explanation of this passage, I remark, that in the times of the apostles there were two recognized characteristic emblems of the female sex, when they appeared in public,

veils, and the preservation of their tresses. It would seem from the apostle's remarks, as if some of the female members of the Corinthian Church, during the time that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was upon them, cast off their veils, after the manner of the heathen priestesses when they delivered the responses of the oracles. This conduct the apostle reproves, and informs them that if the veil were thrown aside, they might as well also cut off their flowing hair, which is one of woman's distinctions from man, and is by all nations considered the ornament, as well as the peculiarity of the female sex.

We may pause for a moment, to observe how constantly and completely Christianity is the parent of order, and the enemy of indecorum of every kind. Why were not the women to lay aside their veils? Because it would be forgetting their subordination and dependence, and assuming an equal rank with man. This is the gist of the apostle's reason. It was not merely indecorous, and contrary to modesty, but it was a ardent desire for rank, fame, or power, and violating the order of heaven.

The other expressions of the apostle in this passage are very strong. As Christ is the head, or ruler of man, *so man is the head and ruler of woman, in the domestic economy.* Man was made to show forth God's glory and praise; to be in subordination to him, and only to him; while woman was created to be, in addition to this, the glory of man, by being in subordination to him, as his helper and his ornament. She was not only made out of him, but *for* him. All her loveliness, attractions, and purity, are not only the expressions of her excellence, but of his honor and dignity, since all were not only derived from him, but made for him.

This then is woman's true position, and if anything more need be said to prove it from the records of Christianity, we may refer to apostolic language in other places, where wives are enjoined to be subject to their husbands in all things, even as the church is subject to Christ. Nor is the apostle Paul alone in this, for Peter writes in the same strain. Let woman then bow to this authority, nor feel herself degraded by such submission. It has been said, that in domestic life, man shines as the sun, but woman as the moon, with a splendor borrowed from the man. May it not be said with greater truth and propriety, and less invidiously, that man shines as the primary planet, reflecting the glory of God, who is the center of the moral universe; and woman while she equally derives her splendor from the

central luminary and is governed by his attraction, is yet the satellite of man, revolves around him, follows him in his course, and ministers to him.

Behold, then, we say again, woman's position and mission — it is summed up in love and subjection to her husband. *'Everything connected with the relationship of man and woman has, however, since the fall, a more serious character; her love has become more anxious; her humility more profound. Bashful of her own defects, and anxious to reinstate herself in her husband's heart, woman lives to repair the wrong she has inflicted on man, and lavishes upon him consolations which may sweeten the present bitterness of sin, and warnings which may preserve from the future bitterness of hell.'*

Woman, then, whatever relation she may bear to society at large, whatever duties, in consequence of this relation, she may have to discharge, and whatever benefits, by the right discharge of these duties she may have it in her power to confer upon the community, must consider herself chiefly called to advance the comfort of man in his private relations; by promoting his peace, to promote her own; and to receive from him all that respect, protection, and ever assiduous affection, to which her equal nature, her companionship, and her devotedness, give her so just a claim.

She is, in wedded life, to be his constant companion, in whose companionship he is to find one, who meets him hand to hand, eye to eye, lip to lip, and heart to heart — to whom he can unburden the secrets of a heart pressed down with care, or wrung with anguish; whose presence shall be to him above all other friendship; whose voice shall be his sweetest music; whose smiles his brightest sunshine — from whom he shall go forth with regret, and to whose company he shall return with willing feet, when the toils of the day are over; who shall walk near his loving heart, and feel the throbbing of affection as her arm leans on his, and presses on his side. In his hours of private companionship, he shall tell her all the secrets of his heart; find in her all the capabilities, and all the promptings, of the most tender and endeared fellowship; and in her gentle smiles, and unrestrained speech, enjoy all to be expected in one who was given by God to be his companion and friend.

In that companionship which woman was designed to afford to man, must of course be included the sympathetic offices of the comforter. It is

hers, in their hours of retirement, to console and cheer him; when he is injured or insulted, to heal the wounds of his troubled spirit; when burdened by care, to lighten his load by sharing it; when groaning with anguish, to calm by her peace-speaking words the tumult of his heart; and act, in all his sorrows, the part of a ministering angel.

Nor should she be backward to offer, nor he backward to receive, the counsels of wisdom, which her prudence will suggest, even though she may not be intimately acquainted with all the entanglements of this world's business. Woman's advice, had it been asked and acted upon, would have saved thousands of men from bankruptcy and ruin. *Few men have ever had to regret their taking counsel from a prudent wife*; while multitudes have had to reproach themselves for their folly in not asking, and multitudes more for not following, the counsels of such a companion.

If, then, this is woman's mission according to the representation of her Almighty Creator, to be the suitable help-mate of that man, to whom she has given herself as the companion of his pilgrimage upon earth, it of course supposes that *marriage*, contracted with a due regard to prudence, and under all proper regulations, is the natural state of both man and woman. And so, I affirm, in truth it is. Providence has willed it, and nature prompts it. But as the exceptions are so numerous, is there no mission for those to whom the exception appertains? Is it married women only, who have a mission, and an important one? Certainly not! In these cases, I fall back upon woman's mission to society at large. And is not this momentous? Has it not been admitted in all ages, and by all countries, that the influence of female character upon social virtue and happiness, and upon national strength and prosperity, is prodigious, whether for good or for evil?

Is not the declaration with which Adolphe Monod opens his beautiful treatise, perfectly true? *'The greatest influence on earth whether for good or for evil, is possessed by woman! Let us study the history of by-gone ages, the state of barbarism and civilization; of the east and the west; of Paganism and Christianity; of antiquity and the middle ages; of the mediaeval and modern times; and we shall find that there is nothing which more decidedly separates them than the condition of woman.'* Every woman, whether rich or poor, married or single, has a circle of influence, within which, according to her character, she is exerting a certain amount



of power for good — or harm. Every woman — by her virtue or her vice — by her folly or her wisdom — by her levity or her dignity — is adding something to our national elevation or degradation. As long as female virtue is prevalent, upheld by one sex, and respected by the other, a nation cannot sink very low in the scale of ignominy, by plunging into the depths of vice. To a certain extent, woman is the conservator of her nation's welfare. Her virtue, if firm and uncorrupted, will stand sentinel over that of the empire. Law, justice, liberty, and the arts, all contribute of course, to the well-being of a nation; beneficial influence flows in from various springs — and innumerable contributors may be at work, each laboring in his vocation for his country's well-being, but let the general tone of female morals be low, and all will be rendered nugatory — while the universal prevalence of womanly intelligence and virtue will swell the stream of civilization to its highest level, impregnate it with its richest qualities, and spread its fertility over the widest surface!

A community is not likely to be overthrown where woman fulfills her mission; for by the power of her noble heart over the hearts of others, she will raise it from its ruins, and restore it again to prosperity and joy. Here, then, beyond the circle of wedded life, as well as within it, is no doubt part of woman's mission, and an important one it is. Her field is social life, her object is social happiness, her reward is social gratitude and respect.

*'If any female,' says Mr. Upham, 'should think these pages worthy of her perusal, let her gather the lesson from these statements, that woman's influence does not terminate, as is sometimes supposed, with the molding and the guidance of the minds of children; her task is not finished when she sends abroad those whom she has borne and nurtured in her bosom, on their pilgrimage of action and duty in this wide world. Far from it! Man is neither safe in himself, nor profitable to others, when he lives dissociated from that benevolent influence which is to be found in woman's presence and character; an influence which is needed in the projects and toils of mature life, in the temptations and trials to which that period is especially exposed, and in the weakness and sufferings of age, hardly less than in childhood and youth.'*

*'But it is not woman — gay, frivolous, and unbelieving — or woman separated from those divine teachings which make all hearts wise, that can lay claim to the exercise of such an influence. But when she adds to the traits of sympathy, forbearance, and warm affection, which characterize*

*her, the strength and wisdom of a well-cultivated intellect, and the still higher attributes of godly faith and holy love, it is not easy to limit the good she may do in all situations, and in all periods of life.'*

If I am right as to the nature of woman's mission, I cannot err as to the *PROPER SPHERE* of it. If she was created for man, and not only for the race of man, but for one man, then the easy and necessary inference is, that *HOME is the proper sphere of woman's action and influence.* There are few terms in the language around which cluster so many blissful associations as that delight of every English heart, the word home. The paradise of love — the nursery of virtue — the garden of enjoyment — the temple of harmony — the circle of all tender relationships — the playground of childhood — the dwelling of adulthood — the retreat of old age — where health loves to enjoy its pleasures, wealth to revel in its luxuries, and poverty bears its rigors — where best sickness can endure its pains, and dissolving nature expire — which throws its spell over those who are within its charmed circle, and even sends its attractions across oceans and continents, drawing to itself the thoughts and wishes of the man who wanders from it, to the opposite end on the globe — this, home, sweet home — is the sphere of wedded woman's mission!

Is it any hardship upon woman, any depreciation of her importance, to place her sphere of action and influence there? Is it to assign her a circle of influence unworthy of herself, to call her to preside over that little community, of which home is the seat? Shall we estimate the importance of such a scene of action? Shall we tell of the varied and momentous interests which are included in that circle? Shall we speak of the happiness of a husband, whose bliss, to so considerable an extent, is created by herself — and which involves her own happiness; or the character and future well-being for both worlds of her children? or the comfort of servants, and the order and pleasant working of the whole domestic constitution, all which depend so much upon her? Why to make one such home a seat of holiness and happiness; to fill one such sphere with an influence so sweet and sacred; to throw the fascination of wedded delight and of maternal influence over one such home; to irradiate so many faces with delight; to fill so many hearts with contentment, and to prepare so many characters for their future part in life — such an object would be deemed by an angel worth an incarnation upon earth!

Or from this sense of her duties, shall we look abroad upon the public good, the strength and stability of the nation? Who knows not the springs of an empire's prosperity lie in the domestic constitution, and in well trained families? Even one such family is a contribution to the majestic flow of a nation's greatness. Can such families exist without a woman's care, and oversight, and wisdom? Has it not grown into a proverb, that home has ever been the nursery of great men, and their mothers their instructresses? It may be said as a general principle, that woman is not only the mother of the body, but of the character, of her children. To her is first entrusted the instruction of the mind, the cultivation of the heart, the formation of the life. Thought, feeling, will, imagination, virtue, religion, or the contrary moral tendencies, all germinate under her fostering influence. *'The greatest power in the moral world is that which a mother exercises over her young child.'* The decisive moment in education is the starting point. The dominant direction which is to determine the whole course of life, lies concealed in the first years of infancy; and these belong to the mother.

One of the most hallowed, lovely, and beautiful sights in our world is, a woman at home discharging in all the meekness of wisdom, the various duties of wife and mother, with an order that nothing is allowed to disturb; a patience which nothing can exhaust; an affection which is never ruffled; and a perseverance that no difficulties can interrupt, nor any disappointments arrest — in short, such a scene as that described by the writer of the most exquisite chapter of the Proverbs. Eve in Paradise, in all her untainted loveliness, by the side of Adam, propping the lily, training the vine, or directing the growth of the rose; shedding upon him, and receiving, reflected back from his noble countenance upon her happy spirit, such smiles as told in silent language, their perfect and mutual bliss, was no doubt, a brighter image of perfect virtue and undisturbed felicity; but to me, a woman in our fallen world, guiding in piety, intelligence, and all matronly and motherly excellences, the circle of a home made happy chiefly by her influence, presents a scene little inferior in beauty, and far superior as a display of virtue and intelligence, to that of which our first mother was the center even in her original perfections. And it is imagination, and not reason and moral taste, that can revel in the mind's pictures of Eve in Paradise, and not feel warmer admiration in the actual presence of such a woman as I have described.

But it will, perhaps, be asked, whether I would shut up every married woman within the domestic circle, and, with the jealousy and authority of an oriental despot, confine her to her own home; or whether I would condemn and degrade her to mere household drudgery. I have, I think, protected myself already from this imputation, by representing her as the companion, counselor, and comforter of man. She shall, with my consent, never sink from the side of man, to be trampled under his feet. She shall not have one ray of her glory extinguished, nor be deprived of a single honor that belongs to her sex; but to be the instructress of her children, the companion of her husband, and the queen partner of the domestic state, is no degradation — and she only is degraded who thinks so!

Still in connection with, though not in neglect of, this, let her give her influence upon society to the circle of her friends on all suitable occasions, and in all suitable places. Though the drawing-room is not the chief sphere of her influence, it is one of the circles in which she may move; and albeit incessant parties of pleasure, and a constant round of entertainments, are not her mission, but oppose and hinder it; yet she is occasionally to bestow that influence, which every wise and good woman exerts over the tone of morals and manners, on the friends who may court her society.

*Woman is the grace, ornament, and charm of the social circle;* and when she carries into it habits that frown upon vice, that check folly and discountenance levity, she is a benefactress to the country. And as to the various institutions of our age for the relief of suffering humanity, the instruction of ignorance, and the spread of true religion — we give her all the room and liberty for these things which are compatible with her duties to her own household. What prudent female would ask more, or what advocate of her rights would claim more? Woman is always in her place where charity presides — except when her time and attention are demanded at home, for those who are more immediately her charge. But I shall have much more to urge on this subject in a future chapter.

But what shall I say of those women who claim on their own behalf, or of their advocates who claim for them, a participation in the labors, occupations, rights, and duties — which have usually been considered as exclusively appertaining to men? There are those who would expunge the line of demarcation, which nearly all nations have drawn, between the duties and the occupations of men and those of women.

*Christianity has provided a place for woman for which she is fitted, and in which she shines; but take her out of that place, and her luster pales and sheds a feeble and sickly ray!* Or to change the metaphor, woman is a plant, which in its own greenhouse seclusion will put forth all its brilliant colors and all its sweet perfume; but remove it from the protection of its own floral home into the common garden and open field, where hardier flowers will grow and thrive — its beauty fades and its fragrance is diminished. Neither reason nor Christianity invites woman to the professor's chair, or conducts her to the lawyer's bar, or makes her welcome to the pulpit, or admits her to the place of the magistracy. Both exclude her, not indeed by positive and specific commands, but by general principles and spirit, alike from the violence and evil of the military, the debates of the senate, and the pleadings of the forum. And they bid her beware how she lays aside the delicacy of her sex, and listens to any doctrines which claim new rights for her, and becomes the dupe of those who have put themselves forward as her advocates only to gain notoriety, or perhaps unneeded income.

The Bible gives her her place of majesty and dignity in the domestic circle — the heart of her husband and the heart of her family. It is the female supremacy of that domain, where love, tenderness, refinement, thought and tender feeling preside. *'It is the privilege of making her husband happy and honored, and her sons and daughters the ornaments of human society. It is the sphere of piety, prudence, diligence, in the domestic station, and a holy and devout life. It is the sphere that was occupied by Hannah, the mother of Samuel; by Elizabeth, the mother of John; by Eunice, the mother of Timothy; and by Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is the respect and esteem of mankind.'*

It is, as Dr. Spring has said, that silent, unobserved, unobtrusive influence, by which she accomplishes more for her race, than many whose names occupy a broad space on the page of history. A woman who fills well the sphere assigned to her, as a wife and mother; who trains up good citizens for the state, and good fathers and mothers of other families which are to spring from her own; and so from generation to generation in all but endless succession, need not complain that her sphere of action and her power of influence are too limited for female ambition to aspire to. The mothers of the wise and the good are the benefactresses of the human race. What would be gained to woman's comfort, respectability, or usefulness, or to the welfare of society, and how much would be lost to each, by

withdrawing her from her own appropriate sphere, and introducing her to that for which she has no adaptation? Who, but a few wild visionaries, and rash speculatists, and mistaken advocates of '*woman's rights*,' would take her from the home of her husband, of her children, and of her own heart — to wear out her strength, consume her time, and destroy her feminine excellence — in committee-rooms, on platforms, in mechanics shop, or philosophical institutions?

But may not woman, in every way in her power — benefit society by her talents and her influence? Certainly, in every legitimate way. Her sphere is clearly assigned to her by God — and only by very special and obvious calls should she be induced to leave it. Whatever breaks down the modest reserve, the domestic virtues, the persuasive gentleness, of woman, is an injury done to the community. Woman can be spared from the lecturer's chair, the platform of general convocation, and the scene of public business; but she cannot be spared from the hearth of her husband, and the circle of her children! Substitutes can be found for her in the one, but not in the other. In the bosom of domestic privacy she fulfils with truest dignity and faithfulness the first and highest obligations of her sex. Monod's remarks on this subject are so beautiful, appropriate, and just, that I shall be more than forgiven for the following quotation.

*'Is not the humble sphere which we assign to woman, precisely that for which her whole being is pre-disposed and pre-constituted? Her finer but more fragile conformation, the quicker pulsation of her heart, the more exquisite sensibility of her nerves, the delicacy of her organs, and even the softness of her features, all combine to make her what Peter so aptly designates 'the weaker vessel,' and render her constitutionally unfit for incessant and weighty cares, for the duties of the state, for the vigils of the cabinet, for all that which yields renown in the world.*

*'Again, are not the powers of her mind equally distinct? The question is sometimes started whether they are equal to those of man. They are neither equal nor unequal; they are different, being wisely adapted to another end. For the accomplishment of the work assigned to man, woman's faculties are inferior to his; or rather she is not adapted to it. We speak of the general rule, and not of exceptions. It must be conceded that, by way of exception, there are among women some few whose intellects are adapted to the cares reserved, on principle, to the other sex, and that peculiar*

*situations may arise in which women of ordinary capacities may be called upon to discharge the duties assigned to man, man in that case being a defaulter; it must be seen, however, that these exceptions are clearly indicated by God, or called for by the interests of humanity. For, after all, in the mission of woman, humility is but the means, charity the end, to which all must be subservient. And why should not God, who has made exceptions of this nature in sacred history, do the same in ordinary life?*

*‘Be this as it may, we leave exceptions to God, and to the conscience of the individual, and abstaining from all irritating, personal, or contestable questions, will confine ourselves simply to the general rule.*

*‘In that limited sphere, however, of which we are speaking, limited in extent, but boundless in influence, within which, supported by Scripture, we exhort woman to confine her actions, she is endowed with faculties superior to those of man, or rather, she alone is adapted to it. Here she has her requital; here she proves herself mistress of the field; and employs those secret resources (which might be termed admirable, if they did not inspire a more tender sentiment both towards her and towards God, who has so richly endowed her) — her practical survey, equally sure and rapid; her quick and accurate perception; her wonderful power of penetrating the heart, in a way unknown and impracticable to man; her never-failing presence of mind and personal attention on all occasions; her constant though imperceptible vigilance; her numerous and fertile resources in the management of her domestic affairs; her ever ready access and willing audience to all who need her; her freedom of thought and action in the midst of the most agonizing sufferings and accumulated embarrassments; her elasticity (may I say her perseverance? ) despite of feebleness — her exquisitely tender feelings; her tact so practiced, were it not instinctive; her extreme perfection in little things; her dexterous industry in the work of her hands; her incomparable skill in nursing the sick — in cheering a broken spirit — in re-awakening a sleeping conscience — in re-opening a heart that has long been closed — in fine, innumerable are the things which she accomplishes, and which man neither can discern nor effect, without the aid of her eye and hand.’*

Milton has finely expressed the difference of the original pair:

*‘For contemplation he, and valor formed;  
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.’*

and this difference, by limiting their respective capacities, prescribes their separate duties and spheres of action.

Now look at woman’s *NATURAL ADAPTATION* for her sphere. If the view here given of woman’s mission be correct, we can in a moment perceive what is required to enable her to fulfill it. There must be, what indeed there generally is pervading the sex — a consciousness of subordination, without any sense of degradation — or any wish that it was otherwise. Woman scarcely needs to be taught, that in the domestic economy, she is second, and not first, that *‘the man is the head of the woman.’* This is a law of nature written on the heart, and coincides exactly with the law of God written on the page of revelation. It is, first of all, an instinct, and then confirmed by reason. Without this law deeply engraved and constantly felt, as well as known, her situation would be endured as a slavery, and she would be constantly endeavoring to throw off the yoke. Her condition would be wretched, and she would make all wretched around her. With such a sense of oppression, or even of hardship, pressing upon the mind — no duty could be well performed, and the family would be a scene of domestic warfare. But she generally knows her place, and feels it her happiness as well as her duty to keep it. It is not necessity, but calm choice, that produces a willing subjection. She is contented it should be so, for God has implanted the disposition in her nature.

Then her *GENTLENESS* is another part of her qualification for her duty. She should have, must have, really has, influence, power of impulsion, if not compulsion. Were she utterly powerless, she could do nothing. *Her influence, however, is a kind of passive power — it is the power that draws, rather than drives — and commands by obeying.* Her gentleness makes her strong! How winning are her smiles, how melting her tears, how insinuating her words! Woman loses her power when she parts from her gentleness. It is this very yieldingness, like the bulrush lifting its head after the rush of water, to which it has bowed, that gives her a power to rise superior to the force of circumstances, which, if resistance were offered, would break all before them. *She vanquishes by submission.* How

necessary is gentleness to the fulfillment of her mission, in handling the young and tender spirits of her children, and training the first delicate shoots of their infantile dispositions; and for directing the feelings of that one heart on which she depends for her happiness. There are many varieties of disposition in women, such as being sensitive, petulant, irritable, jealous, quick to feel and to resent. But notwithstanding all this, and under all this, there is a gentleness of disposition which indicates this vocation as destined to *influence and constrain by love*.

*TENDERNESS* is another of her characteristics. Gentleness relates more to manner — tenderness relates more to disposition. Gentleness relates to habitual conduct, towards all people and all cases — tenderness relates more to the occasional exercise of sympathy with distress. Tenderness is so characteristic of the female heart, that an unfeeling woman is considered a libel upon her sex. If compassion were driven out from every other habitation, it would find there, its last retreat. Her heart is so made of tenderness, that she is ever in danger of being imposed upon by craft and falsehood. How suitable such a disposition for one who is to be the chief comforter of the domestic commonwealth — who is to mollify the wounds of her husband's heart, and to heal the sorrows of her children; whose ear is to listen to every tale of domestic woe, and whose bosom is to be the lodging-place of all the family's grief!

*SELF-DENIAL* is no less necessary for this domestic mission than anything I have yet mentioned. How much of ease, comfort, enjoyment, must she surrender, who has to consult her husband's comfort and will, before her own — *whose happiness is to consist, in a great measure, in making others happy* — who has first to endure all that is connected with giving birth to her children, and then all that is involved in nursing, watching, comforting, and training them! One of the most striking instances in our world of endurance and self-denial, both as to the extent and the cheerfulness with which it is borne, is the busy, tender, and contented mother of a rising family. God has given the power, yet I sometimes wonder how she can exercise it.

And then see her *FORTITUDE* in this situation. In that courage which leads man to the cannon's mouth, to mount the breach, or to encounter some terrific danger of any other kind, she is inferior to man; but in the fortitude manifested by enduring bodily suffering, the ills of poverty, the

wasting influence of long-continued privations, the gloom of solitude, the bitterness of injustice, the cruelty of neglect, the misery of oppression — is she not in all these as superior to man, as man is to her in all that appertains to brute force? On the subject of woman's fortitude and power of endurance, I will introduce, though it may be at some length, the most surprising instance of it perhaps on record, whether in inspired or un-inspired history, and it will serve as an appropriate illustration of this part of the subject of the chapter.

The apostle John, in his narrative of the events of the crucifixion of our Lord, says, with beautiful simplicity, and without a single comment, as if he could not hope, and would not attempt, to add to the grandeur of the incident, '*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.*' That the other women should have been there is less amazing, though even their presence at such a scene, (from which it would seem as if all the apostles had retired except John) was indeed an instance of the fortitude of heroic love. But that his mother should have been there, not far off, but beside the cross, not prostrate in a swoon, or beating her bosom, wringing her hands, tearing her hair, and shrieking in frantic grief, but standing, in silent, though pensive, anguish, to witness the horrors of crucifixion, so far surpassing in torture, those of any modern method of execution — the crucifixion of her son, and such a son; O wondrous woman! and act surpassing wonder!

To whatever length endurance may be carried by attendance at the sick-bed of a dying friend, how few of even female heroes could witness the execution of a husband, son, or brother. I have read of one, who when her lover was executed for high treason went in a mourning coach to witness the dreadful process; and when the whole was closed by the severing that head which had leaned on her bosom, simply said, '*I follow you,*' and sighing forth his name, fell back in the coach, and instantly expired. Here was a power of endurance carried to a point which nature could sustain no longer, and it sunk at length crushed beneath the intolerable burden of its grief. But behold the scene before us; that mother, in the dignity and majesty of profound, yet composed grief, enduring to the end. Peter had denied his Master — the other disciples, at the sight of the officers of justice and the soldiers, amid the deep shadows of Gethsemane, had deserted Him, and still kept at a distance from the scene of suffering and danger; but there, standing by the cross, were those dauntless, holy women, sustaining with

wondrous fortitude the sight of his dying agonies, and confessing their Lord in the hour of his deepest humiliation, in the absence of his friends, and in the presence of his foes — and there among them was his mother. I shall never wonder at anything that female fortitude, when upheld by Divine grace, can do, after it could stand in the person of Mary, at the foot of the cross, when Christ her Son and her Lord was suspended upon it! Nor shall I ever despair of the support of any woman in the hour and scene of her deepest woe, who is willing to be sustained, after I have beheld the mother of our Lord upheld in that unutterably awful situation.

Painters and poets have not done justice to the dignity of this most honored of all women. There is still existing a picture of Annibale Carracci, entitled '*The three Marys*,' the subject of which is those holy women surveying the body of Christ after it was taken down from the cross. As a work of art it is inimitable, and does full justice to the painter's skill. But it does far less justice to the character of the mother of our Lord, than the apostle's description of her. In the painting, she is represented swooning over the dead body of Jesus, whose head reclines on her lap, while the other figures are represented in the attitude of passionate grief. How different this to the dignified, majestic, and composed grief which stood beneath the cross. So far must art ever fall beneath nature, still lower below the wonders of grace, and most of all below such grace as was given to the mother of our Lord.

Let women study this pathetic and amazing scene, and learn that the deepest love, and the noblest grief, are not that sickly sensibility, that emotional excitability, which are too tender to bear the sight of suffering; but instead of sinking with hysterical outcries, or retiring with averted eyes from agonies, or swooning at the sight of tears and blood — can control the feelings and brace the nerves, to perform in the hour and scene of woe, a part which none can perform except herself, or at any rate none can perform so well. Let young women set out in life practicing that discipline of their emotions, which without diminishing anything of that softness and tenderness of manner which are the most lovely characteristics of their sex, or robbing their hearts of those delicate sympathies and sensibilities which constitute the glory of woman's nature, will preserve their judgment from being enveloped in such a mist of emotion, and their will from being so enervated, as to make them incapable of resolution, and render them incompetent in times of their own sorrow and trial for anything besides

weeping over the calamities which they might otherwise remove, and to make them altogether unfit for those hardy services of mercy which the miseries of others will sometimes require at their hands.

Arising out of this self-discipline, and as one beautiful display of it, see woman when called to put forth her gentleness, her sympathy and her self-denial, in the hour of affliction, and the chamber of sickness. It has been somewhere beautifully said, that '*In sickness there is no hand like woman's hand, no heart like woman's heart.*' A man's bosom may swell with unquestionable sorrow, and horror may rend his mind; yet place him by the sick couch, and in the light, or I should rather say in the shadow, of the sad lamp by which it is watched; let him have to count over the long dull hours of night, and wait, alone and sleepless, the grey dawn struggling into the chamber of suffering; let him be appointed to this ministry, even for the sake of the brother of his heart, or the father of his being, and his grosser nature, even when most perfect, will tire, his eye will close, and his spirit grow impatient of the dreary task; and, though his love and anxiety remain undiminished, his mind will own to itself a creeping in of irresistible selfishness, which indeed he may be ashamed of, and struggle to reject — but which, despite of all his efforts, will remain to characterize his nature, and prove in one respect, at least, the weakness of man.

But see a mother, a sister, or a wife, in his place! The woman feels no weariness, and has no thought of herself. In silence and in the depth of night, she bears up not only passively, but so far as the term, with the necessary qualification, may express our meaning, with delight. Her ear acquires a blind man's instinct, as from time to time it catches the slightest stir, or whisper, or breath, of the now more than ever loved one, who lies under the hand of human affliction. Her step, as she moves in obedience to an impulse or signal, would not waken a mouse; if she speaks, her accents are a soft echo of natural harmony, most delicious to the sick man's ear, conveying all that sound can convey of pity, comfort, and devotion. And thus, night after night, she tends him like a creature sent from a higher world, when all earthly watchfulness has failed; her eye never winking, her mind never palled, her nature, which at all other times is weakness, now gaining a superhuman strength and magnanimity, herself forgotten, and her sex alone predominant.

But as woman's mission is in an especial sense one of charity, LOVE is, above all things, essential to its right performance. Here again, I will give a long quotation from Monod's beautiful work.

*'But in speaking of love, it is less the degree than the character which is of importance. Love, as we have before said, is the very essence of woman's existence. But what love? Let her reflect, and she will find that it is precisely that love which predisposes her for the vocation of beneficence prescribed for her by the Scriptures. There are two kinds of love, love which receives, and love which gives. The former rejoices in the sentiment which it inspires, and the sacrifice it obtains; the second delights in the sentiment which it experiences, and the sacrifice which it makes. These two kinds of love seldom exist apart, and woman knows them both. But is it too much to say, that in her the second predominates? and that her motto, borrowed from the spontaneous love of her Savior, is, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

*'To be loved! This, we well know, is the joy of a woman's heart; but alas, how often is the joy denied her! Yet let her continue to love, to consecrate herself by love; it is the exigency of her soul, the very law of her existence — a law which nothing can ever hinder her from obeying.*

*'Man also is no stranger to this feeling; he, too, must love; but his is the love in which Paul sums up the obligations imposed upon the husband in conjugal life, 'Husbands, love your wives,' even as he sums up the duties of submission on the part of the wife — 'Wives, obey your husbands.' But what we are treating of here, is not the obligation, nor the faculty; it is the inclination to love.*

*'Love, it must be remembered, is less spontaneous, less unselfish among men than among women. Less spontaneous; man is often obliged to conquer himself, in order to love; woman need only listen to the dictates of her innate feelings. Hence, Scripture, which frequently commands the 'husband to love,' abstains from giving this command to the wife, taking it for granted that nature herself would supply the injunction.*

*'Moreover, the love of woman is more unselfish. Man loves woman more for his own sake than for hers; woman, on the contrary, loves man less for her own sake than for his. Man because he is not sufficient in himself, loves that which has been*

*given him of God; woman, because she feels that she is needed, loves him to whom God has given her. If solitude weighs heavily upon man, it is because life has no charms for him when separated from his help-mate; if woman dreads living alone, it is because life has lost its aim, while she has none to whom she can be 'a help-mate.' Of her it may be said, if we may be permitted to make the comparison, in the emphatic language of Scripture, 'We love her because she first loved us.'*

If such, then, be woman's mission (and who will deny or question it?) how immensely important it is that it should be well understood, and that she should be properly trained to perform it well. But is it really understood, and is education so conducted as to qualify woman for her mission? It requires little knowledge of modern society to answer these questions in the negative.

Parents, and especially mothers, you who have daughters, to you appertains the serious, and deliberate, and prayerful consideration of this momentous and deeply interesting subject. Look upon those girls whom Providence has committed to your care, and say to yourselves, *'I very distinctly perceive, and as impressively feel, the importance of the female character on account of its influence upon the well-being of society. And it is clear to me, that woman's is a domestic mission, which is to affect society through the medium of family influence. As she fills up her place with wisdom and propriety, so will she promote the well-being of the community. Nor is it society only, but the Church of Christ, that is concerned in, and promoted by, the female character. Now, I have daughters, who must contribute their share of influence to the public weal or woe. How shall they be educated, so as best to fulfill their mission, should they be called to preside over the domestic economy? It depends much upon me, whether they fail or succeed in this their mission.'*

To them, I say, In all your conduct never let these thoughts and views be long out of your minds. Look beyond the drawing rooms of your friends, where your daughters are to be sometimes seen. Look higher than to get them in. These are appropriate, weighty, and necessary reflections, peculiarly belonging to mothers. married, even well married. Take into account their being well qualified to fulfill their mission. Set them before you as the future heads of a domestic establishment, and prepare them to

preside over it with dignity and efficiency.

How much in modern education is calculated, if not intended, rather to prepare our women to dazzle in the circle of fashion and the gay party, than to shine in the retirement of home! To polish the exterior by what are called worldly accomplishments, seems to be more the object than to give a solid substratum of piety, intelligence, good sense, and social virtue. Never was a subject less understood than education. To store the memory with facts, or to cultivate the taste for music, singing, drawing, languages, and needle work, are the ultimatum with many. The use of the intellect in the way of deep reflection, sound judgment, accurate discrimination, is not taught as it should be; while the direction of the will, the cultivation of the heart, and the formation of the character, are lamentably neglected. I ask not the sacrifice of anything that can add grace, elegance, and ornament, to the feminine character; but I do want incorporated with this, more of what is masculine in knowledge and wisdom.

I want to see woman educated not to be man's plaything, but his companion. I want to see her invested with something higher and better than fashionable baubles, elegant trifles, and alluring airs. I want her to be fitted to hold fast her husband's heart by the esteem he bears for her judgment; to inspire confidence and reverence in her children, and in that home where her influence is so potent, to train up men and women who shall add to the strength and glory of the nation.

In this, let mothers be assisted by those to whom they entrust the education of their daughters when they pass from their hands. It is melancholy to think of the incompetency of a large portion of those to whom the education of women is entrusted. How little has it ever occurred to many of them to inquire into woman's mission; what is necessary to qualify her for it; and how they shall aid her in obtaining this fitness! How rarely does it come within their comprehension that it is their duty, and should be their study, to impart not only knowledge, but wisdom; not only to train the performer, the artist, or the linguist, but to lay the foundation for the character of the sincere Christian, the intelligent woman, the prudent wife, the judicious mother, the sagacious manager of the household, and the useful member of society!

And if there be no impropriety in turning aside for a few moments to address myself as well to *fathers*, I would say to them, study deeply, and ponder much the momentous importance of the domestic constitution. In the present age, how much has been said and written respecting improvements in society; but never let it be forgotten that all radical improvement must commence in the homes and at the hearts of our families. The enquiries how best to cure existing evils, or to supply existing defects, which do not begin here, will be superficial in their nature, and unsatisfactory in their results. It is in the correct understanding of the nature of parental obligations, and the right discharge of the duties of man and wife towards each other and their children, that the chief restorative remedy for the diseases of a nation must be sought, as well as the best means of preserving its health. Institutions may be set up to aid or to supplement a father's efforts, or to alter the nature or widen the sphere of woman's mission; and an artificial state of social life may be produced, varnished and glittering with the showy devices of human wisdom, but it will be found in the end, that the purposes of the God of nature, the Great Author of human society, cannot be frustrated; and that the parent must still be the educator of the child, and home the school for the formation of character.

Nor should *young* women themselves be kept in ignorance of woman's mission. Their future destiny, as stated in the last chapter, should sometimes by a wise mother or an able governess, be set before them; and they themselves reminded how much is necessary on their part, to prepare themselves for their future lot. They must be reminded that above and beyond worldly accomplishments, their character is to be formed; which never can be done without their own aid. They must be early impressed, not indeed in a way to inflate their vanity — but to excite their ambition, to stimulate their energies, and to direct their aim, that they have a mission on earth, for which it becomes them most anxiously and most diligently to prepare themselves.

My young friends, let it be your constant aim, and at the same time your earnest prayer, that you may first of all thoroughly understand your mission, and then diligently prepare for it, and hereafter as successfully fulfill it. Look around and see what women commend themselves most to your judgment as worthy of imitation. You will see some, perhaps, in whom, as Monod says, reserve has degenerated into supineness; activity into restlessness; vigilance into curiosity; tact into cunning; discernment into



censoriousness; lightheartedness into levity; fluency into talkativeness; taste into fastidiousness; aptitude into presumption; influence into intrigue; authority into domination; and tenderness into morbid susceptibility; some whose power of loving is converted into jealousy, and their desire of usefulness into obtrusiveness. From such turn away, as from examples in which the best qualities are metamorphosed into the worst.

And equally avoid those whose whole aim seems to be to amuse and to be amused; whose vanity is predominant, even in mature age — and who appear, in their taste for gaiety, company, and entertainments, to forget that they have any mission upon earth, except to flutter in social circles, and to dazzle its guests. On the contrary, select for your models those who seem to be aware of woman's destiny and mission, as a help-mate for man.

If in closing a chapter, already too long, I may suggest a few things which, in preparing to fulfill well your future mission, it is of importance you should attend to, I would mention the following:

Young women! Deeply ponder, that *character for life is usually formed in youth*. It is the golden season of life, and to none more truly and eminently so than to the young woman. Her leisure, her freedom from care, and her protected situation, give her the opportunity for this, which it is her wisdom and her duty to consider, embrace, and improve.

It is of immense consequence you should consider that whoever may help you, and whatever appliances from outside may be brought to bear upon your mind and heart, you must, to a considerable extent, be the constructor of your own character. *Set out in life with a deep conviction of the momentous consequence of self-discipline*. Let your mind, your heart, your conscience, be the chief object of your solicitude.

Lay the basis of all your excellences in true religion, the religion of the heart, the religion of penitence, faith in Christ, love to God, a holy and heavenly mind. No character can be well-constructed, safe, complete, beautiful, or useful, without this.

Cultivate those dispositions of mind which have especial reference to your future mission as the help-mate for man. Improve your mind, and grow in intelligence by a thirst for knowledge; for how can an ignorant

woman be a companion for a sensible man? Cherish a thoughtful, reflective turn of mind. Look beneath the surface of things; beyond their present aspect to their future consequences. Be somewhat meditative, and learn to restrain your words and feelings, by a rigid self-control. Pay most anxious attention to your temper, and acquire as much as possible its perfect command. More women are rendered miserable, and render others miserable, by neglect of this, than perhaps from any other cause whatever. Let meekness of disposition and gentleness of manner be a constant study. These are woman's amiabilities, which fit her for her future situation far better than the bold, imposing, and obtrusive airs of those who mistake the secret of woman's influence.

Contentment and patience; self-denial and submission; humility and subordination; prudence and discretion, are all virtues, the seeds of which should be sown by you in early youth, that their rich ripe fruits might be gathered in future life. Benevolence of heart, and kindness of disposition, must be among your foremost studies, the most prominent objects of your pursuit and most laborious endeavors; for they are the virtues which in their maturity are to form excellence in Christian character, and constitute you the fit companion for a husband.

Make worldly accomplishments subordinate to more substantial excellences. Let the former be to the latter only as the burnish of the gold, or the cutting of the diamond. And as matters of mental taste are to be less thought of, than the state of the heart and the formation of moral character, so let especially bodily adornments be in low estimation compared with those of the mind.

To prepare you to carry out the duties of your future mission with ease to yourself, with satisfaction to a husband, and comfort to a household, pay attention to the minor virtues — *punctuality, love of order, and efficiency*. These are all of immense importance, the lack of them in the female head of a family, must necessarily fill the home with confusion, and the hearts of its inhabitants with sadness. Set out in life with a deep conviction of the importance of habits, and a constant recollection that habits for life are formed in youth and that these habits, if not acquired then, are likely never to be.

Aim at universal excellence. Do little things well. Avoid with extreme dread a loose, slovenly, and careless way of doing anything proper to be done.

Young women, your whole future life will illustrate and confirm the truth and propriety of this advice, either by the comfort and usefulness which will result from your attending to it, or by the miseries which you will endure yourself and inflict on others, if you allow it to sink into oblivion. It is in this way only you can fulfill, with effect, that which it has been the object of this chapter to set before you, woman's mission in social life.

## EARLY PIETY

*'I love those who love me; and those who seek me early shall find me,'*

- Proverbs 8:17

How fascinating is nature in the second quarter of the year. Spring, lovely, animating spring, then sheds its reviving and gladdening smiles upon us. It is always a season of beauty. *'For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in the land.'* Nature stands forth dressed in her garb of living green, decorated with the chaste colors and perfumed with the mild fragrance of the violet, the primrose, and the lily. It is a season of joy as well as beauty; recently recovered from the gloom of wintry months, the earth smiles and is vocal with delight. The feathered songsters of the grove blend their notes with the lowing of the herds and the bleating of the flocks; and the harmony is completed by the joyful sounds of the husbandman, and the gentle music of the breeze. But it is also a season of activity as well as of loveliness and delight, the torpor produced by short days and cold nights is succeeded by universal motion. The farmer is busy in his fields, the florist in his greenhouse, and the horticulturist in his garden — for full well it is known and felt, that a seedless spring must be followed by a fruitless autumn. Hope too adds radiance and delight to youthful spring scenes. The blade springing from the well-cultivated soil, and the blossom on the well-pruned tree, give the promise and prospect of the future crop.

And what is youth but the spring-time period of existence; it is the season of beauty and of joy, it should be the season of activity and of hope. It is then that the beauty of the human form is in all its untainted freshness, and the spirits of our physical nature are in all their unchecked vigor. And it is then that all the energies of the soul should be put forth in the way of self-improvement, to awaken the hopes — not only of their possessor, but of every observer. Do, my young friends, thus look abroad upon the field of nature; not only to poetize, but to moralize; not only to admire, but to imitate; not only to feel the throb of pleasure and the thrill of delight, but to learn lessons of wisdom, and collect motives for self-improvement.

You are, indeed you are, passing through the spring of your life; and as in nature, so in your existence, there can be but one spring; and in each case, it is the spring that will give the character to the seasons that follow it. It is then the seeds of intelligence, of prudence, of virtue, of piety, must be sown, or there will be no produce in the after periods of your history. A seedless spring must here also be followed by a fruitless autumn, and a destitute, dreary, and cheerless winter, and for this reason this chapter is devoted to the enforcement of early piety.

Your first concern, and deep indeed should that concern be, is, of course, *to understand the nature of real religion*. This is of momentous importance. No language can exaggerate it. There can be no hyperbole here. Upon a right understanding of this subject is suspended your happiness for eternity. Ponder that word eternity, and think of the millions of millions of ages, passing comprehension, it includes; all to be filled with torment or bliss, according as you understand and practice, or mistake the nature and neglect the claims of true religion. Should not this awaken solicitude of the deepest kind? What should increase the concern of your mind to intense solicitude, and almost to distress, is, that both our Lord and his apostles, by what they have said, lead us to believe that mistakes on this subject are very common and very destructive, as you may learn by consulting the following passages of Holy Scripture — Matthew 7:13-28; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 13:5-7; Galatians 4:11-18; 6:3-5.

To guard against mistakes, go to the right source of information; consult the only infallible oracle, the Word of God. You have the Bible in your hand; search that, search it yourselves for yourselves. Do not be satisfied with merely consulting men's works, but consult God's own Word. All churches, whatever they may boast, may err, have erred, and have no authority or ability to settle this matter for you. Creeds and catechisms, prayer-books and missals, formularies and confessions — none of them are pure truth — this is true only of the Bible. The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Christians.

Not that I would have you reject the help of other things — but only their authority. An humble, docile mind will be thankful for human aid in the great business of religion. There is a medium between despising assistance and so depending upon it as to cast off all self-inquiry. The pert and flippant self-sufficiency which would lead a young woman to neglect,

or even to despise, the judgment of those whose calling it is to teach the Word of God, and who have studied it more closely than it is possible she can have done, is no proof of that humility which is one of the brightest ornaments of her sex. I do not, therefore, teach young women to think lightly of the assistance rendered by ministers and books, in the momentous concerns of religion; but simply remind them of their duty to search for themselves the Scriptures, by whose authority all books and all ministers are to be tried.

Before I dwell on this source of information, as to the nature of religion, I may just remark that there are one or two things which must of necessity characterize religion. Since it has, first of all and chiefly, to do with God, and since God can and does regard, search, and judge the heart, *its true seat must be the heart*. It is not a mere outward thing, a round of ceremonies, or a course of unintelligent action. The soul must be religious; the whole inner self, the intellect, the will, the affections, the conscience, must be under the influence of piety. Mark this — *there must be thought, choice, affection, and conscientiousness*.

Again; whatever be true religion, it must primarily relate to God, and must of necessity be a right state of mind and heart towards him. It must also be to its possessor a very serious, solemn, important matter; it supposes great concern for it as an affair of salvation, eternity, heaven. It must produce a character very different from that of the person who is not living under its influence. It is too great a matter to leave no mark, to produce no impression, to form no peculiarity. So that we may be sure where it lives properly in the heart, *it will develop itself visibly in the outward character*.

With these ideas, which are at once obvious, instructive, and impressive, let us open the New Testament and see what descriptions of religion we find there; and I beg your very closest attention to them, as in the presence of God, and the prospect of eternity. The apostle Paul, in setting forth the subject and substance of his ministry, describes it thus, '*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*' This then is true religion, repentance and faith. If we turn to the gospel by John, we read thus, '*But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on his name — who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*' This

is also repeated, *‘Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’* This is religion, a new spiritual birth; or in other words an entire spiritual renovation of our fallen and corrupt nature. Then again we may quote the apostle’s words in that beautiful chapter on charity, *‘And now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.’* These also constitute religion, faith, hope, and love. Similar to this is his language in his epistle to the Galatians, *‘For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.’* This is an immensely important passage, as showing that no outward ceremonial observance or church relationship constitute religion; but a true simple faith in Christ for salvation; producing love to God, to man, to holiness. This accords with what our Lord said, *‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’* Then again, the apostle said, *‘For the grace of God that brings salvation, has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’*

Observe then from these passages what is religion, and its usual order. True conviction of sin; deep solicitude about pardon and salvation; confession of sin, without defense, excuse, or palliation; genuine repentance; self-renunciation; faith in Christ, or a simple reliance on him for salvation; the new birth, or an entire change of our corrupt nature; love to God, leading to obedience of his commands, and a holy life; a serious observance of all the ordinances of religion, including baptism and the Lord’s supper. Are these things so? Is this the description of religion given us in the New Testament? Who will pretend to deny it? Search for yourselves! You will see at once how this answers to the general description of it previously given, as a thing of the heart, a right state of mind towards God, a matter of deep concern to the mind that possesses it, and making an obvious distinction between her who has it and her who has it not.

You are in danger, my young friends, from the female temperament, from your sensibility, susceptibility and imaginativeness, of having your minds led astray on the subject of religion, and of considering it rather as a matter of feeling than of principle, as belonging rather to the emotions than to the judgment and the will. You are liable to be seduced from the truth by appeals to the senses and the imagination, as the spurious religion of the present day abounds with them. But I again say, search the New Testament and judge for yourselves, and say what do you find there about tasteful architecture, gorgeous ceremonies, splendid dresses, sacerdotal power, sacred days, either of fasting or festivity, church authority, or even the prevalence of devotional observances over moral duties. What you find everywhere is faith, love, peace, hope, holiness — a religion of which devotion is indeed an element, but only one out of many; being ever associated with self-government, conscientiousness, social excellence, and charity.

Nor is the religion of the New Testament merely that state of mind which is moved by a pathetic sermon, which melts at the Lord’s supper, or is excited by the appeals of a missionary meeting. Religion has to do, I know, with our whole nature, and therefore with its emotional part; but then, the degree of sensibility so much depends upon physical constitution, that a sense of excitement during religious ordinances is far less to be depended upon as a test of personal godliness, than rigid self-government, resolute will in the way of righteousness, and tender conscientiousness, exercised in obedience to the Divine authority, and under a constraining sense of the love of Christ. None are more in danger, therefore, of self-delusion on this subject, than yourselves!

I may now lay before you the obligations you are under to possess, and ever to cultivate and act under the influence of, such a religion as this. I say obligations. This word is stern and hard, but not too much so. The subject is pressed upon your judgment, heart, will, and conscience, by all the weight and power of a Divine authority. Religion is not one of those matters which are submitted to your option, for which if you have a taste, well — and if not, still well. Nor are you left to form your own religion, and to select for yourself the form in which you will please God and find your way to heaven. This is the dangerous delusion of many in the present day. It is all well enough, they think, to be religious after some fashion; but each must adopt his own way of serving God. Upon this principle of

resolving it all into taste, the person of no religion if his taste be that way, is on nearly the same footing as he whose religion is simply according to his own liking.

The truth must be told, and told plainly too; that there is but one religion, and that is the religion of the Bible. To be pious at all, we must be pious in God's way. It would be a strange thing if, when a master had given strict and explicit written orders to a servant how he should be served, the servant should choose his own way of obedience, and set aside the directions he had received. In all honesty, therefore, I must tell you at once, as harsh as the declaration may seem, that without the religion of the Bible, you will perish everlastingly! There is no way to heaven but by the religion of the Bible. *'He who believes on the Son has everlasting life — and he who believes not the Son shall not see life — but the wrath of God abides on him.'* These are dreadful words, they roll like thunder, and flash like lightning, not from Sinai, but from Calvary, and they should be pondered by all who hear or read them.

The obligations to a life of religion arise out of the relations in which you stand to God. He is your Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor — and you are his creatures, his dependents, and his beneficiaries. You feel, my young friends, your obligations to your parents, arising out of your relation to them. As a child, you feel bound to love, and serve, and please them. What, and not feel your relation to God, which is a thousand times more close than that of your connection with them? Yes, you sustain an individual relationship to God. Do you consider this? Have you considered it? Have you ever yet, in devout seriousness, said, *'What, and where, is God my maker? What do I owe him, and how should I conduct myself towards him?'* Is God the only relation you should leave out of consideration and forget? Did you ever yet in all your life devoutly ponder this relationship to God, and the claims which it brings? Why, if he had never commanded you to love and serve him, you ought to do so, on account of this relationship. But he has commanded it. Your Bible is his demand upon you. It is God's voice, enjoining you to be truly, and constantly, and consistently religious. It is his formal, explicit, frequently and solemnly repeated claim. Its injunctions command, its invitations allure, its promises encourage, its threatenings warn, its judgments alarm you, to be truly pious. It is given to teach you what religion is, how it is to be practiced, and how it will be rewarded.

And then this is all addressed to you, while you are young. Religion is not merely the concern of the middle-aged and the old, but of the young; not of the other sex only, but of yours. Indeed it has ever flourished more among people of your sex and age than among any other class. To imagine it is only the business of old age and a death-bed, is an insult both to it and God. Ought he not to have the first and the best of our days? Should he be put off with the dregs of life? Will you dare entertain such an idea as offering those dying remains of existence, that are of no service for anything else, the refuse of sin, Satan, and the world? Does not your fear tremble at such a thought, and your generosity scorn it, and your sense of gratitude recoil from it?

Seriously attend to the following motives by which early piety may be enforced upon you. Alas, that you should need them! Think of its being told to the angels in heaven, that mortals upon earth need to be urged by inducements to love, serve, and glorify that God, whose service is felt to be their bliss, their honor, and their reward. However, you do need these inducements, and they are at hand.

There are motives which apply to you in common with the other sex. Such, for instance, as the nature of religion itself. What for dignity, for happiness, for honor, can be compared with it? What constituted the glory of unfallen woman in Paradise? Religion. It was her piety towards God that invested Eve, before she had spoiled the beauty of her soul, with her brightest charms. Conceive of her, bending in lowly reverence, in ardent affection, and with inexpressible gratitude, before the throne of God; passing with holy dread and averted eye the tree of knowledge, to feed upon the fruit which grew upon the tree of life, and to hold communion with her husband in that sacramental type and pledge of immortality. Not a thought, feeling, or volition, was then in opposition to God. She heard his voice in the garden, and hastened to meet him. Now religion is intended to bring you back as near to that state as our fallen nature in this sinful world will admit of. Yes, religion was the repose of her happy and holy spirit, of which the fall deprived her; and which it is the design of the whole scheme of redemption to restore to her daughters as well as to her sons. True, your religion must have some ingredients which hers before her lapse had not — but in so far as it consists in the service of God, it is the same in substance.

Look up into heaven, and what constitutes the felicity and glory of the blessed inhabitants of that happy world? Is not religion the beauty of every spirit made perfect, the ephod in which every seraph ministers before the throne of the Eternal? But to judge of the real dignity, honor, and felicity, of true religion, hear what our Divine Lord said on one occasion, *‘As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out — blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.’* And who does not admit the justice of addressing this congratulation to that distinguished woman, to whom was granted the honor of being the mother of the Savior of the world? What woman on earth would not have esteemed such an honor infinitely higher than to have been the queen of the whole earth? And yet what was the reply of Christ? *‘But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.’* Yes, she is to be congratulated — but still higher is the honor of being a child of God by true piety, than the honor of being the mother of Christ without it.

Beautiful is the language of Quesnel on this passage;

*‘The Holy Virgin is not blessed in having borne Christ, on any other account; but only because he, being much more holy than the holiest of saints, made her worthy to be his mother, by sanctifying her. Christ does not blame the woman for praising his mother, but he completes it by intimating that her blessedness proceeded from her having borne the Son of God in her heart, even before she bare him in her womb.’ In other words he declares her honor as a woman would have been of no account to her, but for her religion as a saint. (Could any language of our Lord have tended more effectually to rebuke the preposterous and blasphemous honors which are paid to the Virgin by the Papists? It would seem that, foreseeing all that the church of Rome has accumulated of error and impiety in this way, he had determined in the most effectual and impressive manner to furnish the antidote and refutation in this impressive language. Let any one study the spirit of this reply of Christ to the congratulation of the woman that blessed his mother, and say if it is not the most convincing answer which could be given to the dreadful system of Mariolatry, which prevails so extensively in that corrupt and apostate church.)’*

Is it possible, my young female friends, to find a richer, loftier commendation of the dignity and felicity of true religion than this, which places those who possess it above the honor of giving birth to the humanity of Christ? I ask you most intently to ponder this passage of the gospel history.

In common with the other sex, you also are liable to the stroke of death, and therefore youth may be the only time given you to attend to this high concern; so that if neglected then, it may be neglected forever. In the touching and poetical language of Job it is said, *‘Man comes forth like a flower and is cut down.’* How impressive this figure of the frailty of humanity. Man is not like the cedar of Lebanon, or the oak of the forest, which defies and outlives the storms of centuries; no, nor the shrub of the mountain side; or even the flower, watched by the gardener’s care and protected by the greenhouse from the frost and hail, the storm and rain — but the flower exposed to the force of the elements, and the vicissitudes of the weather, soon and easily destroyed by adverse influences. Such is humanity — tender, frail, and fragile.

How often have we seen some lovely flower in our garden, prepared by nature to live in full-blown beauty through a long summer, suddenly pierced by the arrows of frost, just when its bud was bursting and opening its beauties to the sun and the eyes of the beholder, and then drooping its head upon its stalk, and gradually withering away. So also have we often seen an amiable girl, apparently destined to live long upon earth, smitten by consumption, at a time when all her powers of body and of mind were developing into womanhood, and then wasting away by incurable disease, until death closed the scene and left us weeping over the lovely flower cut down in spring. What multitudes of such faded, withering flowers do we see every year. Could we from some high place in the air look down into all the chambers of sickness only of one town, how many estimable young women would we see sinking under disease, amid the tears of parents sorrowfully beholding their pride and hope thus incurably diseased; and others amid the anguish of heart-stricken lovers thus witnessing the flower cut down just when they expected to transplant it into their own garden of domestic delights. Oh painful reverse, to sigh out the last adieu at such a time and under such circumstances; to put on the shroud instead of the bridal attire; to go down to the tomb instead of taking possession of the elegantly furnished house; and be gathered to the *‘congregation of the*

*dead,*’ instead of going into the gay circle of the living!

Does this never happen? Alas, you mourners, your sighs and tears answer in the affirmative. Yes, and you, my young friends, may add to the number. Would you die without saving religion? No! you answer, not for a thousand worlds. Then why live another hour without it? To have it in a dying hour, you must seek it in living ones. Few find it on the bed of death. With religion shedding its luster on the tomb, and pouring its consolations into your bosom; with the attractions of heaven drawing up your soul to its glories; with a hope full of immortality surveying the mansions of the just men made perfect; you will be able to turn away from earth when it is holding out its brightest scenes to your view, and scarcely cast one longing lingering look behind.

But should you live, as most likely you will, still if you neglect true religion in youth — you will most likely neglect it forever. There is nothing more likely to perpetuate itself than neglect, in every case and in reference to everything. Procrastination grows, like other things, with indulgence. Nothing in all the world requires prompt decision so much as true religion. Nothing is more likely to be postponed forever, if postponed from the present moment. I have no doubt you *intend* to be pious. You would shudder at the idea of deliberately purposing and determining to abandon religion forever. It would appear to you the height of impiety, a species of blasphemy, to say, ‘*I will never become a Christian.*’ Yes, and it is thus that Satan would cheat you out of your salvation. He will allow you to be as solemn, and serious, and even sincere, in your *intentions*, as you please, to be religious at some future time — if he can persuade you to put it off from the present moment ‘*to a more convenient season.*’

But you must be told that not one in a thousand of those who go through the period of youth amid evangelical advantages of religion, and with a deliberate postponement of the matter to futurity, ever fulfill their purposes. Those who come to woman-hood, and collect around them the cares and anxieties of a wife, a mother, and a manager of the household, without religion, rarely ever find leisure or inclination for it in such circumstances.

But I now go on to dwell on some motives and persuasives to early piety, which appertain with greater force to your sex than to the other; or at

any rate to a large proportion of it. Consider then your natural temperament. There can be no doubt that though religion is not exclusively, nor principally — it *is* partially, a matter of emotion. In many affairs of human conduct we are moved to action partly by our feelings, even before the decisions of the judgment are made and deliberated upon. The head should always move and lead the heart, but oftentimes the heart rouses and moves the head. The feelings are excited even when the judgment is only half-awake and informed. This is no doubt the case in religion. Your quick sensibility, your soft nature, your tender heart, your great imaginativeness, render you naturally susceptible of pious impressions. Religion contains not only much that is stern, bold, sublime — much that is truly logical, and truly philosophical, which addresses itself to the judgment; but much that is pathetic, tender, and touching — which appeals to the heart.

You are easily moved to fear, and therefore the terrors of the Divine law have greater power to cause you to tremble. You are readily excited to pity, sorrow, and love; and therefore the gospel, that wondrous mixture of suffering, grief, and mercy, powerfully stirs up your tender emotions and calls into exercise your gentle affections. I do not forget that you partake of the common corruption of our nature, and that you also need the grace of the Holy Spirit for your conversion — but still I contend, that so far as natural advantages are to be taken into consideration, the very temperament of your minds is in your favor. Hence it is that so many more women are truly pious than men. It is not that the gospel is unworthy the more robust nature of the other sex; but that it falls in more with the softer nature of yours. In most things the God of grace seems to follow the order established by the God of nature.

I may mention in reference to many of you, your sheltered condition at home, and the protection you there enjoy. Your brothers must go out into the world, encounter its temptations, and be exposed to its moral dangers. While they are in peril of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience on the troubled ocean of human life; you are in the quiet haven of a pleasant domicile. Or, to change the metaphor, you are nestling under cover of a mother’s wing; while they are left in all their inexperience and moral feebleness to the attacks of birds of prey.

Besides this, at home you enjoy, if the children of godly parents, many religious advantages. There, you are called to join in offering the morning

and evening sacrifice at the altar of family devotion. There, you regularly accompany your parents to the house of God; and enjoy the ordinances of public worship. There you are guarded from the withering influence of evil companionship. How favorable is all this to the cultivation of piety! Should your heart be inclined to serve the Lord, you have not to encounter the jeers of scoffing associates, the poisoned arrows of infidel wit, or the sharp spear of profane humour. No heroic or martyr-like moral courage is requisite to enable you to persevere in a religious course, as is sometimes the case with your brothers; on the contrary, every advantage will be afforded you — every stone will be gathered out of your path.

Nor is this all, for independently of parental vigilance and home-protection, your sex is less exposed to the assaults of those temptations which, assailing young men, and conquering the virtue of so many, harden their hearts against the impressions of religion. A keen sense of female decorum has thrown a covering over you. By common consent, an immoral woman is a more immoral character than a profligate man, and hence is a more rare one. The prodigal son is, alas, no unfrequent character — but the profligate daughter does not often occur. A tenth part of the criminality which some men commit and yet retain their place in society, would banish a woman from it forever. It is the high sense of female honor, the moral delicacy, the fastidious modesty, which are at once your glory and your protection. But then this very circumstance increases your responsibility. You are not hardened by crime into insensibility; nor confirmed in guilty habits by repeated acts of sin; nor petrified by infidelity into a stone-like indifference to religious impressions. Your moral susceptibilities are not so blunted by long continued wicked courses as to leave no avenue to your hearts open for the voice of warning.

And then consider one thing more, *your leisure time*. I now speak of women living at home with their parents, and not necessitated to earn their own support by their own labor. Your time, except that which is put under requisition by a judicious mother, for her assistance in household matters, is all your own. Your brothers, whether at home or abroad, must of necessity be much engaged in business. Their time is scarcely at their own command — and too often this is felt, or at any rate pleaded, as an excuse for neglecting the claims of religion and the salvation of the soul. You have no such excuse. Your time is so much at command that you can walk, or read, or work, or visit at will. You have so much leisure, that to get rid of

time, which sometimes hangs heavy on your hand, some of you I fear squander hours every day upon useless labors of pleasure and taste. You, of all people in our world, can with the least truth say you have no time to think of eternity, no opportunity to seek for salvation. Is it possible you should overlook your present happy freedom from solicitude of almost every kind?

You will perhaps at once think of the apostle's words — '*There is a difference between a wife and a virgin — the unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit — but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*' How much of instruction, warning, and advice, is there in these few words. The apostle did not intend to say that all unmarried women actually do, alas, we know that too many of them do not, care to please the Lord — but his meaning is that in the absence of all the concerns of a wife, a mother, and the manager of a house, they have most opportunity to attend to the things that belong to the soul.

Ah, young women, you can perhaps form some idea of what awaits you by seeing what has come upon the head, the heart, and the hands of your mother. With the most judicious domestic arrangements and a mind happily freed from excessive care and troublous thoughts, how incessant are her cares, how exhausting of time, strength, and spirits — are her duties! She has no resting hours, no holiday seasons, no leisure time — but care, incessant care, is often her lot. Is this the time, and are these the circumstances to which you would postpone the consideration of the high concern of religion? Is it amid such distractions of thought, and such perturbation of feeling, and such occupancy of time, you would begin the momentous pursuit of salvation, and the sacred duties of religion? Why the real, yes the established and eminent Christian woman, finds it as much as she can do to keep alive her piety amid so many perplexities and demands. And will you *begin* it then?

These remarks apply to all, even to those who have servants at command, but especially to those who have no such help. Females of the laboring class, how with a mother's duties will you be able to commence a religious life, with your unshared and unalleviated anxieties? Oh, let me say with an emphasis borrowed from what I have witnessed myself, '*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*' Halcyon season, did



you but know it! Improve it while it lasts!

Dwell, my female friends, upon the rich advantages placed by the order of Providence within your reach. Their practical value and tendency are evident in their results. How else shall we account for it, that so much larger a number of the disciples of Christ is found among your sex than among the other? In addition to the circumstances mentioned above to account for the prevalence of piety among your sex, I might remark that it would seem as if God had intended it for the greater humiliation of Satan, that as he triumphed over man by woman, so God would triumph over him by woman; that as she was the instrument of his infernal success in the fall, she should be the instrument of his humiliation in redemption; that she who was the first to come under his yoke should be the most eager to throw it off, and thus his trophy be snatched from his hand, and his boast be rendered empty, by the power of Him who came to bruise the serpent's head, and to destroy the works of the devil.

But there is another mark of the wisdom of God in this arrangement, which is, that as religion is so momentous to the interests of society and the welfare of immortal souls, that sex should be most inclined to it to, which is consigned the first formation of the human character.

I will now set before you the BENEFITS which will accrue to you from early piety.

Are the blessings of religion itself nothing? Recollect, piety is not merely the performance of duties — but also the enjoyment of benefits. This is too much forgotten, and the whole business of a holy life is regarded by many in something of the light of penance; or at any rate of a service somewhat rigid and severe. If it were so, it would still be our wisdom to attend to it, since it is the only thing that can prepare us for heaven and eternity. That it is service, is very true; but it is also a state of privilege. It is the service, not of a slave, but of a child; and with the duties of a child, it brings also the privileges of a child. Dwell upon that one thought, a child of God! Can you conceive of anything higher, greater, nobler? Does an angel stand in any higher relation to God? To be able to say in the fullest, richest sense of the language, '*Our Father who is in heaven,*' to be an object of the love, care, interest, of the one Infinite Being — to be savingly interested in all the privileges of the divine, redeemed, and heavenly family!

O, my young friends, is this nothing? Is it not everything? Many of you are orphans, and is it not blissful to say, '*When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up?*' Is it not a blessed thing to have Him for the guide of your youth? Hear what God says, '*Therefore, come out from among them, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and my daughters, says the Lord Almighty.*' O, hear his voice, accept his invitation, and come into his family. Hence it is we propose religion to you, not simply in the shape of duty — but of bliss! Yes! Saving religion is another name for happiness — and can you be happy too soon? You want to be happy. You are made for happiness, and are capable of it; and where will you find it? Pleasure says, '*It is not in me;*' and knowledge says, '*It is not in me.*' Rank, fashion, and wealth affirm, '*We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*' But true religion says, '*Ho, every one who thirsts, come to the fountain and take of the water of life freely!*'

Universal experience attests that pure and full satisfaction is not to be found for the soul of man in any of the possessions of this world; and if they were satisfying, they are all uncertain — mere unsubstantial shadows, which flit before us, and are lost. You have perhaps formed totally wrong conceptions of religion. '*Happiness,*' you say, '*in religion! We can conceive of it as duty, somewhat severe, though incumbent duty; but to speak of religion yielding pleasure, is like supposing the entrance of a violent lunatic would increase the delights of a ball-room!*' Yes, I know it is in the imagination, of some of you at least, a spectral form, muffled, sullen, and gloomy; frightening the young by its dreadful look, petrifying them by its icy touch, and casting over them its gloomy shadow. But you mistake it! It is on the contrary — a seraph from the presence of God, lighting on our orb, clad in robes of celestial beauty, radiant with beams of glory, shedding smiles of joy on this dark scene, and echoing the angels' song, '*Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will to men.*' True religion meets you, my female friends, just setting out in life, offers to be your guide, protector, and comforter, through all your perilous journey to eternity. Hear her voice as she beckons you to follow her. '*If you are in danger I will shield you; if you are desolate I will befriend you; if you are poor I will enrich you; if you are sorrowful I will comfort you; if you are sick I will visit you; in the dangerous walks of life I will protect you; in the agonies of death I will sustain you — and when your spirit flees its clay tabernacle, I will conduct you into the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy, and place you at his right hand, where there are pleasures*

*for evermore.'*

And will you refuse such a friend? Will you turn away from such bliss? Religion — gloom and melancholy? Yes — if Eden was a gloomy place. Yes — if heaven be a region of sighs and tears. Yes, if saints made perfect and holy angels are clad in sackcloth, and the song of the seraphim is changed into the groan of despair! Oh no! *'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'* Her duties are pleasant, her very sorrows are mixed with joys, to say nothing of her privileges.

To exhort you, therefore, to be pious, is only in other words to invite you to true pleasure. A pleasure high, rational, holy, angelical — a pleasure accompanied by no envenomed sting, no subsequent loathing, no remorseful recollections, no bitter farewells — such a pleasure as being honey in the mouth, which never turns to gall in the stomach. A pleasure made for the soul and the soul for it, adapted to its nature, because suited to its spirituality; adequate to its capacities, because the enjoyment of an infinite good; and lasting as its duration, because itself eternal. Such a pleasure as grows fresher, instead of becoming wearisome, by enjoyment. A pleasure which a man may truly call his own, because seated in his heart, and carried with him into all places and all circumstances; and therefore neither liable to accident nor exposed to injury. It is the foretaste of heaven and the pledge of eternity. In a word, beginning in *grace*, it passes into *glory* and immortality — and those joys which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.

Perhaps I may suggest, without at all intending to utter a suspicion of your regard to virtue, or a reflection upon your firm attachment to its rules, that you may need religion in youth to protect you from the moral dangers to which even women are exposed. An immoral woman, I have already admitted, is a much rarer character than an immoral man; but still it sometimes occurs. What instances could not the records of some institutions reveal? How many victims of the tempter's wiles could there be found, who would have been preserved from degradation and misery, had they been found under the protecting influence of true religion when the assault was made upon their purity or honesty! I know that multitudes are kept strictly chaste and upright without religion; but I know that of the numbers which have fallen, not one would have lapsed if they had been living in the fear of God. After Eve's fall from perfect innocence in

Paradise, no woman should feel offended by the admonition to be cautious and vigilant — nor suppose that her circumstances, feelings, or principles, place her so far beyond the reach of temptation that her safety is guaranteed with absolute certainty. *'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.'* To many a once high-minded woman, proud of her reputation, the taunt has been uttered by the victims of frailty, *'Have you also become weak as us?' 'Be not high-minded, then, but fear.'*

But you need religion for your consolation amid the sorrows of your lot. If it be truly said of man, that he *'is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards,'* it may with greater emphasis be so said of woman. As if in the way of righteous retribution — she who mixed the bitter cup of human woe, is called to drink the deepest of its dregs. Sorrows are apportioned to her sex in common with ours, and there is scarcely an affliction to which humanity is incident to which she is not herself exposed. In addition, how many has she peculiar to herself! The weaker vessel, she is liable to be oppressed by the stronger; and to what an extent is this oppression carried on! How is she trodden down, not only in countries where the protective influence of Christianity is not known, but in this country also! To how much greater *bodily infirmity* is her more delicately wrought and more sensitive frame subjected, than ours! Dwell upon her dependence, and her helplessness in many cases. To me some single friendless women are the very types of desolation.

Then think of *her privations, her sufferings, cares, and labors as a mother!* I admire the patience, contentment, and submission, which enable her to say, *'I am a woman,'* without repining or complaining of the hardness of her lot; for certain it is, that her groans are the loudest in creation. Do not think, my young friends, I am scaring you into religion by filling your minds with these gloomy forebodings. By no means; but I am anxious to prepare you by its sweet, soothing, tranquilizing, and alleviating power, to meet a woman's trials with a woman's piety.

Early piety is at once the most secure basis, and the most complete finish, of all female excellence. Look over what is said in a previous chapter on *'Woman's Mission,'* and the virtues and tenderness that qualify her to fulfill it, and think what a support to all these is furnished by sincere piety. The surest basis of all moral excellence will be found in it. What is so productive of humility, of meekness and gentleness, of contentment and

submission, and of self-denial and fortitude? In what soil will these mild and yet heroic dispositions grow and flourish so luxuriantly as in that of piety? We have stated that woman is created to love and be loved. To love is natural to her — and what cherishes this state of mind like religion, which, both in its doctrines and duties, is one bright and glorious manifestation of love to the universe? To all these varied excellences religion adds the firmness and consistency of principle, and the power and government of conscience, and takes them out of the region of mere taste.

And what a holy and ineffable loveliness does true religion throw over the female character? Beauty is woman's attribute, and her form is the most perfect type of exquisite symmetry to be found in the whole material universe. And if woman's form be the finest specimen of material beauty, woman's piety is the most attractive instance of moral beauty. Who can look upon any well-executed pictorial representation of it without admiration? Where does woman look so altogether lovely as when seen lifting the eye of devotion to heaven; that eye which expresses the mingled emotions of faith, hope, and love? The Church of Rome has known the power of this, and has maintained its dominion in some measure over its votaries, by the power of the painter's art in depicting female beauty associated with female piety. In a religious female, the beauty of heaven and earth combines — the graces of the seraph and those of the daughters of Adam are united

Yet, notwithstanding all this, many of you are not pious. Do consider what a chasm in excellence remains to be filled up, what a deficiency to be supplied, while religion is lacking in the female character. There are few men, however irreligious, but would shrink from impiety in a woman — it involves a coldness and hardness of character offensive both to taste and feeling.

*'Even when infidelity was more in vogue than at present, when it had almost monopolized talent, and identified itself with enlightened sentiment, the few women who volunteered under its banner were treated with the contempt they deserved. The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the 'Rights of Woman;' and no one sympathized with her in her defeat. And depend upon it, whatever other female follows Mary Wolstencroft, and essays the emancipation of her sex from the obligations of piety, will, like her,*

*be consigned to abhorrence by the verdict of society. The mere suspicion of irreligion lowers a woman in general esteem. Religion is indeed woman's armor, and no one who wishes her happiness would divest her of it; no one who appreciates her virtues, would weaken their best security.'* (Woman, in her Social and Domestic Character, by Mrs. Sandford.)

What is it, then, that prevents your giving to the subject of religion that attention which its infinite and eternal importance demands and deserves? Let me ask you with a beseeching importunity, as the apostle did the Galatians, *'Who (or what) hindered you, that you should not obey the truth?'* Ah! what? Let me speak to you of the HINDRANCES that are in the way of your obtaining life eternal. Hindrances! Should anything but absolute impossibilities prevent you? It is not infidelity? No. You are not infidels. You shudder at the idea. A female infidel is a character as rare as it is odious. Nor is it that you are absolutely against religion — but that of *'no religion'* that we have most to complain of. Not of direct opposition to its claims, but the *neglect of them* for other things. It is a *guilty apathy* to the most momentous subject in the universe; a *careless indifference* to the most valuable interests of time and eternity; a *fatal oblivion* of all that belongs to the eternal world, which we regret; a contentment with things seen and temporal, without any concern about things unseen and eternal, which we deplore. Your minds are preoccupied. You are taken up with other things, and say to religion when it appeals to you, *'Go your way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for you.'*

There is, I know, a repugnance to true, spiritual, vital, earnest piety, which is the natural working of an unrenewed heart. You can observe the outer forms of religion, by attending the house of God; but even this is more from custom than from choice, a kind of weekly compromise with piety, that you may for so much Sabbath occupation, be left to yourselves and other pursuits all the rest of the week. Your religion is nothing more than a Sunday dress, worn for the place and the season. But this is not saving religion, but merely a substitute and an apology for it.

Some of you are bent upon present worldly enjoyment. The apostle has described your taste and your pursuits where he says, *'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.'* Ponder that description. Does it not startle you; horrify you? Lovers of parties, of the dance and the song, of the gay scene

and frivolous chat, more than God! Just look at this thought in all its naked deformity. A ball, a concert, a festivity, a party — loved more than God! Not to love God at all for higher objects than these; for science, literature, fame, rank, wealth, is a dreadful state of mind; but to neglect and despise God for scenes of frivolity, mirth, and pleasure — is it not shocking? Did you ever yet seriously reflect thus? *‘What a dreadful heart I must have, which can love pleasure, but cannot love God!’* Consider what this desire for pleasure will do for you in the hour of sickness, in the scenes of poverty, in the season of calamity, in the agonies of death, and in the bottomless pit?

In the case of some of those who possess a more than ordinary degree of personal beauty, the consciousness of beauty fills the mind with self-delight, and constant thirst for the admiration and attention of others. No really elegant woman can be ignorant of her natural accomplishments — and too rarely is a beautiful mind the lovely tenant of a beautiful body. What an odious spectacle is presented when mind and body are thus exhibited in contrast. *‘Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.’* What beauty can be compared with that of the soul, and what beauty of the soul can be compared with holiness? This is the beauty of angels, yes, of God himself. How foolish is it to be vain of that which a disease may soon turn into loathsome deformity, and which, if sickness does not destroy it at once — advancing age must obliterate, and the grave consume. Many a woman, even in this world, has had to rue the possession of a captivating face or form, and to deplore it forever in the world to come. Beauty has lost body and soul, character and happiness, in thousands of instances!

Vanity displays itself also in attention to personal decoration, even where there is no pretension to beauty, and not infrequently attempts to supply the lack of it. How many are a thousand times more concerned about jewelry than religion, the pearl of great price; and about fine clothing, than about the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation. A love of fine dress is not only a foible and a fault, but almost a sin, and in innumerable cases has led to confirmed vice. Is it not lamentable to conceive of a rational and immortal being spending her time and exhausting her solicitude in adorning her body, and caring nothing about her soul — thinking only how she shall appear in the eyes of man, and caring nothing how she shall appear in the sight of God!

With this is too often associated a levity and a frivolity of disposition which are the very opposite to that seriousness and sobriety of mind, which a real regard to spiritual religion requires. There is no sin in cheerfulness — nor piety in gloom. Religion is the happiest thing in the world, for it is in fact the beginning of heaven upon earth. Religion gives a peace that passes all understanding, and yields a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; so that I wish you to understand, my young friends, I do not require you in becoming Christians to put on the veil, cut off your hair, put aside every elegant dress, part with your smiles, and clothe yourself like a spectre in the gloom, and sullen silence of the convent. But saving religion is still a serious thing — a thing that deals with God, salvation, heaven, eternity. And surely the frivolity and the levity that can do nothing but laugh, and rattle, and court attention by studied airs, empty talkativeness, and personal display, are utterly incompatible with that dignified and chastened (yet by no means formal, much less gloomy), sobriety of mind which religion requires.

*Friendships* hinder many from giving their attention to this momentous subject. They are surrounded by associates who have no taste for religion — and they have perhaps formed a still closer friendship with some who unhappily do not conceal their distaste for this high and holy concern. From the spell of such a circle, it is difficult indeed to break away. It has been thought and said by some, that the influence of companionship both for good and for evil, is greater with women than with men; on the ground that there is less of robust independence and of self-reliance in woman than in man. If so, how much does it behoove every female to take care what companions she selects!

How difficult it is to oppose the spirit and conduct of those with whom we associate! Generally speaking, we must conform to them — or give up their friendship. Even if a solicitude about religion is in some degree awakened, it will soon be checked and extinguished in the society of those who have no sympathy with such concerns. Shall the dearest friends you have on earth keep you from salvation? Will you sacrifice your soul, your immortal soul, at the shrine of friendship? Will you refuse to go to heaven because others will not accompany you — and will you go with them to perdition rather than part company on earth? Will you carry your friendship so far as to be willing to be friends even in the bottomless pit?

You are perhaps prejudiced against religion by the conduct of some of its professors. And it may be that some of your own age and sex are included in the number. I am sorry there is any ground for this. I admit that much you see in many of them has but little in it to recommend religion to your favor. But all this was foretold by Christ, and must be expected because of the sinfulness of human nature — and ought not to be allowed to prejudice your minds against piety. If you saw a number of people under a course of medical treatment which required them to observe a particular regimen, but which they constantly violated, and were of course no better for the medicines they took, you would not reject the system because it did not cure them.

Just so it is with religion. These people, though they profess to be under it, are constantly violating its rules, and are no better than those who do not profess it. But is this a valid reason for rejecting the system? You are to test Christianity by its own nature, as set forth in the Bible — and not by the conduct of its professors. If your soul should be lost, it will be no excuse before the judgement of God, nor any comfort to yourselves in the world of despair, that you allowed your mind to be prejudiced against religion by the misconduct of some who professed it.

And now, in conclusion of this chapter, let me, young women, conjure you at the outset of life to consider the great end and purpose for which, as regards yourselves, your great Creator placed you in this world. Do not think too highly of yourselves, for you are sinners as well as others, and need, and may obtain, the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, and along with it, eternal glory. Do not think too basely of yourselves, for you are immortal creatures, and may inherit everlasting life. Rise to the true dignity of your nature by rising into the region of true religion. Do not consume your life in pursuits, innocent it may be, but frivolous and unworthy of your powers, your destiny, and your duty! With a clear and right understanding of your mission as regards this world, connect as clear a perception of your mission as regards the world to come. Behold an existence opening before you, which you may fill with the sanctity, bliss, and honor of a Christian, as well as with all the virtues of a woman. Withdraw your heart from vanity — and consecrate it to piety. Give the morning of your day to God, and then whether it be long or short, whether it be passed in wedded or in single life, whether it be bright with the sun of prosperity, or dark with the clouds, and stormy with the winds, of adversity; if it shall close suddenly

by one of those visitations to which your sex is peculiarly exposed; or if it shall include a long and gloomy evening, it shall usher in for your happy spirit, delivered from the burden of the flesh — that cloudless and eternal morning to which there shall be no night. Then shall it be found that the chief end of woman, as well as man, was to glorify God and enjoy him forever!

## CHRISTIAN ZEAL

*'Those women who labored with me in the Gospel.'* - Philippians 4:3

The subject of this chapter harmonizes with the scenes which we often witness in the metropolis of our country, I mean the missionary and other religious meetings, which are held annually in that great center of the world's family. The month of May is wisely selected for the time of holding the anniversaries of these organizations of Christian zeal. Then, when the principle of fertility, after the dreariness of another winter, is flowing in a thousand channels, and when all nature in this country is verdant and blossoms with the hopes of another year, it is well for the church of Christ to exhibit those institutions which are, in the moral world, the vernal signs of retiring frosts and approaching summer. It is a glorious sight to behold the trooping multitudes hastening with willing feet and joyful countenances, and beating hearts, to the place of convocation, and blending all the joys of friendly greetings with all the sublimer delights of Christian zeal. We feel called upon there to bless God, not only that we live in a world which he has visited in mercy by the person and work of his incarnate Son, but in an age and country in which so much is done for the spread of the knowledge of this great fact to the ends of the earth. At these meetings all is matter of delight. The crowded platforms, containing the pastors, deacons, and members of our churches, who have connected themselves with the Missionary Society; the presence of missionaries from the fields of holy labor; the eloquent addresses of the speakers; the vast crowd of listening hearers, the thunders of eloquence reverberated in other thunders of applause; all, all, are calculated to make one feel how happy an exchange we have made in giving up the pleasures of sin and the world for those of religion.

But there is one other sight on these occasions which is as delightful as it is common; and that is the number of women, and especially of young women, that are always present — thus reminding us how deep an interest they have in these proceedings, and how large a share they bear in them. And indeed, without going to the metropolis in the month of May, or witnessing the scenes of Exeter Hall, what public meeting for any religious

object is ever held in our own, or any other town, of which women do not form by far the larger portion? But I do not adopt the world's vocabulary and talk of the beautiful and elegantly dressed women who are there, I would rather speak of 'the holy women,' like one apostle, and refer to them as another apostle does, as *'those women who labor in the gospel.'*

Let us attend to what the passage at the head of the chapter says, 'Help those women who labored with me in the gospel.' Then women may labor in the gospel, for they did so in apostolic times, and received the commendation of the apostle for it. If they did then, they may now; and if they may, they ought. Hard would be woman's lot, bitter her privation, and degraded her condition, if on account of her sex she was excluded from all participation, beyond her own personal religion, in the most sublime enterprise in the universe. She might well deplore her misfortune, if while man was permitted the exercise of religious zeal, she was denied all service at the altar of God. *'Even heathenism,'* she would mournfully exclaim, *'honored our sex, as it was represented by the Vestals, to whose vigilance was committed the guardianship of the sacred fire; and also by its priestesses, to whose inspiration was entrusted the responses of the oracles. And does the religion of Jesus exclude us?'* No, it does not, and I refer you back to the first two chapters for proof that it does not; and I call your attention in the present one to learn how you may avail yourselves of the honor placed within your reach, and discharge the obligations which you are under to promote the interests of religion in this dark, disordered world.

To be useful in the cause of God! How noble, how vast, how sublime, how godlike an idea! Dwell for a moment upon it. Did you ever weigh the import of that very common, but very delightful word, *'usefulness?'* Did you ever ponder in sober seriousness of thought the kindred phrase, *'To be useful?'* Have you never had your admiration excited by hearing it said of any one, *'She is a useful woman?'* I cannot let you read another syllable until I have endeavored to fascinate you if possible by the beauty, and to captivate you by the force, of that glorious word, usefulness.

Look at its opposite, uselessness. How low, and dull, and mean a sound; and how despicable the character it represents! A rational, social, and immortal being, useless — doing no good, carrying on no benevolent activity, exerting no beneficial influence — a worthless weed, and not a flower; a pebble, and not a gem, a piece of dead wood floating down the stream, instead of a living fruit tree growing on its bank! Yes, worse than

all these, for the weeds, stones, and wood may be converted to some good purpose; but to what purpose can one who does no good be turned, except it be to serve as a warning to others? Let your young hearts, then, beat with a desire to do good. Aspire to the honor of doing good. Contract not, shrivel not, into a despicable selfishness. Cherish a yearning after benevolent activity, and feel as if it were but half-living to live only for yourselves.

In this cause I want you to be even *zealous*. The apostle says, '*It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.*' Zeal, as you know, means an earnest, ardent desire, giving rise to a correspondent energy of action, to obtain some favorite object; and when directed to a right object is a noble and elevated state of mind. It is, however, a state of mind that requires great caution in its exercise, especially in the young, and most of all in young women. It is like fire, which may be applied to many useful purposes when under wise direction, but which if not kept in its proper place and under proper restraint may cause a conflagration. Or to change the illustration, it may be only as the healthful vital heat which keeps the body in comfort and in action, or it may become a fever of the soul, to consume its strength and destroy its life. Or, to venture, for the sake of emphasis, even upon a third comparison, many a zealous mind is set on fire by the speed of its own action, and for lack of some regulator to check its speed, and some lubricator to lessen its friction, bursts into a flame and consumes the whole machine, and does mischief to others as well as to itself.

A warm heart requires a cool judgment to prevent these consequences from a *misguided zeal*. The female mind being so susceptible, is far more liable to incautious action than that of the other sex, and is less disposed to reflection. In man the judgment more generally keeps the heart in check until it is itself enlightened and convinced. In woman the heart is often engaged before the judgment; and hence the danger of female zeal being sometimes wrong in its object, excessive in its degree, and impetuous in its action. Almost all new theories, whether relating to medicine, theology, or any other practical matters, find favor first of all chiefly with women. Too often led more by their feelings than by their reason, they get entangled, like their first mother, by appeals to their passions and affections, and allow their hearts to lead astray their judgment. The Greek philosophers classed zeal under three heads — zeal of envy, the zeal of achievement, and the zeal of piety. Extinguish all feelings of the first, as so many sparks thrown off

from a flame kindled by the fire of the bottomless pit. Have very little to do with the second beyond an unenvious imitation of what is good; and let the third be put under the guardianship of a sound judgment, and the guidance of the Holy Scripture.

I will first of all advert to the OBJECTS of your zealous activity. You dwell in a valley of tears, and amid the groans of creation, occasioned by poverty, disease, misfortune, and death, and are not to be insensible to the sights and sounds of affliction by which you are surrounded. The female heart is supposed to be the very dwelling-place of mercy, and an unfeeling woman is a libel upon her sex — formed by nature to weep with those who weep, and to minister to the bodily woes of humanity, she should enter into the design of Providence, and become a ministering angel in the chamber of sickness. You have seen those cloaked and demure women who issue from Catholic convents on errands of mercy to the abodes of sickness and poverty, deeming no office too menial, no service too self-denying, which can alleviate the pains, or promote the comfort, of the sufferer. We would not question the purity of their motives, or the tenderness of the offices which they perform for the children of want and woe; but they look, after all, like a device of the church which employs them, to obtrude itself on public notice and to win converts to itself. We call upon you, without cutting the ties of your connection with society and abjuring the characters of wives and mothers, to be our Sisters of Mercy, and to make it your business and your pleasure to visit the scenes of sickness and the abodes of poverty. Even in youth, acquire the habits, the tenderness, the delicate tact, of a nurse. Loathe that spurious sentimentality which can weep over the imaginary woes of a novel — but turns away, either with a callous or a coward heart, from the real sufferings which abound on every hand.

But I now more particularly refer to zeal for Biblical religion, or for matters connected with it. Religion is every one's business, not only as regards the possession and practice of it as a personal concern, but also as regards its diffusion. Everyone can not only be truly pious, but, by the blessing of God, can do something to make others so. To spread religion in our world is not merely the work and duty of its ministers, but of all Christians without exception, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, male or female. Everyone who understands the nature, feels the influence, and values the privileges, of the gospel of Christ, can do something to bring others into the same happy condition. Where there is no

desire and no effort to do this, there can be no real piety. Those who have no concern for the salvation of others have no right to conclude they are in a state of salvation themselves. There is room, and opportunity, and obligation, for all to work in this cause. Even children can do something here, and have done it.

God sometimes employs the humblest instruments for accomplishing great purposes, as I observed when remarking upon the conduct of the little Hebrew maid in Naaman's family. Paganism teaches us something here; for what said Jehovah to the prophet when referring to the heathen practices which the Jews had imitated? *'Do you not see what they are doing throughout the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? No wonder I am so angry! Watch how the children gather wood and the fathers build sacrificial fires. See how the women knead dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. And they give drink offerings to their other idol gods,'* Jeremiah 7:17-18! What a busy scene — all minds engaged, all hands employed, men, women, and children! Let us be instructed by this example of misguided zeal, and show a zeal for the true God equal to that which the apostate Jews did for false ones. Christianity can find work for women and children as well as Paganism; and how solemn are the obligations to propagate it which it imposes on all who profess it!

As no service can be well performed by those who are not QUALIFIED for it, I will here enumerate the chief prerequisites for a course of female activity in the cause of religion.

Religious zeal should in every case be the offspring of personal piety. Without this there can be no intelligent, well-sustained, or very efficient effort. Something no doubt may be accomplished without it. God may make use of labors which were not directed to his glory. But it is only the truly pious mind that can understand the object of religious zeal, be actuated by right motives, and be likely long to continue the work, or to bring down the blessing of God upon what is done. Your own heart must be right with God or you will know little about the way of making others so. Example must support exhortation, or the latter will have little effect. Much of the effort of the present day is sadly lacking in devout seriousness, spiritual earnestness, and holy solemnity. It is a bustling, prayerless, unsanctified activity. There is, in too many, a frivolity about it that looks as if those who are engaged in it know not, or forget, that they are doing the work of the

Lord — all is so light and trifling that it is evident in this case zeal is only another species of amusement. The zeal that is likely to be continuous, to honor God, to do good to our fellow-creatures, is that which is cherished in the closet of devotion, fed by the oil of Scripture, and fanned by the breath of prayer. There is upon the minds of those who manifest it that awe which warns them how they touch a holy thing.

Scriptural knowledge is essential to well-directed efforts to do good. I now more particularly refer to a knowledge of the object to be accomplished, and of the means of accomplishing it. A young person anxious to do spiritual good should well understand three great principles in religion — *the ruin of human nature by sin, its redemption by Christ, and its regeneration by the Spirit* — and should consider that all efforts of zeal must be directed to the accomplishment of the two latter. To fit her for this work, she should study well the Word of God, read some of the many treatises on the subject of religion with which the press teems, and make herself acquainted with some of the best tracts and books for putting into the hands of those who become anxious about religion.

An intense and longing desire to be useful must lie at the bottom of all her efforts. It is not a mere love of activity, a taste for social union and occupation, a desire for power and influence over others, an ambition for distinction, which are the impulsive causes of religious activity; but a tender pity for the immortal souls of our fellow-creatures, and an earnest solicitude for their salvation, coupled with an enlightened and fervent zeal for the glory of God. It is that piety which melted the heart of David when he said, *'Rivers of waters run down my eyes because they keep not your law;'* which agitated the soul of Paul, when amid the splendors of Athenian architecture and sculpture, he was insensible to all the magnificence that surrounded him, in consequence of the sin with which it was associated, and felt his spirit moved within him at seeing the city *'wholly given to idolatry;'* and which, indeed, is taught in the first three petitions of our Lord's prayer — *'Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'*

Understand, my young friends, then, what you have to do; not the work of a low and narrow sectarianism, in proselyting people from one denomination to another, nothing resembling the operations of female Jesuitism, nothing of zeal to establish one denomination upon the ruins of



another — no, but the nobler and holier work of saving the souls of your fellow-creatures, especially those of your own sex, from the dominion of sin here, and from *‘the wrath to come’* hereafter. Begin life with an abhorrence of bigotry, and never let your zeal degenerate into the baseness and malignity of that earth-born spirit; let it be a fire kindled by a coal taken by the seraphim from the altar of God — and not a flame lighted by a spark from the bottomless pit. Be it your aim to spread that religion which consists not in forms of government and religious ceremonies — but in faith in Christ, love to God, and love to man. To accomplish this, let there be a real engagement of your heart. Give up your soul to a passion for being useful. Cherish the most expansive benevolence. Feel as if you did not understand, or secure, or enjoy, the end of life — unless you lived to be useful. Consider usefulness the charm of existence, the sugar that sweetens the cup of life. Ever feel as if you heard a voice saying to you, *‘Do something — do it at once — do it heartily — do good, this good, good to the soul.’*

A habit of self-denial is essential to the exercise of religious zeal and Christian benevolence. Our Lord said, *‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.’* This is true of the way of holiness, but it is especially so of that of benevolent activity. Christ could do us no good without his cross — nor can we do others much good without ours. We would not deceive you, and endeavor to lure you into the career of holy activity by representing it as leading through a garden of Eden where all is blooming and beautiful, ease and enjoyment. No such thing. The course of religious zeal is often in a wilderness, over sharp stones and bare rocks, and amid thorns and nettles. You must make sacrifices of time, ease, enjoyment, feeling, perhaps of friendship. You must bear hardships, and encounter many disagreeable things. You must be prepared to give up self-will, your own comfort, and claims to pre-eminence. Can you be zealous of good works on such terms? If so, come on; if not, go back; for the career of mercy is not for such tender feet as yours to tread.

But, my young friends, can you allow yourselves to sink into such delicacy and feebleness of character? Can you be content to degenerate into littleness, and pass through life as a species of nonentity, because you cannot endure noble self-denial? I do not appeal to your love of romance. I would not set your imagination on fire, in order that you may offer up

yourselves a burnt offering to benevolence, in the flames of enthusiasm. I do not stimulate you to become heroines of mercy, and to set all the comforts of life at defiance. There are some who love the adventures of a career of active mercy. There may be romance in everything, even in pity. I do not want this — but I do want to see young women practicing a sober self-denial, a judicious disregard of ease and comfort — in order to do good. Unite a masculine hardihood of endurance with a feminine tenderness of feeling and delicacy of manner. Passive fortitude belongs to you.

Patience and endurance is another qualification for doing good. Those who would accomplish this must not be *‘weary in well-doing.’* There are many things to make them so, the neglect of others, opposition, disappointment, ingratitude, perhaps censure. Those who expect to benefit their fellow-creatures with as much ease and as speedily as some do them injury, had better not make the attempt, for they are sure to fail. Scarcely any people in the world have more need of patience than those who set themselves to instruct the ignorance, to relieve the needs, to alleviate the sorrows, and to reform the vices, of their fellow-creatures.

See how this was illustrated in the history of our Lord. Consider how his benevolence was ever resisted by the malignity of those whom he sought to benefit. He lavished upon them his mercy, and it was repaid by their ingratitude. They refused his offers, rejected his invitations, misrepresented his actions, disbelieved his words, and misconstrued his motives. Never was so much goodness met by so much envenomed opposition! Yet behold his patience. A thousandth part of the opposition which he met with, would have exhausted the forbearance of an archangel; and yet *‘he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself;’* gave them his tears when they had refused his miracles; shed for them his blood when they despised his tears; and bade his disciples to make to them the first proclamation of his grace, when they had even scoffed at his death.

Study the history of Christ, my young friends, for the purpose of seeing an example for you to imitate in the career of mercy. Follow him who *‘went about doing good,’* in order to teach you with what patience you should go and do likewise. Many who are all ardor at starting, soon grow tired, because they do not find the course easy, and reach the goal, at a bound — or are opposed in the way. It is a despicable as well as pitiable sight, to behold a young person entering into the work of benevolence as

confident and eager as if she would surpass all others, and then almost at the first stage, when the novelty is over, and difficulties arise, and the expected flowers do not appear in the path, giving all up, and turning back to indolence, ease, and uselessness. On the contrary, it is a sight on which angels and God himself look down with delight, to see another holding on her way in her humble career of benevolence, amid disappointment and opposition, persevering in her attempts to do good, and finding in the consciousness of her aims and motives, and her knowledge of the excellence of her object, a sufficient inducement to persevere — though at present she reaps little else but discouragement and defeat.

A spirit of dependence upon God for success, united with a high sense of the importance and necessity of human effort, is essential to religious zeal. This gives a twofold boldness of mind, and firmness of step; and makes us strong, not only as instruments, in ourselves, but also in the Lord and in the power of his might. What courage is derived in the career of benevolence from such a consideration as this — *‘I know I am seeking a good object by right means, and I will go in the strength of the Lord!’* Young women, even in your humble sphere and feeble efforts to do good, a spirit of believing prayer, (which indeed is the spirit in which everything should be done) will bring the God of angels to your help, the Lord Almighty to your aid! Go forth with the consciousness that you are doing right, and with a belief that Omnipotence is by your side. It does not betoken pride nor self-conceit, but only that proper sense of capability which every one should cherish, to say, *‘I feel I am something, and can do something; I need not be a cipher, for God has not made me one. I have a mind, and heart, and will, and tongue, and with these I may do something for God and my fellow-creatures. Others of my own age and sex, feeble and humble as I am, have done something, and so may I, and by God’s help and blessing, I will.’* You are right; it is all true. This is self-knowledge, and right self-esteem. Cherish these thoughts; act upon them, and you will do something. With such qualifications you may go to the work of religious zeal.

Permit me now to point out to you the WAYS in which your zeal may be employed appropriately to your sex, age, and circumstances. *‘As we have opportunity,’* said the apostle, *‘let us do good.’* Opportunities are more precious than rubies, and should never be lost by neglect. There are three things which, if lost, can never be recovered — time, the soul, and an

opportunity. And it is of importance for you to ponder this. It becomes us all to remember the advice of the sage to his disciples, *‘Be mindful of opportunities.’* Youth is your opportunity for doing good; not indeed if you live, your only one, but it is a very precious one. The remarks made in the last chapter on the subject of the leisure afforded by your present situation for the cultivation of piety, apply with equal force to the opportunities it affords for usefulness. In married life, with a family around you, and all the cares it brings with it, you will have comparatively little opportunity, at least for some of those activities which you can now carry forward.

Among the ways in which female activity could be appropriately carried on, I must begin of course with the education of children in our Sunday Schools. The instruction of the girls is entrusted to women, and what an honor is thus assigned to them! It is strange how any young woman pretending to religion can satisfy herself that she is doing all she can, or all she ought, for God’s glory and the good of her fellow creatures — who is not devoting her youthful energies to this blessed work. And yet it is painful to observe how many of the young women of the more respectable families of our congregations, withhold their services from this useful and valuable sphere of female activity. I am not unaware of some difficulties and objections to this engagement for her daughters, which present themselves to the mind of a careful, judicious, and anxious mother. But surely the proper exercise of maternal influence and authority would, in most cases, be sufficient to counterbalance those contingent evils to which the mixed society of the Sunday-school community might expose young women, I mean in the way of forming acquaintances and unsuitable connections. A well-taught and wisely-trained girl will know, and ought to know, how to avoid general and undesirable familiarity — without being suspected of haughty disdain or proud neglect of those who are not upon her level in the ranks of social life. It does require care, I admit, but care will be sufficient to avoid the evils alluded to. And I freely confess that the frequent and mixed meetings of teachers of both sexes which are held in some schools, are by no means necessary for the good working of the system, and are very undesirable on other accounts; and it is not to be wondered at, that for this reason, many mothers do not allow their daughters to become teachers, and that daughters themselves do not wish to engage in the work. Acquaintances, by no means suitable, have, no doubt, in some cases been formed. It is therefore incumbent upon all who are thus engaged to be anxiously watchful that no part of their conduct give to those who

seek it, occasion to speak ill of the effect of Sunday-school teaching upon the character and conduct of the women who devote themselves to it.

District-visiting Societies and benevolent institutions for affording temporal relief and spiritual instruction to the sick poor, conducted by female agency, are become very common both in the Church of England and among Dissenters. It would not be desirable, of course, that these should be chiefly conducted by young women. Matronly age, experience, and weight, are necessary to give propriety and effect to such a labor of love, but surely there is no impropriety in associating even in these good works, a youthful female with an elderly one.

The Bible and Missionary Societies, and other religious institutions, have called into operation a large number of women who are employed in collecting money for those important organizations, and for supplying the poor with copies of the word of God. There can be no objection to this, provided the more youthful portion of the sex so employed be associated with those who are older, and also that very young girls be not employed at all in the work. Nothing can be more repugnant to my sense of propriety, than for young women to be sent out with what are called '*collecting cards*,' to wander over a town knocking at the doors of anybody and everybody for the purpose of begging money, and sometimes even entering counting-houses, and assailing young men with their importunities.

The distribution of religious tracts is another line of female activity in which many may be eminently useful. This is a means of doing good universally characteristic of the age. The press was never so active either for good or for evil as it is now. Its productions are instruments which every hand can wield — even that of a young and even comparatively illiterate female. But the same caution must be here applied also, that nothing be done to break down the barriers of female modesty.

Perhaps it will be thought I ought not to overlook one line of female usefulness peculiar to the sex, and especially to the youthful portion of it, and that is, furnishing articles of the pencil and needle, the products of which when sold shall go to the support of the cause of Christ. There is one way of doing this, about which I confess I have serious doubt; I mean the modern practice of bazaars, or as they are now called, '*Fancy Sales*.' I am aware of all the arguments that are employed in favor of them, such as their

gainfulness, and their calling forth contributions from those who would give or could give in no other way. A very beautiful little tract, entitled '*The Bazaar*,' was published two years ago, in which the writer, not without a show of argument, endeavored to prove that these means for the support of religion hardly comport with the sanctity of the object. A certain air of frivolity and worldliness at these sales is thrown over the whole; so that such a scene looks like piety keeping a stall at '*Vanity Fair*.'

'Recall,' says this writer, '*the scene itself — the gay dress, the music and the raffle, flattery and compliment instead of truth. Purchases made from regard to man, and not free-will offerings to God. Mortification and disappointment in place of the approving consciousness of her who 'had done what she could.'* Skill exercised in making that which is worthless pass for much. Arts practiced, advantages taken, with the excuse that it is for a religious purpose, that would be thought dishonorable in the common business transactions of the world. Then follows the feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction after excitement; the gaze at the heap of left things to be disposed of, or that will do for other bazaars, with the false estimate of the result of this. There is another fact in the history of such sales; some who shun the ball-room and the concert, and never entered a theater, act there the shop-woman, talk the nonsense befitting the bazaar room, and are as worldly, vain, and foolish, as she who seldom dreams of anything but pleasure, earth, and time.'

Now this, I admit, is rather severe, and is perhaps a little exaggerated. Still there is much truth in it, and it may serve as a corrective, if it should not as a dissuasive. To the pure, all things are pure, and there may be those who can enter, pass through, and leave such scenes, without receiving the smallest injury to the devout and happy seriousness of their religious character. At any rate it is coming near '*the appearance of evil*,' and should excite caution and prayer on the part of those who consider the matter as innocent and therefore lawful. Bazaars, however, are not the only way in which the needle is employed by pious women for works of charity. Working parties are very common — one meets periodically in my vestry, at which articles of utility are made and shipped for sale in India, the produce of which, amounting sometimes for one year's labor to eighty pounds, is devoted to the support of orphan schools connected with our

missionary stations abroad. At these meetings, piety, friendship, and zeal, all blend their feelings of enjoyment, and furnish happy seasons for those who attend them.

I knew a most accomplished woman, long since in heaven, who was called by grace out of the mirthful world, and who after her conversion felt an irresistible desire to do something for the spiritual welfare of her fellow creatures and the glory of God — but her means were more limited than her aspirations. She thoroughly understood the science of music, and her most exquisite singing had been the delight of mirthful and fashionable circles. Her taste in drawing and painting was equal to her skill in music. After her conversion to God she turned these abilities to the purpose of glorifying God, *‘who does instruct man to discretion,’* by setting some of the most admired Italian and German tunes to sacred words, and painting Scripture subjects, and selling the music and pictures in the circle of her friends, often for large sums, especially the paintings, and consecrating all, like the woman who broke her alabaster box of ointment, to the honor of the Savior whom she intensely loved. Perhaps there may range over these pages the eye of some similarly gifted woman, with a heart for Christ and his cause, but with as scanty property to serve him, as the female above alluded to; to her I would say, *‘Go and do likewise.’*

Is there not one way in which young women, unable to do much in producing tasteful works, may be occupied in doing good for God and their fellow-creatures, without in the smallest degree violating the rule of decorum or infringing on the delicacy of female modesty — I mean visiting the chamber of sickness, or the cottage of poverty, to read to the invalid or the ignorant of their own sex, the Word of God and religious tracts? Surely it is no invasion of either the rights of man or the duties of the minister, for a pious modest female, though young, (of course I do not mean a child,) to go to the bedside of a sufferer, and pour into her ears the words, and into her heart the sacred truths, of that precious volume, which is the best balm for a wounded spirit, and the only consolation for a broken heart. Nor can it be improper for her to take her chair by the side of a poor mother who, while she is plying her needle, or watching the cradle, is ready to hear words whereby she may be saved.

What a field of usefulness, almost unoccupied, is here opened to the ambition and the energies of our pious young women who have leisure for

such occupation! How many thousands of women of the laboring classes are there in every large town, who are so occupied by the cares of their families and the demands of their husbands, as never to join the public assemblies for worship, or to hear the joyful sound of the sermon, or the psalm, who would hail as a ministering angel a female coming to their scene of constant monotonous care and labor, and causing their dreary abode to echo with the music that tells of a present salvation even for them, and of a land hereafter where the *‘wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are forever at rest.’*

Oh you *‘devout women, not a few,’* if you have hearts of pity for the poor; or compassion for the souls that are likely to be lost amid their *‘being anxious and troubled about many things and their much serving;’* or if you have any zeal for the glory of God, do, do, employ your leisure hours in paying these visits of mercy to the houses of poverty, ignorance, sickness, and misery. Here there can be nothing in opposition to female modesty, nothing that can minister to female vanity. The seclusion of the scene prevents all this — no crude or inquisitive gaze follows a young woman there; no language of fulsome compliment or sickly adulation is addressed to her there; she is alone with sorrow, or witnessed only by her conscience and her God. Oh, what compared with a young female so occupied is the most elegant and beautiful woman glittering in the gay scene of fashionable folly — the admiration of many eyes and the envy of more? What is all the adulation poured by the lip of flattery into the ear of beauty, compared with the blessing of her who was ready to perish, so gratefully bestowed on that sister of mercy, who had thus *‘caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.’*

FRIENDSHIP affords a means of usefulness of which you ought not to be slow in availing yourself. It may be you have formed friendships in the days of your thoughtlessness with some as thoughtless as yourselves. But you have been awakened to solemn and holy reflection. You have through the work of divine grace passed from death unto life; but your friends still remain under the power of the world and far from God. Here then is a most legitimate object of pious zeal, to seek by all affectionate and judicious means their conversion to Christ. What an honor and felicity would it be, should you be the means of saving the soul of your companion! How close and tender would be your friendship from that hour, when the tie of affection was doubled and sanctified by the bond of saving faith! How happy would be your friendship, how sweet your communion! A

friendship is made between you which will go with you to heaven; for all friendships formed on the basis of religion will last forever. Take with you then if you can, to that happy world, the friend of your heart, there to renew, perfect, and perpetuate the communion which you have commenced on earth, and realize the idea that the closest and happiest friendship commenced below is but the bud, and scarcely even that, which will blossom with unending freshness through eternity in heaven!

Women's talent for a flowing easy tender style of CORRESPONDENCE is generally acknowledged; and ought they not to employ this as a means for serving God and their fellow-creatures? How many have been thus led to an acquaintance with religion. There is a great moral power in a well-written religious letter. It is known and felt to be an effusion of love from one heart to another. It is read alone, when no one is a witness of the effect. There is not the reproving or monitory presence of the writer. There is no disposition to feel offended and to resent the intrusive advice or warning. Young women, employ your pen and let your affection in this manner breathe from your letters.

I shall now lay down some RULES for the direction of female activity, which must be very rigidly observed in order to prevent it from doing harm in one way as well as good in another.

The zeal of young women must ever be exercised with the strictest regard to the MODESTY of youth, and especially of youthful women. It must never be forgotten that bashful modesty is the beauty of female character — like the violet, which seems to court seclusion, and indicates its retreat only by its fragrance — bashful modesty in her, adds to her attractions. Anything that would destroy this; that would strip off this delicate veil of modesty, and make her bold and obtrusive; that would thrust her by the impulsive ambition of her own mind upon the public notice, instead of being sought out for usefulness; that would make her clamorous in her complaints of neglect, and imperious in her demands for employment; would inflict an irreparable injury on society by depriving her of that passive power of gentleness by which her influence can be most effectually exerted in society.

I confess that with all my desires for female activity within its proper sphere, and the legitimate exercise of woman's zeal, the extent to which in

the active spirit of the age, the female sex is employed, makes me not a little jealous for the delicate beauties and excellences of the female character. Money might flow into the treasury of our societies, and numbers might be added to their friends, spirit might be given to our operations, and the triumphs of the cause might seem to be multiplied — but if any injury were sustained by the female character, all that was otherwise achieved would be accomplished at a dreadful cost and a fearful loss.

Therefore I entreat you, my young friends, to guard against this evil. Cultivate the meekness, gentleness, and bashful modesty which are your brightest ornaments. Make it appear that in what you are doing for God and his cause, you neither seek publicity, nor aim to attract attention, nor to court applause. Avoid all that undue familiarity, flippancy, and trifling with the other sex, which would look as if your object was rather to attract notice from them, than really to do good. I ask for nothing prim, prudish, or repulsive; for no dread of converse with men, or flight from their company, as if there were moral contamination in their presence and pollution in their words. Excessive prudery is no indication of the highest toned purity; nor is an easy, artless frankness of manner, the indication of a bold and forward disposition. Still, be reserved, without pride or coldness — and frank, easy, and ingenuous, without familiarity and obtrusiveness. In this age your danger lies in the latter extreme rather than in the former. Be contented that your influence should flow through society like the blood in the human frame, carrying life and energy with it, but by channels where it is neither heard nor seen.

Female zeal in religious matters must ever be carried forward with *due regard to the duties of home*. If, as I have stated, home is the sphere of woman's mission, and the first and chief place of her duty, no public objects of any kind must be allowed to interfere with them. This I have already alluded to, but on account of its importance I refer to it again. It is not to the honor of religion, nor to the credit of a wife and mother, for a husband to come home at the dinner hour expecting to see everything ready and in order, and to find all in confusion, and nothing properly arranged, and have his time wasted by waiting for his wife, who has not finished her benevolent rambles, or her morning's attendance at some women's meeting. Nor is it much for his happiness on coming home in the evening, suffering from the fatigue and vexation of the world's rough business, and when needing the soothing influence of a wife's sweet voice, to have to sit hours

in sadness and solitude, because she is away at some public service. This is not the way to promote wedded felicity, or to interest his mind on behalf of the objects of his wife's zeal. *It will never do to serve the Lord with time taken from domestic order, comfort, and family duty!* A neglected husband and family are a sad comment upon some women's religious activity — and it is a comment not infrequently expressed by those who see it in the appearance of the children and the house.

On the opposite extreme, there are many who could do much Christian service without infringing on domestic claims, but who will do nothing — and avail themselves to justify their own selfishness and indolence.

Still a woman may look well to the ways of her household, and yet have time to devote to the cause of religion and humanity; and some do so, who by method, diligence, and efficiency, set their house in order. The description of the virtuous woman comprehends both of these — '*She looks well to the ways of her household. The heart of her husband does safely trust her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. Her children rise up and call her blessed. She gives food to her household, and her portion to her maidens. She eats not the bread of idleness.*' Here is domestic order, management, economy, in perfection. Yet with all this is associated, '*She stretches out her hands to the poor yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.*' There the good housewife is supposed to find time for works of mercy abroad as well as of industry at home. When the comfort of a husband is never neglected, and he has no reason to complain, and does not complain, of the lack of his wife's friendship; and the supervision of the children, as to their general well-being, and their education and home-training are properly attended to; and the whole course of domestic order is maintained with regularity and precision — it is to a Christian woman's honor that her method of efficiency and order in the regulation of her household affairs is such as to leave her ample time for usefulness — without infringing on her duties as a wife, a mother, or a manager of the household. Except in the case of a large family, a lack of all Christian service is no credit to any female. She cannot be educating her family as she ought to do, if she is not, by her example as well as by her precept, training them to habits of benevolence.

*The two extremes then are to be avoided by a married woman, of allowing, on the one hand, the duties of home so entirely to engross her*

heart, as to feel no interest in anything that is going on in the world for the alleviation of its sorrows or the reformation of its vices, and to cherish no desire to promote the great objects of Christian zeal — and, on the other hand, of allowing Christian service to occupy her attention so far as to neglect the claims of her husband, children, and servants. The chief danger in this age lies in giving too much attention to public duties, especially in the metropolis, the seat and center of all our great societies, and the place of their annual convocation. It is not much to the credit of a mother, nor for the advantage of her daughters, to be fond of taking them to many of these public gatherings. The month of May affords a strong temptation to this, and it should be most assiduously guarded against. It is not only lawful, but proper and desirable, that our wives and daughters should be present at such meetings. Who would debar them from all these assemblies, or shut them out from all these feasts of holy charity, or exclude them from all these scenes in which they take as deep an interest, and to which they have contributed equally with ourselves? Their sex is more benefitted by them even than the other. Let woman's heart there bleed over the woes of humanity, and especially of her down-trodden sisters in the lands of darkness; let woman's hand be there stretched out to lift them up from their degradation, and woman's eye there sparkle with a brighter luster as it rejoices over the records of our missions, and the triumphs of Christianity. But let not this rise into such a passion as shall spoil her for partaking of interest in home duties.

In order to this, let younger women in these days of general benevolence guard against acquiring in youth that taste for public activity which, though it will not prevent them from entering into domestic life, will to a very considerable extent disqualify them for its duties. A love of activity is good; a passion for it is an evil. There is such a thing as well-regulated, temperate, religious zeal — and there is also such a thing as a species of religious excessiveness. When a young person loves home and home duties, but is ever willing and ready on suitable occasions, and for a proper object, to leave them for works of religious and common benevolence, she has a right disposition. But when home and home duties are irksome, and she is ever longing for the excitement of public services, her taste has been corrupted, her character damaged, and her prospects for future life have become somewhat beclouded. If she has abandoned the intention or wish ever to become a wife, and has determined to be a sister of charity, it may be all very well to desire to give herself wholly to works

of benevolent activity — but if not, let her beware how she acquires tendencies, and forms habits, which would equally unfit and indispose her for the duties of wedded life.

Young women while at home should be generally regulated by the wishes of their parents, and especially by their mothers. They are not, and should neither wish nor attempt to be, independent of parental control. A good and wise daughter will ever look up with affectionate deference to a good and wise mother, and will not therefore enter on any career of religious activity without consulting her. It may be that the wishes of the child and the opinions of the parent, on this point, are sometimes in opposition to each other, and it requires little argument to prove which in this case ought to give way.

Perhaps, some zealous, ardent, young female will put such a question as this — *‘I feel it my duty to God to attempt to spread religion, and to do good to my fellow-creatures, especially in the way of saving their souls; but my parents, not being themselves Christians, oppose it, and will not allow me either to engage in Sunday-school instruction, to collect for missionary or Bible societies, to distribute tracts, or to read the Scriptures to the poor. Is it my duty to follow out my own convictions, or yield up my wishes to my parents?’* It would be very proper for you, in a respectful and deferential manner, to state your wishes, and use every argument to obtain their compliance — but if this should prove ineffectual, you must then submit and bear the privation without resentful sullenness. To be moody, ill-tempered, and petulant under the refusal, would too plainly indicate that you have much yet to do in your own heart, to foster religion there, before you seek to communicate it to others. You are under no such obligation to exercise your religious zeal in any particular way — as you are to *seek your own salvation*. It is manifestly your duty to do good, and you can do it, even under such restrictions as those I am now supposing; for you can *set a holy example*, and you can *pray* for the spiritual welfare of others, and *correspond* with absent friends, and perhaps influence by *conversation* your companions — and thus are not, and cannot be, shut out from all methods of doing good. And as for those from which you are debarred by parental authority, God will take the desire for the deed, and reward the intention, as he would have done the action, had you been permitted to perform it.

Consider also that as your parents do not enter into your views of religion, they will regard your conduct, if you persist, in no other light than that of a refractory spirit, and will thus receive a prejudice against religion on account of your conduct — whereas a meek and good-natured yielding to their wishes, and sacrificing an object which they perceive to have been near your heart, will dispose them to think favorably of the religious principle which could produce such a spirit of unresisting and uncomplaining self-denial.

In order to be useful, it is necessary to cultivate habits of order, punctuality, and the right employment of TIME. There is no doing good without the proper use of time. Two things cannot be done at once. Benevolent service requires time. And how much time is wasted, which the miseries and needs of society require! *‘Redeem the time!’* — is a warning that should ever be sounding in our ears. We need it for the improvement of our own souls — and we need it for the good of others. We can do much with a proper use of time — and nothing without it. There is scarcely anything to which the injunction of our Lord more strictly applies than to time — *‘Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.’* Order redeems time, so does punctuality — therefore order and punctuality are ways of supplying the time necessary for the exercise of deeds of mercy.

Redeem time from useless reading, and other selfish entertainments — and also from that excessive addictedness to the worldly accomplishments of music, arts, and fancy craft-works, which are so characteristic of the present day. That some portion of time may be given to these things is admitted. I am not for parting with the exquisite polish which skill in these matters imparts to female elegance. I love to see the decorations of female mind and manners. Of this I may have to speak again in a future chapter, and therefore shall merely now enquire — when the cries of misery are entering into her ears, and the groans of creation are arising all around her; when countless millions abroad are living and dying without the light of the gospel and the hope of salvation; when at our own doors will be found so many passing in ignorance and wickedness to their eternal destinies — is it humane for a Christian woman to spend so much precious time each day over her knitting, crotchet, or embroidery work? As she sits plying those needles, and bringing out, it may be, the tasteful design hour after hour — does she never hear the cry of human woe, *‘Come over and help us!’* Does it never occur to her, how many souls have gone into eternity unprepared

to meet their God, since she took her chair and commenced her daily entertainment?

Or, even leaving out of view the employment of her time for deeds of mercy to others; is it not an afflicting sight to behold so much time thrown away on these elegant trifles, which might be employed in cultivating one's own mind and heart, by reading useful Christian literature? You cannot, systematically, do good either to yourself or others, without redeeming time for the purpose!

Perhaps the following very striking antithetic description of time will interest and instruct many of the readers of this chapter —

*'TIME is the most undefinable yet paradoxical of things; the past is gone, the future has not yet come, and the present becomes the past, even while we attempt to define it, and like the flash of the lightning, at once exists and expires. Time is the measure of all things, but is itself immeasurable, and the grand discloser of all things, but is itself undisclosed. Like space, it is incomprehensible, because it has no limit, and it would be still more incomprehensible, if it had. Time is more obscure in its source than the Nile, and in its termination than the Niger — and advances like the slowest tide, but retreats like the swiftest torrent. Time give wings of lightning to pleasure, but 'feet of lead' to pain. Time lends 'expectation' a curb, but 'enjoyment' a spur. Time robs beauty of her charms. Time builds a monument to merit, but denies it a house. Time is the transient and deceitful flatterer of falsehood, but the tried and final friend of truth. Time is the most subtle yet the most insatiable of predators, and by appearing to take nothing, is permitted to take all — nor can it be satisfied, until it has stolen the world from us, and us from the world. Time constantly flies, yet overcomes all things by flight, and although it is the present ally, it will be the future conqueror of death. Time — the cradle of hope but the grave of ambition — is the stern corrector of fools, but the salutary counselor of the wise, bringing all they dread to the one, and all they desire to the other; but like Cassandra, it warns us with a voice that even the sagest discredit too long, and the silliest believe too late. Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it — he who has made*

*time his friend, will have little to fear from his enemies, but he who has made it his enemy, will have little to hope from his friends.'*

Permit me now to remind you that all your efforts of religious zeal should be carried on in a spirit of FAITH and PRAYER. Christian zeal should not be merely the love of activity, much less an ambitious fondness for publicity and display, that moves you; but the overpowering feelings of love to God and love to man. Zeal must not be a substitute for religion, but the impulse and the constraining power of it. Instead of weakening your own piety, zeal must strengthen it. Emanating from your own holy mind, zeal must, like the newly kindled flame, react upon and increase the fervor of its source. You must be watchful over your spirit, and take care that your humility and spirituality be not impaired by a spirit of vanity. You should look well to your motives, and subject your heart to a most rigid self-scrutiny. In the retirement of the closet you should cultivate that spirit of dependence which expresses itself in prayer — and is cherished by prayer. The more you do for the spiritual welfare of others, the more you must do for your own. You should take alarm if you find that the excitements of zeal produce indisposedness for the more retired and quiet exercises of devotion. A renewed consecration to your work should often have taken place — preceded by a renewed consecration of yourselves to God.

To encourage you in your career of holy activity, I may call you, in CONCLUSION, to consider the nature of your work, and the consequences that will follow even your humble endeavors to carry it on. It is salvation, the gift of God to man, which Jesus Christ came to our world to produce, and the Scriptures are written to describe and impart. It is saving religion, the balm of man's wounded heart, the renovator of his corrupt nature, the means of his happiness, his preparation for immortal glory — it is saving religion, the source of individual comfort, domestic peace, social order, national prosperity, and the whole world's restoration — it is saving religion, which shall cover our earth with the glories of millennial bliss, and raise up countless millions of our race from the ruins of the fall to the heavens of the eternal God — it is saving religion, which shall be the glory and the bliss of the redeemed church throughout eternity — it is saving religion, the cause for which prophets testified, apostles labored, martyrs bled, ministers toil at home, and missionaries abroad; it is this that you are promoting by all your efforts of religious zeal!



In this cause you shall not labor in vain, nor without your reward, for ‘the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;’ and your humble labors, though as drops in that mighty ocean, shall help to swell and impel the mighty mass; and after this, shall come the world where you shall be gathered unto those holy women whose lives were briefly recorded in a past chapter, and to all those chaste virgins and holy matrons, who have wrought to weave by their labors, the crown of glory which shall ever flourish on the head of our Emmanuel!

## THE PARENTAL HOME

*‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise.’*

- Ephesians 6:1-2

*‘It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.’*

- Proverbs 21:19

*‘Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.’*

- Romans 12:10

It was the saying of a judicious governess to a pupil on leaving her establishment, *‘Be assured, my young friend, that the order, comfort and happiness of a family, very greatly depend upon the disposition and conduct of the younger members of it — when they cease to be children. I have seen the declining years of some kind parents completely embittered by the pride, self-will, and inconsiderate conduct of their children. When a young lady returns home, if she is not so good a daughter as she was before, whatever acquisitions she may have made at school, she had better not have been there.’*

This advice, so sensible and so appropriate, not only shows how well-qualified was the admirable woman who offered it for the discharge of her duties, but is well worthy of being written on the first page of every young woman’s album, yes, upon the tablet of her heart, and of being read by her every day of her residence in her father’s house.

*What we are at home, is what we really are.* Everyone is best known at home. Many change their conduct and behavior when they go into social company. It has become almost a proverbial saying — *‘Tell me not what people are in company — but what they are in the family circle.’* Home, as I have already said, is one of the sweetest words in our language; and nowhere better understood than in our own country. But it involves as many duties as it does enjoyments. It is not only a paradise of delights — but a school of virtue. A family is a little world within doors; the minia ture

resemblance of the great world without. It is in the home of her parents that a young female is trained for a home of her own — and generally speaking what she was in the former, that, in full maturity and expansion, she will be in the latter; the good wife and judicious mother, looking well to the way of her household, being the full-blown rose of which the good girl at home was the bud of promise and of hope.

And it may be depended upon as a principle, suggested by reason, as well as a fact corroborated by observation, that she who contributes nothing to the happiness of her early home as a daughter, is not likely to find others contributing to her later one as a wife, a mother, and a manager of the household. It is therefore of immense importance that you should at once, at the very commencement of this chapter, pause and ponder the momentous truth, that you are preparing your own future home by the manner in which you conduct yourself in the home of your father — and because of its importance it is thus dwelt upon with such repetition.

In one aspect the subject of this chapter is of more consequence in reference to you, than it is in reference to your brothers; you remain longer at home than they. It is the usual order of things for them to remove early from beneath the parental roof, first to learn, and then to pursue, their avocations in life; so that if their disposition be unamiable and their habits unfriendly to domestic peace, they soon depart and the annoyance goes with them. But you, if not necessitated to go out into a situation for your own support, remain with your parents until you are married; and if not wedded, you are with them continually. In the latter case, being a fixture in the household, you are under the greater obligation to increase its happiness. Of how much comfort or distress, according to her character and conduct, may a daughter be to a family through a period of ten or twenty years, dating from the period of her completion of her education! Hence it is always a source, not of unmixed delight, but of some anxiety, to a considerate mother, what kind of home character her child will prove when she has finished her education, and exchanges the company of her teachers and fellow-pupils, for that of the family circle.

Here then is the first thing, the great thing, to be determined upon by the young woman on her return home — to be largely a contributor to the happiness of the domestic circle. You cannot be a cipher in the house, or a nonentity. The other members of the little community must be affected

by your conduct. You are ever in the midst of them, and your actions, words, and even your looks, exert an influence upon them. Behold, then, your starting point in the career of home duties. Take up this resolution, intelligently, deliberately, determinately, *‘I will, by God’s grace, do all I can to make my home happy to others — and thus comfortable to myself.’*

Look at this resolution, ponder it, imprint it on your memory, heart, conscience. Is it not wise, virtuous, right? Do not reason, conscience, self-love, approve it? Let it be a serious matter of consideration with you, not merely a thought passing through the mind, and leaving no trace behind; but a deep, abiding, influential consideration. Have not your parents a right to expect it? Is it not the most reasonable thing in the world, that enjoying the protection and comforts of home — you should in return make home happy?

To diffuse happiness anywhere is a blissful enjoyment, but most of all at home. To light up any countenances with joy, is to a benevolent mind, a desirable thing; but most of all the countenances of parents, brothers, and sisters. Set out with an intense ambition to compel from the whole family circle the testimony that it was a happy era in its history when you permanently resided at home. O, to hear a mother say, *‘Your coming, my daughter, was as the settling of a ministering angel among us; your amiability of disposition, your constant efforts to please, your sweet and gentle self-sacrificing disposition have been a lamp in our dwelling, in the light of which we have all rejoiced. What a large accession, my beloved child, have you brought to our domestic felicity! Receive your mother’s thanks and blessing.’* The hardest heart would be moved by such a hope as this.

Contemplate now the contrast to this, when the conduct of the daughter is such as to extort such a declaration as the following from sorrowful parents — *‘We looked forward with pleasure and with hope, not altogether unmixed with anxiety, to the time when we would receive her back from school, to be our companion and our comfort. But how bitter is our disappointment! Her unamiable disposition, her heedlessness of our happiness, her restlessness in the family circle, her craving for any company but ours — are painfully obvious. It was, we regret to say it, a sad increase of our domestic trouble, when she became a permanent inhabitant of our house.’* Sighs and tears follow this sad confession.

Which of these shall be the case with you? Can you hesitate?

Having then made up your mind to be a comfort at home, you should, and will, of course, inquire into *the means of accomplishing your purpose*. These will, if the purpose be fixed, and the desire intense, almost without any enumeration suggest themselves. Those who really want to make others happy, will find out their own means of doing so, and be ingenious in their devices to effectuate their end. Many things are difficult and require deep thought, but not so the desire to please. If our heart be set upon it, we can diffuse bliss almost without effort or contrivance. From a heart fully possessed with the desire to make others happy, kind attitudes, words, and acts will perpetually flow off, like the waters of a spring ever rising of themselves.

But I will lay down *rules for your guidance*, that your behavior at home may contribute to the happiness of your family circle.

Should your parents themselves be truly pious people, who have trained you up in the fear of the Lord, their deepest solicitude and most earnest prayer for you, is that you may '*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*' You have been the witnesses of some of their great concern on this ground, and for this object. You have heard a father's prayers, have seen, perhaps, a mother's tears for your salvation; but of the whole of their concern on this point you never can know. It is too deep for you to fathom. Until this great subject is determined; until they see you in earnest to lead a pious life, they cannot be happy. They value your love, your respect, your attentions to their comfort, your general good conduct, your acquirements, and not infrequently feel a parent's delight over you. But '*Alas, alas,*' they say, '*one thing you lack yet, and that is, the one thing needful — true piety, the salvation of the soul. Oh, my daughter, that you were a real Christian; and that your love to Christ were as sincere as your love for me — and that all your other excellences were sanctified by the crowning one of true religion.*'

What a check is such a reflection to the joy of a Christian parent. How many hours of bitterness such reflections occasion! What an interruption to the bliss of a family does it occasion when there is a difference of experience on this most momentous of all subjects! How is a mother's heart grieved to see her daughters, after all the pains she has taken to form

their religious character, more taken up with *fashion, company, and gaiety* — than with *eternal realities*! And that good man, their father, how is he distressed to see his *counsels unheeded*, his *prayers unanswered*, and they whom he had hoped to lead to the altar of God, far more fond of the *fleeting mirthful vanities of the world*!

On the other hand, how happy are those parents whose children are one with them in this momentous concern. How sweet and sacred are the seasons of family worship, when, not by constraint, but willingly, the children assemble round the domestic altar, and join in the sacrifice of prayer and praise. No jars and discords now arise for the lack of sympathy in these great subjects. No opposition of tastes occurs, no clashing of interests. Very often does the mother exclaim in the fondness of her heart, '*Thank God, that dear girl is a Christian, and to all her other excellences which endear her to my heart, adds piety towards God. The beauties of holiness invest her charms with a loveliness that nothing else can impart.*'

In order to make home happy, there must be a proper consideration and right discharge of all the duties you owe to the various members of the little community of which it is composed.

First of all, there are the DUTIES TO YOUR PARENTS. That home cannot be a happy one where they are neglected, and filial duty is lacking in the heart and conduct of the children. God has selected the most comprehensive term that could be employed on this subject, '*Honor your father and mother.*' This includes *respect, love, and obedience*. It is not necessary here to state the claims which parents have upon your gratitude, reverence, and regard. I can only remind you how much of the happiness of home depends upon a right understanding and discharge of the duties you owe to them. When the father's heart is wounded by disobedient conduct, or even disrespectful language; when the mother's comfort is neglected, and her burdens are unshared — when it is apparent that the children are much more intent upon their own gratification than that of their parents — when services are rendered to them tardily, reluctantly, and with bad attitudes — when dissatisfaction is uttered by the parent, only to be answered by disrespect from the child, happiness must be a stranger in such a home. Disobedience in young children, in whom reason and reflection are yet feeble, is bad enough, but it is far worse in those who are grown or growing to years of maturity.

On the other hand, if it be beautiful to see the tender obedience and affectionate attentions of childhood, which are rather the efforts of instinct than of reason — it is a far more attractive scene to witness the reverent regard, the studious desire to please, the anxious effort to gratify, manifested towards her parents by a grownup daughter. Here the intelligent mind is moved by the affectionate heart, and the affectionate heart is, in return, guided and impelled by the intelligent mind. If your parents have been less educated than you, and at the same time have spared no expense to afford you advantages which they did not possess, how ungrateful would it be in you, by any part of your conduct, to display your superiority and make them conscious of their ignorance! Before a mother's infirmities reach the point of actual incompetency, a good daughter will feel solicitous to share with her the burden of domestic care, and to relieve her as far as possible from her load of maternal duty. This requires caution, lest by an meddlesome intrusion of help, it would be suspected she was desirous of thrusting the mother from her superintendence, and of stepping into her place. It can never fail to wound a mother's heart to be supposed to be incompetent to fill her own situation as female head of the family. Even when senility is creeping on, she should be made to feel it as little as possible, and the forms and show of authority should be allowed to remain, when the reality has passed away. Jealousy is one of the last passions that die in the human heart, and it should not be awakened by any part of filial conduct in the mind of a parent. A wife, mother, and manager of the household, deposed by her daughter, is a painful sight. She may have much weakness, but still enough reflection remains to make her feel her humiliation.

Therefore, young women, in aiding a mother, do not attempt to wrest the keys from her keeping, but only employ them under her direction. For this be ever ready. It is to me one of the most lovely scenes on earth to see a young woman risen up to be the companion and helper of her mother, placing herself by her side, and foregoing many an invitation and opportunity of personal enjoyment to relieve her solitude, to lighten her cares, or to minister to her comfort. Your object should be to share your mother's labors, without superseding her authority — and to assist her in a way so tender and so delicate as shall neither awaken her suspicion that you wish to supplant her, nor make her feel that she is incapable of doing without you. To these duties all should be attentive, but especially those

daughters who make a profession of religion.

Many who will read this work are happily in this state — and to them would I most earnestly and affectionately say, '*Let your light shine*' at home, that its inhabitants, '*seeing your good works, may glorify God your Heavenly Father.*' Let it be most impressively and constantly felt by you, and let it be seen by others, that you feel that Christianity is no abstract thing of times, places, and occasions; but an element of the general character, which is to enter into all relations, all duties, and all engagements. It must improve you in everything, spreading like a gilded surface over your whole selves and all your conduct, and shining like a beautiful polish on every other excellence. It must make you a better daughter in every aspect — more respectful, more kind, more devoted to your parents; and compel them to say, '*Happy was the day when she became a Christian, for from that hour she became a lovelier and more loving child!*'

It may be that the parents of some of you are not truly converted to God. This places you in a difficult and delicate situation, and will require the utmost solicitude, care, and prayer, that you may be prevented from doing, or being, anything that would prejudice them against religion; and that you may be enabled on the contrary so to conduct yourself as to predispose them in its favor. You must affect no superiority, nor even seem to say, '*Stand aside — I am holier than you.*' This is improper towards any one, much more towards a parent. You can pray for them, and you can exhibit to them, by your example, invested with all the beauties of holiness, what religion is; but direct efforts to bring them under its influence, though they should not be altogether withheld, should be conducted with the greatest tenderness, humility, modesty and delicacy. There must be no lecturing, much less any reproach or accusation. A deep, tender, loving solicitude for their spiritual welfare, must be seen veiled with modesty, but still seen, penetrating the transparent and graceful covering; a solicitude which only now and then presumes to speak; but, when it does, always in love. Such a line of conduct may accomplish its purpose, and produce results like the following —

A female, who had been some years known and respected for her quiet, consistent, unobtrusive, Christian deportment, called on her minister to introduce her aged mother, who leaned on her arm, and seemed to repose on her that tender dependence which is so soothing and delightful to an

aged parent, and so heart-thrilling to a dutiful and grateful child. Both were overcome by their feelings, and it was some moments before either could speak. The minister desired them to be seated, and cheerfully said, *‘Well Hannah, I suppose this is your good mother, I am very happy to see her.’* ‘Yes,’ replied the mother in broken accents, *‘Her mother, and her daughter too. Twenty-five years ago I bore her in infancy; and now through her instrumentality, I trust I am born to God.’*

Mr. Jay relates a similar anecdote. ‘Well,’ said a mother, one day, weeping (her daughter being proposed as a candidate for Christian communion), *‘I will resist no longer. How can I bear to see my dear child love and read the Scriptures, while I never look into the Bible; to see her retire and seek God, while I never pray; to see her going to the Lord’s table, while his death is nothing to me?’* ‘Ah,’ said she to the minister who called to inform her of her daughter’s desire, wiping her eyes, *‘Yes, sir, I know she is right and I am wrong — I have seen her firm under reproach, and patient under provocation, and cheerful in all her sufferings. When, in her late illness, she was ready to die, heaven stood in her face. Oh, that I was as fit to die! I ought to have taught her, but I am sure she has taught me. How can I bear to see her joining the church of God, and leaving me behind, perhaps forever?’* From that hour she prayed in earnest that the God of her child would be her God, and was soon seen walking with her in the way everlasting.

But there are, in most cases, other members of the household besides parents — BROTHERS and SISTERS — who also require attention and right conduct from a young woman at home. A loving, united, harmonious family, I repeat again, where the children all promote the comfort of their parents and of one another; where each is studious to please and to perform all kind offices for the rest, and all seek the happiness of each, is one of the loveliest scenes to be found in our selfish and discordant world. Much, very much, depends upon the daughters for this domestic harmony. They can exert, if prudent, good-tempered and accommodating — a softening influence over the minds and manners of their brothers. Sisterly affection, judiciously displayed, is one of the sweetest and most powerful ingredients in the cup of domestic enjoyment. True it is, that it will require occasionally some little self-denial, and sacrifice of personal gratification, desires, and feeling, to conciliate the affection, and secure the good-will of brothers, who are apt to begin too soon to feel that they are *‘the lords of the*

*creation;’* but this is necessary to keep the peace of the family. And a girl of good sense and affectionate disposition, will do a great deal towards it.

Woman is made to yield, though not to be trampled upon. Her gentle nature is formed for submission, rather than for resistance. A good and wise sister will feel this, and her affection will, in most cases, be her protection. Let her put forth the thousand little ingenious arts, and throw the silken cords of love over her brother’s hearts, and she may do much to attach, and in some cases, even to subject, them to her, and make them fond of home.

A husband is but too apt to run away from the home which is tenanted by an ill-natured wife; and brothers have been often driven away to wicked company — by cross, sullen, unaccommodating sisters. I am aware that it is but too frequently the case, that young men are polite and attentive to every female but those they meet at home every day, and that scarcely any one has to complain of a lack of civility and pleasantness, but their sisters. At the same time it must be confessed, that some young women have themselves to blame for this, for it does require more virtue than is ordinarily found, to be much attached and very attentive to such an impersonation of pettishness, bad disposition, and vanity — as some silly girls present at home. How many parents’ comfort is disturbed, and their hearts half-broken, by the jealousy, envy, and contention of their children!

To the elder daughter, especially if she be older than her brothers also, a larger share of responsibility attaches than to any other of the children, because her influence is greater. She does almost as much to form the character of the younger branches as the mother, and when the latter is feeble or inefficient, perhaps more. It is a lovely sight to behold an intelligent and affectionate girl, exerting a gentle, yet not authoritative or dictatorial power, over her younger brothers or sisters, setting them a beautiful example of filial piety, and devoting all her efforts to uphold parental authority over them, conciliating their confidence by her judgment, and their affection by her kindness; throwing a softening and gentle influence over their cruder and harsher natures, and compelling the parents to say *‘She is a second mother to the family!’*

Mothers, I speak to you. Train your daughters, not to be elegant and helpless ladies — but to be useful wives, mothers, and managers of their

homes. Be yourselves patterns in these things, and secure the imitation of your daughters. Much will depend upon you in this matter. And you, my young female friends — enter warmly and wisely into this subject yourselves. Do not assume the *'fine lady'* — or wish to be only a kind of dressed dolls, to be carried about and played with by others.

I now suggest some other matters, partially implied in what I have already advanced, but of sufficient importance to be brought out in full view. Among these must be mentioned AMIABILITY — in other words, that sweetness of disposition which is *ever seeking to please, and to avoid whatever would offend*. There is a saying, that *'disposition is everything.'* This is going too far, since it is not to be doubted good disposition is sometimes associated with bad principle — while on the other hand, there are many high-principled and noble-minded individuals, who are troubled, equally to their own annoyance and that of their friends, with infirmities of disposition. Still, though not everything, good disposition is a great thing. Very much depends in this matter upon our physical organization, for we see the same difference in the brute creation that we observe in the human species. But this, though an explanation, is not an apology; because reason and religion may do much, and in myriads of instances have done much, to correct and improve a naturally bad disposition.

Begin life, young woman, with a deep impression of the value of good disposition, both to your own happiness and to that of the people with whom you have to do, especially your family circle. Study well your own disposition. Know well what it is you have to contend with in your own case, and set yourself most diligently to subdue it. Be manager of yourself! Bad disposition is a generic phrase, there are several species of the thing, as for instance, there is a PEEVISHNESS or PETULANCE about some people which makes them susceptible of offence, not of either a very deep or passionate kind, but an irritability which disposes them to be hurt at little things, and to complain of the petty faults of others.

Then there is the VIOLENT disposition, which is excited, by some supposed or real offence, to sudden ebullitions of anger, or what we call being in a rage — sometimes even to violence.

There is also the SULLEN disposition, which, on being contradicted, opposed, or reproved, sinks into a silent, moody, and inwardly resentful

state of mind. People of this turn will sulk for hours, if not days; retiring into themselves, they will brood over the matter which has occasioned their unhappy state, until they have actually made themselves ill by their bad disposition; and yet, if reasoned with, will assert they are not ill-tempered, but only *'hurt.'* This is the disposition, which, more than anything else, is an interruption to domestic peace.

I am no apologist for stormy passions, or for those that indulge them, but those who are soon in a blaze and as soon cooled down and the fire extinguished, are not so inimical to the peace of a family, as those in whose heart the embers of ill-will are kept long smouldering under the ashes and not allowed to go out.

Next there is the SELFISH disposition, which leads its possessor ever to be seeking to concentrate the attentions of the family upon herself, especially if subject to sickness. All must bend to her; and every hand be employed for her. Her will must be consulted in everything, and her comfort be the study of all. She must engross the affection of her parents, the regard of her brothers and sisters, and the time and labor of the servants. This is sometimes encouraged by injudicious parents, who excite the envy and jealousy of the other branches of the family, by this exaction from all for the sake of the one. True, where there is great illness the sufferer should be, and usually is, the center of sympathetic attention — but where the ailments are slight, and especially where the patient is apt to exaggerate them, she should not be petted into an engrossing and exacting selfishness; but should be gently taught to have a little regard to the comfort of others.

In addition to these, there is the JEALOUS and ENVIOUS disposition, which contends not only for pre-eminence, but for monopoly; which accounts as a rival every one who receives the least special notice, and dislikes her on that account. What petty passions of this kind often creep into families, and poison all the springs of domestic happiness! Consider how much the dispositions of its members have to do with the peace of a household, how much of sunshine one sweet and lovely disposition, constantly in exercise, may throw over a household! And on the other hand, how much of gloom, and storm — one passionate, sullen, selfish, or envious disposition, may bring over the little community at home. Let all then begin life with a deep conviction, (and it cannot be too deep,) of the importance of this subject.

A bad disposition will torment you through life. With this you will carry your own curse with you everywhere. It will multiply your enemies, and alienate your friends — it will becloud your reason and benumb your religion — it will embitter your comforts and envenom your trials — it will make you unhappy at home, and secure you distress when away from home — it will give you wretchedness at the time, and conscious guilt and painful reflections afterwards. It will deprive your days of peace and your nights of sleep. In short, a bad disposition will be to the soul what a chronic and painful disease is to the body, a constant source of uneasiness and distress, with this difference, that whereas the former is a visitation from God, the latter is our own doing, and while one brings its own consolation with it to the Christian, the other brings nothing but punishment and shame.

To make home happy, you must of course *conform to its general rules*. This perhaps it is less necessary to insist upon in reference to you than it is to your brothers, because you are less in danger than they are of infringing domestic order. Every well-regulated family has its laws and customs; its times and seasons; its government and authority, which must be observed if the little community be kept in order and good condition. I will suppose it is a pious family where God is worshiped, and the morning and evening sacrifice are duly offered upon the domestic altar. At the appointed hour all ought to be present. Nothing can be more unseemly than to see one member after another come dropping in while the Scriptures are being read, as if the Bible were only the prayer bell to call the family together for worship. I have often witnessed this, and heard the remonstrances of the father with his dilatory children, whose lack of punctuality had been occasioned only by a wretched habit of lying late in bed. It has really in some cases given rise to domestic quarrels.

Much the same remark will apply to other matters. The father of a family may see reason to object to the late hours of the present day, and may request that all his household shall be at home by a certain hour of the evening. It may be thought by his children that he is too precise, too antiquated in his notions, too inconsiderate of their gratification — but still it is his law, he is master of his house — and they are subjects who are to obey him. It is unseemly for the children to be ever maintaining a struggle against paternal rule and maternal counsel.

On the contrary, it is the glory and the praise of a good and dutiful child to find what sacrifices of feeling and gratification she can submit to, rather than wrestle with parental authority and domestic government. On the other hand, parents should be very careful not to make their yoke oppressive, and their burden heavy. The laws of the family should not be too stringent, nor the authority of the father tyrannical, capricious and unnecessarily precise. But they must be obeyed as long as they last, and the elder branches of the family, where there are younger ones, should excel in leading them both by example and precept to habitual conformity to household law.

If you would make home happy, you must, of course, be HAPPY at home. No one can diffuse joy who is not joyful. Attitudes are infectious, because the heart is sympathetic. Cheerful people make others like themselves, and so do gloomy people; just as the sun irradiates by his beams, or the clouds darken by their shadow, the whole landscape. A young person whose heart finds its resting-place in the domestic circle; whose sympathies are with household scenes; whose chosen companions are her parents, and her brothers, and sisters; whose pleasures are the sweet interchanges of domestic services and affections; whose beloved employment it is to make her daily contribution to the comfort of the little community within doors; and whose good-natured disposition radiates from smiling eyes, and flows from gently-curved lips — such an inhabitant is a blessing to the house in which she dwells. The soft music of her speech, aided by the congenial influence of her accommodating and influencing disposition, sheds a benevolent influence on all the family.

But observe the opposite to all this, the girl that looks upon her home as a prison rather than a paradise, and thinks that to stay at home is a penance rather than a pleasure; and accordingly is anxious to escape from it, and is ever seeking opportunities to effect her purpose. Her gloomy aspect, her sullen disposition, her discontented attitude, her repulsive somberness, her peevish expressions, when she breaks her silence; her unsympathizing isolation — what a sad member of a family do these dispositions make her! She has no friends at home — no objects of strong affection — nothing to engage and interest her heart — but is ever seeking occasions to slip away, upon any pretense, or for any engagement. She is ever on the watch for opportunities or excuses for absence; ready for any errand; eager for every business that opens the door for her departure. She is not happy but in a continual round of parties, visits, or outdoor novelties,

of which this fertile age is so prolific. Any society rather than that of the family — and any scenes rather than those of home — suit her taste.

Can such a young person make home happy? Yes, if a dangerous lunatic can do it; for such, or little better, is she. Young people, I repeat, be happy at home. Parents put forth all your ingenuity to make them so, by investing home with its proper attractions. Mothers, this devolves much on you. Be '*keepers at home*,' for a gossiping mother is sure to make gossiping daughters. Let it be seen that you are happy at home in the midst of your families. Put on a cheerful countenance, that your children may love to bask in the sunshine of your smiles. Be the center of attraction to your families, and let the household delight to revolve in sweetest harmony around your maternal chair.

INDUSTRIOUS HABITS will contribute greatly to the happiness of home, especially on the part of a young female. Slothfulness is a wretched thing, as it regards the subject of it, and as it affects others. A lazy person cannot be a happy one. Indolence is a constant opposition to the law of our being, which is made for activity. That there is a species of indulgence connected with it, is true; but it is a very mixed kind of gratification, for as it is against nature, there is sometimes a consciousness of this, which awakens the conscience, and inflicts remorse. To the remonstrances of conscience are added the reproaches of others. And as it cannot always be indulged, there are to be overcome the repugnance, the lassitude, which make the least exertion more wearisome to the indolent than far greater efforts are to the active. Slothfulness is a miserable object — the very sight of it inflicts pain upon an industrious person. What a vexation is it to an industrious mother, to see the dull, heavy, immoveable habits of a daughter, whom neither entreaties, persuasives, nor rebukes, can quicken into activity, nor excite to industry — who, if moved at all, must be moved by main force, and needs every minute the same effort to keep it going — a poor lumpish creature, who is enough to wear out the patience of the most forbearing and affectionate mother on earth. Such habits in a daughter must be destructive of domestic happiness. The misery they create may not, like the profligacy of a prodigal son, come upon the family with the noise, and destructive force, and fury, of a hurricane, but it settles down upon its comfort like the silent power of blight or mildew. It is a constant vexation, which eats into a mother's heart, when she finds that a daughter who has grown to an age when she ought to be a relief to maternal labor and solicitude, is a heavy increase to both. This wretched habit may be

overcome, and it must be, or you will be a poor, helpless, useless, unhappy creature through life. If indolent in your parent's house, what are you likely to be in your own? An idle daughter is likely to make an idle mother — and from my soul I pity the man who is tied for life to a lazy, indolent woman. No personal charms, no mental acquirements, no brilliancy of conversation, can make up for the want of domestic industry — and indeed these things are rarely found in the absence of industry, for indolence is usually too lazy to acquire knowledge — the habits of soul and body being in sympathy with each other.

It is essential to your making home happy that there should be much *self-denial* — a *spirit of forbearance* — an *occasional surrender* for the sake of peace, of supposed rights — and a *willingness to forego* what you could rightfully claim as your own. I am aware there are limits to this, especially in cases where concession pampers tyranny and encourages oppression. There may be brothers, and even sisters, whose disposition is so encroaching, that it should be resisted under parental authority, for the protection of the weaker and more yielding members of the household. It is, however, far better in some cases to concede rights, when the sacrifice is not too costly, and does not involve a violation of principle, than to contend for them. The contest, even where it is successful, often costs more than it is worth, the victory does not pay for the battle. Be, therefore, content sometimes to lose a little for the sake of retaining more. I cannot give you a piece of advice more conducive to your peace at home, or to your comfort through life — than to be ever ready gracefully and quietly to bear with the infirmities of disposition of those around you, and to yield little things which you deem belong to you, rather than disturb the peace of the family by contending for them.

Never seek an undue share of parental affection. Let there be no ambition to be a favorite, nor any arts to obtain this distinction. Some young people have made home miserable in this way, being base and guilty enough to attempt to rise in the esteem and affection of their parents, by little arts of detraction in reference to their brothers and sisters — and their parents being weak enough to encourage the attempt. Partiality was then not only cherished but manifested. Envy and jealousy ensued, and the peace of the family was destroyed. Abhor this conduct and be content to share with other branches of the family your parents' justly apportioned regard.



Recollect that your power to contribute to the happiness of home does not depend on the performance of great services, opportunities for which occur but seldom — but on *attention to little matters*, which are always taking place. Our existence as to time, is made up not only of years, but of moments — our body not only of limbs, but of particles — our history not only of great events, but of little occurrences — and our obligations, not only of splendid acts of duty, but of seemingly insignificant ones. Set out in life with a deep sense of the importance of little things, or rather with a conviction that where character, duty, and the happiness not only of ourselves but of others are involved, *nothing is little*.

This applies especially to your conduct in the family. In that little world then, keep up a constant attention to what will constitute the felicity of the passing hour. True politeness has been defined to consist in *‘benevolence in trifles.’* This is a beautiful definition, and worthy of being remembered by all who would fill the family circle with bliss. By politeness here, I do not mean heartless and unmeaning ceremony; nor even the graceful polish of manners which characterizes the communion of well-bred people — but a gentle, obliging demeanor and delicacy of behavior towards all around; that mode of conducting ourselves towards others which is opposed to what is coarse, vulgar, crude, or offensively familiar. The politeness that I mean, is not affection’s root, but it is its flower, beauty, and fragrance. Or if not the plant itself, it is like the hedge around it, which preserves it from being trampled under foot.

In the family circle all the little acts that can give pleasure or pain — all words, tones, and looks — should ever be considered and weighed. Woman has perhaps more tact and discernment in reference to the minor affairs of life than men. Her mental eye is more discerning, her touch more delicate, her taste more refined, on all the matters of behavior. Let her therefore keep this up in reference to her conduct at home.

*‘But we return to the more ordinary circumstances of young women, resident under the parental roof, after having finished the term of their education — and observe that their conduct should be marked by a soothing forbearance and tenderness towards the infirmities of their parents. Deafness, lameness, dim-sightedness, and other infirmities of old age, circumscribe their pleasures, and perhaps a degree of fretfulness is sometimes observed. But a*

*dutiful child will be fertile in expedients to extend their pleasures, to alleviate their privations, and to bear with and soothe their infirmities. The prompt eye will discern their needs, and anticipate their wishes. The needle will be threaded before the eye aches with endeavoring, and before the sigh is excited by inability to accomplish it; or, by gentle and playful persuasion, the needle-work will be exchanged for knitting or netting. The leg-rest or the footstool will be presented or exchanged before complaint of uneasiness is uttered. The large-print Bible and the spectacles will be placed at hand; the dim columns of the newspaper will be read aloud; the enquiring eye will be answered by a repetition of the conversation, or of the sacred address, which uttered by a stranger’s voice, had passed over the dull ear — and in the most exalted sense, the benevolent pleasure will be enjoyed of being eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, and causing the trembling heart to sing for joy.’* (From *‘Female Excellence,’* published by the Religious Tract Society.)

I now return to the idea with which we started, that the right conduct of a daughter at home, is to study to make home happy. There is a fascination in the very expression, a happy home. And so far as what may be called the poetry of home scenes is concerned, is there a lovelier flower to be found in that garden of unearthly delights, that paradise of sweets, than a good daughter and affectionate sister, adorning her maiden charms with the virtues that befit her sex, her age, and her relationships — and elevating and sanctifying all her other excellences by a saintly piety, which makes her lovely in the eyes of God by all the beauties of holiness? Her father’s pride, her mother’s comfort, and her brother’s companion — she is the ministering angel of them all. How much of bliss, does this one dear object of their common affection, throw over them all! Her absence is mourned as a common loss, and her return to the family circle is hailed as the restoration of a suspended enjoyment. When this lovely one is loved by another not belonging to the family, though about, through her, to be united with it, with what a treasure, at their expense, is he about to enrich his own home! Their hearts, at the thought of parting from her, bleed from wounds which nothing but the hope of her happiness could heal. Her removal leaves a blank, which, as they look upon her vacant seat, calls up recollections, and produces a sense of deprivation, which even the sight of her happiness can scarcely dispel.

But as woman's mission is to make happy her husband's home, suppose her gone forth to fulfill it. Well has she been trained, and well has she trained herself also, at her parental home, for this home of her own, and all the united excellences of the good daughter and the good sister now develop and blend in the more mature and matronly virtues of the good wife, mother, and domestic manager — and she who as the young woman at home, contributed so largely to the felicity of one family circle, has just prepared herself to contribute still more largely to the felicity of another, and that other is her own. Behold, my young friends, your pattern. May the imitation of it be your study, your prayer, your bliss!

## LIFE AWAY FROM HOME

*'Behold, I am with you, and will keep you in all places where you go.'*  
- Genesis 28:15

*'In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.'*  
- Proverbs 3:6

*'You shall guide me with your counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.'*  
- Psalm 73:24

The hour of separation from parental society, home enjoyments, and the scenes of early history, is in most cases, and ought to be in all — a season of pensive grief. No affectionate daughter can leave the house of her father, and go from beneath the covering wing of maternal love, without passing over *'the bridge of sighs.'* Even the joys of the bridal morning, when she leaves the arms of her hitherto nearest relations, for those of one now still nearer, do not prevent her from looking round with something of instinctive regret on the scenes she is leaving, now no longer hers; and amid the smiles of the happy bride, are seen falling the tears of the loving child, like dewdrops sparkling in sunbeams. It would augur ill for the husband, if his wife could part from her parents, even for him, without a momentary pang. It is one of nature's loveliest sights to see in that scene and season of delight, filial piety blending its luster with marital affection, and investing even nuptial charms with new and captivating beauty.

But I now speak of a different kind and purpose of separation from home. I contemplate the young woman, not led out by that right hand, the *'cunning'* of which is to be employed for her support; nor going away, leaning upon that arm which is to be continually stretched over her for protection — but departing solitarily and mournfully on the journey of life, to meet alone its dangers, cares, and toils. It is sad enough to see a young man leaving his father's house, and leaving home to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow; how much more to see a young female thus going forth to seek her own support. What is she but a lamb venturing out into the wilderness where wolves abound; or a young dove leaving its nest to fly

abroad amid eagles and vultures! How many in the progress of life, and amid its changes, some of which are so melancholy, look back to the hour of separation and exclaim, '*O my mother, how sad and certain presages of what awaited me were those bitter tears I shed on that morning when I tore myself from your embrace! My heart then sunk, and the sun of my life then set never to rise. Every step since then of my dark journey has been one of sorrow — and every change only of one calamity for another.*'

In some cases separation from home is rendered necessary by a change in domestic circumstances, and she who was brought up tenderly amid the luxuries, and with the prospects, of opulence, is now compelled to leave scenes where she was a stranger to toil and care — to earn her own support. It is a sight to be looked upon with admiration, to behold a young woman in such circumstances, instead of hanging upon parents no longer able to support her, without additional privations for themselves, nobly resolving to relieve them of the burden, and instead of sitting down in despairing grief and helpless sorrow, bracing her mind to meet the privations of her altered condition, descending gracefully to a lower level, and going forth with true magnanimity, inspired by religion, to tread life's stormy way alone. No morbid sense of degradation; no feeling of false shame arising from altered circumstances — no haughty sense of humiliation connected with a situation of subordination and dependence — benumbs her faculties, paralyzes her energies, or renders the duties of her new situation irksome and oppressive — but remembering it is the will of Providence, and thankful for her health, her abilities, and her opportunities to take care of herself, she goes to her new sphere without dread, despondency, or reluctance.

Others meet with no such reverse, but are brought up amid circumstances which have always kept before them the probability that they must go out into the world to support themselves. In these cases, the charge comes not upon them by a surprise, and if they are wise they will endeavor to prepare their hearts and qualify their minds for it. A judicious mother's energies and vigilance will ever be employed, not only in helping her daughters, but in teaching them to help themselves. Wherever there is a probability of their leaving home, and even when there is not, her concern, considering the vicissitudes of human life, should be directed to the point of qualifying them to become self-supporting. And it should be a point of ambition with every young woman, whose parents can with difficulty

support their family, not to be a burden to them, but to provide for herself in some honorable and useful occupation.

It is a very beautiful scene to witness a young female, not only supporting herself, but endeavoring by the produce of her diligence, and the savings of her frugality, to minister to the comfort of her aged, infirm, or impoverished parents. Many a heroine has left home, and endured privations neither few nor small, for this purpose. All her discomfort and labor were endured with patience, under the idea that by this means she was rendering the home of her beloved parents more happy.

Here, however, a caution is necessary against a too great eagerness to get away from home. A large family, where there is a straitened income, brings many cares and some privations, not only upon the mother, but upon the elder daughters. In such a case, for a young woman who can be of essential service to her mother, and whom her mother wishes to retain, to determine or even wish to go out into the world, and leave her mother to struggle and almost faint under the load — is a deplorable lack of filial piety. It is delightful to hear a daughter say, '*Anywhere, or in any circumstances, abroad or at home, in single or in wedded life — my beloved and honored parents, I am ready and eager to serve you.*'

There is another and melancholy occasion which not infrequently occurs, for a young woman's leaving home, and that is when home itself is broken up by the death of both parents. How frequently does this happen! Ah, how often are families invaded by the '*last enemy*,' and scattered here and there by his desolating ravages! The grave covers both father and mother. The dear domestic hearth is forsaken. The family gatherings at prayer, at meals, at festive seasons, are over — and the house of your childhood and youth is deserted. Poor orphans, I pity you; especially, you orphan girls, my heart bleeds for you. Your brothers can provide for themselves better than you can. But even you have no need to despond. Painful I know it is, to have no parent, no home, no settled place of abode. Often in your forlorn situation, you must and do say, '*Alas for me! I am alone in the world. David's expression suits my case. I am like a pelican in the wilderness; or like a sparrow alone upon the housetop. Other young people, though away from home, have a home to think and talk about — and parents to write to, and occasionally to visit. I have none. I have not a house to dwell in except that which I may soon be required to leave, nor*

*have I any friends, except those whom my own good conduct may secure. My heart is often more desolate than my condition; and though I am in the midst of society, I feel as if I were alone in this great and busy world.'*

But I remind you there is the orphan's unfailing friend still left. God lives, and he is the father of the fatherless. Be it yours, and it may be yours, to say, '*When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.*' Should you be so wise and happy as to become truly pious, you will never be without a friend, and in the absence of an earthly father, will have an omnipotent one in heaven. You may then set out in life, and go through it, adopting as your motto, the reply of Abraham to Isaac, who, when the latter said, '*Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*' replied, '*God will provide.*' Be that your motto, '*God will provide.*' Fear God, and you may without scruple and with confidence adopt this assurance.

Permit me now to suggest some topics which apply alike to all these different cases, and which it is important you should dwell upon, either in prospect of leaving home — or after you have left it. Consider it is in the order of Providence you should be thus situated. Your lot is fixed in heaven. It is God's will — and not chance. Is there nothing consolatory in this? Consider his wisdom, power, and goodness. He does all things well. He knows what is best for you. He may, in ways which you cannot imagine, be consulting your future and permanent good. You cannot see the end. When this is revealed, you may be compelled to exclaim, '*He leads the blind by a way that they know not, and leads them in paths that they have not known. He makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.*' Submit, therefore, without envying others, and without murmuring. Would you contravene his purpose? Say, '*It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight. I am where he would have me be.*'

But remember, there are not only *privations* to be endured away from home, but *moral dangers* also to be encountered. If these are not so pressing in your case as in that of your brothers, there are some perils even in yours. Happily for you, the guards of female decorum, propriety, and reputation — are stronger and stricter than those of the other sex. But they have proved too weak for absolute security in thousands of instances. Multitudes who have stood well at home — have unhappily fallen, when removed from it. Eve was tempted when alone, and away from the

protection of her husband. Alas, how many have gone away to sin, and have returned to hide their shame. A mother's watchful eye is no longer upon you; a father's arm is no longer stretched over you — and the shelter of home no longer protects you. Others know this as well as you, and may take advantage of it.

And even if there were no moral dangers — is there no danger of imprudence, folly, levity? No danger of bad connections, improper acquaintance, ill-contracted marriages? None of undue love of pleasure and vanity? Are not the prevailing faults and defects of some women to be found in *vanity, love of dress, disposition to court attention and admiration, fickleness, inconsiderateness, love of novelty, lack of judgment, and curiosity*? And are not all these likely to increase rather than diminish, when they are away from the checks which home supplies? Are not these weeds likely to grow faster, and to attain greater strength, when there is no mother's eye to see them, no mother's hand to pluck them up?

All this danger is greatly heightened in the case of those who have personal or mental accomplishments. A beautiful young woman, withdrawn from the fostering care and ceaseless vigilance of a judicious mother, and exposed abroad to the crude and licentious gaze of the world, is ever an object of alarm to her family — and it were well if she were so to herself. It is perhaps a rare case for such a female to be ignorant of her charms; it is rarer still for her to be more afraid than vain of them, and to be more anxious that they should not lead her into danger, than that they should secure for her admiration.

The great source of consolation and protection to a young woman from home is *true religion*. It is very easy for any one, to conceive of the privations and discomfort of many a young person, on leaving the comforts of a happy home to sustain the character of a governess, a shop-woman or a servant. The cold, proud, and perhaps in some cases cruel, treatment of employers — as contrasted with the affectionate conduct of parents; the annoying and unfeeling peculiarities of companions in the house — as contrasted with the sympathizing and loving behavior of their brothers and sisters; the disregard of their comfort, in all that concerns their food, lodging, and general personal convenience — as contrasted with all the accommodations and enjoyments of their father's house; and the general inattention and neglect of the strangers among whom they dwell — as

contrasted with the recognition and kind notice of a wide circle of friends in their own native place. This, all this, is bitter indeed.

Some hard and unfeeling natures, or mirthful and frivolous ones, may be insensible to these things; but oh, that poor girl of softer mold, whose heart was made for home scenes, and whose bliss was derived from home enjoyments; under all this, her heart is sometimes ready to burst! What thoughts disturb her peace, like visions of bliss lighting on her gloomy and sorrowful path, and then instantly vanishing, only to leave the path still more gloomy, and the darkness still more oppressive! What letters, wet with her tears, she writes to her own sweet home, and to her sympathizing parents!

What is to comfort her now? Only the balmy influence of religion — the consciousness that she is in the way of duty — and the testimony of her conscience that she is discharging her obligations with scrupulous fidelity. This can and this will do it. She whose heart is renewed by Divine grace; who has genuine faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; who walks with God as her divine, unchangeable, omnipotent Friend, and communes with him as her Heavenly Father; whose affections are set on things above; and who considers life as a probation for eternity — she will find in such a state of mind — a source of consolation — a means of endurance — an element of happiness — which will counterbalance all discomfort, disquietude, and distress.

With true dignity she will bow to the will of God, and consider her situation as his appointment. She will find satisfaction in submission. Her religion will impart much patience, and something of cheerfulness — it will control her disposition, and throw an air of loveliness over her character, which will give her an interest in the heart of her employer. She will always find companions in her Bible and other good books — in her closet of devotion and in communion with God, a sweet retreat from the coldness and unkindness of her fellow-creatures; and in meditation upon the everlasting rest above, a blessed substitute for the comforts of the home she has left on earth. Faith in God, in Christ, in Providence, in heaven — can comfort, has comforted, and will comfort in the dreariest situations of life, and in the bitterest agonies of death.

I am anxious all should set out in life with this lofty idea of true piety — that it can sweeten the bitterest cup of human woe — can soften the hardest lot — and can be a substitute for all other pleasures. It must be so; for it made Adam happy in paradise, and makes saints and angels happy in heaven. It has lighted, as with a lamp kindled in heaven, the confessor's dungeon, has sustained the Christian fugitive in his exile, and has enabled the martyrs to endure even the agonies of the stake.

Adopt religion, then, young women, as your companion, for it will not only *comfort you*, but also *protect you*. Yes, it will be a shield for your defense, as well as a cup of consolation amid your sorrows. Expect temptations, for you will certainly have them in one way or other. You cannot imagine in what shape or from what quarter they will come. It may be in a form so fascinating, so plausible, so unsuspected, so insidious, as to contain all the '*deceivableness of unrighteousness*.' Do not imagine that Satan respects female virtue too much to assail it. Did he thus respect the holiness of Eve in the garden of Eden? Does he reverence any character or any virtue; did he not tempt our Lord? The more spotless the character, and the more eminent the excellence — the more intense is his hatred — the more malignant his envy — and the more eager his desire to despoil it!

Has he not tempted to their ruin, multitudes as pure as you are? Against such a foe, whom all but infinite cunning makes skillful, and boundless success makes bold — consider you are safe only under the protection of Omnipotence — and that protection can be obtained only by faith and prayer. Of those millions of instances of female immorality, which the history of your sex has presented, not one would have occurred, if they had trusted their virtue to the keeping of true godliness. It is religion that will repel the fiercest assault with the holy and indignant remonstrance, '*How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.*'

It is not only however from such dangers as these, dangers affecting moral character in its most important features, that religion will protect you; but from the lesser ones also, which, if they do not lead to open vice, are still injurious. True religion will moderate your love of pleasure by furnishing pleasures of its own. It will check your vanity and folly, by producing a devout seriousness and sobriety of mind — without at all destroying your natural and innocent vivacity. It will remove your

thoughtlessness, and make you contemplative and reflective, without stiffening you into formality, or investing you with gloom. It will induce habits of precaution, and frugality, and thus guard you from present imprudence and recklessness, and future improvidence and extravagance. Do not then venture out into the world unprotected by this spirit as your guardian angel.

There are one or two other cautions which it may be of importance you should receive and remember. You should never allow yourselves for a moment to imagine there is anything dishonorable or degrading in your being compelled to leave home and to support yourself, either as governess, shop-woman, or servant. Those who have been in better circumstances are of course most apt to feel this. And no doubt it is a descent, a lower status, according to the conventionalities of human life — but it is no dishonor. It is from misconduct, and not from misfortune; from loss of character, and not from loss of rank — that disgrace arises. Nobility of soul is often associated with financial descent; while vulgarity of character is sometimes covered with the coronet or the crown. A virtuous, holy, and intelligent young female has, in the heraldry of heaven, a patent of nobility, and is one of God's nobility in her own right. '*Honest industry*' is far more honorable than '*wealthy indolence*;' and she who willingly, honestly, and cheerfully earns her own support, when Providence has deprived her of her patrimony, is far more to be admired than she would have been, had she throughout life rolled in her father's equipage, and been surrounded by every luxury.

Akin to this is another state of mind against which you should most sedulously guard, and that is a conviction that you must be miserable away from home. It is conceded that you cannot be as happy away from home, as you would be at home. It is not right you should be. There can be no perfect substitute for a united and happy family circle. But when called by Providence to surrender it, give it up with submission and fortitude, and yield to the privation with true magnanimity. Let it be said of you on leaving, as is said by Milton of Eve on her departure from Paradise, '*Some natural tears she dropped, but wiped them soon.*'

Weep you may, and you ought, at giving up the dear delights you have enjoyed from childhood in your father's house; and you cannot but sometimes feel pensive at recollecting the friends from whom you have been separated. But to allow your love of home to make absence from it

intolerable wretchedness; to render you moody and melancholy, discontented and ill-tempered; to unfit you for business, and make you unpleasant to your employer and companions — exhibits a weak mind, a feeble heart, and a sickly character. Rise above this! If Providence calls you away from home, bear it with composure. Go out expecting to meet with privations, and make up your mind to endure them with fortitude. Make the best of your situation. Doom not yourself to misery on this account. You may be happy anywhere — with religion, good disposition, submission to your lot, and usefulness. If you determine to find out such pleasures as your present situation affords, instead of always looking back upon that which you have left; if you resolve, by God's grace, to please and be pleased; if you give up your mind to piety, industry, and usefulness — you will find that felicity is a flower that blooms, and a fruit that grows, away from home as well as at home. A cheerful spirit, like a lamp lighting any darkness into which it may be carried — lessens the discomfort of any situation, recommends you to your employer, and promotes your interest as well as your happiness.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to say a few things on the *choice of a residence*, as it appertains to your parents, where they are living — as well as to yourselves. Let the subject be made the matter of earnest and believing prayer to God. '*In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.*' '*Commit your way to him, and he shall bring it to pass.*' These are precious declarations, and they are sustained by promises no less precious. '*The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.*' '*I will instruct you, and teach you in the way which you shall go — I will guide you with my eye.*' With such exhortations and assurances, what should be your resolution? '*You shall guide me with your counsel.*' There is Providence in everything. Even your most minute affairs are under Divine direction. Your times are in his hand. Do not doubt it. Hold fast the truth that God hears your prayer, casts your lot, and fixes the bounds of your habitation. Pray, pray earnestly, believingly, and expectantly. All situations and all hearts are at his disposal.

In selecting, accepting, and retaining a residence, consult its religious advantages. In these are included such means of pulpit religious instruction as are likely to build up a young disciple on her holy faith, and to quicken into activity the principles of godliness planted in her soul by the Spirit of God. It is not ordinarily desirable, where a selection can be made, to choose

a residence where even the minor matters of the sacraments and church government differ from those to which you have been accustomed. This exposes you, if not to a change of sentiment, yet to antagonism and perplexity, which are unfavorable to the quiet enjoyment of your own personal religion, and may do you injury by producing a spirit of controversy. Where the differences of opinion are of a more serious kind, affecting even the fundamental doctrines of the gospel — no pious young person should expose herself to any hazard of this kind.

I will now address a few *special counsels and cautions* to two or three classes of those who are in the circumstances contemplated by this discourse.

Many are occupied in the very important and responsible duties of a resident governess. This is a situation of delicacy, difficulty, and momentous consequence; and requires much wisdom, prudence, and conscientiousness. There are many parties concerned, all of whose interests and comfort should and must be consulted. You who are in this situation owe something to yourself. Those who have hired you, will be most likely to pay you the respect due to you when they see you respecting yourself. If they so far confide in you as to entrust you with the education of their children, they ought to treat you in such a manner as to teach them also to confide in you and esteem you. But this will depend much upon your own conduct and bearing. Let them be duly aware that you expect all that is your due in the way of kind and respectful conduct, but that you expect no more. Any apprehension on their part that your demands in this respect are too high, or are preferred in an obtrusive and exacting spirit, will be sure to set them on their guard against you as a person of encroaching disposition, and will dispose them to yield you less than you are entitled to. A kind, attentive, respectful, and dignified bearing towards them, as far from servility on the one hand, as it is from familiarity on the other, as well as a right behavior towards their children, will in most cases accomplish all you wish. If you have taken your present situation, after coming down in life, let there be no such sense of degradation and mortified pride, no such loftiness as will make you gloomy, dissatisfied, unhappy, and repulsive.

Even should it appear that you have exchanged places with your employers, that they once were in the situation of inferiority which you now occupy, give no evidence that you are aware of it, and take no notice of

little ebullitions of vulgarity, or even purse-proud insolence, not uncommon to those who have risen in life. If sometimes you cannot be insensible to this, and you feel your spirit rising within you, and your cheek growing flushed and warm, so that your mortification cannot be concealed, call in religion to your aid; comfort yourself in God; and exemplify the Christian in a spirit of meek forbearance. In such circumstances, many a tearful look will be thrown back by memory on that home from which you have been driven by misfortune, or rather by Providence, and you will need to retire to calm your perturbation and repress your indignation. In such cases, go and by prayer invite the hand of your Heavenly Father to wipe your weeping eyes, and compose your ruffled spirit and agitated heart.

Then there are the CHILDREN entrusted to your care for their education. Enter upon your task with a deep and solemn sense of responsibility to them, to their parents, and to God. Abhor the baseness, injustice, and cruelty, of being satisfied with any manner of discharging your duty, so that you get your board and salary, and respectful treatment. The future character and comfort, for both worlds, of those girls, depend much upon you. They have been placed in your hands, and look up to you as their instructress and teacher. As you would give in your account at last to God with joy and not with grief, do your very uttermost; tax your energies to do them and their parents justice, in instructing their minds, forming their characters, and fitting them for the station they are to occupy in life. Prepare yourself for your task by constant reading and study. Do not be satisfied with your present qualifications. The education of a rational and immortal creature, for this world and the next — is a great work. Improve your own mind, to be better fitted to improve theirs. Win their confidence by your ability; their affection by your kindness; their respect by your dignity; and their industry by your own diligence. Let your aim be, not only to communicate knowledge — but wisdom; not only to store the memory — but to strengthen the judgment, to nerve the will, and to make the conscience tender; not only to teach them to think correctly — but to act with propriety, discretion, and promptness, in any situation in which they may be placed.

As regards religion, that of course must depend much upon the views of the parents. If they are similar to your own, and you have unrestricted liberty on this point, labor to the uttermost to form the religious character of your youthful charge. Ever consider the education of an immortal being

incomplete without instruction in that which alone can fit her for immortality. But never act the part of a secret zealot, by inculcating principles opposed to those of the parents. I should say to a Christian young woman — go into no situation where you are not allowed to teach what you consider to be the truth as it is in Jesus. Do not conceal your sentiments — and afterwards teach them secretly and stealthily. You would abhor such conduct in a Romanist — do not be guilty of it yourself. Of course you should not, and cannot conscientiously teach what you believe to be error; therefore do not go where you would be required to do so.

Then come the PARENTS to be considered by you. Of course you will do everything you can to uphold their authority, even as they ought to do their uttermost to uphold yours. You should also most assiduously labor to secure the affections of their children for them, rather than for yourself. It would be treachery of the basest kind to steal away the hearts of their children. Your aim should be to secure the love of the children to you, for their parents' sake, as well as your own; and then their love to their parents, for your own sake as well as theirs.

There is another thing to be observed, and one which I shall touch upon with the delicacy it demands; and that is the fact, that a wife has sometimes been made uncomfortable by the presence of a governess. Jealousy, it is true, is sometimes in this case suspicious without reason. But are there no cases in which such uneasiness is not entirely the result of an over-sensitive and morbid imagination? Respect your own character and dignity, the wife's peace and the husband's honor, too much ever to seek or accept attentions which, from him, even though playful and innocent, may excite uneasiness in that one bosom, the tranquility of which is so easily disturbed by any act of his. Conduct yourself so as to be not without blame — but without suspicion.

Apart from this, do nothing by becoming the depository of secrets, hearing tales, or uttering insinuations, to loosen the bonds, or violate the affection, of the husband and wife, or to disturb the peace of the family. If unhappily, a difference should exist, keep yourself as much as possible out of the way of witnessing it, or let your wisest and kindest offices be exerted to heal the breach. Win for yourselves the blessing which will come upon the peacemaker, and cause the family to bless the hour which made you a member of their household. Recollect you are bound in honor never to

make the transactions or condition of the family, a matter of conversation with others. Without being actually sworn or even pledged to secrecy, you are solemnly bound to observe it; you are a traitress to the family which has received you as an inhabitant, if you make their affairs known to others. Never inter-meddle with the servants, and especially avoid all unnecessary familiarity with them. Keep to your own sphere, and diligently discharge your own duties. You will find sufficient scope there for all your time, your energies, and your anxiety.

To maintain a course of conduct, seek by prayer the grace and wisdom which come from on high, and under all the trials of your situation, whether the waywardness of the children, or the ingratitude, pride, or petulance of the parents — seek the comfort which comes from the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation.

Governesses in a school are a class of young women, who, though acting under the direction and supervision of another, and therefore with less responsibility than those who reside in a family — have to discharge very important duties, for which high qualifications, both intellectual and moral, are essential.

I next consider the case of those young people who are employed in *retail shops*, and they form a very large class. Their situation is often one of far greater discomfort and moral danger than that of the class just mentioned. In addition to the oppressive and exhausting labor which modern competition imposes upon them, in common with all who are engaged in trade, they have to bear in some cases the unkindness of their employers, who are not infrequently deplorably lacking in regard to the comfort of those whom they have received into their service — as to their food, lodging, and general treatment. A surly master and his unfeeling wife, intent only upon what they can get out of the flesh, bone, and muscle of their servants, and caring little for their welfare — never satisfied with even the most exemplary diligence and competent ability, and therefore ever urging to greater labor, and ever uttering the language of complaint — always suspicious, even where there is no ground for it, of the honesty of their servants — such are the trials which some of these hapless young people have to bear.



In such a case, you who have to endure it, need comfort. The recollections of home, where all was kindness, happiness, and confidence — embitter, by the power of contrast, the ills you have to sustain. Bear all with as much patience as you can command. Seek consolation in true piety. Carry your sorrows to God by prayer. When the bitter contrast between your position when at home and your present situation from home forces itself upon your thoughts, and sends a tear to your eye and a pang to your heart, go to Him whose gracious presence is ever with you, and whose infinite love is ever ready for you.

But it is not thus with all shopkeepers. I am not describing the class, but only some of its members; the exceptions, rather than the rule. I know heads of retail establishments, employing a large number of young people, who cherish for them something of the feelings of parents, and regard them almost in the light of children — nor is it their temporal comfort exclusively, but also their spiritual welfare, which is the object of their solicitude. And this is obviously the incumbent duty of employers.

Whether your employers be generous and kind, or neglectful and oppressive — do your duty — and seek to possess all the qualifications which will commend you to their esteem. DILIGENCE is indispensable. It is the first excellence of one in your situation. Be anxious to please, and as earnest to serve your employer as if the business were your own. No one will or can employ an indolent servant. Be an early riser. Comply with all the rules of the shop. Aim at excellence. Seek to be bright and alert. Cultivate an attractive, winning, and even polite address. Be an intelligent shop-woman.

Especially let your HONESTY be above suspicion. Deem it no insult or reproach that I caution you on this subject. You are exposed to temptation. Money in small sums is continually passing through your hands, your salary is low, and through the deceitfulness of the heart you may dwell on the injustice of your small earnings, until you imagine it lawful to pay yourself, and make up what you should in justice receive. Resist every temptation of this kind. Rather starve and die, than appropriate to your own use an article of clothing or decoration, or a farthing of money belonging to your employer. As a guard upon your integrity, and a check to temptation, avoid expense in dress and ornament. Vanity is insatiable, and has led more people into dishonesty than any other passion. A taste for

finery fostered and indulged, with a salary too small to yield the means of its gratification, has in innumerable instances led to acts of pilfering to supply the deficiency.

In some establishments, young people of both sexes are employed. Where this is the case it brings new perils, and requires additional caution. Your honor, your respectability, your safety, require that you should be most anxiously upon your guard. How earnestly, as well as sincerely, should you present those beautiful petitions of our Lord's prayer, '*Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.*' Avoid all undue familiarity, all flippant and trifling conduct, all jocularity, with the young men employed in the same establishment. Maintain a proper self-respect, a befitting reserve, and a dignified bearing; they will be a fence round your character, and prevent even the approach of anything that would insult your purity, or offend the most fastidious modesty.

You have need to be upon your guard against the influence of companions even of your own sex. In large and even in moderate establishments many young women are associated together, without in some cases, any matronly superintendent being placed over them, and with almost unrestricted opportunities for free conversation and general interaction. It is no severe reflection on the sex to suppose that in such a number of young people, there may be some who have no personal religion, whose sense of female decorum and propriety is not the most delicate, and who, without being immoral, are still so given to levity, vanity, and romance — as to exert an unfavorable influence over the rest. Be upon your guard against influence of this kind.

Gain all the good you can, from those who are your associates — but avoid all the evil. Be good tempered, accommodating, amiable, and conciliatory — but set yourself against all that is improper. Be an example of all that is good — and then you may be a reprover of all that is evil. Let there be no affected superiority; nothing like, '*Stand aside — I am holier than you.*' But demonstrate all the consistency, gentleness and sweetness of unaffected goodness, of true piety, and good conduct — and then you may be a blessing to those around you.

Be especially careful in the selection of a *particular friend* from the rest of your companions. Be not led away by specious appearances, nor

induced to commit yourself by professions of friendship on the part of another, or by the first feelings of preference on your own. But take time to ascertain the correctness of her principles, the consistency of her conduct, and the respectability of her family — otherwise you may be led into snares and dangers which you very little anticipate.

For your conduct towards your employers, if a master, I refer you to what I have said to the Governess. Instances have occurred within my knowledge to prove that cautions on this head are not altogether unnecessary. An evil eye has sometimes lighted on an unsuspecting female, and men bound by every tie of honor, and by their solemn vow to a wife, have been despicable enough to assail, and in some instances to destroy, the purity, the honor, and the peace, of those whom they were bound in duty to protect. Spurn then with disdain and indignation any such attempts, receive no special attentions, and quit the service of the wretch whom you suspect of a design against that which ought to be dearer to you a thousand times over, than even life itself.

Female servants are a most important and a very numerous class of young women away from home, and often a very destitute and much exposed one. Their case however is so needful of enlarged counsel and caution that I inserted in the *'Family Monitor'* a chapter to meet it, and reprinted it separately as a tract.

I shall now conclude this chapter by some few *general remarks*, which will apply alike to all classes of those who are away from home.

Again and again I say, *commit yourselves by true faith in Christ into the hands of God for protection and consolation*. How many beautiful passages and examples of holy Scripture, in addition to those already quoted, could be adduced, which apply with peculiar force to your case. Look at poor Hagar, who was much to be pitied as well as much to be blamed, alone in the wilderness, *'when the angel of the Lord found her by the fountain of water, and she called the name of the Lord that spoke unto her — God, You see me.'* If, when God found her there, notwithstanding some past misconduct and self-reproach, she comforted herself in that desolate place with the consideration that she was compassed about with the presence of the Lord; with how much greater confidence and peace may you cheer your heart with the thought of an ever-present God, you who

have not been driven out as she was by misconduct from your home, but have been led out from it by Providence.

Yes, God is in every place, he is with you, *'he encompasses your path, he knows your down-sitting and up-rising, and is acquainted with all your ways.'* You have left your earthly father, but your heavenly one is with you. You are far from your earthly home, but if you are a Christian, you are as near as ever to your heavenly one. The eyes that lately beamed affection upon you, do not see you now, and you do not see them; but lifting your voice to God, you can say, *'God, You see me!'* His eye is upon you, his heart yearns over you, his arms are underneath you.

Also, what PROMISES are on record for you. Do you fear the *lack of adequate provision*? *'Trust in the Lord, and do good — so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.'* Do you need *protection*? *'He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings shall you trust; his truth shall be your defense and shield.'* Do you need *direction*? *'Your ears shall hear a voice behind you, saying — This is the way, walk in it.'* Do you dread the *forlorn circumstances* that await you away from home? *'None who trust in him shall be desolate.'* Are you trembling with apprehension at the absence of all who were dear to you, and the *unknown difficulties* of your new situation on earth? *'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God! I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you! Yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.'* *'My presence shall go with you and give you rest.'* Do you ever dread the idea of being *forgotten* by the friends you are leaving? *'Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yes she may forget, yet will I not forget you.'* *'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.'* Can anything be more consolatory than such assurances?

Need you be afraid to leave home and go out into the world with such promises? What, when omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, all-sufficiency, and boundless love, go with you? Why, with such assurances you may leave, not only your father's home to dwell in any other part of this land of railways and easy and speedy methods of conveyance; but may embark on board an emigrant ship, leave your native country for the opposite ends of the earth — and exultingly exclaim, *'If I take the wings of*

*the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.'*

But then to apply the truth and feel the comfort of these precious assurances, you must have that genuine faith which alone gives you a title to them. Personal religion will, in all probability, procure you earthly friends wherever you go, for it is the soil in which all those virtues grow that conciliate affection, ensure respect, and invite confidence. God will go before you to prepare the way for you, for when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes *'even his enemies to be at peace with him.'* Remember how he gave Joseph favor in the eyes of the governor of the prison — and how he turned the heart of Esau, brooding over purposes of revenge, into brotherly endearment. The best way to get the friendship of man is first to secure the friendship of God.

Connected with this, acquire in an eminent degree the general good qualities which I have already alluded to. Add to piety — amiability of disposition — kindness of disposition — gentle, artless, and attractive manners. Let there be a substratum of the solid gold of excellence, bearing at the same time the polish of the pleasant virtues of life. Those who have to make their way in the world must be attentive to external, and to what some may call, little things. It is not enough to be holy and virtuous, or even to be conscious that you are such — but you must also be attractive. You must aim to please. Real excellence may sometimes be repulsive on account of eccentricities, acid disposition, and blunt coarseness, with which it is associated. It is like grapes amid nettles or thorns, which few will attempt to gather for fear of the lacerations of the thorns.

There is a word of very difficult definition, but which, without being defined, is perfectly understood, and very impressive, *'She is a pleasant young woman.'* This is a very common expression. Perhaps the best explanation of it is the power of giving pleasure and engaging affection. This includes, I am aware, more of nature than of art, and something of personal attraction. A manifest intention to secure the favor of an individual is almost sure to defeat its own end, and to inspire disgust. But the general good opinion of those among whom we live, can in most cases be secured by attention to their wishes, and consideration for their feelings. And surely it cannot be improper to ask, *'How can I interest others in my behalf?'* And those who depend upon the interest they create for

themselves in the hearts of others, should study how to secure it.

Combine a due and tender recollection of home — with a noble fortitude in surrendering its comforts. You are not required to forget your father's house, and your mother's endearing society. You would be unnatural if you could. Indeed you are in little danger of this. *'Forget my honored father! Forget my much loved mother! Forget my brothers and sisters! Forget the sweet home of my childhood! Oh no! Memory must perish before I can be guilty of such oblivion. I muse on you all in my solitary walks. I give up many an hour's sleep to think of home. I wet my pillow with my tears, as I think of the years and joys that are gone, never to return. I dream often that I am in the midst of you all, and wake to the sad reality that I am away from home.'*

But these are not the only thoughts you are to cherish as to your home. Nor is the frequent and affectionate letter, so welcome and so precious to those who love and think of you, the only way to send comfort to your parents. Let there be the never-varying excellence of character and conduct, the uniform good behavior, the growing usefulness, which on their knowing of them, shall comfort their hearts. Avoid that fickleness which would make you soon tired of an employment. Let no unsuitable friendship of a tender nature, which they would not approve, be formed. Let no conduct, which if they knew it, would distress them, be carried on by you. They have lost the comfort of your companionship — add not to the affliction by causing them to lose the comfort of your character!

Let your situation in a social point of view, remind you of your circumstances in a religious one. If you are a true Christian, what are you here upon earth — but a child away from home? Yes — heaven, and not earth, is the home of the believer. How simply and sublimely beautiful is the language of our Lord — *'In my Father's house are many mansions — if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.'* Delightful idea! Heaven is the home of the Christian, which the Savior has prepared and made ready for him. There, is God the Judge of all — the Father, of whom the whole family is named. There, is Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, who calls himself the First-born, the Elder Brother. There, are the spirits of the just made perfect, the brothers and sisters. There, is the

innumerable company of the angels, the ministering spirits now sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation. What a glorious household assembled in the third heavens — the eternal home of the Redeeming God, the Great Redeemer, and the redeemed family!

There you are going — if you are a true believer! All the dispensations of Providence and all the means of grace are preparing you for that state. All things, and among them your present situation, with all its disquiet and discomfort, are working together for your good. You are away from home here — that you may be at home there. Let this cheer and comfort you. When distressed by looking back upon the home you have left — comfort yourself by looking on to that to which you are going. Heaven, glory, eternity — are before you! You are educating for your Father's house; preparing to go in and dwell forever in his presence. Half a century hence at most, and in perhaps a much shorter time than that, it will be of no consequence to you whether you passed through life agreeably or not. The only thing about which you should be supremely concerned is, not to be shut out from the heavenly home — not to be excluded by sin, impenitence, and unbelief — from the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare. In the blessed hope of reaching that state, you might endure, not only with fortitude but with comfort — all the trials of a young woman away from home, though they were ten times greater than they are!

## THE CHARACTER OF REBEKAH

*'Before I had finished praying these words, I saw Rebekah coming along with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water and filled the jug. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' She quickly lowered the jug from her shoulder so I could drink, and she said, 'Certainly, sir, and I will water your camels, too!''*

- Genesis 24:45-46

Every one must be struck, I would think, with the narratives in the book of Genesis, and their correspondence to the state of society to which they relate. Their realistic descriptions guarantees their truthfulness, and explains their peculiarity. We find all that charming simplicity which is in keeping with the primitive life of the people referred to; together with all the defects in their conduct, which their imperfect knowledge might be expected to bring with it. Another kind of narrative, more in conformity with the advance and artificial refinement of modern society, would excite suspicion of the truthfulness of the story.

Where shall we find in all the range of fiction anything so exquisite as the history of Joseph; or even as the beautiful story which furnishes the example to be contemplated in this chapter? I invite those endowed with taste to the perusal of this portion of Holy Writ. True, it relates rather to the history of a family than of a nation. And it is worthy of remark, that the Spirit of God preserved in the inspired chronicles this little gem of historic narrative, rather than the record of anything going on at that time among the great kingdoms of antiquity, not excepting Egypt, the birthplace and cradle of science. The secular historian delights to emblazon his page with the conflicts of empires, the exploits of heroes, and the prowess of armies — but what is the influence of such records upon the moral habits, social happiness, and individual character of mankind — compared with that of the story of the holy courtship of Isaac and Rebekah?

Sarah, the beloved and faithful wife of Abraham, had died, and been laid in the cave of Machpelah. Sadness and desolation were reigning in the patriarch's household. His tent was empty; the grief of Isaac, who loved his

mother most tenderly, was unsoothed; and upon him the heart of the venerable widower was now turned with more concentrated affection. Isaac, the miraculous child of promise, though forty years of age, was unmarried. The holy patriarch, amid much domestic distress — the consequence of polygamy — had known the happiness of possessing a faithful and devoted wife, and he now became naturally anxious to see his beloved son in possession of a companion in life, before he himself should go the way of all flesh. His solicitude however was not merely that Isaac should be married — but well married — which in his view meant not wealthily, but religiously. Abraham was a worshiper of Jehovah, and abhorred idolatry — by the votaries of which he was surrounded on every side; and it pierced his heart with anguish to think of the child of his love contracting a marriage with one of them. He knew that Isaac's character as well as his happiness depended upon his choice. Moreover it was not only a private matter of personal and family arrangement, involving Isaac's happiness and the comfort of his father, but also a public concern, intimately affecting the covenant which the Almighty had entered into with him, and the countless millions who were to be blessed in his seed. Isaac sustained a sacred character, he was the child of promise, and inherited, and was to transmit, the promises concerning the Messiah.

As Abraham had relatives in the land of Mesopotamia who worshiped the living God, he determined to send his personal servant to engage a wife for Isaac from their family. We must suppose of course that all this was with the knowledge of Isaac and met with his cordial consent, though parental authority was then more extensive, and filial submission to it, more exemplary, than they now are. Parents, in those times, chose wives for their sons, and husbands for their daughters; and often were regulated in their choice more by regard to wealth and rank than by the adaptation and affection of the parties to be united. I do not wish this custom to be revived — it is unnatural, and reduces marriage to a matter of bargain and sale. But I do wish parental counsel, consent, and approbation, to be always sought in a matter of so much importance to all parties concerned, whether directly or remotely.

The trusty servant selected by Abraham proceeded on his mission — so delicate, difficult, and momentous to both the father and son. Not however until religious solemnities had been observed, and the patriarch had commended Eleazar to God by prayer. If we wanted the character of a

faithful servant delineated to the life, where could we find a picture so perfect as this man? I shall not follow him through his long and wearisome journey of nearly five hundred miles, nor will I dwell upon the anxious ruminations of his mind during the weeks it occupied. Yet I cannot but imagine how constantly that mind was lifted up to God for protection, direction, and success. He at length arrived at the city of his destination. It was a summer evening, and observing a well outside the walls, he stopped to give his camels water, before he passed through the gates. Aware that it was the custom for the young women to come and draw water for household purposes, he first placed his camels by the well, and then betook himself to prayer for Divine direction.

*'O Lord, God of my master,' he prayed. 'Give me success and show kindness to my master, Abraham. Help me to accomplish the purpose of my journey. See, here I am, standing beside this spring, and the young women of the village are coming out to draw water. This is my request. I will ask one of them for a drink. If she says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will water your camels, too!' — let her be the one you have appointed as Isaac's wife. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master,'* Genesis 24:12-14.

It is noticeable that he did not fix upon the one who would first offer her services, but upon the one who would first willingly grant the service asked of her. In this he proceeded wisely, conceiving, it would seem, that a maid who offered unasked, to a stranger, even so slight a service as a draught of water at a public well, showed no maidenly spirit; and deeming perhaps that such attention might be an excuse for curiosity, and an evidence rather of officious forwardness, than of an obliging disposition.

Eleazar's conduct in all this is worthy of notice, as furnishing a beautiful comment upon Solomon's advice, *'In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct your paths.'* Let us thus begin, carry on, and end, all our works in God. What is begun in prayer, usually, as in this case, ends in praise. So thought Eleazar when he knelt down by the side of the well of Nahor, and poured out this simple and beautiful prayer. In his case it no doubt was well, but ordinarily it does not become us to ask, much less to prescribe, special tokens by which God shall indicate his will.

Having presented his prayer, he waited for the answer, and waited in strong faith that he should receive it. He did not wait long. A young woman came towards the well, with a water jug upon her shoulder. By her appearance, perhaps by an impression from God, he was possessed with the idea that she was the person sought, and that the Lord had answered his prayer. He therefore addressed her in the language which he had resolved to employ, and received the very answer which was to be the sign of her being the object of his mission. Her gentleness, cheerfulness, diligence, and courtesy, manifested towards a stranger of whom she could have no knowledge, were truly admirable — unmixed and uncorrupted as they were by any improper forwardness or levity. She was frank without being obtrusive, kind without being familiar. She neither ran away affrighted from his presence, for her innocence gave her courage — nor did she step beyond the decorum of her sex, nor allow her courtesy to infringe upon her modesty. It was well for Rebekah that she did not answer with a proud and haughty contempt, and a surly refusal. Yes, and it was well for another woman, who long after met another stranger, ‘*wearied with his journey,*’ at another well, that when she met his request, ‘*Give me a drink,*’ with the surly question, ‘*How is it that you being a Jew, ask drink of me who am a Samaritan?*’ it was well, I say, for her that she had a different person from Abraham’s servant to deal with.

The words in which Rebekah’s answer and conduct are described, paint the scene to the life — ‘*Drink, my lord,*’ she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘*I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.*’ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.’ Conduct so amiable overwhelmed Eleazar; and so slow of heart are we to believe in the answer of our prayers, that — ‘*Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful,*’ Genesis 24:21.

There are cases in which the mind, like the eye, is lit up by a sudden light. It was so here. Finding at length that she was indeed the object of his journey, he could not repress the feelings of his full heart, but expressed them in two ways. The first has in all ages and in all countries been considered as one inlet to the female heart; that heart, which has at any rate been ever thought ‘*accessible to finery, presents, and praise.*’ ‘*Then at last,*

*when the camels had finished drinking, he gave her a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists.*’

But this was not the only expression of his joy and gratitude, for unrestrained by the presence of Rebekah, ‘*He bowed down his head and worshiped, saying — Blessed be Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, who has not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth — I being in the way, Jehovah led me to the house of my master’s brethren.*’ Did the heart of Rebekah, true to instinctive perception in all such matters, begin to divine what this present and this praise to God meant? Did a thought glance across her mind of the nature of this man’s visit to Nahor? Or was the scene beheld by her in awe and wonder at the character and errand of the mysterious stranger? She must have known of her noble relation, Abraham, whose name she now heard in prayer from the lips of Eleazar.

But let us for a moment forget Rebekah, to look upon this holy, faithful, loving servant. Never did piety and fidelity more truly blend the sanctity of the one with the devotedness of the other. Happy master, to have such a servant! Happy servant, to be blessed with such a master!

It is not necessary for me to enter very minutely into the incidents of the scenes which followed. How Rebekah hastened with the news to her father’s house, and how Laban her brother went forth to greet the stranger and conduct him to their home. We mark, as if we saw them, the courtesy of the opening interview; the frank interchange of kindly greetings and good offices; the admirable delicacy of the servant’s introduction of himself to the family of Bethuel; the servant’s impatience to fulfill his errand; the simple recital of what the Lord had done for him; and the full development of the object of his visit.

Upon hearing them, Laban, as the surviving representative of his father, replied, ‘*The thing proceeds from the Lord, we cannot speak unto you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her, and go, and let her be your master’s son’s wife, as the Lord has spoken.*’ This was dependent, as the after part of the narrative shows, upon the girl’s consent. To help to gain this, a second splendid present was prepared for her — of jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and clothing. This was, and is still, the oriental custom of contracting all bargains and entering into all covenants, relating to marriage, trade, or politics. Very natural was the remonstrance which the

brother, and especially the mother of the bride, addressed to the impatient servant of Abraham, when in the morning he said, *'Send me away to my master. And her brother and her mother said, let the girl abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.'* Whether it be a respite of ten days, or as some say, of ten months, or even years, that the mother joined with her son in soliciting, before the daughter should bid her a last adieu, this is a touch of genuine tenderness which we would not willingly lose from the narrative. For it is a narrative which proves its own truth by its being so thoroughly, all throughout, true to nature.

Rebekah was now called in and the question put to her, *'Will you go with this man?'* Was she deficient in virgin modesty, in prudence, in thoughtfulness? Did she display an unseemly haste to become a wife? Did she venture too carelessly to commit herself and her happiness for life to one of whom she knew nothing, but by report? Did she not take the decisive step in the dark, when she consented to peril in such haste the comfort of her life, upon the truth of the singular embassy that had come to her? In ordinary circumstances I would unquestionably reply to these questions in the affirmative, and I would earnestly recommend to all young women at the present day, and to all who have the care of them, whether parents or guardians, more delay, inquiry, and caution, than were observed in this case. Hasty offers of marriage should be met either by immediate refusal or lengthened consideration. It is too momentous an affair to be decided without much investigation and reflection.

But there was a peculiarity here. Something, perhaps, may be justly imputed to the times in which they lived, but far more to the religious state of Rebekah's mind; a sense of duty overwhelmed a feeling of reluctance, together with every inferior consideration. She was doubtless in the habit of daily communion with God, and in fervent prayer had sought Divine direction; she saw an overruling providence; God was in the affair; his finger, visible to the eye of faith, pointed the way in which she should go; and with unhesitating obedience she confessed her readiness to part from all the felicities of home, and seek a distant alliance — at the voice of the Almighty Being to whom she had committed her future destiny.

Flattering as the scene before her must have appeared to a worldly eye, the sacrifices she made at this moment of compliance were certainly very considerable. What could have led to such an answer, when standing

between the tears of parental and fraternal affection, and the urgency of a mere stranger, the servant too of her future home — but a faith which overcame the world, and dictated her holy resolution. Heaven appointed her journey, and nature pleaded in vain. That religion had something to do with it, I have no doubt; that the promptings of the female heart had also some influence, I have as little doubt. *'What woman,'* says Monod, *'under a sense of her dependence, has not wished once in her life, for the arm of a man to support her, and his name to shelter her? But at the same time, what woman under the feeling of reserve, has not kept her secret closely shut up within her own bosom, waiting silently until she is sought for, even though she should wait until the hour of her death, hastened, perhaps, in some cases, by that internal fire by which she would be consumed within, rather than allow it to be blazed abroad. The invariable order of marriage which surrenders the initiative to man, and does not accord even the appearance of it to woman, is not a refinement of civilization, it is not even a nicety of the gospel, it is a law imposed on woman in every age, not excepting the most barbarous; and among all people, not excepting the most savage.'*

Rebekah partook of this feeling, but she worshiped the true God, and lived amid those who worshiped idols, where perhaps few opportunities of a holy union presented themselves; and now one offered, in which was combined all that piety could desire, and even vanity crave; she therefore required little or no time to deliberate upon it, and at once consented to accompany the servant of Abraham. Rebekah took leave of her friends, and proceeded on her eventful journey under the care of Eleazar, and accompanied, both for her comfort and her protection, by Deborah, an old and faithful servant who had nursed her from a child.

For a moment we leave her, proceeding on her journey, to speak of her future husband, of whom good Bishop Hall says, *'Of all the patriarchs, none made so little noise in the world as Isaac; none lived either so privately, or so innocently; neither know I whether he proved himself a better son or husband. For the one he gave himself over to the knife of his father when about to be offered up in sacrifice, and mourned three years for his mother; for the other he reserved himself in chaste forbearance twenty years and prayed.'*

Isaac appears to have been a quiet, retiring, domestic, and devotional character; good, rather than great, and altogether blameless, with the exception that he was a little too much addicted to the gratification of his palate. *'It is a calm and peaceful summer evening. The oxen have been lodged in their stalls, and the implements of husbandry are at rest in the furrows of the field. Not a breath of wind rustles in the noiseless leaves. Not a stray sheep wanders in the dark shadow of the hills. It is a time of profound repose. One solitary figure is seen slowly pacing the sweet-scented meadow path. Unconscious of nature's charms, although his soul is melted into sweet harmony with the peace that reigns all around, he is wrapped in holy fellowship with the God of his salvation.'* (Candlish)

It is Isaac, *'who had gone out into the fields to meditate.'* No improper oratory for the good man, who, surrounded by the glories of creation, looks through nature up to nature's God. In such an exercise and such a frame of mind, Isaac was well prepared to receive the best possible earthly blessing — a good wife. Perhaps he was then meditating upon Eleazar's mission, and beseeching heaven for its success. Behold the answer of his prayers! A cavalcade is seen in the distance approaching. It draws nearer and nearer. Can it be the return of Eleazar, the faithful servant? And are there not two women in the retinue, one young and the other far advanced in life? The vision of his future wife now flashed through his imagination as the procession drew nearer, and his eyes with fixed attention rested upon the beauteous form of Rebekah.

*'And who,'* says Rebekah, whose eyes are as busy in looking towards Canaan as Isaac's are in the direction of Mesopotamia, *'is that meditative man approaching us?'* The secret is disclosed by the faithful, joyful Eleazar. *'My master, Isaac!'* As she approached her destined husband, see how female delicacy, and maiden modesty and reserve, resume their empire. *'She alighted off the camel; and took a veil and covered herself.'* This act expressed her subjection as his already espoused wife, to him as her future husband.

*'And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her — and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.'* In this tender manner does this admirable story close. Peace be to that dwelling, the residence of a dutiful son and a tender husband — and of a kind, generous, open-hearted, pious wife. Dutiful sons

promise to be affectionate husbands — and were I a woman, and received an offer of marriage, one of the first enquiries I would make concerning the man who solicited my hand and heart, would be *'How did he behave to his mother?'* feeling assured that conjugal affection could scarcely be expected to dwell in that heart from which filial regard had been excluded. He who is insensible to a mother's tender affection, believe me, my young friends, is not to be entrusted with the care of a woman's heart and happiness.

We may here pause and remark that all the circumstances continue to make this portion of the sacred record peculiarly attractive. In reading it we feel at home amid these patriarchal incidents and descriptions, realizing them as if they were familiar. The stately pomp and ceremony, reserve and coldness and suspicion of a more artificial social state pass away. The freshness of nature's early truth and tenderness returns — artless, guileless, fearless. We breathe a purer and freer air. We are touched with a deeper sense at once of a special Providence in heaven, and of a real and true sympathy on earth. We feel that there can be such a thing as the exercise of a frank and generous trust, relying both upon God and upon man; and that it is possible to act upon the belief both of God's superintendence and of man's sincerity.

Before we consider what is to be learned from the conduct of Rebekah as a wife and a mother, we will for a few moments contemplate her in reference to the act which made her such, her marriage. The circumstances connected with this were peculiar to the times, and partook of a simplicity, as I have already remarked, to which your history is not likely to supply a parallel. One thing, however, may be noticed — it was with the concurrence and consent of her family. I cannot account for the fact of Bethuel, Rebekah's father, being passed over in silence, and Laban her brother only being mentioned as conducting the transaction, except upon the supposition that Bethuel was dead. It is true the name occurs once in the history, but this probably was a brother. But Laban was consulted. There was nothing clandestine in the affair. And moreover it was a marriage in which the claims of religion were considered. On this delicate subject I cannot enlarge. If Rebekah had showed too great an eagerness for leaving the single state, and somewhat too hasty a decision, we do not recommend this to you; from this however we have absolved her.



It may be natural enough to prefer the married to the unmarried state, when an opportunity offers for entering into it. But let not your minds be unduly restless and anxious in realizing the object of your wishes. Avoid all romantic and poetic imaginativeness on this momentous affair. Do not allow yourselves ever to treat it with levity, or to sustain or adopt a line of conduct which would look as if you were more anxious to be a wife — than to be qualified for such a state. Never come to the conclusion that you cannot be happy if you are not married — and cannot but be happy if you are married. Let the multitude of happy maidens and the equal number of unhappy wives, correct such mistakes, and dispel all the illusions with which the idea of marriage disturbs the propriety of some young women's conduct.

Treat the whole subject, not as a matter of poetry and romance, but as one of the gravest realities of life. It is an affair of *love* — but it is also an affair of *prudence*. It is a matter of *taste*, and even of *poetic delightedness* — but it is also a matter of *judgment* and of *conscience*. It is not a thing to be laughed and joked about — but to be pondered in the deepest recesses of the soul — and prayed over in the most solemn seasons of devotion. It is momentous to both parties, but most so to the woman.

*'Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman indeed ventures most, for she has no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband. She must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her folly or her unhappiness has produced — and she is more under it, because her tormentor has a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise, she has no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And even of the man we may say, though he can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again, and when he sits among his neighbors he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply.'* ( Jeremy Taylor's *'Marriage Ring'*)

It is not necessary for me here to lay down many rules for your guidance in this affair. When however it comes in your way, consult, not only your heart, and your imagination, and your young companions — but your judgment, your God by prayer, and your parents for advice. Enter into no commitment without the cognizance of those natural guides and

guardians of your youth. It is at the beginning of connections of this kind that parental counsel should be sought. Never commit yourselves by a word until the domestic oracle has been consulted — nor allow your affections to be entangled until a father's and a mother's judgment have been pronounced. Determine that similarity of taste, especially in the most important of all matters, religion — shall form the basis of any union you may form.

Should it be that God has not destined you to wedded bliss, do not forget -

*'that there are advantages peculiar to single life — that it affords an immunity from many cares, an opportunity for intellectual pursuits, a power to do good extensively — which married women may not enjoy. And if these privileges are improved; if cheerfulness and benevolence characterize the disposition, there will be no lack of occupation, of happiness, or of sympathy. The kind sister or aunt will be always welcomed; she will be hailed as the agreeable companion, or the tender nurse; as the participator in joy, or the sympathizer in sorrow; as the helper in business, or the companion in affliction; she will be the ready assistant in every good work, the children will run to greet her arrival, the poor will rise up and call her blessed. And if in truth, as we do see in some bright examples in our own day, her energy grows with her desire of doing good, and in the assiduous and pain-taking efforts of Christian charity she seems to forget the weakness of her sex, she realizes in one of its most pleasing forms primitive devotedness. In pious exercises more spiritual, in self-denial more mortified, in faith more pure, than any of the cloistered nuns of the strictest order; while at the same time her religion is without superstition, and her sobriety without gloom. She is one of a holy sisterhood — whose vows are scriptural — and whose voluntary service is the labor of love.'* (Mrs. Sandford)

We now turn to another chapter in the history of Rebekah, in which she appears to far less advantage than she does in the one we have just reviewed, where the artless simplicity of the virgin is lost in the crooked policy of the designing wife and the too partial mother. Perhaps it will be thought by some that as I am addressing young women, I might have cut short the story with her marriage and her virtues — and drawn a veil over her future failings. But I bear in recollection what I said in a former chapter

that the matron should be held up to the maiden, that from the outset she may learn what to copy — and what to avoid. And here is a striking example to serve this purpose — *an affecting instance to prove what a transformation a change of circumstances may produce in the same person!* Isaac and Rebekah, like Abraham and Sarah, had their faith tried in waiting long for the son who was to be the heir of promise. Twenty years elapsed and Rebekah bore no child. In answer to the earnest prayers of her husband, God gave her the prospect of becoming a mother. Before this happy event took place she received a communication from the Lord that she should give birth to twins, who should be the heads of two separate nations, and that contrary to the order of nature and the custom of nations — the elder brother should serve the younger. Esau and Jacob were born, grew up, and exhibited great difference of taste and character. Into this family of Isaac and Rebekah there entered that which has rent myriads and myriads of households, setting the husband against the wife, the mother against the father, and one child against another; disturbing the harmony of domestic peace; poisoning the springs of domestic happiness; and preventing the progress of domestic improvement — I mean *parental favoritism*. *‘Isaac loved Esau in particular because of the wild game he brought home, but Rebekah favored Jacob’* - Genesis 25:28.

In the case of Isaac and Rebekah, the parents had each their favorite child, and what was worse — manifested their fondness. It may in some cases be almost impossible not to have a preference for one child above another, but what anxious carefulness should there be to conceal it! Policy and justice both demand from parents an equal distribution of their affection, their favor, and their goods; for if there be one folly which more certainly punishes itself than another, it is this ill-judged and wicked favoritism between children. Parental partiality injures both the one preferred and the one that is slighted — inflating the one with pride, insolence, and vanity — and corrupting the other by jealousy, envy, and revenge. Isaac loved Esau, and for a reason not very honorable to his character, *‘because he ate his wild game.’* Rebekah loved Jacob, for what reason we are not told; it is probable on account both of his superior excellence, and of the revelation which God had made to her concerning his future history. She was undoubtedly a woman of sincere faith, and even her most censurable conduct arose from misdirected piety. She, like another female in after times, pondered in her heart all the things which had been spoken of God concerning her child of promise.

It was not long before the effects of parental partiality appeared in the family. A competition for precedence, and the ‘right of firstborn’ engaged the attention of the brothers, and whetted their spirits against each other from their earliest years, and the outcome was alienation, separation, hostility, on the part of the children, and sorrow and distress on the part of the parents. Jacob’s conduct was selfishness, and Esau’s profane. The younger son knew that he was destined to precedence, and instead of leaving God to fulfill his own purpose, sought to accomplish it in a manner unworthy both of himself and of the blessing.

Time, which moves on with ceaseless tread, had brought Isaac to old age; and he now thought of his approaching end, and the propriety of settling his domestic affairs. His great concern was to direct the descent of the patriarchal blessing, which in this case, implied more than that ordinary benediction which every good man would pronounce on all his children without distinction; it comprehended the great things contained in the covenant with Abraham, according to which his posterity was to be selected and distinguished as the peculiar people of God, and to give birth to the Messiah. Isaac ought to have remembered the communication made to Rebekah, and by her doubtless told to him, that this blessing was to be bestowed upon Jacob. Natural attachment for a while overcame his faith, and he prepared to divert the blessing from the channel marked out for it by the purpose and providence of God. To enkindle his affection for Esau, by the remembrance of past gratifications, he wished to have some savory meat, certainly a carnal introduction to so divine an act, partaking more of the flesh than of the Spirit, and betraying more of that parental partiality under which he had acted, than of the faith of a son of Abraham.

See, of what importance it is to avoid contracting bad habits early, seeing time, indulgence and habit, interweave them with our very constitution, until they become a second nature, and age confirms instead of eradicating them. We find the two great infirmities of Isaac’s character predominant to the last –

1. *A disposition to gratify his palate with a particular kind of food.*
2. *Partiality to his son Esau.*

Rebekah, whose affection was ever wakeful, active, and jealous for her favorite child, overheard the charge given by her husband to Esau, and

instantly plans a scheme to divert the blessing into another, and as she knew into its right, channel. What should she have done? Expostulated with Isaac on the impropriety of acting in direct opposition to the revealed purpose of God. Such an appeal to a mind devout and contemplative, as his evidently was, notwithstanding its weaknesses, would in all probability have succeeded. Instead of this, she manifested what has ever been considered to be *one of woman's infirmities* — a disposition to have recourse to finesse, stratagem, and maneuver — a wish to carry her object by an indirect and circuitous way — rather than by an open and straightforward course.

It is unnecessary for me to enter into the details of her plan, its prompt execution, and its success. It is a sad story. There was nothing but shameless trickery and imposition, a disguised person, a stolen name, a false answer. Everything was bad except the motive, and that could not alter the character of the action, and transmute evil into good. It was a disgrace to Rebekah, a cruel fraud practiced upon Isaac, and a most grievous injury inflicted on the moral character of her son. We must not load Jacob with more of the infamy of this transaction than what really belongs to him. He was not first in the transgression. His feelings revolted from it when it was proposed to him. He remonstrated against it. His remonstrance, however, was founded more upon the ‘consequences of the evil’ than the evil itself. And there is a striking difference between his reasoning and that of his son Joseph. Jacob said, *‘I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing;’* Joseph’s pious and noble reply was, *‘How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.’*

The resoluteness of Rebekah is astounding and affecting, confirming the general opinion that woman, in a bad purpose, is often more bold and determined than man. *‘Upon me be your curse, my son — only obey my voice.’* Appalling spectacle, to see a mother, a religious mother, so far forgetting what is due to her sex, her relationship, and her piety, as not only to lead, but to goad and drag on her son to perpetrate falsehood, and to practice deception upon his half-blind father! O mothers, read this account and tremble!

The plan moves forward, but the whole plot was in danger of exploding. The conference between Isaac and his son Jacob is deeply affecting. The half awakened suspicion and artless simplicity of the father,

invests, by the power of contrast, with deeper shades of infamy and guilt, the shameless, undaunted effrontery of the son. Such is the way of transgressors, one sin prepares for, and leads on, to another, until the sinner is involved by a kind of necessity to add another and another lie to help on the former one. Isaac’s ears were keener than his eyes, and his mind was not so blunted by age as not to be capable of reasoning upon some improbabilities; for there is something about falsehood, which though it may silence, yet will not ordinarily satisfy. Trickery however, in this case was too deep for honesty, and Isaac, kind and credulous, soon had his suspicions lulled, ate the meal, and bestowed the blessing. It is no part of my design to paint, or rather copy the scene which followed, when the return of Esau revealed the plot and proclaimed the deception. The shock to poor old Isaac was almost overwhelming. As an aged and an decaying man, the infliction which had been practiced upon him would excite his indignation. Yet a moment’s reflection would convince him of his mistake in intending to convey to Esau that blessing which God designed for Jacob. Such considerations rushing upon his mind at once, sufficiently account for all his feelings — it was to him like a place where two seas meet, or as the union of subterranean fires and waters which causes the earth to tremble.

Esau is to be pitied, and would be more so if his distress arose from any other feelings than disappointed ambition. He who profanely despised his birthright, cared for the loss of the blessing, only as it deprived him of some earthly distinctions and temporal possessions.

Rebekah’s deceitful policy had succeeded. But she soon began to reap its bitter fruits, in perceiving the feud which she had occasioned between the two brothers. The same tent could no longer contain them. And news having reached her that Esau plotted revenge, even to the murder of his fraudulent brother, she hurried away Jacob to the land of Padan-Aram, to seek a protection and a home among her own relatives.

With the sequel of this interesting story you are acquainted, and we return to Rebekah. The best explanation that can be given of her conduct, and it has been advanced by her apologists as her defense, is that she acted from religious motives. Perhaps it is in part true; but I do not think wholly so. There is much of the mother mixed up with the believer; and no small share of regard for the interests of a favorite child, blended with regard for the purposes of God. But be it so, that religion had the principal hand in

this odious deception, then we see how early pious frauds were practiced for the furtherance of the faith; and Rebekah, so far as this part of her conduct is concerned, is presented to us as anticipating the principles of the Jesuits; for even if we concede to her a religious end, we must admit she adopted the most sinful means to obtain it. She was unquestionably right in her belief that God designed the blessing for Jacob, and in this one respect, I mean her faith, she was stronger and more unswerving than her husband. Yet this faith was mixed with some unbelief after all; for what else was it but a partial distrust, that led her to adopt such sinful means to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose? Does God's truth require man's falsehood to fulfill it? Cannot we leave God to find means to perform his own word without supposing he requires our sins to help him out of a dilemma? The urgency of the temptation was no doubt very great. In her view an hour or two would decide the matter, and the blessing intended for Jacob would be transferred to Esau, and how then would the declaration be fulfilled? She should have left it to God.

Let us now leave the history, and learn the LESSONS with which it is fraught. The Scripture narratives are intended to exhibit holiness and sin embodied in living characters; the one for our imitation, and the other for our warning. And not infrequently we find both sin and holiness blended in the same character, requiring a careful analysis and an accurate discrimination. This discrimination is requisite in looking at the character now before us.

As you see Rebekah with her water jug on the shoulder coming to draw water, you cannot fail to notice her domestic and industrious habits. Yes, it was when thus occupied — and not when indolently reclining upon the couch of ease, nor when sauntering with a company of associates as idle and gossiping as herself, nor when wasting her time in useless occupations of frivolity and amusement, that Eleazar saw her. No! but, though high-born, wealthy, and beautiful, bearing the water jug upon her shoulder to the well to draw the evening's supply of water for the family.

Every young woman should aim to be useful at home, and she is not a wise or good mother who does not train her daughters for such occupations. But as I have already dwelt on this, it is not necessary to enlarge upon it here, any further than to say that the humble yet useful employments of domestic life, are a virtuous woman's most honorable station; that whether

in single life, wedlock, or widowhood, God and nature have destined you, my female friends, to occupation — not perhaps highly honorable in the eyes of '*unfeeling wealth*' or '*giddy intemperance*' — but highly important to the happiness of others, and therefore essential to your own.

We cannot fail to notice in Rebekah's early deportment an artless genuine SIMPLICITY — affectingly in contrast with her subsequent artifice and duplicity. This it is which invests her character, and most of the excellent ones in Scripture, with such an irresistible charm. To whatever we look we find that '*simplicity is beauty.*' This is true of *nature* as the great model. Amid all its grandeur and complexity, its processes appear easy and spontaneous, being all originated and directed by a wisdom and a power which operate not only without visible effort but in perfect repose. Simplicity is no less beautiful in *art* than in *nature*, and the very perfection of art is to hide itself in copying the simplicity of nature. All this holds good of *manners*, there especially affectation is hateful and repulsive. '*Studied display*' of any kind, whether of intellect or virtue, of conversation or even of pronunciation, or of singularity, whether in dress or habits — is always odious. It cannot secure respect but must excite ridicule.

Perhaps this is one of the principal follies against which women, and especially young educated women, have to guard. An 'artificial character' has a deeper meaning, involving immorality, as signifying a tendency to artifice, equivocation, and the simulation of virtue not really possessed. This in its fixed and consolidated form, is hypocrisy — the most odious vice on earth.

But I now refer to '*artificial manners*' — the affectation or parade of superiority in any particular; a studied mannerism for the purpose of display. This generally springs from that vanity which has been considered by many female writers as one of the foibles of their sex, and the prevalence of which really spoils many otherwise useful and amiable characters. It is in woman what ambition is in man; and though it may be a less dangerous, it is a more odious fault; and it is a form of self-love equally jealous and insatiable. Nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, and the only security against it is genuine humility. Be clothed, young women, with an artless genuine simplicity. It is your most befitting and beautiful garment; and where will you obtain it, but from the wardrobe of Christianity?

Observe the COURTEOUS AFFABILITY of this interesting young woman. Here was a stranger, a servant, though evidently a servant of a wealthy master; and yet how respectful, how gentle, how affable was her address. Josephus, fond of adding in his paraphrastic manner to the terseness and simplicity of the Scripture narrative, relates that there were other young women with Rebekah, who were asked for water, but refused; and that she reproved them for their churlishness. COURTESY is a befitting grace in both sexes, but most so in the female. While rudeness, which is a *'blemish'* upon masculine character, is a *'blot'* upon feminine character. A female churl is a monstrosity, from which we turn away with insufferable disgust. Courtesy is one of the cheapest exercises of virtue; it costs even less than rudeness — for the latter, except in hearts that are petrified into stone, must put the subject of it to some expense of feeling. Even a rough voice issuing from female lips is disagreeable, much more rough manners exhibited by a female form.

There are various things which prevent the exercise of courtesy. In some cases, it is to be traced to pride, a vice which befits a demon, but not a woman. In others it is the result of an absolute bad disposition — a morose, sour, and ill-conditioned mind, which knows no congenial seasons, and experiences no soft emotions. Some are petulant and peevish, and when putting on a mood of civility, are easily driven from it by the slightest touch of their irritability. Be courteous then; it is, if not of the solid substance of holiness, at least its polish. It is a Christian grace; for an apostle has said, *'Be compassionate and courteous.'*

Akin to this was Rebekah's KINDNESS. There was not only an external affability of manner — but a real benevolence of disposition. Here was a stranger, tired and faint with a day's journey in a hot country, asking her kind offices to procure a supply of water for himself and his weary animals. To grant his request for himself, would have cost her no great labor; but it must have been a considerable effort to draw water enough for a number of thirsty camels! And this is more apparent when you know the construction of eastern wells, which are not like ours, but are a kind of sunken cistern, to which you descend by a flight of steps. How many tiresome descents must this young creature have made, before she satisfied the thirst of Eleazar's camels.

And there is another little circumstance which marks her kindness; Eleazar asked only for a *'sip'* of water, for so the original word signifies, and she said, *'Drink, and your camels.'* It was a solitary act, I admit; but it was so promptly, so generously done as to indicate a habit. It is said, with as much beauty as simplicity, *'Love is kind;'* and, if possible, with still greater beauty, it is given as one of the traits of the virtuous woman, *'In her tongue is the law of kindness,'* the tongue here, as in all cases, commanding the hand.

Insensibility in a man is bad enough, but worse in a woman. An unfeeling woman is a contradiction in terms, for the female heart has ever been found the dwelling-place of kindness, where the misery of others, when all other hopes have failed, is sure to find an asylum. In what age, or in what country in the world, has woman forfeited her character as the ministering angel of humanity? When and where has the female bosom disowned the claims of misery and repudiated the virtue of benevolence? Arctic snows have not frozen up the springs of mercy in the female heart, nor tropical suns dried them up. Tyranny has not crushed it out, nor barbarism extinguished it. Look at Mr. Park, when alone in the midst of Africa, and lying down to die in poverty and despair, found by the black women of that wild land, carried to their tent, fed, clad, and cherished amid the tender strains of the impromptu song, with which they cheered the feelings of his heart and expressed the benevolence of their own. Young women, cherish in your bosoms the purest philanthropy. *Abhor selfishness* — you are made for *kindness*. Oppose not the design of your Creator. Do no violence to your own nature. A stony heart does not behoove you. A tearless woman is a revolting scene in our sorrowful world. She may be pure and beautiful as the marble statue — but if withal she is as hard and cold, who can admire her?

I cannot yet pass from the contemplation of this sweet and amiable young creature to behold her in her future character, until I have referred again to the *veil of modesty* under which all this affability and kindness was concealed. In listening to her language, in witnessing her conduct, will the most fastidious, prudish, or censorious of her sex, find anything to condemn in anything she said or did? Did she in the smallest measure violate decorum? She did not stand to gaze upon the stranger and his camels, or do anything to attract his attention, but was intent upon the object for which she came, and was diverted from it only by an opportunity to do good,

thrown in her way, without her seeking for it. She did not anxiously or confidently enter into discourse with the man, but waited until she was addressed, and then answered him modestly.

Modesty is the most attractive of all female graces. What is intelligence without it, but bolder impudence; or beauty but a more seductive snare? There is, I know, a reserve that degenerates into repulsive pride; as on the other hand, there is a frankness that corrupts into forwardness. Woman is intended neither to avoid man by a bashful timidity, nor to court him by an obtrusive advance. A genuine modesty guards against each extreme. It is that semi-transparent veil, which by revealing half her excellence, makes more lovely that which it reveals, and excites desire to know the rest. It is her shield as well as her veil, repelling all the darts with which, either by acts, by words, or by looks, any one would dare to assail her purity. It is also her ornament, investing all her other excellences with additional charms, the blush of purity upon the cheek of beauty. It is her power, by which she subdues every heart that is worth the conquest. Yes, what is not modesty to woman? Lay not aside your veil. Cast not away your shield. Divest not yourselves of your brightest ornament. Enfeeble not your power to influence others. Avoid everything in which the absence of this virtue can show itself.

See how the lack of it is reproved by the prophet Isaiah in his third chapter and how the practice of it enjoined by the apostle Paul — *‘That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becomes women professing godliness, with good works.’* Neither in dress, nor in conversation, nor in action, violate this law. Chastity is the robe which every woman should wear, and modesty is the golden clasp that keeps it upon her, and the fringe that adorns it. When the clasp is lost, the garment is likely to fall off; and when the fringe is torn away, or carelessly allowed to be trampled upon, the disfigurement of the robe has commenced, until at length it is cast away as not worth being retained.

I do not wish you to mistake a silly and affected bashfulness for modesty. You live not amid Asiatic ignorance, tyranny, sensuality, and female degradation, where woman is used mainly to pander to the appetite of her master, and where by a cruel jealousy she is excluded from communion with all but her fellow-slaves and their common tyrant. You

are the women of an enlightened age and country, and you are admitted on equal terms to all the enjoyments of social communion. Assert in this respect your rights; maintain your standing, and while you throw off all boldness, cast away with it all unworthy prudishness. In one of my previous chapters, I remarked that the over-prudish mind, which can never speak to one of the opposite sex but with a blush, is not always the purest one in reality.

There are, my young friends, one or *two momentous lessons* for you to learn from Rebekah’s conduct in after life — lessons which you must carry with you through all your future existence on earth. The first is GENERAL — *a change of circumstances often produces a considerable change of character and conduct.* How unlike the maid of Nahor was the wife in Canaan! And is it an uncommon thing now, for a change, far more extensive and more powerful than this, to be effected by the new condition into which marriage brings the female character?

Learn also this SPECIAL lesson — *that we should never seek a good end by bad means*; or in other words, never do evil that good may come. Abhor the great principle and favorite maxim of Jesuitism, that the end sanctifies the means; and especially abhor the application and operation of this most detestable principle in reference to religion; a principle which is more or less interwoven with the whole history of Popery. What crimes have been perpetrated by the zealots of Rome in the abused name of religion, for the good of their church! The pages of history which record the progress of that dreadful apostasy are not only *‘stained’* with blood, but *‘steeped’* in it.

And even by other professing Christians, holding a purer creed, and animated by a milder spirit, how much has been done, ostensibly for religion, but really for sectarianism, in contradiction of every principle of the law of God, and love to our neighbor! Religion refuses to be served by any principles of action but its own, and disdains to accept any offering which is contrary to truth, love, holiness, and honor. And as the stronger our zeal is for an object, the more we are in danger of resorting, in times of difficulty or in prospect of defeat, to unworthy means; so the more fervent we are to promote any religious cause, the more watchful should we be against being seduced into the use of *‘unholy means’* to obtain success. The wife of Isaac was right in her object, but wrong in her means, to obtain the

blessing for Jacob.

But we must take leave of Rebekah. It is somewhat remarkable that the sacred narrative takes no notice of her death. One might have hoped that she who came upon our notice at first like a bright and lovely vision, would have been seen to depart with as much gracefulness, simplicity, and beauty as she exhibited when we first saw her with such delighted attention. Is it that this despicable act of her old age so disrobed her character of its pristine beauty that censure is pronounced upon her by this most impressive silence? But is hers the only instance of painful contrast between the maid and the matron? The only instance that has disappointed the hopes raised by youthful excellences? The only instance in which the full-blown flower has not answered to the bud? Happy would it have been for thousands if it were.

Let it then be your first solicitude to exhibit, in your early life and single state, all those general and moral beauties which form the character of virgin excellence. Be *holy, industrious, modest, benevolent, and useful* — *inspire hope* in every beholder, and *awaken expectation*. But then, be *ever anxious, studious, and prayerful*, that in the transition from the single to the wedded state; in the development of the girl into the woman — all that was lovely, artless, and simple in youthful charms, shall, with unbroken and unvarying consistency, ripen into all that is holy, estimable, venerable in the wife, the mother, and the matron.

## THE ORNAMENTS OF A PROFESSION OF RELIGION

*‘And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. But they must show themselves to be entirely trustworthy and good. Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.’*  
- 1 Timothy 2:9-10

*‘Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within – the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.’*  
- 1 Peter 3:3-4

There is in human nature an instinctive propensity to ‘*decoration*.’ To whatever principle the taste may be traced, whether to innate perception of the beautiful, or to a desire to excite admiration; the fact is indubitable. It is seen equally in savage and civilized nations; and is manifested by them alike in attention to the decoration of both their bodies and their dwellings — and indeed in all their social customs and usages. The string of shells, fish teeth, or bits of bone-around the neck of the Polynesian; and the blaze of diamonds, or rubies — upon the brow or bosom of the British Queen, indicate the same instinctive propensity for decoration. This propensity to decoration, however in many cases it may be altogether corrupted in its object, wrong in its principle, or excessive in its degree — is in its own nature an imitation of the workmanship of God, who, ‘*by his Spirit has garnished the heavens*,’ and covered the earth with beauty. Who can look over one of creation’s lovely scenes, and behold the display of elegance of form, and beauty of color — in the flowers of the field and garden — in the plumage of the birds — in the meandering rivers — and the gentle undulations of the ground — exhibiting forest and copse, hill and dale — all gilded with the beams of the glorious sun. I say, who can witness all this without being convinced that God himself delights in decoration! He has made a world which he has ornamented so profusely that he has scattered beauties where there are no eyes but his own to behold them!

*‘Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathomed waves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its fragrance on the desert air.’*

To reject all design and effort to add the lovely to the good, and the beautiful to the useful — would be to oppose and not to imitate, to condemn and not to approve — the works of the Great Creator. And indeed no sect has ever arisen among Christians which has even pretended to disclaim all attention to what is ornamental. Even those who conscientiously repudiate the pearl, diamond, and ruby, the feather, and the flower, erect their buildings, select their furniture, plant their gardens, and choose their garments, according to their ideas of taste, and with some regard to the laws of beauty. Hence, I think that both the apostles who touch on the subject of personal decoration for Christian women, are to be understood not as condemning all ornament — but only regulating it.

The propensity to personal decoration is, without all doubt, peculiarly strong in the female heart. That a maid *‘should forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire,’* is spoken of by the prophet as unlikely to a proverb. There is nothing wrong in the instinct itself. It serves important purposes. Its total absence is felt as a serious interruption to the pleasure of social communion. A sloven is disagreeable — one habitually negligent of neatness or cleanliness in personal appearance, is intolerable. Christianity no make war on any of man’s natural propensities — but only on their abuse. Its object is not to eradicate our instincts, but to prune and train them, and make them bear good fruit.

Now it is well known that some, in what the apostles say on this subject, find an absolute prohibition of all ornaments of dress, and an injunction to wear only the most plain and unadorned apparel. I think Christian women may fall into much more dangerous misinterpretations of Scripture than this; yet I have no doubt it is a misinterpretation. The prohibition seems to be *comparative* rather than *absolute*, and contains an injunction to be far more attentive to the ornaments of the soul than to those of the body. *‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,’* means, *‘I prefer mercy to sacrifice.’* At the same time, there can be no doubt that in the words of the text it is taken for granted that women at all times are, and that the women of those times were, far too much addicted to ornamental dress; that

they trenched both upon modesty and economy by their habits. And therefore that in these verses the apostle laid down some very important hints as to the principles on which Christian women should regulate their attire. They inculcate modesty in opposition to what is immodest — economy in opposition to extravagance.

*‘Excessive costliness,’* says Leighton, on this passage, *‘argues and feeds the pride of the heart, and defrauds, if not others of their dues, yet the poor of their charity, which in God’s sight is a due debt. And far more comfort shall you have on your death-bed, to remember that at such a time, instead of putting lace on my own back, I helped clothe a naked back. I abated somewhat of my former extravagances to supply the poor with necessities. Far sweeter will this be than to remember that I could needlessly spend large sums of money to serve my pride, while I grudged a penny to relieve the poor.’*

Barnes has given, I think, the true meaning of the apostle.

*‘It is not to be supposed that all use of gold or pearls as articles of dress is here forbidden; but the idea is that the Christian female is not to seek these as the adorning which she desires, or is not to imitate the world in these personal decorations. It may be a difficult question to settle how much ornament is allowable — and when the true line is passed. But though this cannot be settled by any exact rule, since much must depend on age, and on the relative rank in life, and the means which one may possess; yet there is one general rule which is applicable to all, and which might regulate all. It is, that the true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind, and which engrosses the time and attention more than the virtues of the heart, we may be certain is wrong. The apparel should be such as not to attract attention; such as befits our situation; such as will not be particularly singular; such as will not leave the impression that the heart is fixed on it. It is a poor ambition to decorate a dying body with gold and pearls. It should not be forgotten that it will soon need other clothing — and will occupy a position where gold and pearls would be a mockery! When the heart is right, when there is a true and supreme love for religion, it is usually not*



*difficult to regulate the subject of dress.'*

It is somewhat remarkable that Plato, the loftiest of all the Grecian sages, has a passage which strikingly resembles that of the apostle.

*'Behavior and not gold is the ornament of a woman. To immoral women, these things, jewels and ornaments, are advantageous to their catching more admirers; but for a woman who wishes to enjoy the favor of one man, good behavior is the proper ornament, and not dresses. And you should have the blush upon your countenance, which is the sign of modesty, instead of paint — and worth and sobriety instead of gold and emeralds.'* It is impossible not to notice this similarity between the apostle and the philosopher; and equally impossible, one would think, not to mark the superiority over the reason of the one of the inspiration of the other. *'The philosopher is of the earth, earthly — the apostle brings the authority of God, and the power of the unseen world distinctly into view. While Plato leads wives to seek exclusively the honor that comes from men, Peter teaches them to seek the honor which come down from God, the true Judge of excellence, the great Fountain of honor.'*

Before we pass from this subject of personal decoration, we will just notice the very beautiful reference which the apostle makes to that part of our nature, which it is to be your chief concern to beautify. *'Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within — the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.'* How exquisitely is this put. How impressive the ideas which are conveyed. It is the decoration of the soul rather than of the body, about which Christian women should be chiefly solicitous and concerned. The soul is indestructible and immortal; so should its ornaments be. What can jewels of silver or jewels of gold do for this? Can the diamond sparkle upon the intellect? or the ruby blaze upon the heart? Or the pearl be set in the conscience? Or the gorgeous robe clothe the character? Or the feather or the flower wave over the renewed and holy nature? No! The appropriate ornaments of the soul are truth, holiness, knowledge, faith, hope, love, joy, humility; and all the other gifts and graces of the Spirit — *wisdom, prudence, fortitude and gentleness*. These

are the jewels with which the heart should be adorned. The outer body is corruptible. Dust it is, and unto dust it shall return.

That beautiful woman glittering in all the profusion of diamonds — the admiration and envy of the party or the ball room, must before long be a mass of putrefaction too ghastly to be looked upon — and then a hideous skeleton, a collection of bones, a heap of dust! And where will be the immortal spirit? Will it wear the cast-off jewels of the body? Oh no! These remain, rescued from the grasp of the *'king of terrors,'* but only to ornament other bodies!

But turn now to that other female, the woman who, regardless of the decoration of the body, was all intent upon the beauty of the soul. Look at her, who was clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, and decorated with the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. She too dies; but the indestructible and immortal spirit over which death has no dominion, goes not unadorned into the presence of the Eternal; for the jewels with which it decorated itself on earth are as indestructible as its own nature, and go with it to shine in the presence of God!

*'Men,'* says Leighton, *'think it poor and base to be meek. Nothing is more exposed to contempt than the spirit of meekness; it is mere folly with men. But that is no matter of concern — this overweighs all disesteem, it is with God of great price. And these are indeed as He values them, and no otherwise. Though it be not the country's fashion, yet it is the fashion at Heaven's court; yes, it is the King's own fashion; 'Learn of me,' says he, 'for I am meek and humble in heart.' Some that are court bred, will send for the prevailing fashions there, though they live not at court; and though the peasants think them strange dresses, yet they regard not that, but use them as finest and best. So care you not what the world says — you are not to stay long with them. Desire to have both your clothing and your fashions from heaven. The robe of humility, the garment of meekness, will be sent to you. Wear them for his sake who sends them to you. He will be pleased to see you in them, and is not this enough? It is never right in anything with us until we attain to this — to tread on the opinion of men, and eye nothing but God's approbation.'*

But we now pass from the ornaments of the Christian woman's body; to those of her profession, and these indeed are the chief subject of this

chapter. There is something impressive in the exhortation, '*Then they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.*' Even the great truth of our Divine Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is thus represented as susceptible of decoration on the part of those who profess it. The sentiment conveyed is that the holy life of a consistent Christian is an adornment of the profession of this sublime doctrine. This, more than all splendor of tasteful architecture, or gorgeous forms, or imposing ceremonies, or anything else which can appeal to the senses, is the decoration of Christian doctrine. It is this, as it shines forth in the beauties of holiness, that truly decorates religion. '*Beyond the pomp that charms the eyes — or rites adorned with gold.*'

A very large proportion of the members of all Christian churches are women, and young women too. This, on many accounts, is a very delightful fact. It has, however, been sometimes complained that like others, they are not so anxious to sustain their profession well, as to make it attractive. And it is for their sake, and to lead them to consider what would set off their profession to the best advantage, that this chapter is designed. What is really ornamental attracts attention and excites admiration — these are virtues which Christians should secure by their conduct. I shall proceed on this subject, into the four following particulars.

I. The PERSONAL QUALITIES which will make the gospel attractive. As incongruity of conduct in reference to any profession whatever, is a blemish and not a beauty, a deformity and not a decoration — remember that *inconsistency* would be a blemish and deformity in you, in reference to religion. Study your profession, and thoroughly understand what it implies and enjoins. Consider well what holiness of conduct; what spirituality of mind; what separation from the world in spirit and taste; what devotional feelings; what faith, hope, love, and humility; what amiableness of disposition and kindness of disposition, are included in that declaration you have actually made — '*I am a Christian.*'

You should not have made such a profession if you did not understand it — or intend to sustain it. I must remind you, it is a solemn thing to profess to be a disciple of Christ. It supposes you to be a new creature, that old things are passed away, and that all things have become new with you; that you have new principles, new motives, new ends of life, new tastes and new pleasures. Now, your profession is to be maintained with a due regard

to this. Your conduct must correspond with it. You must be dissimilar in these things, quite so, to those who make no such profession. They must see the difference as well as hear of it. You must commend yourselves to them as consistent with yourselves. You must compel them to say, '*Well, we do not like her religion, but it is quite in harmony with her profession.*' But what is this CONSISTENCY? The following remarks will perhaps explain it.

There must be EARNESTNESS, without enthusiasm, fanaticism, or bigotry. Lukewarmness as to any duty is odious. Earnestness on the other hand excites attention, and sometimes admiration, even where its object is far from commendable; how much more where that object is holy, benevolent, and useful. It is a noble and a lofty spectacle to see amid a race of frivolous mortals, one, who being immortal, is intent upon its immortality; and though surrounded by the frivolities of this visible world, is intent upon the realities of the unseen eternal world!

Nothing can be more dull and repulsive than a lukewarm and heartless profession of religion — a pale, sickly, and shriveled form, which has all the decay of consumption, without its hectic flush or dimmed eye. On the other hand, how impressive a spectacle is it to behold a young woman amid the wonderment of some of her companions, and the laughter of others, rising upon the wings of faith and habitual devotion above the region of their levities, into that of devotion; to see her eye, as it is upturned to heaven, sparkling with the beam of eternity that has fallen upon it; and to follow her in her ardent career, pursuing her seraphic course, undeterred by contrary examples or opposing influence.

But there must be no '*enthusiasm*' leading her to violate the law of sobriety; no '*fanaticism*' leading her to tie down others to all the rules she has imposed upon herself, and to cherish a hostile, much less a '*malignant feeling*' towards them, because they seem to differ from her in some things which she deems important. There must be the most profound *humility* blended with all this *intense earnestness*, and the *mildest forbearance* towards others, combined with the *utmost conscientiousness* as regards the laws which she imposes on herself.

Earnestness implies a resolute determination never to allow others to interfere with our convictions; a courage that dares to be singular; a

fortitude which braves opposition, though it should be united with gentleness even under persecution. Earnestness must be shown by an intelligent and well-regulated zeal to bring others under that influence which is the spring of its own energies. Mild in persuasion, gentle in entreaty, and with a loving insinuating manner, the female religious professor must aim at the conversion of others. Usefulness, in the way of holy activity for the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind, must be a conspicuous trait of her character. Selfishness, indolence, and inertness, are disfigurements of character — while benevolent activity is one of its richest ornaments.

There must be seriousness without gloom. On the one hand, she who is bent upon eternity and anxious for salvation, cannot sink down into the levity of those who are all taken up with fashion, amusement, and folly! On the other, true religion includes such an intelligent joy as makes its possessor satisfied with her own sources of enjoyment, without running to the amusements of the world for pleasure and excitement. The young female professor must let it be seen and felt that her religion is her bliss — and not her penance; that it is her song and her solace. She must appear as irradiated with sun-beams, and not invested with gloominess. Her countenance must be the index of a heart at peace — of a bosom serene and happy.

And in addition to all this, there must be a most anxious desire to cultivate that prime virtue in the composition of womanly and Christian excellence — GENTLENESS. See how this is commended in the passage which I have already quoted from the writings of the apostle Peter — *‘The unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.’* God values gentleness above all gifts of intellect, delights in it above the most splendid genius, honors it above all that men delight to honor. Gentleness is woman’s ornament above all others; it is her defense, for who can oppress the gentleness which never provokes, and can scarcely resist or complain? Who can wantonly tread on that lowly, lovely floweret, which as it lifts its unpretending head, silently says, *‘Can you crush one that hurts nothing?’*

Nothing is more unsightly than the reverse of this — an irritable, discontented, peevish, domineering woman. Hence the declaration of the inspired Israelitish sage, *‘It is better to live alone in the corner of an attic*

*— than with a contentious wife in a lovely home.’ ‘It is better to dwell in the wilderness — than with a contentious and angry woman.’*

Mr. Jay has drawn a beautiful picture of this virtue in his character of a Christian wife; as one *‘who can feel neglects and unkindnesses, and yet retain her composure; who can calmly remonstrate, and meekly reprove; who can yield and accommodate; who is not ‘easily provoked,’ and is ‘easily entreated;’ who would endure rather than complain, and would rather suffer in secret, than disturb others with her grief.’* Such is gentleness — the highest form of the peculiarly Christian life — and such the ornament of female Christian profession.

## II. The SOCIAL QUALITIES which will make the gospel attractive.

Great injustice has been done to religion, and a great hindrance thrown in the way of its diffusion, by those descriptions of it, which represent it as an abstract thing, almost exclusively appertaining to the Sunday as to *time*, and to the church as to *place*; a mere matter of devotion, a transaction between God and the soul about salvation and heaven; but having nothing or little to do with secular affairs, the social relations, and the places of resort in human life; in short, as a thing which looks entirely heavenward, but which casts no glance upon earth. This is superstition, and we find enough of it in Popery, which overlays with a cumbrous ceremonial the moral duties of the law, as well as the free grace of the gospel; cuts in many instances the ties of social life, and isolates men and women from their fellows; and by the devotions of the cloister, the convent, and the church, supersedes the duties of the house, the shop, and the exchange; thus setting forth religion, as fitting men for the next world, but having very little to do with their abode in the present one.

On the contrary, true religion, the religion of the Bible, is seen under two aspects; one looking up to heaven; the other looking down to earth. It gathers all the interests of man under its protection and fostering care. Like the sun, which, though fixed in the heavens, pours the flood of his light and glory and cherishing influence upon earth; or like the atmosphere which, though above the earth, enters into every place upon it, and sustains the insects that creep, as well as the birds that soar; so religion irradiates with its light, guides by its revelations, animates with its stimulus, sanctifies by its power, and blesses with its influence — in all their relations, and all their

interests — all those who yield themselves up to its authority and government. It goes to palaces and teaches kings; to the legislature and teaches senators; to the exchange and teaches merchants; to the cottages and teaches peasants and workmen — instructing all in the various duties which they owe to God and to their fellow men.

Religion is also a household thing, a family law — it lifts the latch of the house and goes in and takes its seat at the parental table, and joins the circle round the hearth, as well as round the altar; it swells the joys of the domestic fellowship, as well as responds to the morning prayer, or chants the evening hymn; it founds the duties of the second table of the law upon those of the first, employs the loftiest theology to enforce the commonest morality, and enjoins the most ordinary obligations of social existence by motives drawn from the cross of Christ. Hence the necessity for professors to pay the greatest attention to the various duties of social and domestic life.

We are commanded to let our *'light shine before men, that they seeing our good works may glorify God.'* So in the beautiful passage quoted from the apostle Peter, where he gives directions to Christian wives, he says, *'Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.'* Here again is the fact set out, that religion is intended to regulate the communion, and form the character, of domestic and social life, and that where its influence so exerted is seen, it must be beneficial to the observers of it. I wish to press this most earnestly upon your attention, that the faith of the gospel is intended and calculated to carry social excellence to the very highest perfection. It is the soil in which all the seeds of domestic happiness will best flourish.

It should not be forgotten that social excellence is often seen apart from religion. Exemplary instances of the home duties of life are often found in those who make no profession of religion. Good husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, are found outside the circle of vital piety — a fact which ought to make those that are within it, still more anxious to be exemplary in the discharge of their obligations. A real Christian should excel unconverted people not only in religion, but in morality. She should not only be more holy, but more socially excellent. She should excel the worldling in those things which the latter makes her

boast, and rise above the level which she has prescribed as her highest elevation in moral and social virtue. Select, therefore, the most dutiful and affectionate daughter, the most kind and attentive sister you can of this class, and say to yourself, *'She makes no profession of religion, and yet she excels, in a manner worthy of attention and admiration, in all the duties of domestic life. Now, as I do profess religion, I must if possible be still more exemplary than she is in all social obligations, for surely nothing could possibly bring religion into greater disrepute than for my parents, or my brothers and sisters, or even the servants, to make a comparison to my disadvantage, between my conduct and hers.'*

If you would adorn your profession it must be in this way of domestic excellence. There may be the most seraphic piety, so far as the raptures of devotion go; there may be a most punctilious performance of all the rites and ceremonies of religion; there may be a most eager and regular attendance upon all the public services of religion; there may be an ardent zeal for the spread of the religious peculiarities of your denomination, but if at the same time there be a deficiency of duty, honor, and obedience to your parents, or of kind interest and affection for your brothers and sisters, or of humane consideration for your servants; all this religious profession will only excite disgust, and raise a suspicion of your sincerity, and a prejudice against religion itself.

No one can possibly be attracted to, or conciliated by, a religion which is in any great degree destitute of social and domestic excellence. It is a terrible taunt to be thrown at any one — *'Yes, she is, if her own profession and supposition be consulted, a very good Christian; but it is a pity she is not a better daughter, a more kind sister, and a more accommodating neighbor.'* The most flaming profession must be at once thrown into eclipse by such a sarcasm. If you were to study how most effectually to discredit, not only your profession of it, but religion itself, you could not be more successful than by associating with it such a line of conduct as this. I do therefore most solemnly and anxiously entreat you to enter very deeply into the subject of the chapter entitled, *'The Parental Home.'*

It is probable that this chapter will be read by some who sustain the character of female servants. This is a class of people to be found in all our churches, and in some is very numerous; and I take this opportunity of saying that I have many such who are among the brightest ornaments of the

church under my care, and who by their exemplary deportment do much to recommend religion to their employers. Their honesty, diligence, industry, good disposition, and obliging, respectful deportment, make them the comfort of the households in which they live. It is somewhat observable that the text which speaks of our ‘*adorning the doctrine of God our Savior,*’ was addressed to servants. And so far as the ornamental parts of religion are concerned, as well as its substantial elements, none have more occasions, or more favorable circumstances, for exhibiting them than female servants. Their humble situation, by testing their good disposition, devotedness, and submission, gives them an opportunity of bringing out into bold and beautiful contrast, the most lovely traits of Christian piety.

On the other, hand, there are some, who by a lamentable deficiency of these more amiable qualities, though perhaps they may have real religious principle, have excited much prejudice against genuine piety, and led their employers to say, ‘*I am not anxious again to have what are called religious servants, for in most things they are no better, and in some they are worse than others.*’

III. There are INTELLECTUAL ORNAMENTS of your profession, which you should seek — both on their own account and on that of religion. True it is that genuine and consistent religion is its own recommendation, and depends upon nothing extraneous for its real value. Still, since there are those who have imbibed prejudices against it, and have taken up mistaken views of its nature, as if it were at war with the gifts of the intellect and the graces of the character — it would be well to disarm their minds, and by reason and elegance, to convince them that piety is not, as they may suppose, another name for ignorance, stupidity, and vulgarity. For their sakes, then, as well as for your own pleasure, cultivate your minds by study. Acquire an eager thirst for knowledge. Be fond of reading, and of the best kind of reading. Disprove the slander that girls are only fond of tales and novels, of stories of love, female adventures or heroism. Prize knowledge; desire to arrive at truth; be anxious to investigate the wonders of nature; and covet to enrich your minds with the treasures dug up and distributed in such abundance in this wonderful age. Store your minds with this wealth.

But let other faculties be brought into exercise besides your memory; cultivate your *judgment*, be *inquisitive, reflective, discriminating*. There are

many young people whose memory is a storehouse crowded with facts, names, and dates, but who are lamentably deficient after all in judgment. They may talk French, quote history, and display other worldly accomplishments, but their intellect is too feeble to form, to hold, or to defend, an opinion of their own. We do not of course expect all women to be profound logicians, but most tolerably well-educated women may by vigorous and well sustained efforts arrive at some maturity of sound judgment.

Let it then be seen that the highest kind of wisdom and knowledge does not lead you to despise the lower kinds; lest those who are competent only in them, should by what they see in you, despise that which is the highest. Make it clear that they who are the children of God are most solicitous to become acquainted with all the works of their Heavenly Father, not excepting the wonders and glories of creation. Convince the worshipers of the God of nature, (or rather of the false god, Nature) that while you are chiefly anxious to pass on and worship Him who sits enthroned between the cherubim, upon the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, you can bow and adore with them in the vestibule of his temple, and ascend with them to the highest altitude of earthly subjects and general knowledge; and that when like birds of weaker pinions, and dimmer vision, they droop the wing and stop their flight, you, like the eagle soaring still upward to the sun, can still pursue your heaven-bound course, and rise into the regions of celestial splendor.

Nearly allied to this, is taste, or a perception and love of the beautiful and sublime in nature, in literature, in accomplishments, in conduct, yes, and in Holy Scripture. The Bible is full of instances of this. With a correct literary taste you will relish more even this bread of life, that came down from heaven — the Word of God. Inspiration has garnished its page with beauties that are hidden from eyes whose vision has not been strengthened by education. The Scripture is a paradise of flowers to be admired, as well as of fruits to be eaten.

Taste displayed even in what are called accomplishments is ornamental to piety, when not carried to excess. As I observed, in a former chapter, these matters of elegance are not to be despised. True, it is a sin for a Christian woman to spend hours and hours of each precious day in the fashionable modes of killing time — by *embroidery, crotchet work,*

*painting, languages, and music* — to the neglect of *religion, useful reading,* and all *benevolent effort*. It is truly affecting, to see a rational, immortal, and accountable creature, dwelling in this world of ignorance, sin, and misery, which she could do something to enlighten, reform and bless, (and she herself on her way to eternity and the bar of God,) consuming the best and preparatory period of her whole existence in this world and the next, in working figures upon canvass, or drawing them upon paper; or in playing and singing; or in acquiring German, French, or Italian.

Let me not however be misunderstood. I am not such a rigid utilitarian as to be the advocate of the merely useful in human character, for I really love and admire the ornamental. I am not all for Doric strength, but contend also for Ionic grace and Corinthian elegance. I am not for young women laying down the needle and the pencil; or for their leaving the piano silent and untouched; or foreign languages unlearned. No such thing! Religion forbids not these matters. Nature, and the Bible too, are full of the sweetest embroidery and enameling, full of music and painting, and all the varieties of a language not our own. Instead of forbidding what can add embellishment to the female character, I enjoin it. Woman, formed to please, yes, made in Paradise, where beauty was in perfection, and where your first lessons in taste were taught by the Great Master of all created beauty, go on to besprinkle your character and to interweave your conduct with every flower of elegance; and especially Christian woman, let it be seen by your sex, that you have not so learned Christ as to throw off all delight in the tasteful, the decorative, and the picturesque, with which pointing to the lily, the vine, the birds, and the flocks, he was pleased to enliven and adorn his own discourses. To me it is always a beautiful sight to behold the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, in which genuine piety is ever attired, adorned, (not encumbered,) with the jewels of elegant accomplishments and tasteful decoration.

Now all this is important to you as young unmarried women — and how is the importance of it augmented by your looking forward and contemplating yourselves in future life, as wives and mothers! Without intelligence and taste, are you fitted to be the companion of a wise and sensible man, or to preside with advantage over the education of children? Remember the character of the age in which you live. But even in these days of knowledge and taste we know very well that the aptness and ability of a good house-wife are always invaluable — for it is a poor commen-

dation to say of a woman, '*She is exceedingly well informed in all the literature of the day, quite learned, but she knows very little of household affairs.*' I believe her husband often thinks, if he does not say, '*I would dispense with a great deal of her bookishness and her knowledge, if I could have the house kept in a better condition, and enjoy a little more comfort at home.*'

Still, a wife and a mother, to all the household prerequisites, should and may add intelligence and taste. It is indeed the perfection of womanly character, at once to '*look well to the ways of her household*' and also, to '*open her mouth with wisdom.*' How impressive and attractive a scene is it to see a pious, well-informed, accomplished woman, respected as well as beloved by her husband, as his intelligent companion, esteemed by his guests, and looked up to with confidence, reverence, and affection by her children, over whose general education she presides with dignity and ability.

IV. There are some things which are not reducible to either of the other heads, and which may therefore be called *general excellences of a decorative nature*. These have been already dwelt upon in former discourses, and therefore need only be briefly mentioned here. We find them set forth in the early character and conduct of Rebekah; i *modesty without silliness, frankness without forwardness, courtesy without affectation, and pleasantness without servility* in which we beheld. In short, all that maidenly reserve which would restrain whatever is obtrusive, crude, impudent, and bold; and which yet would allow of an artless, ingenuous, and unembarrassed mode of communion with the other sex.

I have sometimes seen good women so bold, obtrusive, and imposing, as to repel and disgust. I could not doubt that they had really some religious principle within this indecorous outside, but it could scarcely be seen. In some cases it has happened that even the very profession of religion, which should have led women to draw closer the veil of modest reserve, has led them to throw it off altogether, and they seemed to act as if the Christian name, which ought to be a guarantee for all that is meek and gentle, was a sanction for improper forwardness.

On the contrary, there are others, whose profession of religion has so disfigured them with the airs of assumed sanctity, so stiffened them into

prudish reserve, and so distorted the simplicity of nature with the formalism of gloomy superstition, that they are repulsive as spectres, and lead many to exclaim, '*If this be religion, it may be pure, but it is surely unlovely, and, one would imagine, as unfit for heaven, where all is joyous, as it is for earth, where if happiness be lacking, this certainly cannot supply it.*'

Good disposition, or AMIABILITY, is essential to the adornment of a Christian profession. This has been alluded to already in more places than one, but its importance justifies the repetition. I have already admitted that there is a great difference in this respect in natural constitution. Hence it costs some immensely more pains to acquire a small degree of this excellence, than it does others to manifest ten times the amount. And really there may be more of principle and virtue in the small measure of the one, than in the abundance of the other. Some indulgence should therefore be shown to those who are born with a crabbed disposition, and they should not be judged too harshly. We see the fault, but not the contrition with which it is followed; nor do we witness the deep self-abasement which the ebullition of the moment inflicts for hours, if not days. But still we would enjoin on those who are conscious of this infirmity, a most anxious, earnest, and prayerful attention to the subject.

Let every woman who is troubled with an over-wrought sensibility, a morbid susceptibility of offence, an unusual liability to passion, put her heart under discipline, or her constitutional tendency will be a prolific source of misery to herself, and to others around her. It is not, however, as a source of disquietude that I now allude to it, but as a cause of scandal. A bad disposition not only troubles the heart, but it disfigures the profession. Observers can see nothing to love and admire in religion, when found in company with so much ill-temper. There are some people whose bad disposition is unassociated with piety, or indeed moral worth of any kind, and they are wasps, hornets, scorpions, all venom and no honey, according to the degree of malignity they possess. There are others who have real godliness and some sterling excellence of other kinds, and they resemble bees, who though they have honey, yet are somewhat irritable, and have also a sting for those who offend them. Cultivate then a lovely and amiable disposition as one of the brightest ornaments of religion. It is to religion what the burnish is to the gold, the polish to the steel, the fragrance to the rose, the sunshine to the gorgeous scene.

There is one thing which, in addition to all that has been mentioned, is requisite to give the finishing stroke of ornament to the character of the young female professors of religion; and that is the virtue that is sometimes designated *good sense*, at other times *prudence*, at others *thoughtfulness*. I know such dispositions are thought by some minds to partake too much of a grave demeanor, to be ornamental in youth. They may hang like rich ripe clusters round the character of the matron, but such people think the beauty of youth consists of the picturesque, the romantic, with a tinge of the wild, the visionary, and the enthusiastic. There is no poetry they imagine in prudence, no imagination in good sense, no imaginativeness in thoughtfulness. True, and I will concede so much as to allow that a precocious gravity, an anticipation of the sobriety of threescore years and ten, is not what I enjoin, or wish to see in youthful maidens.

Even religion with all its solemn proprieties, all its heavenly sanctities, does not extinguish the vivacity, the sprightliness, the buoyancy of a girl in her teens. I love to see her sparkling eye, her sun-lit countenance, her elastic step, and to hear the merry note of her laughter, and the music of her cheerful voice. These are ornamental, they belong to her age, and the natural flow of her spirits, and it is only superstition that would turn that young and joyous creature into the stiff and silent statue, the nun-like figure, or the unsmiling devotee.

But then, is it any detriment to all this innocent hilarity to have meditative thoughtfulness, an instinctive sense of propriety, cautious reserve and accurate discrimination? Is it a blemish rather than a beauty to be able to consider what in all circumstances is best to be done, and to be able to do it well? To act from principle rather than from impulse, and to be guided by reason rather than by feeling? To weigh words before they are spoken, and estimate actions before they are performed? Is not propriety beauty? Are notions and caprices, whims and eccentricities, imprudence and follies, ornaments? Yes, in the estimation of that silly girl (but in hers alone), who would rather be smiled at for her wildness and her weakness, than commended for her more solid excellence. What kind of a mother is this romantic and wayward creature likely to make? Let the Christian young woman be very jealous then of this romanticism, and consider it is not in keeping with the dignity and sanctity of religion. The matrons are admonished by the apostles to teach the young women to be *sober*; a word that refers to a prudent thoughtfulness.

Such then are the ornaments of early female religious profession. It has been throughout this chapter supposed that there may be real piety, without some of these accompaniments — a rough unpolished godliness, true but unadorned religion. One young female may be sincere in her profession of religion, and yet have an uncorrected infirmity of disposition — another may be very illiterate or very weak-minded — another may be guilty of various little inconsistencies which tarnish the beauty of her profession — another may be rash, restless, and imprudent — another may be spiritually proud, and something like pretended sanctimonious — another may be lacking in agreeable and accommodating manners or habits at home. In all these ways and in various others, religion may be disparaged, shorn of some of its beauty, rendered less attractive, and made even repulsive to those who observe it.

*‘Let not your good,’* says the apostle, *‘be evil spoken of.’* Religion is itself so transcendently excellent, (being the highest glory of man, the image of God, and the disposition of heaven,) that it should be exhibited to the greatest possible advantage. Who that wore the portrait of some dear friend, or suspended a picture of the queen in their house, would not wish to have it so framed as to be worthy of the subject? Who would not deprecate the idea of their keeping it either covered with dust or defilement? True religion is the only thing that can make people happy in this world, or guide them to eternal felicity in the world to come. How solemnly, tremblingly anxious should all who profess it, be to exhibit it in the most advantageous light, and with the greatest and most powerful attractions! How deeply solicitous should we be, lest by anything others see in us, they should take a prejudice against it, and we should thus cast stumbling blocks in their way! How desirous should we feel, and how studious should we be, to invest our profession with whatever things are lovely — that others, beholding our good works, our peace of mind, our meekness, gentleness, and kindness, our usefulness and humility, should be won to Christ; that so if they will not love religion in the first instance for its own sake, they may be conciliated to it by the ornaments with which, in our case, it is decorated!

Before this chapter is concluded, I may with great propriety suppose that some will read it who have not made a profession of religion, who are not in visible connection with a Christian church, and are living in the habitual neglect of the Lord’s Supper. Making no profession of religion! How is this? Have you none to profess? Melancholy idea! No religion!

Better, I admit, not to profess at all, than to profess what you do not possess, and thus add hypocrisy to your other sins. But is it not painful and fearful to think of a rational, immortal, sinful being, living without penitence, prayer, faith, and love? How can you live another hour in such a state? What are all the intellectual ornaments spoken of above, without personal piety, but a garland of beautiful flowers round the brow of a corpse; or but as diamonds sparkling on the bosom of death? Oh, for your soul’s sake, live no longer without remembering your Creator in the days of your youth.

Others, perhaps, will read this discourse, who, though partakers of true faith in Christ and love to God, are not yet professors of the religion they possess. We again say, How is this? Have you pondered that language of the apostle, *‘With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,’* or that solemn injunction of Christ, when he instituted the sacred supper, *‘Do this in remembrance of me.’* Is this the command you select from the law of the New Testament as the only one you feel at liberty to disobey? This one, so tender, so touching, so loving! This, delivered in sight of the cross, only a few hours before our Lord endured those agonies by which you are saved! What! neglect the command of dying love, a command so positive, an invitation so gracious, an injunction, obedience to which is at once so honorable, so happy, and so useful! What is your reason for this neglect? Do you tremble to make a profession because it is so sacred? Have you not mistaken the design of the Lord’s Supper; it is simply a commemorative ordinance, and are you not deluded and terrified by the mystery in which priestcraft has sought to envelope it?

But, *‘you tremble to make a profession lest you should dishonor it, as so many have done.’* They have indeed, and the painful fact should lead to caution, self-examination, and earnest prayer for grace, that another stumbling-block should not be furnished by you. But the very fear will, if sincere, be your preservation from the object of your dread. The path of duty is the way of safety. Besides, are you less likely to sin outside the pale of communion than within it? We invite you, therefore, if you are partakers of true faith, to profess, or to use a scriptural synonym, to confess it. The communion of saints and the participation of the Lord’s Supper will by God’s grace, strengthen the principle, and call forth the exercise, of the Divine life, and be at once your honor and your joy.



And as to you who are already to be found in the fellowship of the faithful, I congratulate you on the choice you have made, and on the decision to which you have come. To your pastors it was a source of unspeakable pleasure to receive you among the number of the followers of the Lamb. You, in an especial manner, are their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, inasmuch as they look to you, and those who may descend from you, to fill up the places of more aged disciples, when they, according to the course of nature, shall be removed to the church triumphant. Acknowledge practically and gratefully the grace you have received from the Lord, by using your influence with labor and judgment, to engage other young people, your relatives and companions, to come and share with you the privileges, and enjoy the blessings of Christian communion.

And to give effect to your persuasions, exhibit all the beauty of consistent example. Let religion be seen in you, combining with all its sanctities and spiritualities, the pleasantness of life, amiability of disposition, general intelligence, correct taste, and general social excellence, which shall predispose them in favor of genuine piety. Make it evident to them that true godliness is as happy a thing as it is a holy one. Convince them by what they see in you as well as by what they hear from you, that you have found the secret, and that your soul has touched the center, of bliss. Let the richest excellences that can adorn the female character — all the most rare and delicate beauties that are admired in it — be strung together upon the golden thread of eminent piety, and be hung like a necklace of heavenly pearls round your profession. Thus, *'make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.'*

## THE CHARACTERS OF MARTHA AND MARY OF BETHANY

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, *'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'* *'Martha, Martha,'* the Lord answered, *'you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'*

- Luke 10:38-42

This beautiful little gem of sacred history is replete with instruction in reference to every one of the individuals which it brings before us. It is a group of characters, each possessing its own peculiar excellence and interest. It says much for the condescension, kindness, and fidelity of the chief personage of the scene; and not less for the feelings and the excellences of the other two. In the person and conduct of Jesus are always combined, without being confounded, all the uncreated glories of the Godhead, and all the milder beauties of the perfect man — and if in the admiration of his humanity we are not to lose sight of his divinity, so neither in the contemplation of his divinity are we to forget his humanity. Human nature had its consummation in him, he is its representative in its best estate, the pattern man. His greatness did not raise him above any kind of goodness or the manifestation of it.

Is *friendship* one of the virtues of our nature, one of the bonds of society, one of the blessings of life, a sweet and lovely flower that unfolds its beauty and exhales its fragrance in the garden of our social existence? Behold in Jesus Christ this virtue in perfection! He had his friendships, not indeed capricious ones; they were all founded on the characters of their objects; but he had them. His nature was susceptible of special regards. He felt more delight in some of those he loved, than in others of them. Hence the groundlessness of the cavil against Christianity that it nowhere positively enjoins the practice of friendship; for it does more, it exhibits it

in the character and conduct of its Divine Founder. For *‘Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus,’* and this was so well known, that when Lazarus was ill, *‘his sisters sent unto Christ, saying, Lord, behold he whom you love is sick!’* And where shall we find a more beautiful manifestation of friendship than in the gospel narrative of Christ’s conduct when Lazarus was dead?

In entering upon this interesting history, I observe, that it is one of the peculiarities of our Savior’s discourses that he often takes occasion to graft general truths on special incidents, and makes comparatively small occurrences the vehicle of momentous instructions — in a few words bringing everlasting truth, in some important view of it, home to all times and circumstances. Standing on the spiritual center-point, he, without violence, entwined the minutest and least important circumstances of the present, with the loftiest eternal truths. Thus in the conduct of the two sisters before us, he places together the nothingness of all love and care for the body — in comparison with care for the soul and solicitude about that which is everlasting.

Bethany was a little village about two miles from Jerusalem, inhabited as a suburban retreat by many wealthy and respectable Jews. There dwelt Martha, who appears to have been the elder sister, and manager of the house; her sister Mary, and a brother named Lazarus. Whether the sisters were maidens or widows, we are not informed. All we know of the family is, (and it is the best and most worthy thing to be known of them,) that they were all united, not only by the ties of nature, but of grace, they were all one in Christ, partakers of *‘the common salvation,’* by a *‘like precious faith.’*

In the bosom of this little quiet and holy family it is probable Jesus occasionally found repose after his bodily fatigues and mental sufferings in the unbelieving city — for his humanity was susceptible on the one hand of both these, as indeed of all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and on the other of the relief afforded by rest and pious converse. *‘O happy house,’* says the pious Bishop Hall, *‘into which the Son of God given to set his foot! O blessed women, that had grace to be the hostesses to the Lord of Heaven and earth! How would I envy your felicity herein, if I did not see the same favor, though in a different way, if I be not lacking to myself, lying open to me!’* There are two ways of receiving Christ even in the present

day; in himself, by opening to him our hearts in faith; and in his members, by opening our hands in charity, and our doors in hospitality. And Christ will esteem himself better served in these ways, than he would were he again upon earth, by being physically entertained in our houses.

On one occasion when the Divine Visitant made his appearance by an unexpected visit, Martha, as the head of the household, the presiding spirit of the domestic economy, with an anxiety prompted by a loving and generous heart towards her illustrious guest — not altogether, perhaps, unmixed with a desire to display her skill in good housewifery — set about providing the best and fullest entertainment the kitchen could afford. We can see her in the fullness of her cares and the activity of her disposition, cheerfully and busily engaged in getting ready the supper. Eyeing everything with minute inspection and provident forethought, that nothing might be lacking, that was worthy either of her Lord or of herself. Generous, but mistaken woman, do you know so little of your Lord as to imagine he needs, or can be gratified with, all this care and provision for his sake? Had you never heard that he once said to his disciples when pressed to take food, *‘My food and my drink are to do the will of my Father in heaven?’*

Yet it was love, though mistaken love. I can fancy her saying to herself, *‘Can I ever do enough for him who deserves infinitely more than all I can do? Cheerfully will I give him the best I have, and the most I am able to perform. To give to Jesus, and labor for him, are my delight. He has my heart — and he shall have my hand, my feet, my house, my all.’*

And where all this while was Mary? Eagerly availing herself of the precious opportunity afforded by the presence of the Great Teacher, sitting at his feet to receive instruction. Such a season might never return; and she was determined to make the best of it by listening to every word the Savior said. Yet we are not to suppose that Martha had not been at the Master’s feet at all, listening to any part of Christ’s instructions, for it is said of Mary that *‘she also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard his word,’* evidently implying that some other had been there also, which no doubt was Martha; who, just then, like some of her sex, thinking of the house and its duties while in the sanctuary and service of God — recollected the provision which she supposed necessary, and somewhat abruptly rose up and retired from the presence of Christ to the scene of her domestic solicitude, leaving Mary to be feasted by Christ, while she goes to make a feast for him. *‘I know not,’*

says the good bishop already quoted, *‘how to censure the holy woman for an excess of care to welcome her Savior.’*

How apt are we to measure other people’s sense of propriety, and rightness of conduct, by our own — and to blame them for not exercising their religion and expressing their love and obedience to Christ in our mode! Mary perhaps wondered that Martha could on any ground whatever cease to listen to the instruction of Christ, while Martha wondered no less that Mary could sit still and be a learner when she ought to have been active as a provider. Martha would be ready to blame Mary for her lack of love to Jesus by not caring for his refreshment; while Mary would be apt to blame Martha for the lukewarmness of her regard, in not eagerly catching every word that fell from his lips. Let us learn that those may equally love Christ, who do not take exactly the same mode of showing it. Goodness is very ingenious, and while it is uniform in essentials, is multiform in circumstantialities.

After waiting some time and expecting Mary to come out and assist her, and often perhaps casting a silent but reproachful look at Mary, as the door stood ajar, and she remained still sitting at the feet of Jesus, Martha’s patience could endure it no longer, and in unseemly haste, ruffled disposition, and irreverent manner, she entered the room, and thus addressed herself to Christ. *‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to come and help me.’* It was a sad speech, which in her cooler moments she must have condemned. It was irreverent to Christ, for it accused him in an angry tone of neglect of her comfort. It was unkind to her sister, for it implied that she was lacking both in love to Christ and to herself. It was well she had one to deal with, who knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust. Why did she appeal first to Christ, and arraign her sister before him? Might she not have beckoned Mary away, or whispered in her ear? Or why when she saw her so devoutly engaged, did she not leave her to her rapt enjoyment, and say, *‘Happy sister, to be thus enjoying your Lord’s presence and instructions — would I could feel at liberty from these cares, and be at your side — but somebody must provide for the comfort of the Master, and this belongs to me.’*

*They are not always in the right who are most forward in their appeals to God.* Many are more anxious to get God on their side, than to be on the side of God. We must take heed lest we expect Christ to espouse our unjust

and groundless quarrels. I am afraid there was in Martha’s mind at this time a little of that envy and ill-will which is not infrequently felt by one person at witnessing the superior piety of another. The more eminent religion of one professor is often felt to be a reproach to those who are lukewarm and worldly, and is therefore really in some cases the cause of ill-will and dislike.

We do not find that Mary uttered a syllable in reply to this vehement accusation. I can fancy her lifting up her meek and invoking eye to the Savior, with a look which seemed to say, *‘O my Lord, I leave the vindication of my love to you and to my sister, in your hands.’* Gentle spirit! may we learn of you when we are complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips in silence, and to wait until the manifestation of our innocence comes from above. And how surely will Jesus undertake our cause, and bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon day. Christ when he might have retorted with keen and cutting severity, replied only with a kind but faithful answer, in which he first rebuked her, and then justified and commended her sister. The very repetition of her name is instructive, as showing how serious Christ was in this act of reproof — *‘Martha, Martha,’* as if he had said, *‘O woman, you are very wrong.’* Though the wrongdoing was out of love to him, he reproved it; for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens.

No faults, mistakes, or sins, are more dangerous than those which originate in misdirected love; and none should be more faithfully yet tenderly pointed out to those who commit them, as there are none which the deceitfulness of the human heart will be so backward to see and confess; none which it will be more ready to excuse and defend. The ill-directed love of friends is sometimes more mischievous than the open hostility of foes. Now observe the rebuke of Jesus. *‘You are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful; your mind is full of unnecessary anxiety about those domestic matters, and disturbed by restless agitation. And what you discover on the present occasion is too much your accustomed on others. There is one thing far more important and far more needful than all these matters, which by losing the opportunity I now afford you of receiving instruction, you are sadly neglecting, I mean the care and salvation of your immortal soul.’*

\*It has been contended by some, that by the one thing needful, our Lord intended to suggest to Martha, that instead of the abundance she was preparing, the many varieties of food she was about to place upon the table, one dish only was necessary. I will not deny that this might seem to harmonize with the occasion — much less will I deny, that it would furnish on the part of our Lord, a perpetual and merited rebuke to unnecessary and sinful care, trouble, and expense on the part of professing Christians, to provide costly entertainments for their friends. Good John Newton has some admirable remarks on the subject of entertainments given to Ministers. *‘Some of us would be better pleased, whatever kindness our friends design to show us, to be treated less sumptuously, and in a way more conformable to the simplicity of our Christian profession. We would not wish to be considered as avowed epicures, who cannot dine well without a variety of delicacies; and if we could suppose that such cost and variety were designed to remind us how much better we fare abroad than at home, we might think it rather an insult than a compliment.’* The criticism however which would make our Lord refer to such things is obviously a false one — for as Mary’s conduct is opposed to that of Martha’s, that which she chose, the good part, must be the same as the one thing needful; and if the one thing needful means one dish, Mary’s good part must also be one dish, which she chose or provided, rather than the many which her sister was intent upon. But the suggestion of such a meaning is trifling with Scripture rather than explaining it.

Having rebuked Martha, our Lord next vindicates her sister, whom she had so severely and unmeritedly reproached. *‘Mary has chosen that good part which cannot be taken from her.’* By the good part we are to understand her sitting at Christ’s feet to hear his words, rather than bustling about domestic affairs. That was the good part for the moment, but I believe our Lord meant to extend his meaning in what he said to each of the sisters, to their habitual character and conduct; and as he intended when he said to Martha, that she was too anxious and too much troubled about many things — to describe her usual temperament. So when he said that Mary had chosen the good part, he designed to describe her uniform attention to the high and sacred concern of religion, and to represent her as one who had given herself to the pursuit of eternal salvation. This was matter of choice, and neither of compulsion nor of unintelligent and heartless formality. She voluntarily took up a life of piety — and in doing this had secured an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away. I reserve for

the conclusion of the chapter some remarks on this description of true piety.

How difficult it is to inflict reproof and not excite anger — and to bestow deserved praise without doing mischief by inflating vanity! No such injury was done in this case. The effect, both of the censure and of the praise, appears to have been beneficial; for in a subsequent chapter of this scriptural history, to which we shall presently have occasion to refer, we find the two sisters as united in affection as ever, and Martha considerably improved.

I shall now attempt an analysis and discriminating delineation of the CHARACTER of these two sisters. I have already remarked that they were in one, and that the most important, feature alike — they were both pious women, they both loved Christ. And what is religion without love to the Savior? In making the inquiry after true piety, fix your attention, concentrate your thoughts, terminate your researches, settle your conclusions, on this simple but comprehensive idea — it is a scriptural, supreme, practical, grateful love to Christ. This Martha, as we have already asserted, undoubtedly possessed, as well as Mary. She, too, notwithstanding her failings, could have returned the same answer as did Peter, *‘Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.’* Underneath the superficial earthliness of that anxious and troubled mind, there burnt a sacred fire of strong attachment to the Savior.

With this sameness of general character, there were circumstantial differences. Just as we have seen two flowers springing from the same root, possessing the same general characteristics, yet one bending towards the earth while the other stands erect and opens its petals more expansively to the sun. Martha and Mary are the exemplars of the peculiarities of two distinct varieties of character and religious tendencies. One the type of a naturally energetic — the other of a quiescent mind. One exhibiting excellence in action — the other in repose. One a life busily devoted to externals — the other careful only for her own religious instruction, as the one thing needful. In the one we see the contemplative Christian musing and feeding in silence upon holy thoughts, and looking up in rapt meditation into heaven — in the other we see the practical Christian, now lavishing her indefatigable cares upon a brother whom she loves, and now ministering in ordinary life to a Savior whom she adores; invoking him in the bitterness of grief, and blessing him in the joy of deliverance. In one,

too much of the busy, careful, anxious housewife — in the other, perhaps too much of the contemplative quiescent devotee.

You cannot mistake all this — it is patent to every reader. There was much that was good and useful in Martha's character. She possessed great quickness, alertness, and energy, with practical ability and good sense, which qualified her both for taking a lead herself and for giving an impulse to others; so that she was well fitted for going through with any work to be done, and was always awake to the common calls and the common cares of the ordinary domestic routine of life. And more than this, she was well prepared to work her own way, and to help others, in those emergencies of trouble and of difficulty which not infrequently occur in the changeful scene of human existence. It is a blessed temperament, my young friends, to have that noble hardihood, untiring energy, and undaunted boldness of character, which can grapple with difficulty, surmount obstacles, and instead of being crushed by misfortune, can rise triumphant above it.

But such a temperament has its dangers, and Martha fell into them. She was impetuous, irritable, intolerant, and somewhat rude. She was angry that others were not as energetic as herself, a common fault with people of such a turn of mind. She could not make allowance for differences of disposition. She was however an excellent woman after all.

Mary was characterized by more depth of thought, more reflection, more sensibility. She was more easily engrossed by an affecting scene or any spiritual subject; more alive at any time to one single profound impression, and apt to be abstracted from other concerns.

We see the characteristics of these two sisters brought out in an affecting scene in their after history, to which I will now advert, and for the particulars of which I refer you to the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the gospel by John. Sickness in an alarming form entered this little family at Bethany, and arrested Lazarus. Jesus was at that time in Bethabara, about thirty miles from Bethany. In the agony of their grief the sisters dispatched a messenger to him, under the supposition that he would come and restore their brother to health. Lazarus, it would seem, expired soon after the messenger left. On receiving the information, Christ, who knew all about the matter, and also what he would do, lingered where he was, two whole days in order that the miracle which he was about to work, might, from the

circumstance of the longer continuance of death, be the more signal and convincing. At length he set out for Bethany. Observe in this act his usual mercy, to travel on foot thirty miles to restore a dead man. How delightful is it thus to trace the Savior in his journeys, justifying the description which is given of him, as one, '*who ever went about doing good.*'

Martha was the first to receive information of his approach on this occasion to Bethany, either because as the manager of the house the news was first conveyed to her, or because from her bustling and active disposition she was most likely to hear of it. And now, acting according to her character, she lost not a moment, but immediately hastened forth to meet her Lord, to render him the offices of courtesy and respect, to inform him of the calamity that had befallen them, to pour out to him the sorrows of her heart, and to receive the expressions of his sympathy. She was thus, as ever, ready to be up and doing.

But Mary, either not being informed of the coming of Jesus, or absorbed in a deeper grief, sat still in the house and waited for the entrance of the Comforter. This intensity of sorrow did not escape the notice of the Jews — hence when at length she arose at the call of her sister to go forth and meet her Lord, they said, '*She is going unto the grave to weep there.*' They said this from a knowledge of her character, for they made no such remark on Martha when she went forth. She might be bent on other errands. Mary could go, only to weep.

It is well observed by Candlish, in his discourse on this subject —

*'In different circumstances the same natural temperament may be either an advantage or a snare. Martha was never so much occupied in the emotion of one subject or scene, as not to be on the alert and ready for the call to another. This was a disadvantage to her when she was so hurried that she could not withdraw herself to wait upon the Word of Life. It is an advantage to her now, that she can, with comparative ease, shake off her depression, and hasten of her own accord to meet her Lord. The same profound feeling, again, which made Mary the most attentive listener before, makes her the most helpless sufferer now — and disposes her almost to nurse her grief, until Jesus, her best Comforter, sends specially and emphatically to rouse her. Nor is it an insignificant circumstance*

*that it is the ever-active Martha who carries to her more downcast sister, the awakening message; so ought sisters in Christ to minister to one another, and so may the very difference of their characters make them mutually the more helpful.'*

The two sisters both deeply affected with a sense of their loss, meet their Lord, and exhibit in this interview the same difference of character as pervades their whole history. Martha's grief is not so overwhelming as to prevent her utterance; she is calm, cool, and sufficiently collected to enter into argument. She can talk of her sorrow, can refer to her loss, can express her faith, and even modestly suggest to Christ, in a delicate and covert manner — the possibility of his restoring her brother. It was different with Mary. In piety she is of course equal to her sister, but in composure and serenity she is inferior. Her gentle spirit is paralyzed with grief. All she can do is to cast herself prostrate at the feet of Christ, all she can say, is to sob out, *'Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died!'*

We cannot pass over one more characteristic, exquisitely delicate and true to nature. Jesus, having asked where Lazarus had been laid, is conducted to the grave, which was a cave with a stone upon it, and he gives orders to take away the stone. It was not Mary who offered the objection founded on the commencement of decay, she is silent still in the unutterable agony of her grief, and the deep reverence of her soul before the Lord. But Martha's marked officiousness makes her forward when it might have been more befitting to be silent and to stand in awe.

Candlish, with nice and just discrimination, points out the wise and considerate manner, which will be observed by every judicious critical reader of the narrative, in which Christ adapts his behavior towards the two sisters. Martha's distress was of such a nature that it admitted of discussion and discourse. Jesus accordingly spoke to her and led her to speak to him, and made to her, as suited her circumstances, some of his most sublime communications touching the resurrection of the body and the life of the soul. While to Mary, who is wrapped in such deep grief, he shows his sympathy in a different way. He is much more profoundly moved. He does not reply to her in words, for her words are few. Sorrow has choked her utterance and over-mastered her soul. But the sight of one so dear to him, lying in such helpless grief at his feet, is an appeal to him far stronger than any supplication. And his own responsive sigh is an answer more

comforting than any promise. *'When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.'* And when he had asked of the bystanders, where they had laid him, and received the reply, *'Come and see,'* like Joseph, *'he could no longer refrain himself,' 'Jesus wept.'*

O most blessed mourner, with whose tears your Savior mingles his own! O sympathy most unparalleled! To each of the two stricken and afflicted ones, our Lord addressed the very consolation that was most congenial. With Martha, Jesus discoursed and reasoned — with Mary, *'Jesus wept.'* It is thus he who knows our frame adapts the communications of his grace, as our temperament and circumstances most need them.

Before we leave this scene of domestic grief, and pass to another incident in the history of Martha and Mary, shall we not turn aside to see this great sight exhibited in the conduct of Jesus? I know I am giving the history of Martha and Mary, but was not Christ so blended with it as to form a part of it, and to constitute the glory of it? Shall I take you to the grave of Lazarus, point you to the mourning sisters, and omit to notice the weeping Savior? Shall I pass over that short but wondrous verse, which tells us with such sublime simplicity, Jesus wept? Every view of Christ is glorious; whether reigning upon his throne in the glory he had with the Father before the world was; or agonizing in the garden, when he sweat as it were great drops of blood; or hanging upon the cross the great sacrifice for sin; or rising from the grave with the keys of death and of Hades at his belt; or ascending to his glory amid the retinue and acclamations of angels. Now all these manifestations produce feelings of awe and wonder.

But oh, his weeping at the grave of Lazarus! The Son of God in tears, not as on the Mount of Olivet, when he signed the death-warrant of Jerusalem, and looked onward from the destruction of the guilty city, to the torments of eternity, of which its fires and plagues were a dark type. No! his tears on this occasion were those of human tenderness, the exquisite sympathy of his noble and perfect manhood with the afflictions of those whom he loved. How many lessons are taught us by those tears. Have they not vindicated and defended humanity from the insults and injuries of stoicism, and made *'chastened sorrow'* one of its genuine workings? Have they not consecrated sympathy as one of the virtues of humanity? Have they not made tenderness the adornment of greatness? Have they not raised

friendship to the rank of a Christian excellence? Have they not proved that he has not the mind of Christ, who knows not how to weep for the woes of our nature? Jesus wept. There were critics in ancient times who with ruthless fingers cancelled this verse, as thinking it beneath the dignity of Jesus to weep. Barbarian critics! stoical scholars! you would have robbed the Scriptures of one of their brightest gems, and despoiled the character of the Savior of one of its richest beauties.

But now after this graceful episode, let us pass on to one more scene in the history of this happy, holy family. About four months after the resurrection of Lazarus, a supper was given to our Lord and his disciples (most likely on account of the resurrection of Lazarus, who with his sisters were perhaps relations of the host), by a man named Simon, who had been a leper, and had in all probability been healed by Christ. At this supper Lazarus and Martha and Mary were present. Here also we find the contrast existing between the characters of the two sisters, maintained with unbroken continuity and unvarying uniformity. Martha, ever active, ever generously attentive to the comforts of others, ever to be found where energy is required, '*served*.' She had assisted in the preparation, and now busied herself in waiting upon the guests, and especially upon the most distinguished of them all, her Lord and Master whom she loved. Not so with Mary; in that assembly all were forgotten by her but one, on whom she gazed long with the silent rapture of love and devotion, waiting and watching for her opportunity to give him a meditated, practical, and personal expression of her adoring gratitude and affection.

While, according to the custom of the times, he was reclining at table on his couch (not sitting upright as we do on chairs), she stole behind him, and unrestrained by the presence of the guests, brought an alabaster box of spikenard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus and then wiped his feet with her hair. She gave him her most costly article, and employed for him the most ornamental part of her person. For who that loves Christ will not give him the richest and best of their possessions? Was not this Mary all over? Sensibility, gratitude, affection? Does it not harmonize with the listener and mourner whom we have already witnessed?

From one of the company, I mean the traitor who sold his master for thirty pieces of silver, this act of pious affection and liberality drew forth a censure, and under a hypocritical profession of concern for the poor, he

expressed his regret that the precious ointment had not been sold and given to the fund for charity. Ah, how often has a plea of charity served as a cloak for covetousness! True it is, as a general principle, that great expense in external magnificence, even when designed to honor Christ, would most commonly be better employed in feeding and clothing his members; but there are some extraordinary occasions when some sort of profusion is not to be blamed. And everything which is given to Christ is acceptable to him when, as in this case, it is love that gives it. Happy is the person who knows like Mary to make that an offering and expression of love to the Savior, which in her days of worldliness and folly she has offered at the shrine of vanity.

Jesus becomes her vindicator against the cavils of Judas, and pronounced a eulogy which the loftiest monarch on earth might covet to receive, '*She has done what she could*.' Of how few can this be said — and yet what lower rule of conduct ought any of us to prescribe for himself than this? Is less than what we can do for Christ, enough to do for him? Have you ever weighed in seriousness of mind this noble testimony, '*She has done what she could*.' What can you do for Christ? What have you done? What ought you to do? What will you do? Be Mary's memorial yours. And to what renown did it raise her? '*Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her*.' How literally has this been fulfilled. Wherever the Bible has gone, in one hundred and fifty languages, this has been published to the world. And all nations will know of Mary's alabaster box of ointment consecrated to Jesus, and will venerate her memory for this act of pious zeal.

The world is a poor judge in matters relating to God; and God takes delight in honoring those actions, done in love to him, which the world ridicules. Happy are those who are content with the approbation of him who sees the heart. The contradictions and groundless censures of men pass away like the clouds that occasionally veil the sun; but the good actions which are the subject of their envy or their calumny, will remain forever, splendid as the great luminary itself. Good works embalm the memory with an odor more precious and lasting than the perfume of Mary's spikenard.

Reference has been made to this incident, and especially to the praise bestowed by our Lord upon Mary, to prove that the contemplative life is

more acceptable in the sight of God than the active life. It is this mistaken notion which led to the establishment of conventional institutions; a system which is no less opposed to the dictates of revelation than it is to the impulses of nature and the welfare of society; which does violence to humanity in order to do honor to Christianity; which stifles all the instinctive yearnings of the heart under the pretext of giving better opportunity for the exercises of devotion; and which, as a natural and necessary consequence, has deposited a muddy soil of immorality upon the surface of Christendom, where the fruits of righteousness cannot grow, though the weeds of superstition may flourish with a dense luxuriance. The supposition that superior sanctity attaches to celibacy, on the one hand, is one of the supports on which the whole Papal system rests, and on the other has been the cause of more abomination in the world than any other single opinion claiming to have a religious sanction. That the history before us will furnish no support to this system is evident. Mary, neither at the time spoken of was a nun, nor did she ever become such. Hers was a piety that blended with, and sanctified, the duties of social life. Whatever was her devotional taste and disposition, it did not drive her from her home, nor cut the ties of her relationships. The design of our Lord's language is not so much to form a comparison between two courses of life, so separate and distinct as not to allow of the mixture of one with the other — as to administer a rebuke to a person who pursuing one course had too much neglected the other. Not to prevent Mary from attending at all to temporal matters — but to engage Martha to less anxiety about them, and to a stricter regard to things unseen and eternal.

And now, my young friends, what in the review of this beautiful little narrative do I recommend? Which of the two characters do I enjoin you to imitate? I answer, all that was excellent in both — without the imperfections of either. Martha's household diligence, without her excessive anxiety, united with Mary's fervent devotion, without her somewhat excessive sensibility.

So far as it could be said of Martha, '*She looked well to the ways of her household,*' let my female friends imitate her due attention to home duties, her cleverness, her diligence, her dispatch, her generous attention to the comfort of her guests, especially those who represent their Lord. Let them be skilled in all the important functions of good housewifery. Let them, if wives, know how to make home comfortable for their husbands; if mothers,

for their children; and if widely connected, for their friends. Hospitality is a virtue which should never be lacking in a female heart. She who will not seek to please her husband's friends, but receives them with a frown, will soon learn to leave off pleasing him, and make their home unhappy for all parties. But then, let all this be without anxiousness, and with that graceful and pleasant ease, which will be ensured by order, method, punctuality, and efficiency.

There are various kinds of slavery in the world, and many classes of victims of this cruel bondage. There is among others, the domestic slave, whose tyrant is her husband, and the scene of her bondage, her home. His is very stingy, and allows her scanty supplies for necessities. His selfishness is so engrossing and exacting, that his demands for his own personal ease and indulgence are incessant, and leave her no time for the consideration of her own comfort — and withal, his disposition is so bad, that all her diligence to please are unavailing to give him satisfaction, and to avert the sallies of his irritability, discontent, and complaints. When such a man protests against Negro-slavery, let him begin the work of emancipation at home, by raising the oppressed woman he holds in bondage there, from the condition of a drudge, into the station of a wife. How can she help being anxious and troubled about many things?

But then there are cases, not a few, in which the *slavery is self-imposed*. The bondage comes from the wife herself, from which the husband would gladly release her, but she will not let him. Some are *slaves to neatness*, and make their fidgety anxiety about this matter a misery to themselves and all around them. Others are *slaves to fashion*, and are always anxious and troubled about elegance and refinement. Others are *slaves to domestic display, parties and amusements*, and are always full of anxiety about making a splendid appearance. Others are *slaves to frugality*, and are ever vexing themselves to economize. In these ways women will torment themselves and fill their minds with unnecessary cares and self-imposed troubles. To all such we say, '*Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.*' With Martha's better qualities, her domestic cleverness and diligence — unite the fervent piety of Mary.

Will you be satisfied with that excellence which fits you only to fill up your place in a habitation from which you may be called away any hour? Be as diligent, I entreat you, in business, as Martha was — but be also as



fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, as Mary was. Seek to unite all the holy virtues of the eminent saint — with all the household excellences of the good wife, mother, and manager. Be all you should be in your own house — and all you ought to be in the house of God. What your husbands, when you have them, will desire and expect, is to see you at your post of duty in the family. Meet their desires and fulfill these expectations. You ought — you must! What Christ desires and expects, is to see you sitting at his feet and hearing his word. Meet these desires and expectations also. You ought — you must!

Study the following portrait of a good wife, a cultivated mind, and a sincere Christian, drawn by the pen of Jane Taylor.

*‘And she whose nobler course is seen to shine  
At once with human knowledge and divine;  
Who mental culture, and domestic rites,  
In close and graceful amity unites.  
Striving to keep them in their proper place,  
Not interfering with her heavenly race;  
Whose constant aim it is, and fervent prayer,  
On earthly ground to breathe celestial air.’*

O! you too anxious and careful housewives, lessen your solicitude. *‘Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God.’* The spirit and influence of vital piety will soften the cares of domestic life, and alleviate its sorrows, where they exist, and inspire an alacrity which will make you go cheerfully about the business of the family — while well regulated attention to domestic duties, so far from unfitting you for the exercise of devotion, will furnish the subjects of your prayers, and prompt the approaches of your soul to God.

And now, in conclusion, let me exhibit to you *the description of true religion*, as set forth in the language of Christ to Martha. It is INDISPENSABLE, *‘One thing is needful.’* Yes, *saving religion* is indeed needful. Mark the restriction and emphasis, ONE thing — and it deserves this emphasis. It is a matter of universal concern; necessary for all alike; for the rich and the poor; for the young and the old; for male and female. Some things are necessary for one person, but not for another — saving religion is necessary for all alike. It is in itself a matter of the highest importance,

of infinite consequence, compared with which all the most valuable objects of time and sense are but as the small dust of the balance! Saving religion will promote every other lawful and valuable interest on earth. It has been pronounced indispensable by those who are most capable of giving an opinion. God has declared it to be needful, by giving his only-begotten Son to die for it upon the cross. Jesus Christ has declared it to be needful, by enduring the agonies of the cross to obtain it. Angels have pronounced it needful by their solicitude for the salvation of men. Apostles, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and ministers have given their emphatic testimony to its necessity by their labors, prayers, tears, and blood. Your own judgment, in the cooler moments of reflection, declares its necessity; so does your conscience when you are listening to sermons, or suffering affliction — so does your heart, when the world stands revealed before you in its vanity, emptiness, and deceit.

Saving religion is needful now in youth to be your guide; it will be no less so as your comforter amid the vicissitudes of life; your prop under the infirmities of old age — your living hope amid the agonies of dying hours; your defense in the dreadful day of judgment; and your preparation for the felicities of heaven. Must not that which alone can do this, be indispensable, and be in fact the one thing needful?

Dwell, I beseech you, upon this representation. If saving religion were as miserable and as melancholy as your mistaken notions of it represent, yet it is *needful*. It is not what you may not have, and yet do well without it — a superfluity, but not a necessary. No! It is needful. Nothing else can be substituted for it, or in the smallest degree compensate for the lack of it. In the absence of saving religion, you lack the most necessary thing in the universe — you are really poor — even amid abounding wealth.

Saving religion is the only thing that is indispensable. There are many other things which are desirable, valuable, pleasurable, and may be lawfully pursued; but they are not indispensable. Saving religion is absolutely so to secure solid happiness here and eternal felicity hereafter. O, young people, call in your vagrant thoughts, your discursive inquiries, your divided and scattered activities, and concentrate them upon this one thing. Settle it with yourselves, that whatever else you may not have, you must have saving faith. It is well at the outset of life to be informed, by an authority which is infallible, what is most necessary for the pilgrim upon earth. Let me

entreat you to remember your own interest in it; it is necessary for you, whose eye shall read this page. Do therefore inquire, solemnly and seriously enquire, into your own conduct in reference to it. Say to yourselves, *‘Have I thought seriously about saving religion? Have I seen the importance of it? Has it lain with a due and an abiding weight upon my mind? Has it brought me in penitence, prayer, and faith, to Christ as my Savior? Am I acting in life as if I considered saving religion the one thing needful. Am I striving or willing to make everything subordinate to it, my interests, my tastes, my pleasures, my passions?’*

And then how TRANSCENDENTLY EXCELLENT is true religion. It is the *‘good part which shall never be taken from us.’* Excellent it is, in every view we can take of it, for it is the reception of the first truth, and the enjoyment of the chief good. It makes us good — for it makes us like God; and brings good to us — for it leads us to enjoy God. It was the bliss of Adam in Paradise, and is the happiness of the spirits made perfect in heaven. It is the beginning of heaven upon earth, and will be the consummation of heaven when we have left earth. It is far better than knowledge, wealth, fame, or pleasure — for it will stand by us when all these things leave us!

Yes, it is, *‘the good part, which can never be taken from us.’* Neither force nor fraud can deprive us of this. It is above the vicissitudes of life, and unaffected by the changes of fortune. Oh, it is glorious to think of our possessing something that bids defiance to all the assaults of men or demons! Go where you will — saving religion will go with you. It will be as inseparable from you. How much then is included in that precious declaration, *‘The good part which cannot be taken from you,’* which shall remain with you, in you, for you — when friends have left you — health has left you — fortune has left you — a portion all-sufficient, inalienable, eternal!

True religion is a VOLUNTARY thing, *‘Mary has chosen that good part which cannot be taken from her.’* It is not the external compulsion of authority, nor the internal compulsion of fear — but the free choice of love. It is not mere blind, unintelligent ritual — an unmeaning, heartless round of ceremonies, performed without motive or design. No, it is the free-will offering of the soul to God, who says, *‘Give me your heart!’* and to whom the soul replies, *‘I give myself to you!’* Where there is no choice, there is no

religion. Hence the language of Moses to the children of Israel, *‘I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing — therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.’* So it is with you at this moment.

There on the one hand is *true religion* with all its duties and its privileges — its present enjoyments and its future eternal happiness, this is life, the life of the soul now, and eternal life hereafter. There on the other hand is *ungodliness*, with all its sins and sorrows here, and its unutterable and eternal miseries hereafter. There are you so fearfully and wonderfully placed between the two. And I am (O, solemn and momentous position!) urging you by every motive that can appeal to your reason, your heart, your conscience, and even your self-love — to urge you to choose life. You must make your choice. You cannot evade the choice. One or the other must be yours. Were you to attempt neutrality, it is impossible. Those that do not choose life, are considered by God as choosing death.

By what witnesses are you surrounded in this crisis of your being! What spectators are looking on upon this eventful scene of your history! *Parents* are waiting, watching, and praying for your decision on the side of eternal life. With silent, breathless earnestness, they are agonizing for your soul and her destiny. *Ministers* are fixing their minds intently upon your situation, and in yearning anxiety for your welfare are saying, *‘O that they may choose the good part which can never be taken from them.’* *Angels* with benevolence hover over you, ready to commence their benevolent activities, and become as ministering spirits to your salvation. *Devils* with malignity are collecting to rejoice, with such delight as demons can experience, in your choice of death. *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* are waiting, witnessing, and ready to assist your election. Yes, such value is there attaching to one human soul; with such importance is its decision for the choice or refusal of religion invested — that heaven, earth, and hell are in some measure moved by the scene of its being called to choose between life and death, and thus three worlds are interested in the outcome. Make then your choice. Pause, ponder, and pray; it is a choice which eternity will confirm to your unutterable torment — or to your ineffable felicity. Almighty God, direct their choice!

## TO YOUNG MOTHERS

*'I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.'*  
- 2 Timothy 1:5

*'Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be keepers at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.'*  
- Titus 2:3-5

What associations with all that is lovely are connected with that blissful word, a mother! To that sound the tenderest emotions of the human heart — whether in the bosom of the savage or the sage, wake up. The beauty of that term is seen, and its power felt, alike by the prince and the peasant — the rustic and the philosopher. It is one of the words which infant lips are first taught to lisp — and the charm of which the infant heart is first to feel. It is a note to the music of which it is difficult to say whose soul most responsively vibrates — that of the parent or the child. Humanity, however semi-brutalized by oppression, by ignorance, or even by vice, has rarely been sunk so low as to have the last spark of maternal love extinguished — or the last sensibility of this kind crushed out of it.

This strength of woman's love to her child must be turned to good account, and be directed in its exercises to the best and most useful purposes. There is this difference, and it is a momentous one, between the maternal care of the animals and that of woman; in animals it goes no further than provision and protection — training forms no part of it. The same power which endowed the beasts with the habits which belong to its nature, endows also its offspring. The latter, without any pains bestowed on its education, or any solicitude cherished for its welfare, will learn the lessons of its existence by the *instincts of nature*, and be capable of rising to its specific perfection, unaided either by parent or teacher. Not so the young of the human species; they also require *provision* and *protection*.

But more than this they need *instruction*. And who must be their instructor? First of all, and chief of all — their mother.

But before we reason and descant upon the subject of a mother's duties, let us look at facts. It is universally admitted that scarcely any great man has appeared in our world who did not owe much, if not most, in the formation of his character — to his mother's influence. In a very useful little volume, by Jabez Burns, entitled '*The Mothers of the Wise and Good*,' there is a series of biographical memorials of eminent sons of pious and judicious mothers, amounting to about fifty, among whom are included Alfred the Great, Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Sir William Jones, and George Washington, among the illustrious of this world. While Augustine, Jonathan Edwards, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Dwight, Mr. Newton, Mr. Cecil, Leigh Richmond, and many other eminent Christians — all of them blessed with pious or eminently judicious mothers, to whom they owed their eminence in the church or in the world.

At a pastoral conference, held not long since, at which about one hundred and twenty American clergymen, united in the bonds of a common faith, were assembled, each was invited to state the human instrumentality to which, under the Divine blessing, he attributed his conversion. How many of these, think you, gave the honor of it to their mother? Of one hundred and twenty — more than one hundred! Here then are facts, which are only selected from myriads of others, to prove a mother's power, and to demonstrate at the same time her responsibility. But how shall we account for this? What gives her this influence? What is the secret of her power? Several things.

First, there is no doubt THE ORDINANCE OF GOD. He who created us, and formed the ties of social life, and who gave all the sweet influences and tender susceptibilities of our various relationships, appointed that a mother's power over the soul of her child should be thus powerful. It is God's ordinance, and the woman who forgets or neglects this, is disobedient to a Divine institute. God has made the child to be peculiarly susceptible of the mother's power over his mind and heart.

Then comes A MOTHER'S LOVE, which is stronger, at any rate more tender, than a father's. There is more of intuitiveness, if not of reason, in her affection. She has had more to do with the physical being of her child,

having borne him in her womb, and fed him from her bosom, and watched him in his cradle — all this naturally and necessarily generates a feeling which nothing else can produce. Now love is the great motive-power in, and for, human conduct. ‘*I drew them,*’ said God, ‘*with cords of a man, with bands of love.*’ Here is the true philosophy of both man’s *natural constitution* and of *evangelical religion*. Human nature is made to be moved and governed by love — to be drawn with the cords of affection, rather than to be dragged with the chains of severity.

And woman’s heart is made to love! Love is exerted more gently, sweetly, and constrainingly upon her child, by her than by the other sex. It makes her more patient, and more ingenious, and therefore, more influential. Her words are more soft, her smile more winning, her frown more commanding, because less alarming and repulsive. The little floweret she has to nurture, opens its petals more readily to the mild beams of her countenance. Hence, to repeat an expression of Monod, already quoted, ‘*The greatest moral power in the world is that which a mother exercises over her young child.*’ Nor is there much exaggeration in that other expression, ‘*She who rocks the cradle — rules the world.*’ An expression, the truth of which will appear to be founded on the next particular.

*The mother has most to do with the character, while yet in the flexible state in which it receives its shape.* The earliest exercises of thought, emotion, will, and conscience, are all carried on under her eye. She has to do not only with the body in its infancy, but with the soul in its childhood. Both mind and heart are in her hands at that period, when they take their first start for good or for evil. The children learn to lisp their first words, and to form their first ideas, under her teaching. They are almost always in her company, and are insensibly to themselves and imperceptibly to her, receiving a right or wrong bias from her! She is the first ‘*model of character*’ they witness — the first exhibitions of right and wrong in practice are what they see in her. They are the constant observers of the *passions*, the *graces*, the *virtues*, and the *faults* — which are shown in her *words*, *disposition*, and *actions*. She is therefore unconsciously to herself educating them, not only by designed teaching — but by all she does or says in their presence!

Children are *imitative creatures*. During their early years, imitation is the regent of the soul, and they who are least swayed by ‘*reason*,’ are most

governed by ‘*example*.’ Learning to talk is the effect of imitation — not intuition. And as children so early and so insensibly learn to repeat *sounds*, so may they also learn to copy *actions* and *habits*. This applies to the mother in a fuller sense than it does to the father of course, just because she is more constantly with the children in the early stages of their existence. It is therefore of immense importance that everyone who sustains this relation should have an accurate idea of her own great power over her children. She should be deeply and duly impressed with the *potency of her influence*.

This has peculiar force in reference to the mothers of the middle class, and still more to those of the working classes. In the upper circles of society, the task of educating the infant, is usually is entrusted upon servants. The nursery is not much, it is to be feared, the resort of many titled or wealthy mothers. Aristocratic habits, in some cases, can scarcely be made to square with maternal ones. Happy are the women who are not lifted by rank or wealth out of the circle of those tender and constant diligences which an infant family requires — out of whose hand ‘*fashionable etiquette*,’ or ‘*luxurious indolence*,’ has not taken her responsibility to train her young children.

Mothers then should be thoroughly acquainted with the work that is allotted to them. I speak not of the *physical* training of the children, that is not my department; nor primarily of their *intellectual* culture — but of their *social, moral, and spiritual education*. A mother’s object and duty, are the formation of character. She has not merely to communicate *knowledge* — but *habits*. Her especial department is to *cultivate the heart* — and to *regulate the life*. Her aim must be not only what her children are to *know*, but what they are to *be* and *do*. She is to look at them as the future members of society, and heads of families of their own — but above all as probationers for eternity! This, I repeat, must be taken up as her primary work — *the formation of character for both worlds!*

Teacher and tutors will most probably be employed in the future intellectual training — but a mother’s part from infancy, is to form habits of godly character.

Many have no other idea of education than the communication of knowledge. Much has been said of late years on the distinction between

*instruction* and *education*. They are by no means synonymous. The etymology of the two words is worth considering. To ‘*instruct*,’ is derived from a Latin word, which signifies ‘*to put on*,’ or ‘*in*.’ To instruct is therefore simply to put knowledge into the mind. The word ‘*educate*,’ comes also from a Latin word, which signifies ‘*to lead*,’ or ‘*draw forth*.’ To educate, therefore, means to draw out the faculties of the soul, to call into exercise and invigorate its intellectual and moral powers. Both together constitute the duty of those who have to form the character. Ideas must be poured in, and the recipient must be taught what to do with them.

We hear much said about ‘*educating children for worldly accomplishments*,’ which may be well enough in their place and in their measure, but they are only subordinate to something higher and better. They are not the whole of education, nor even the best part of it. They are only the polish of the surface — there should be solid gold for the substance. The intellectual part of our nature may be considered as merely the casket — the moral part as the jewel. Yet many leave the diamond uncut and unpolished, while they are careful to load its case with tinsel!

A mother should look upon her offspring with the idea, ‘*That child has to live in two worlds, and to act a part in both; and it is my duty to begin his education for both, and to lay in infancy the foundation of his character — and happiness for time and eternity too. What ought to be my qualifications, and my diligence, for such a task?*’ Ah, what? Deep thoughtfulness certainly on the momentous nature of your charge. It is a awesome responsibility to be a parent, especially a mother, and to have the training of men and women — both for time and for eternity! A distinguished philosopher has said that ‘*all the world is but the pupil and disciple of female influence!*’

Every mother, therefore, has, so far as her individual influence goes, the world for her scholar. O woman! your child’s welfare for all time and all eternity too, depends much upon your conduct towards him during the period he is under your influence in the first years of his being. To you is committed the care of the infant’s *body* — the healthfulness, the vigor, and comfort of which for all his future existence upon earth depend much upon you. What would be your feelings of poignant remorse, if by any neglect of yours, if by a fall, or an accident, the result of your carelessness, the poor babe was injured in his spine, or distorted in his limbs! Oh! to see that

young cripple injured for life in bodily comfort — ever presenting to you the sad memorials of your guilty neglect!

Yet what is this to the sadder spectacle of a deformed and crippled *soul* — a character distorted into crooked and frightful shapes, and to have the tormenting reflection, that this was the result of your neglect!

The poor child in the former case may have his compensation in all the sweet influences and consolations of saving faith — and the distressed mother may assuage the anguish of remorse by the thought that her neglect may have been among the all things that worked together for good to her son — but where in the latter case is consolation to be obtained, or who can wonder that such a Rachel mourning over her lost child, lost through her neglect, refuses to be comforted?

*Qualify yourself for maternal duties above all things by sincere and eminent piety.* A mother should never forget that those little engaging creatures which play about the room so gaily and so innocently, with all the unconsciousness of childhood, are young immortals — beings destined to eternity — creatures placed on earth on probation for heaven — and that much will depend upon her, whether the everlasting ages shall be spent by them in torment or in bliss! This is an overwhelming idea! One would almost think that solicitude about this matter would be so overpowering as to extinguish parental delight. But a mother cannot look at the babe that is feeding at her bosom, and smiling sweetly in her face — as if it meant the thanks it had not yet learned to speak; or watch his slumbers in his cradle, breathing as softly as if he lived without breathing at all; and at the same time feel her soul shiver and shudder in the dark shadow cast over her spirit by such a thought as ‘*Oh, would you live to be a profligate in this world — and a fiend in the eternal world!*’

Instead of a reflection so harrowing to every maternal feeling, she exults in the hope that the dear babe will be a holy, useful, happy Christian on earth — and then a glorified immortal in heaven. Such reflections ought to be sometimes in the mind of every parent. All should realize the sublime idea that their houses are the schools for eternity; their children the scholars; themselves the teachers; and evangelical religion the lesson. Yes, with every infant born into the family comes the injunction from God, ‘*Take this child and bring it up for Me!*’ God sent this child into the world, to be

trained up in the way he should go — that is in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those parents who neglect the religious education of their children, whatever else they may impart, are more guilty than Herod! He slew the children of others — they slay their own children! He slew only the body — they slay the soul! He slew them by hired assassins — they slay their children themselves! We shudder at the cruelties of those who sacrificed their babes to Moloch; but how much more dreadful an immolation do they practice, who offer up their sons and daughters to Satan, by neglecting the education of their souls, and leaving them to grow up in ignorance of God and their eternal destiny!

But *can* any one, *will* any one, teach, or teach *effectually* — that religion which she does not *feel* and *practice, herself*? Therefore I say a mother's heart must be deeply imbued with piety, if she would teach it to her children. Without this, can she have the *will to teach*, the *heart to pray*, the *right to hope*? Mothers, can you conceive of a higher, nobler elevation to which in your maternal relation you can rise, than when, to the opening mind of your wondering child, you give the first idea of God? Or when you direct him to that divine babe who was born at Bethlehem; was subject to his parents; and who died for sinners upon the cross? Or than when you talk to them of heaven, the dwelling-place of God and of his angels?

O! to see the first look of holy inquisitiveness, and the first tear of infant piety start in the eye; to hear the first question of concern, or the first breathing of prayer from infant lips! How has many a woman's heart amid such scenes swelled with delight, until in an ecstasy of feeling she sank upon her knees and breathed a mother's prayer over the child of her heart, while he looked wonderingly up and felt a mysterious power come over him which he could neither fully express nor understand!

Mothers! Your religion, if it is genuine, will teach you at once the greatness of the work, and your own insufficiency to perform it aright in your own strength. Your business is to train mortals for earth, and immortal beings for God, heaven, and eternity! Even an apostle in the view of such an object exclaimed, '*And who is sufficient for these things?*' Your work, as to its design, is the same as Paul's. And you, like him, have to contend with the depravity of your children's nature — and all the difficulties arising from your own weakness and sinfulness. A mistake either in your sentiments, your feelings, or your example, may be fatal to your children's

eternal welfare. Cultivate, then, a trembling consciousness of your own insufficiency, and cast yourselves by believing, constant, and fervent prayer upon God. Be in an eminent sense, praying mothers. Distrust yourselves — and by believing prayer, secure the aid of Omnipotence.

Do not forget what I have already said, that AFFECTION is the golden key fitted by God, to the wards of the lock in every human heart — to the application of which the bolts that nothing else could move, will fly back and open with ease. Severity is out of place in any one, but most of all in woman. But beware of allowing affection to degenerate into a fond and foolish indulgence! A judicious love is as remote from pampering indulgence on the one hand, as it is from moroseness and cruelty on the other. For if '*undue severity*' has slain its thousands, '*injudicious and pampering indulgence*' has slain its tens of thousands! Fathers are apt to err in the former extreme — mothers in the latter. And it not infrequently happens that these extremes are played off against each other. The father afraid that the mother will spoil the child by indulgence, adopts a harsh treatment to counteract the mischief of his wife's excessive fondness; while the wife compensates the child for the severity of the husband by her own excessive attention to the child's gratification. Thus, like the sharp frost by night, and the hot sun by day, operating in spring to the destruction of the blossom on which their antagonistic influences are made to bear — the opposing treatment of the parents ruins the hapless child who is the subject of it.

Still, while I enjoin *affection*, it must not be allowed to impair *authority*! A parent must not be a *tyrant* — so neither must he be a *slave* to his children. It is a painful, and, to the parents, a disgraceful spectacle — to see a family in a state where rebellion reigns rampant — the father deposed, the scepter broken, and the insurgent children possessed of sovereign rule!

The mother, as well as the father, *must be obeyed* — and it is her own fault if she is not! A persevering system of government, where the reins are held tightly in the hand of love — will be sure to produce submission at last! But it must be a mixture of *kindness*, *wisdom*, and *authority*. Submission must be felt by a child to be a duty yielded to authority — and not merely a compliance won by affection. Authority must not stiffen into severity — nor love degenerate into coaxing. Commands must be obeyed

— not only because it is pleasant to obey them — but because it is right that they should be obeyed.

A judicious mother will exercise much *discrimination*, and adapt her treatment to the disposition of her children. There are as many varieties of temperament in some families as there are children. No two children are precisely alike in their minds and character — any more than in their bodies. One is *forward and obtrusive*, and should be *checked and rebuked*; another is *timid and retiring*, and needs to be *encouraged and emboldened*. One is more easily wrought upon by *appeals to her hope*; another by *reasonings addressed to her fear*. One is *too shy and reserved*, and needs to have *frankness and communicativeness encouraged*; another is *too open and ingenuous*, and should be taught *caution and self-restraint*. Every child should be a separate study. Quackery should be banished from the education of children — as well as from medicine. One treatment will no more suit all minds — than one medicine or kind of food all bodies. A woman who does not know the peculiar dispositions of all her children, and does not adapt her treatment to them, is a very *incompetent mother*!

The woman who would fulfill the duties of her parental relationship, must surrender herself to her mission, and be content to make some sacrifices, and endure some privations. Who can witness the patient submission of the mother-bird to her solitude and self-denial, during the term of incubation — without admiration at the quiet and willing surrender which instinct teaches her to make of her usual liberty and enjoyments? A woman must be willing, for the sake of her children, to do under the influence of reason and true religion, what the bird does from the unintelligent impulses of nature. Her children are a charge for which she must forego some of the enjoyments of social life, and even some of the social pleasures of religion.

She who would have a maternal power over her children, must give her company to them. It is not for her to be ever craving after parties — or to feel it a hardship that she is denied them. The secret of her beneficent influence lies in making the home her chief delight and focus. Hence the exhortation of the apostle in the text, to the matrons of his time, '*Teach the young women to be...keepers at home.*' I would not have a mother incarcerated in her own house, so as never to go abroad or enter into company. She who is devoted to her family needs occasional relaxation

amid the pleasures of society, and especially the exhilarating engagements of public worship.

There are some mothers who are such absolute slaves to their children that they scarcely ever stir from home — even to the house of God. This is an error in one extreme, which might be avoided by method and dispatch. But those run into an opposite extreme who will not, even for the benefit of their children, give up a social party or a public meeting. The woman who is not prepared to make many sacrifices of this kind, for the sake of her children, and her home, and her husband — should never think of entering into wedded life!

Be ingenious, inventive, and studious — as to the best method of gaining the attention, and informing the minds of your children while young. There are too many who imagine that education, and especially religious education, consists in just hearing a chapter read, a catechism taught, or a hymn repeated — and that when this is done, all is done. The memory is the only faculty they cultivate — the intellect, affections, and conscience, are wholly neglected! A Christian mother should be ingenious to invent the best mode of gaining attention and keeping it. The illustrated works which in this fertile age are perpetually issuing from the press, afford advantages for conveying both secular and sacred knowledge, of which bygone times knew nothing.

Be personal in your religious instruction. The freedom of incidental spiritual conversation, rather than the formality of set and stated lessons; the introduction of religious topics in the mundane aspects of life — (rather than the grave and forbidding annunciation of a change from secular to sacred subjects) — and the habit of referring all things to God, and comparing the truths and maxims of the Bible with the events of every hour — (rather than the forcing all things out of their channel when the season of '*family devotions*' returns)——these are the means of opening the avenues to the youthful heart, and rendering religion, with its great Author, the object — not of aversion or terror, nor only of cold and distant homage — but of mingled reverence and love. '*These words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart — and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.*'

Mothers, invested as you are with such an influence, often dwell upon your responsibility. With such a power conferred upon you by God, you are responsible to your CHILDREN themselves. Every time their infant or adult voices repeat that words, ‘*My mother*’ — so sweet, so musical to your heart — they urge their claims upon your best and most devoted attention. As it sounds in your ears it should awaken the deepest emotions of your soul and the most faithful admonitions of your conscience.

You are responsible to your HUSBANDS. They entrust the education of their children to you. They seem to say, ‘We will work for their support, and leave the early education of their minds to you. We will hereafter share all the obligations of instruction and the care of their minds and characters with you, but at present, while they are so young, we confide this duty upon you.’

You are responsible to the CHURCH of God — for family education is, or ought to be, in the families of the godly, the chief means of conversion. It is a fatal error for Christian parents to look to the ministers of religion for the conversion of their children. And, alas! it is the error of the day. The pulpit is looked to, for those benefits which should flow from the parents’ chair. Our churches have weighty and righteous claims upon parents, and especially upon mothers.

Nor does your responsibility stop here, for SOCIETY at large looks to you for that beneficial influence which you are capable of exerting. I repeat here the well-known anecdote, which I have given, I believe, in another work. Napoleon once asked Madame Campan what the French nation most needed, in order that her youth might be properly educated. Her reply was compressed in one word, ‘*Mothers!*’ And it was a wise reply. Not the French nation only — the *world* needs them — Christian, intelligent, well-trained, devoted women, to whom the destinies of the rising generation may be safely entrusted. The woman at whose domestic hearth, and by whose judicious maternal love, a family of industrious and godly sons — or of modest, kind-hearted, prudent, and pious daughters — is trained for future life, is an ornament of her country — a benefactress to her species — and a blessing to posterity. I again and emphatically say, Mothers, understand, feel, and remember your responsibility!

But hitherto, it may be said, the chapter does not answer to its title as intended for, and addressed to, *young mothers*. I will therefore now give it a special bearing upon their case. It has been my object, first of all, to set forth the subject of maternal duty and responsibility in its *general aspect* — apart from its relation to those to whom it is *new* — that they may see it in its widest and most comprehensive bearing — before they are reminded of its special bearing on their case. This, I am aware, will give the appearance of a repetition in the second part of this chapter, of some things that were advanced in the first. But such repetitions are sometimes beneficial. In addition, therefore, to what has been said on maternal duties in general, I shall now submit some other matters for your special consideration.

Too many, it is to be feared, enter upon this momentous business without consideration, and, as might be expected, equally without preparation or qualification. It is indeed a pitiable sight to look into the state of some families, and behold the hapless condition of the poorly trained children who have the misfortune to be in the hands of a weak, foolish, and incompetent mother. Perhaps the cause may be traced one step further back, and it may be found that they are incompetent, because their mothers were so before them. Thus the mischief perpetuates itself from generation to generation.

In all things it is of importance to *begin well*. The beginning usually determines the progress and the close. Errors, both in theory and practice, however long and pertinaciously persisted in — may by intelligence, determination, and the blessing of God — be corrected. Reformation would otherwise be hopeless. But how much better and easier is it to *avoid faults* than to *amend them*! Many mothers have seen their mistakes when it was too late to correct them. Their children had grown up under the influence of a bad system of domestic government and maternal guidance, and had acquired a fixedness of bad habit which no subsequent wisdom, firmness, severity, or affection, could correct; and the parents had to pour out bitter but unavailing regrets that they had not begun life with those views of their duties with which they were closing it.

If a mother *begins well* — she is likely to *continue well*. And the same is true, that if she *begins badly* — she is likely to *continue badly*. Her conduct towards her first child is likely, of course, to determine her conduct with respect to all the following ones. How momentous is it then, at this



stage of her domestic history, to weigh well, and solemnly, and prayerfully, her responsible situation! Indeed it is quite clear that this subject ought not to be put off by any wife until she becomes a mother. The very prospect ought to lead to a due preparation for the expected new duties; for these commence with the earliest anticipations of sustaining the maternal character. It behooves us to prepare ourselves for any situation into which we have a confident expectation of soon entering. Forethought is given to mankind for the purpose of meeting with propriety the situation and duties to which we are expecting. The woman who never studies maternal responsibilities and duties until she is called actually to sustain them, is not very likely to do well in that very important relationship.

Instinct will teach a parent bird, animal, fish, or insect, all that is necessary for the well being of its young. But it is not so with human parents — *study, reflection, forethought, and determination* are indispensable for them. Unhappily a young wife, in prospect of giving birth to a child, is in some cases so bowed down with an unnecessary solicitude about her own safety. Others are so absorbed with the preparations which are made for the physical well-being and the elegant furnishings of her promised baby, as to forget to prepare herself for those more important duties which devolve upon her in relation to the mind, and heart, and conscience, of the child. A mother who wishes to fulfill her duties to her children should take especial pains to educate herself for these momentous functions. She should read, to store her mind with knowledge; she should reflect, observe, and gain useful information from every quarter. Her principles should be fixed, her plans laid, her purposes formed.

*She must cultivate all the habits and dispositions which will fit her to teach and to govern.* She must seek to acquire thoughtfulness, careful vigilance, quick observation, and discretion in various forms. Habits of *activity, efficiency, order, and regularity* — are indispensable for her; so is the exercise of all the good and benevolent feelings. She must unite *gentleness* with *firmness*; and attain patience and the entire command of her disposition. It is of immense importance also that she should have a correct knowledge of human nature, and the way of dealing with the human heart. And above all things, let her remember that piety is the vivifying spirit of all excellence, and example the most powerful means to enforce it. She should never let the recollection be absent from her mind — that children have both eyes and ears for attention to a mother's conduct. Not content

with preparing herself for her important functions beforehand, she should carry on the education of herself simultaneously with that of her children. There are few situations which more imperatively require preparation, and yet few that receive less.

Again, we often see in a mother such a solicitude about the health and comfort of her babe; such an engrossing attention to all matters respecting its physical well-being, united with such an exuberant delight in the child, as a child; such a mother's joyousness in her babe — that her mind is diverted by these circumstances from all the serious thoughts and solemn reflections which ought to be awakened by the consideration that a *rational, immortal, and sinful being* is committed to her charge — to be trained for both worlds. Thus her attention is absorbed month after month, while all this while her infant's faculties are developing — its *judgment, will, affections, and conscience* — at least in their capabilities — are opening, but neglected — and its natural bias to evil, grows unnoticed and unchecked! The very time when judicious care over the formation of character could be most advantageously exerted is allowed to pass by unimproved; *sinful attitudes* are allowed to strengthen unrestrained; *self-will* is allowed to attain a resoluteness which stiffens into obstinacy; and the careless mother, who at some time or other intended to begin a system of moral training, (always saying there was time enough yet,) when she does commence — wonders that the subject of her discipline is so difficult to manage!

And then she finds that she has so neglected to prepare herself for her duties, that she doesn't know how to go about them, or what in fact she has to do! A badly trained child continues growing not only in stature and in strength — but in his wayward disposition and obstinate self-will; the poor mother has no control; and as to the father, he is too much taken up with the cares of business to aid his faulty helpmate; and thus the scene is exhibited, described by Solomon — '*To discipline and reprimand a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child!*' - Proverbs 29:15.

Child after child comes along — and are misgoverned, or not governed at all. And there are soon seen — in *rude, disobedient, and ill-natured* children — perhaps at length profligate sons, and vain silly daughters — the sad fruits of the lack of maternal wisdom! Young mothers, begin well.

Manage that first child with *biblical principles*! Put forth all your skill, all your affection, all your diligence and devotedness — in training him! And, the habit thus acquired, all will be comparatively easy with the others that follow. It is the novelty of that first child, the new affections which it calls forth, and the new interest that it creates, that are likely to throw you off your guard without concern — and divert your attention from the great work of moral training. The first child makes the good — or unwise mother!

And as it is of immense consequence to begin your maternal excellence with the first child, so it is of equal importance to him, and to every one that is added, as I have already said, to begin early. *‘Education does not begin with the alphabet. It begins with a mother’s look; with a father’s nod of approbation or sign of reproof; with a sister’s gentle pressure of the hand, or a brother’s noble act of patience — with a handful of flowers in green dells, or on hills or in daisy meadows; with creeping ants, and almost imperceptible gnats; with humming bees, and glass bee-hives; with pleasant walks in shady lanes, and with thoughts directed in affectionate and kindly tones and words to nature, to beauty, to the practice of benevolence, and to the remembrance of Him, who is the fountain of all good.’*

Yes, and before all this can be done, before lessons of instruction can be taught the child from flowers, and insects, and birds — the moral training can commence — a mother’s look, her nod of approbation, or sign of reproof.

One of the greatest mistakes into which mothers fall is that of supposing the first two or three years of a child’s life unimportant as regards his training. The truth is, that in the formation of character, they are the most important of all. It has been truly said, that from the impressions made, the principles implanted, and the habits formed, during these years, the child’s character for time and eternity may take its complexion. It is perfectly clear that before a child can speak, he is susceptible of moral training. The *conscience*, or *moral sense*, may, by a judicious woman, be developed well before the child has spent his first birthday. So early may he be made to distinguish between what his mother considers right and wrong, between what will please and what will displease her.

Why, the brute creatures will do this — and if they can be trained thus — may not very young children? It is admitted that there is more of reason in many brutes than in very young children. Still even very young animals may be trained to know what they may and what they may not do — and so may very young children! We often hear mothers say, their children are too young to be taught obedience. The mother who acts upon the maxim that *‘children may have their own way for a certain number of months,’* will find to her cost that that lesson will not speedily be forgotten! Moral training *may* and *should precede* that which is intellectual. The cultivation of the affections and conscience should be the commencement and foundation of education, and will facilitate every succeeding effort — whether of the child — or of those who train or teach him.

There is in some women a timidity and a distrust of their own capacity, which paralyze or prevent the endeavors which they could make if they would only believe in their own power. Every woman of good plain understanding, can do more than she imagines for the formation of her children’s character. What she is deficient in, let her supply by reading; and no mother, however qualified, should neglect this. Every one may learn something from others. Fearful, timid, and anxious mothers, be not afraid! Prayer will bring God’s help and God’s blessing.

*Injudicious indulgence* is the most common, as it is the most injurious, danger into which a young mother can fall! Be kind — you ought to be. An unloving, hardhearted mother is a double libel upon her gender and her motherhood. Love is her power, her instrument, her magical charm. She can do nothing, worse than nothing, without it. But then her love must be like that of the Divine Parent, who said, *‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.’* Can you say, *‘No!’* to a child, when with winning smiles, or beseeching voice, or weeping eyes — he asks for something which is not good for him? Can you take from him that which is likely to be injurious to him, but which it will give him pain to surrender? Can you correct him for his faults when your heart rises up in opposition to your judgment? Can you put him down from your arms, at a proper season for so doing, when he clings to your neck and cries to remain. Can you exact obedience in, to him a difficult, but to you, a necessary command? Can you, (first conquering your own heart) stand out against his tears, resolute in purpose, unyielding in demand, so stoutly resisting you, in order to conquer his heart? Or do you allow yourself to be subdued — to put an end to the

contest — and by soothing his tears foster the disposition which ought to be eradicated at any pains and any cost? She who cannot answer all this in the affirmative is not fit to be a mother!

There must be discipline in a family! A parent must be obeyed. Give up this, and you train your children for evil and not for good. Here again I say, begin early. Put on the soft and easy yoke early. The horse is broken in while a colt. Wild beasts are tamed while yet they are young. Both the human species and animals — soon grow beyond the power of discipline!

A young mother is apt to entrust too much of the care and early training of her children upon servants. Much of what may be called the drudgery of managing children, must of necessity be committed to them; but a wise woman will have her children with her as much as possible. Next to mothers, nurse-maids are the most influential class of the community, as regards young children. They and nursery-governesses are to a great extent the educators of the community. They, when carrying the children in their arms, or leading them out for air and exercise, or attending upon them in the nursery, or dressing or undressing them, or however they may be employed for them — are forming them to good or evil habits. If multitudes are spoiled by mothers, multitudes more are spoiled by servants; and some of the latter have undone all the good the former have done. Of what importance is it then that you should *be careful as to the people you admit to your families* in this capacity, to whom to entrust your children's *minds*, and *hearts*, and *consciences* — for depend upon it, they have the care of their minds and hearts — as well as of their bodies!

All you do in training up your children in the way they should go — should bear directly or indirectly on their eternal welfare! If I seem to advert to this subject with a frequency that looks redundant — let its tremendous importance — and its too frequent and too great neglect by parents — be my apology. You will not overlook, as I have already remarked, the intellectual training of your children's minds — but I hope their moral and religious education will be the chief object of solicitude to you. Viewing your children as immortal beings destined to eternity, and capable of the enjoyments of heaven — you will labor even from infancy to imbue their minds with spiritual truths. It is the eternal welfare of her children, which rescues from littleness and insignificance all that it appertains to, and hence arises in no inconsiderable degree the exalted

honor of a mother.

*'She has given birth, by the sovereign ordination of Almighty God, not to a being of a mere momentary existence, whose life will perish like that of the beast of the field — but to an immortal being! Her nursing infant, feeble and helpless as it may appear, possesses within its bosom a rational soul, an intellectual power, a spirit which 'all-devouring time' cannot destroy, which can never die, but which will outlive the splendors of the glorious sun, and the burning brilliancy of all the stars. Throughout the infinite ages of eternity, when all these shall have served their purpose and answered the beneficent end of their creation, and shall have been blotted out from their position in the immense regions of space — the soul of each Christian will shine and improve before the eternal throne, being filled with holy delight and divine love, and ever active in the praises of its blessed Creator.'*

Mothers, such is your dignity, such your exalted honor. Feel and value your rich distinction in being called to educate the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and to prepare the holy family who are to dwell in those many mansions of his Father's house which the Lord Jesus has gone to prepare. Give yourselves up to this glorious work. But be judicious in all you do, lest you produce prejudice against true religion, instead of partiality in its favor. Let your warmest affection, your greatest cheerfulness, your most engaging smiles, be put on when you teach Scriptural truths to your children. Approach as nearly as possible to a seraph form. Be a true Christian — in all its beauty, loveliness, sanctity, and ineffable sweetness. Let them see it in your character as well as hear it from your lips.

And especially be careful not to enforce as a '*task*,' what should be proposed as an '*object of hope*,' and a '*source of delight*.' Let them see in you, that piety, if in one respect it is a *strait and narrow path*, is in another, a *way of pleasantness* and a *path of peace*. Do not inflict upon them as a '*punishment*' for offences, learning Scripture or hymns; and thus convert religion, which is the foretaste of heaven, into a penance which shall be to them like being tormented before their time.

And can it be necessary, after what I have said in a former part of this chapter, to admonish you again to pray for and with your children? How have a mother's prayers been blessed to her children! John Randolph, a distinguished American statesman, who had been much exposed to the seductions of infidelity in the society into which he had been thrown by his position, thus accounted to a gentleman with whom he was conversing, '*I believe I would have been swept away by the flood of French infidelity, if it had not been for one thing — the remembrance of the time, when my godly mother used to make me kneel by her side, taking my little hands folded in hers, and caused me to repeat the Lord's Prayer.*'

On the east of Long Island, in one of the most secluded spots in America, more than thirty years ago, a mother, whose rare intellectual and moral endowments were known to but few, made this simple record —

*'This morning I rose very early to pray for my children; and especially that my sons may be ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ.'*

A number of years after, a friend who was present, thus describes that mother's dying hour —

*'Owing to extreme weakness, her mind wandered, and her conversation was broken; but as she entered the valley of the shadow of death, her soul lighted up and gilded its darkness. She made a touching and most appropriate prayer, and told her husband that her views and anticipations had been such, that she could scarcely sustain them; and that if they had been increased, she would have been overwhelmed; that her Savior had blessed her with constant peace, and that through all her sickness, she had never prayed to live longer. She dedicated her five sons to God as ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ, and said that her greatest desire was that her children might be trained up for God. 'She spoke with joy of the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and of the glorious day now ushering in. She attempted to speak to her children, but was so exhausted, and their cries and sobs were such, that she could say but little. Her husband then made a prayer, in which he gave her back to God, and dedicated all they held in common, to him. She then fell into a sweet sleep, from which she awoke in heaven.'*

The prayers of this mother have been answered. All her eight children have been trained up for God. Her five sons are all ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ — and the late Rev. George Beecher is the first of her offspring whom she has welcomed to heaven. And one of her daughters is the lady already alluded to in this discourse, who has obtained a world-wide fame by her touching story against slavery. In that lady and her work, as well as in her able and learned brothers, we see the fruit of a mother's prayers.

Take with you the following MAXIMS, as summing up all that has been said.

1. Though a child's character is not entirely created by the *circumstances* in which he is placed, especially as regards his mother — it is powerfully influenced by them.

2. *Education* is designed to form character, and not merely to communicate instruction. A king of Sparta, when asked what it was in which youth ought principally to be instructed, replied, 'In that which they have most need to practice when men.'

3. *Obedience* is the first thing a mother has to teach; first both in order and time — and the foundation of all the rest. Obedience must first be taught as a *habit*, and soon after inculcated as a *duty*.

4. A mother should assiduously cultivate the spirit of *curiosity* in a child. Instead of always *calling him to learn* — should prompt his *desires to learn*.

5. Young children must be sometimes *denied their wishes*, but never merely for the purpose of teaching them *submission* by taking from them something they are pleased with.

6. *Habits of employment* and a *love of useful employment*, should be taught to children. They are not so mischievous for the mere love of mischief, as it is supposed. If they destroy articles, it is sometimes for the purpose of investigation, and oftener still for lack of proper employment, which ought to be furnished to them. In very early childhood a '*love of*

*industry*’ and *‘honest independence*’ may be instilled into a child, by teaching him that it is honorable to be usefully employed. One little child may feel the pleasure and practice the duty of benevolence, by doing something for the comfort of a tender babe still more helpless than itself.

7. It is of the first importance for a mother to establish in the mind of her child an *entire confidence in herself* — in her *wisdom, kindness, and truth* — as well as a sense of her *irresistible authority*.

8. *Truth, sincerity, honesty, and simplicity* are basic virtues in children. Simplicity is the beauty of a child’s character; and he should be taught from the beginning to act upon principle, and not for the sake of being well thought of or rewarded.

9. *Domestic affections* should be most assiduously cultivated. When the second baby is born, the first child should, if old enough to understand the matter, be taught to regard it as an acquisition by which his happiness is to be increased, and in which he is to take an interest in conjunction with his parents. The child who is taught affectionate obedience to his parents; and justice and kindness towards his little equals round the domestic hearth — is being trained to fill with propriety the stations and relations of future life.

11. The babe grows into the child; the child into the youth; the youth into the man; and the man into the immortal; and that immortal will be an heir of glory — or a child of perdition. Let this be remembered from the beginning and always acted upon.

12. *Discipline* in a family is what the public administration of justice is to a state; where it is lacking, there may be very good laws, but they will remain a dead letter — and the reign of crime and confusion be the certain consequence.

13. *Christianity* should not be regarded as one science among many, the inculcation of which is a part of good education. But it must be the *vital principle* diffusing itself through *all instruction, all rules, all authority, all discipline, and all example*. At what age is it proper, it may be asked, to begin teaching children religion? Their father and mother are, if true and consistent believers, *‘Christianity embodied*’ — and as soon as they begin

to know their parents they begin to know something about true religion. A very young child is quite aware that his parents speak to One whom they do not see, and inquiring thoughts are awakened in his mind, before he can express them in words.\*

\*Some of these maxims are taken from *‘The Young Mother, or Affectionate Advice to an Unmarried Daughter,’* by Mrs. Copley. Published by the Tract Society.

And now, to sum up all, consider —

A mother’s *charge* — an immortal creature.

A mother’s *duty* — to train him up for God, heaven and eternity.

A mother’s *dignity* — to educate the family of the Almighty Creator of the universe.

A mother’s *difficulty* — to raise a fallen sinful creature to holiness and virtue.

A mother’s *encouragement* — the promise of Divine grace to assist her in her momentous duties.

A mother’s *relief* — to bear the burden of her cares to God in prayer.

A mother’s *hope* — to meet her child in glory everlasting, and spend eternal ages of delight with him before the throne of God and the Lamb.

But are mothers only to engage in this work of educating their children for God? No! Fathers, I speak to you, for the Bible speaks to you — *‘Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.’* I have addressed this chapter to your wives, because on them first devolves the duty of training the infant mind, and preparing the children for your hands. Not that they will ever, or should ever, give up their diligence or withdraw their influence. A mother’s power is perhaps as great when judiciously exerted over the adult — as over the infant child. But you, when the children are growing up, must join your solicitude and labors with hers. They are your children as well as hers. God will require their souls at your hands as well as hers. Are you exercising your *authority*, giving your *instructions*, pouring out your *prayers*, affording your *example* — for the salvation of your children? Is it your *wish*, your *ambition*, your *endeavor*, your *supplication*, that they may be *Christian men* — or only *rich ones*? Are you pouring your influence into the same channel as your holy wife? Are you helping or

hindering her in her pious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of your joint offspring?

Happy, happy couple, where there is sympathy of feeling and similarity of sentiment in the most momentous concern that can engage the attention of man, of angels, or of God — true Christianity. Where the husband and the wife are of one mind and one heart, not only in reference to themselves, but in regard also to their children, and both are engaged in training them up for everlasting glory! I can liken such a couple, in their benevolent efforts for their children's welfare, only to the two angels who were sent down from heaven to the rescue of Lot, and who with holy and benevolent violence took him by the hand to pluck him from the burning city, and conducted him to the place of safety prepared by the mercy of Almighty God.

After this chapter was composed, I received the following letter —

*Dear Mr. James,*

*In your next Sermon to Young Women, will you kindly give some advice to common-place Mothers; who, not gifted with extraordinary affection, or extraordinary patience, are apt to be sadly worried with the incessant and varied claims of a large family; especially where a limited income imposes unremitting toil to arrange for ordinary domestic comfort; and the numerous inhabitants of a small house almost preclude the refreshment of solitary closet communion with that Heavenly Father who rewards openly. As a class, we would gladly be instructed how to avoid, or at least to surmount, the impatience and irritation so frequently engendered by the perplexities of the nursery and the school room; the hasty speech, the angry action, which must be not only a hindrance to maternal influence, but perhaps even a hindrance to the efficacy of a mother's prayers. Excuse the liberty I take in thus writing to you, and with many thanks for your past valuable hints,*

*Yours very respectfully,  
A Common-place Mother*

This letter claims and awakens my tenderest sympathy for the class of mothers to whom it refers; I mean women without the advantages of wealth, the accommodations of a nursery, and the help of servants, to lighten the

load of maternal cares, and to assist in the performance of maternal duties — women who must always be in the midst of the perpetually recurring trials of irritation, to which, in such circumstances, a numerous family of young children exposes them; and who may imagine themselves, as to intellectual and other qualifications, only '*Common-place Mothers.*' Let such women not despond as if they were but slenderly fitted for their duties.

The writer of this letter gives full evidence that she is not disqualified for a mother's functions, so far as mental ability is concerned — but perhaps she, and others in her situation, may have something yet to learn and acquire as to godly disposition and manner. It is evident she is in danger in these respects. The waywardness and sins of unamiable dispositions in her children, produce petulance and irritability, and lead perhaps too often on her part to sinful anger. A scold, slap, or shake — sometimes takes the place of mild but firm admonition, and calm correction. To her, and to all in her situation, I say, what you need, and what you must put forth all your constant and determined effort, and wrestling supplication with God, to obtain — is the complete subjugation of your temper. You must bring this under control. You must acquire forbearance, patience, and calm serenity. It will cost you much trouble and much prayer to attain it; but God's grace will be sufficient for you.

I do not, of course, counsel you to contract that spirit of apathetic, easy indifference which lets children take their own course, and for the sake of a little ease throws out the reins of discipline. Still a mother must often have eyes — and not see; ears — and not hear. A fussing, fidgety notice of every little thing that goes wrong in the disposition of all the children, will keep her in perpetual misery. To all then who are in the situation of '*The Common-place Mother,*' I again and again, with all possible emphasis, say — subdue your irritability, and acquire a calm, patient, forbearing, loving, and serene mind. God will help you if you seek it. You must not think such a frame of mind unattainable, nor allow your provocations and temptations to be an apology for your little sallies of bad disposition.

The misfortune perhaps in the case of such mothers, is — that they did not begin well. The first child was not well managed. Bad habits crept on, and now, with the family increased, it is difficult to break them. I have known even large, very large families, where, though there were few domestic accommodations, by patience and kindness, mixed with firmness,

on the part of the mother, aided by a wise, kind, firm father, the children were all well-managed, and the parents happy.

It would greatly comfort, help, and encourage such mothers, if they attended the meetings of Mothers' Societies, where such institutions are formed.

As regards what is said about the opportunity for prayer, I can hardly admit a crowded house to be an excuse for the neglect of this. Every mother has at her command her own chamber, to which, as to a little sanctuary, when the infant voices are hushed in sleep, she can repair and pour out her heart to God for her children, and perhaps breathe over some of them, slumbering on the bed at which she kneels, a mother's prayers. Besides, how much of prayer — *spontaneous* and *silent* — yet *sincere*, *fervent*, and *believing* — may be presented to God, without the formalities of devotion, or the retirement of the closet!

I again say, let no mother despair of herself because she does not possess high intellectual qualifications — the more of these she has of course the better, but a disposition under control, a patient, loving, forbearing temperament, mild firmness, a gentle, but constant maintenance of parental authority, a judicious administration of rewards and correction, will enable any woman to fill her place with efficiency, though she may think herself to be '*A Common-place Mother.*'

## THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF THE EXCELLENT WIFE IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

*'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.'*  
- Proverbs 31:10

If anyone desires a book which shall combine grandeur of subject — with beauty of expression; the most sublime theology — with the soundest morality; the widest variety of topic — with an obvious unity of design; the most ancient history with — poetry; the profoundest philosophy — with the plainest maxims of human conduct; touching narratives — with picturesque descriptions of character — in short, a book which shall as truly gratify the taste by the elegance of its composition, as it shall sanctify the heart by the purity of its doctrines; and thus, while it opens the glories of heaven and prepares the soul for possessing and enjoying them, shall furnish a source of never failing pleasure upon earth; I say if such a book be sought, it can be found in the Bible, and only in the Bible, and that precious volume more than answers the description.

And where in all the range of inspired or uninspired literature can be found a delineation of female excellence — I will not say equal to, but worthy to be compared with — that which forms the subject of the present chapter? We have in it a picture of which it is difficult to say which is the most striking — the correctness of the drawing — or the richness of the coloring. Both display a master's hand, and though delineated three thousand years ago, it is still true to nature; and when we have removed some of the effects of time, retouched some lines that have been clouded and obscured by the lapse of years, and given a few explanations, it is impossible to look at it without admiration and delight. It adds to the interest to know that it is the production of a female artist. It is the description of a good wife, drawn by the hand of a mother, to guide her son in the selection

of a companion for life. They are *'the words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.'* Who this king was is a matter of uncertainty. He was not, as some have supposed, Solomon. The original Hebrew has many Chaldaisms, which are found in no other part of the book of Proverbs, and afford a cogent argument that it was written by another hand, and perhaps after the captivity. The whole passage is composed with art, being a kind of poem containing twenty-two verses respectively beginning, like some of the Psalms, with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in their order of succession. Whoever Lemuel might have been, he had the privilege of a most eminent mother.

The admonitory verses with which the chapter commences, composed by this distinguished woman for her son when in the flower of youth and high expectation, are an inimitable production, as well in respect to their actual materials, as the delicacy with which they are selected. Instead of attempting to lay down rules concerning matters of state and political government, the illustrious writer confines herself, with the finest and most becoming art, to a recommendation of the gentler virtues of temperance, benevolence, and mercy; and to a minute and unparalleled delineation of the female character which might bid fairest to promote the happiness of her son in wedded life.

What a pattern of maternal excellence was this mother of the king! We may well imagine that in this inimitable portrait, she drew her own likeness. What sons we would see, if all were blessed with such mothers as she was!

1. In taking up this delineation, I shall first consider the INQUIRY which introduces it. *'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.'* This interrogation implies the rarity and the worth of the object sought. The question might have been more forcible in those times than in ours, for such a blessing was no doubt more scarce than it is now. True it is, the picture is so

admirable, that even now a perfect resemblance is not to be found everywhere. Yet, if such extraordinary excellence is not often met with, happily that which is far above mediocrity is by no means rare. And why should there not be in every female bosom an intense desire to rise to a perfect conformity to this beautiful pattern? How much more to be valued by her happy possessor is this — than all the jewels with which so many women are fond of being decked — or than the largest and the purest diamond in the mines of the east!

I proceed now to consider this EXQUISITE DELINEATION of *'the virtuous woman.'* But really I feel as if to touch it were to spoil it, and as though comments were almost like — painting the tulip — perfuming the rose — or attempting to add brilliancy to the sun. Instead of following the order of the verses, and adopting the regular expository method — I shall arrange the verses and place them under separate topical heads and titles.

2. The authoress reserves PIETY for the climax or culminating point of her description, and winds up the whole thus, *'Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting — but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.'* - Proverbs 31:30.

I shall make this our starting point. It is set forth in the verse just quoted, and there the essence of true religion is comprised in that phrase, *'The fear of the Lord'* — which means the cultivation and exercise of all right and holy dispositions towards God. Yes, this is religion, to have the heart right towards God. And we hold that this is not merely the gilded ornament that towers upwards to heaven, and crowns and beautifies the building at the apex, though it is this; but it is more than this, for it is the base of the whole structure, and supports the noble pyramid of varied excellences. It is this which makes them strong and stable, and ensures at once their proportions and their perpetuity.



True piety, instead of setting aside a single female excellence — clothes all female virtues with a Divine sanction — harmonizes the demands of God with the claims of man — converts the ordinary duties of domestic life into a means of preparation for that glorious world where the social ties no longer exist — and softens the cares, anxieties, and sorrows, with which woman's lot in this world is but too often sadly oppressed. Whatever else a woman may be — without true piety, she is lamentably deficient. *'Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting.'* The face of a beautiful woman ought to be an index of the mind; and when all is beautiful on the outside — all should be glorious within. Never does outer beauty and elegance appear more revolting — than when seen united with an ill-furnished mind and an ill-favored heart. And yet how often do elegance of manners, and loveliness of person, conceal dispositions which are in total opposition to them, and bitterly disappoint the man who has been captivated by them — and who in his choice of a wife, has been led by no other considerations than mere external beauty and personal charms!

Let beauty have its due praise, and suppose what you will of it; suppose all that the poets say of it be true — still the text tells you it is vain, it is in its nature transient, fleeting, perishing — it is the flower of the spring which must fade in autumn; and when the blossom falls, if no fruit is produced, of what value, I ask, is the tree? The grave is already opening for the most elegant person that moves, and the worms are waiting to feed on the most beautiful face!

But true religion has an excellence and a beauty which time cannot corrode, nor old-age wrinkle, nor disease spoil, nor death destroy; but which after living and thriving amid the decay of all other things in this world, will flourish in the next in the vigor of immortal youth.

3. We next note her MARITAL EXCELLENCE. *'Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.'* - Proverbs 31:11-12.

Confidence between man and wife is the basis of domestic happiness. There cannot possibly be happiness where this is lacking. Suspicion and jealousy must drive felicity out of doors. In regard to the *'virtuous woman,'* her husband trusts her chastity. Her faithfulness is as inviolable as the covenant of the Most High, and her purity unsullied as the light of heaven. What a torment is jealousy in the bosom of husband or wife! wormwood and gall are sweet compared to it.

He trusts her fidelity in the management of his temporal affairs, and knows that all his domestic interests are safe in her hands. With such a manager at home, he can go without anxiety to his daily business, travel to distant places, or remain, when necessary, away from home for ever so long a time. He shall have *'lack of nothing of value'* — he shall have no need of worrying about an extravagant wife — and her wasting their property. *'He need not,'* says Matthew Henry, *'be griping and scraping abroad, as those must be, whose wives are extravagant and wasteful at home.'* She manages his affairs so that he has plenty. He thinks himself so happy in her that he envies not those who have most of the wealth of this world — he needs it not, he has enough in having such a wife. Happy the couple that have such satisfaction as this in each other! It is too well known to be denied, that if many husbands make their wives wretched by their unkindness — many wives make their husbands poor by extravagance! Many a man has been tempted to cheat his creditors through the bad management and extravagance of his wife.

The *'virtuous Woman'* will study to do her husband good, and to avoid doing him harm, all the days of her life. She will be inventive, ingenious, and laborious to promote his comfort, his health, and his interest; will smooth by her sweet words his brow, when wrinkled with care; hush the sigh that misfortune extorts from his bosom; will answer with gentleness the sharp words that in moments of irritation drop from his lips, and will do all this, not by fits and starts when in congenial moods, but continually.

But this is not all; for on looking onward in the chapter we find another reference to her conduct and influence as a wife. ‘*Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.*’ By the gates are meant the place of magisterial assembly and business, which in ancient times was in rooms over the gates of the city. In these public convocations a good wife will make her husband known, and add to his public reputation in various ways. Her prudent conduct in her domestic arrangements will enable him to leave home with confidence to attend to public business. She does not engross his company so as to prevent his becoming a public benefactor and blessing. By the happiness which she imparts to him at their own fireside she sends him abroad, not with a downcast look, as if he had left a heavy trouble at home, or carried it everywhere with him; but with a cheerful countenance, as though he had just come from the scene and seat of his chief earthly bliss. By her proper care of his personal appearance, in the elegance and neatness of his apparel, (which in ancient times was the work of her hands) — and especially by the force of her holy example sustaining and encouraging his excellence, she raises the honor and increases the respect of her husband. He is better known and more esteemed as the husband of such a wife. Can a woman rise to higher honor than to be so excellent and estimable as to augment the public respectability of her husband?

Still, let husbands take care that they do not shine only in borrowed splendor, and stand indebted for all their esteem to their wives. Let them so act, and be such men, that the honor they receive on account of their wives shall be only an addition to the greater honor that belongs to themselves. It is to the comfort and glory of a man to be better known and more respected on account of his wife; but it is to his discredit to be known and respected only by and for his wife. It is a poor base affair, for a man to go through society with no higher qualification than his wife’s excellence. Such a woman must feel herself, though in one sense exalted, in another degraded, by being the wife of a man who has no public honor, but such as he

derives from her. It must bring misery when the husband finds himself always totally eclipsed by his wife — except indeed he be too dull to feel it. Alas for the wife of such a man! Let this induce care and caution in the formation of the marriage union. Unequal matches are not often happy ones.

4. Observe now her INDUSTRY AS A WOMAN. ‘*She seeks wool and flax, and works willingly with her hands. She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.*’ This is an allusion to the customs of the times, and is a description of her personal habits of manual labor and energetic employment. All textures of wool and flax, cotton and silk, were, before the invention of machinery, woven out of thread and yarn, spun by hand with a distaff and spindle. Nor was this occupation confined exclusively to the laboring classes — for queens, princesses, and peeresses disdained not to be thus employed, amid the more courtly occupations of their rank. It is well worthy of attention, that *out of the twenty-two verses of this elegant poem, eleven are taken up in setting forth the virtue and practice of the matron’s industry*, in its various relations and duties. And her industry is represented as eminently practical and utilitarian.

*Indolence* is sometimes thought and said to be one of the failings to which women are exposed; especially when single, and more frequently in wealthy circles. It is censurable even there; how much more in the state of matrimony! And those who give themselves up to indolence as young ladies are in imminent peril of carrying the habit forward into the state of the wife, the mother, and the home manager. An indolent woman at the head of the domestic circle must throw all into confusion. The manager of an establishment, especially if she be also a wife and a mother, can never plead lack of work, as an excuse for personal laziness. What a sad example does such a woman set to her children! No vice is more contagious than this—nor is any example more likely to be imitated by those around.

5. We next notice her THRIFTINESS AS A WIFE AND FEMALE HEAD OF A FAMILY. *'She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hand she plants a vineyard.'* *'She makes fine linen, and sells it; and delivers sashes unto the merchant.'* *'She perceives that her merchandise is good — her candle goes not out by night.'*\* From these verses it is apparent that in early times women were extensively employed even in buying and selling such matters as suited their sex; and without withdrawing their attention from other duties, aided their husbands to increase the wealth and comforts of their families. This manufacturing in the house, this traffic with the merchants, this buying a piece of ground and planting a vineyard, sound hardly feminine in our ears; but they give us an insight into those times, and show how little the tyranny of man over woman, which afterwards, as time rolled on, prevailed in eastern countries, had yet been practiced.

It may be doubted whether in the state of society to which this description belongs there were any household items, but such as were thus produced in families, and the demand having no other source of supply stimulated domestic production to an extent of which we can hardly have any adequate conception. Many families would produce much more than they could consume, and as there was always a demand and a profitable remuneration for such products, a thrifty housewife would be industrious herself, and keep all her servants at work, especially at those articles, such as the fine linen and sashes, which were most in demand. The traveling merchants called at the homes of the people, bought up their articles, and then resold them.

Woman is here seen as man's companion, counselor and helper, even to the making provision for the support of the family. Modern customs render this to a considerable extent unnecessary. Woman's place ordinarily is the home and the nursery rather than the shop. Buying and selling are the business of the husband, and taking care of the family that of the wife; and the less, as a general rule, the wife has to do with the shop, the better. It is an indelible reproach to any

man to live in idleness upon the labors of his wife, and leave her to take care of their children also. A month's labor at the wearisome mill, or a month's penance upon bread and water, would be a suitable regimen for such drones.

Yet '*necessity*' dispenses with ordinary laws; and where there are no children to be provided for, or where their comfort and education can be attended to also, it is by no means an unseemly spectacle to witness a clever and devoted woman occasionally at the side of her husband in the scenes of his trade. This applies, of course only to '*necessity*.' No wife will feel herself degraded by such occupations. The grateful and affectionate smile of her husband, and the consciousness that she is lightening his cares and aiding him to support his family, will be an ample reward for her labor.

It is, however, a great unhappiness for the laboring classes of this and other manufacturing towns, that married women, who are not only wives but mothers — are so extensively employed in our factories. In some cases it may be necessary, and even beneficial; but as a general practice it is fraught with much discomfort to the family. And in order to render it unnecessary, let the husband be more industrious, more sober, more temperate in all things — and forego the earnings of his wife at the factory, that she may be looking after her children, and providing him with a clean, comfortable, and well-ordered home. This would take away from him one temptation to frequent the ale-house.

6. We notice next her JUDGMENT AND SKILL IN HER DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS. *'She rises also while it is yet night, and gives food to her household, and a portion to her maidens.'* *'She looks well to the ways of her household, and eats not the bread of idleness.'* *'Her candle goes not out by night.'* *'She is like the merchant's ship, she brings her food from afar.'* *'She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are*

*clothed with scarlet;*’ or, as it should be rendered, ‘*in double garments.*’

How many points there are here worthy of notice and imitation. She knows the value of time and redeems it — and makes the day as long as she can by early rising. Nothing wastes time more than unnecessary slumber. Sleep is ‘*a temporary death,*’ and no more of it should be taken than prepares for a healthy resurrection in the morning. Even the rising of our Lord from the grave took place very early in the morning, as if among the minor lessons he would teach us by the very circumstances of that wondrous and glorious event, one is that our own morning figure of the resurrection in rising from our bed should take place early. A slothful woman, who wastes the precious prime hours of in bed — is a sad example to her family. How can she teach the valuable habit of early rising to her children; or how can she ‘*look well to the ways of her household, and give food to her maidens,*’ by setting in order her household affairs — if she does not leave her downy pillow until the day is far spent.

And then it is said of the good wife, ‘*Her candle does not go out by night.*’ When the days are short and the nights long, she takes no advantage of this for the indulgence of sloth. Though early up to lengthen the day at that end, she is not in haste to retire to rest, and so shorten it at the other end. Each hour has its work, and the work of the hour is done in the hour. The ways of her household are the constant matter of oversight and inspection, and such is the fruit of her good management, that when winter comes, her children need not fear frost or snow, for they are protected from the cold with both inside and outside garments. How beautiful a scene is it on a bleak cheerless day, when the north wind is piercing, and the sleet is driving before it — to see a large family, through the activity of an industrious and kind mother and manager, all warmly clad.

In a complete sense ‘*looking well to the ways of her household,*’ must include not only good housewifery, but a proper attention to

their moral habits, their religious instruction, their attendance on the means of grace, giving them time for secret prayer, and reading God’s Word, the daily ordinance of family worship, anxious watchfulness over their manners, habits, and connections. Who can have the claim to the title of a virtuous woman who does not feel this weight of family responsibility? And what a responsibility! Let every wife read it, tremble and pray. I most urgently enjoin all the acquirements of good and clever housewifery — of frugality without stinginess — plenty without profusion — attention without slavery — order without fastidiousness — efficiency without hurry — and elegance without extravagance.

‘*This bear in mind,*’ said an accomplished writer, in giving his advice to his son, when he is directing him as to the choice of a wife, ‘*that if she is not frugal, if she is not what is called a good home manager, if she does not pride herself on her knowledge of family affairs, and laying out her money to the best advantage; let her be ever so sweetly tempered, gracefully made, or elegantly accomplished — she is no wife for a tradesman; and all these amiable talents will but open just so many ways to ruin. In short, remember your mother, who was so exquisitely versed in this art, that her dress, her table, and every other particular, appeared rather splendid than otherwise; and yet good housewifery was the foundation of all; and her bills, to my certain knowledge, were a fourth less than most of her neighbors, who had hardly cleanliness to boast, in return for their awkward liberality.*’ This is all true, and all good as far as it goes. But then it is not enough, for to this must be added moral and religious oversight and care.

7. I may now introduce her CONDUCT AS A MOTHER. ‘*Her children arise up and call her blessed.*’ Happy the children of such a mother, who receive the lessons of wisdom taught by her lips, as well as by the example of piety, prudence, and sobriety — which she sets them in her conduct. With their character formed under the resilient influence of her own, and the consciousness how much they

owe to her influence, they rise up around her with feelings of gratitude and veneration; when surrounded with families of their own, they teach her grandchildren to reverence her; and when she has descended to the tomb, they pour those blessings over her grave which they had during her life been accustomed to offer round her chair, or in their evening prayer for her welfare.

Let it be the holy and honorable ambition of every mother to be crowned with the blessings of her children. Let every mother seriously ponder what she would really wish her daughters to be; what by general consent they would be praised for being — and that let her be herself! The mother should be as perfect a model as possible, for her daughters to imitate.

In the last chapter I gave directions to young mothers in reference to the early training of their children; let me now give a few hints to those whose children are rising up around them, or have become young men and women. I say then, be much at home yourselves, and that is the way, if your disposition, spirit, and conduct be loving and agreeable — to keep them at home. Make them fond of your society — by causing them to feel that you are fond of theirs. Throw an air of cheerfulness over the circle. A mother's smile is the sunshine of the domestic group, in which all delight to bask. Be happy yourselves, and you will then make your children happy around you. And yet let it not be a cheerfulness that degenerates into levity. Nothing can be more unseemly than a frivolous mother, indulging in undignified mirth — or frothy, gossiping, or slanderous discourse — in the midst of grownup sons and daughters. To be called a '*rattle-brain*' is no commendation of a mother.

Of all subjects on which a discreet mother will never joke with her children — *love* and *courtship* will be the last. A wise and good woman will avoid all trifling with matters of such delicacy and importance. To her sons she will exhibit in herself the model after which she would wish them to choose a wife; and to her daughters,

the pattern she would wish them to copy, should they ever become wives and mothers themselves. There should be a high and dignified bearing, softened by the tenderest affection; and a kindness and affability uncorrupted by a base familiarity. Her *authority* should insure the prompt obedience of her children, whatever be their age; as her *wisdom* should attract their confidence, and her *love* their gratitude and affection. She must be thus their *companion*, *counselor*, and *comforter* — and by the frankness of her own disposition, encourage their openness with her. They must be so treated as to be made to feel that they have no momentous secrets they could wish to conceal from her. And especially should she exhibit to them all the holiness, meekness, consistency, beauty and attractiveness of true religion — the sanctifying, humbling, spiritualizing power of genuine godliness in times of prosperity — and all its Divine support and heavenly consolation in times of adversity — that they may be won by her example to piety — and thus rise up not only on earth, and in time — but in heaven, and through all eternity — to call her blessed!

8. She is NOT DESTITUTE OF TASTE AND ELEGANCE. '*She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.*' Though not addicted to '*pride in dress*' and '*vanity in decorations*,' she maintains her rank and station in society by their external and conventional signs. Her wardrobe and her furniture are in keeping with her circumstances, her virtues, and her industry. And it is right that they should be so. Religion, my female friends, is not at war with elegance and good taste. It is itself the '*beauty of holiness*,' and the richest and purest moral taste. Neither despise nor idolize these matters. Be neither poorly dressed — nor a '*dressed doll*;' neither the slave — nor the despiser of fashion; neither excite disgust by your lack of attention to little matters of order, suitability and ornament — nor court admiration by extravagance, splendor and expensiveness. Be consistent with your station in all respects. Do not pretend the pride of poverty — any more than that of magnificence.

As to the elegant occupations for leisure hours of modern times, I refer to what in former chapters I have said on the subject of worldly accomplishments.

9. Note her PRUDENCE IN SPEECH. *'She opens her mouth in wisdom.'* She thinks before she speaks; and therefore neither introduces a bad subject, nor disgraces a good one by an improper manner of discoursing upon it. She has too just a sense of the value of the gift of speech, and too accurate an idea of the power of words for good or for evil, to employ them in idle gossip, petty scandal, or slanderous backbiting. She is neither too disinclined to talk — knowing that speech is given to be employed; nor too talkative — equally knowing that *'When words are many, sin is not absent — but he who holds his tongue is wise.'* The apostle James says — *'If any man offends not in word, the same is a perfect man.'* This, perhaps, is still more true of a woman, inasmuch as she is thought to have a greater propensity to loquacity.

The gift of speech is never more adomed than when employed in the soft and gentle tones of woman's voice uttering the words of wisdom and kindness. The gift of speech is never more dissonant and repulsive than when her tongue is voluble in folly or falsehood, malice or anger. Have we not all known husbands, a large portion of whose time has been employed in explaining the mistakes, correcting the follies, healing the feuds, and repairing the mischiefs, of wives who opened their mouths without wisdom? While on the other hand, has not many an Abigail, by her discreet and timely interposition and wise speech, averted the storm that was gathering over the family from the churlish language of Nabal, her husband?

Blessed is the woman who knows how to charm to repose the troubled thoughts of an angry or a vexed husband — who can discern when to be silent and when to speak — and how by the sweet tones of her voice to lull his agitated mind, and drive the evil spirit out of his bosom. Ah! it is at home that this wisdom of speech is most

needed. What stormy scenes sometimes arise from the absence of it, driving peace from the family and filling it with harsh discord and fearful strife!

10. Is KINDNESS AND BENEVOLENCE no part of the spirit and conduct of the virtuous woman? Let the text reply. *'In her tongue is the law of kindness. She stretches out her hand to the poor; yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.'* Her kindness begins with *thoughts*, goes on to *words*, and ends in *works*. In her heart, it is as a principle of charity; upon her tongue, as a law to dictate gentle, and soothing, and pleasing words. She speaks, and her expressions are as the droppings of the honeycomb, or the falling of the dew.

But her mercy is in her hand as well as in her heart and upon her lips. She does not merely say to the hungry and shivering, *'Be warmed and be filled,'* but she gives them with which to satisfy their hunger and clothe their limbs. And her kindliness of disposition is the golden thread which runs through all her life, and binds up all her actions, not only into a womanly, but saintly, benevolence. Her spindle and distaff so industriously employed, are worked not for herself alone, but for the poor and needy. She is not so taken up with those within the circle of her family as to forget those that are outside. Her benevolence is like a spring, which not only refreshes and fertilizes the spot where it gushes up and makes all verdant round its margin — but flows onward to carry its benefits to those at a distance.

She adorns herself with *'silk and purple,'* and makes *'coverings of tapestry'* for her own habitation, and clothes her household; but then also, like Dorcas, she makes garments for the poor. How beautifully does this feature of *kindness* come into the portrait; how does this diamond of *mercy* sparkle amid the other jewels of this charming character! What a blank would the absence of it have made! How would we have turned away, not with admiration, but

with sadness, from this industry, frugality, marital affection, good housewifery, maternal excellency, prudence, and elegance — if all these virtues had been exhibited in the iron setting of selfishness — instead of the gold of mercy! If this woman, the pattern of all household virtues, had been presented to us as so swallowed up in her cares for her own well-provided household as to do nothing for the starving and naked families around her — a dark shadow would have fallen on her otherwise bright character, and its luminousness would have passed at once if not into total, yet into partial eclipse. But it is not so. Mercy, like a midday sun, rises upon the scene, and sheds its luster upon all. Christian women, you must be the brightest patterns of kindness and mercy which our selfish world contains — and add to *temperance, patience, and godliness — Christian kindness and charity.*

11. Such a character cannot be unnoticed or unacknowledged; nor can such excellence pass through the world without admiration and commendation; and I now therefore note the HONOR AND ESTEEM WITH WHICH SHE IS TREATED. *‘Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.’ ‘Her husband also, and he praises her.’ ‘Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all.’ ‘Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman who fears the Lord — she shall be praised.’ ‘Give her of the fruits of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.’*

She seeks not human applause, and therefore acts no theatrical part; nor, for the sake of praise, attempts ostentatious display. Content with the love and esteem of her husband, the veneration and affection of her children, and the respect of her friends — she is not anxious to obtrude herself upon public attention, to shine in brilliant circles, or to have even her excellence made the subject of general commendation. Still, unsought praise will be given her. Spontaneous tributes and free-will offerings of honor and respect will be paid her.

Her husband will be the first to *perceive*, and the foremost to *acknowledge*, her excellence. If a grateful man, he will make her sensible of his just appreciation of her excellences, not by mere caresses, but by respect for her judgment and character; by commending her to her children, and bidding them follow her example. (Cases do sometimes occur of men so inferior to their wives, and so conscious of that inferiority, as to be jealous of their wives superior godliness, and envious of the talents and virtues they cannot imitate.)

A husband blessed with such a woman as is described in this chapter, should not be backward on suitable occasions to let others know the estimate he forms of her character. True it is that a wise man will not be always talking of his wife’s excellences; but he will, at proper seasons, feel a pride and a pleasure in exalting her in public estimation, and the public will not fail to give her the fruit of her doings. Let every one extol her virtue. Let her not lack the just commendation of her pious labors. But while some are magnified for the nobleness of the stock from whence they sprang; others for their fortune; others for their beauty; others for other possessions — let the good deeds which she herself has done, be publicly praised in the greatest assemblies, where, if all men shall be silent, her own works will declare her excellent works.

And to use the poetic language of Horne;

*‘The crown which her own hands have thus formed shall be placed upon her head as it were by general consent, even in this life; and her good deeds celebrated in public assemblies, shall diffuse an odor as pleasant as the smell of Eden, or as the cloud of frankincense ascending from the holy altar. When her task is ended, the answer of a good conscience, and the blessings of all around, sweeter than the sweetest music, shall chant her to her repose — until awakened on the great morning of the world, descending angels shall introduce this*

*daughter of Jerusalem into the joy of her Lord.'*

Such then is the character of the virtuous woman, as delineated by the mother of King Lemuel. By expanding the miniature as it was drawn by the pen of inspiration into a large and full-length picture, I have perhaps done injustice to the subject. If so, let those who are of this opinion, perpetually and closely study the original as it is found in the book of Proverbs. '*There,*' says Matthew Henry, in his quaint style, '*is shut up this looking glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by; and if they do so, their adorning will be found to praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*'

If, however, a wife devoid of all that constitutes her real excellence, will run counter to this beautiful picture — if instead of being the glory of her husband, she will seek to rival him, and will either attempt to be in the domestic skies the greater light to rule the day, or to throw into eclipse him before whom she should be content to be partially obscured — if instead of being content to be praised by him, and deeming his approving smile her worthiest object of ambition and her richest reward, she will seek the gaze of admiration and the language of flattery from strangers — if she is a wife who wantonly opposes his tastes, or neglects his comfort; who despises his opinion, and contradicts him with rigor, and resents with improper heat his real or unintentional slights — who exhibits indolence and not industry in the management of his household — and either by slovenliness allows all things to sink into uncleanness and confusion — or by extravagance hastens on the approach of poverty and ruin — who neglects even her children, and causes them to rise up in grief and shame for their mother — who gives her maidens constant occasion for reproach and complaint, on account of her ill-temper and worse conduct — who is restless and uneasy at home, but gracious and engaging everywhere else — who by her own conduct makes her husband happier everywhere else than at his own fireside — '*or if she be a wife, using her empire over her husband to*

*turn him away from the Lord, as the wife of Jehoram, whose fatal influence the Holy Spirit paints in the single expression, 'But Jehoram followed the example of the kings of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab, for he had married one of Ahab's daughters.'* A wife, in short, who constrains her husband to sigh in secret over the hour when he was blind enough to ask for her hand in marriage — and to look forward to the day when he shall lay before the tribunal of God the eternal wrongs she has done him — what plea can she offer for her conduct?' (Monod)

There are some few things of a GENERAL CHARACTER which may be worthy of notice in surveying this portraiture.

It is a very true and judicious remark of Mr. Bridges, that the standard of godliness here exhibited is not that of the religious recluse, shut up from active obligations under pretense of greater sanctity and consecration to God. Here are none of those habits of monastic asceticism that are extolled by some as the highest point of Christian perfection. Nor does any other part of Scripture, either of the Old Testament or the New, set up a finger-post pointing to the convent. I repeat what I affirmed in a former chapter, that no single practice pleading the sanction of religion, was ever the source of so much pollution and vice, or inflicted so deep a wound on morals — as monasticism. Woman's natural state is the marital one, into which she ought to be, and is usually, willing to enter at the call of Providence, and with all due discretion — and for which she should assiduously prepare herself.

Still, should there be some women of singular unselfishness, or exalted piety, who, either for the benefit of near relations, or from motives of zeal and mercy, and not from a superstitious notion of '*the superior sanctity of celibacy,*' shall be willing to forego the duties and felicities of the wife and the mother; who, I ask, shall forbid them? Such was the mind of the apostle Paul, whose words on this subject have been so eagerly twisted in favor of erroneous



opinions.

*‘If I search,’ says Monod, ‘throughout the whole world for the type of the most useful, the most pure, the most Christian charity, I nowhere find all these conditions better fulfilled than in the good aunt, who by a marvelous sacrifice, accepts the fatigues and the cares of maternity, without knowing its ineffable consolation. Sad she may be, but her sadness is heavenly, and transforms itself completely into love and sacrifice. But if no family engagements bind you, extend your view further; find out a family who has need of you; comfort the afflicted; form or support charitable institutions; assist a pious minister in his labors — in short in every good work for which God appears to have expressly reserved your liberty. Or embrace, for you may, a yet wider sphere. Embrace the world if you will, provided it be in the spirit of charity. In fine, accomplish your mission so faithfully, that when the hour of your death shall arrive, all may rejoice in the happy isolation which permitted you thus to devote yourself — and that amid the tender regrets which shall follow your mortal remains to the tomb, it may no longer be discerned in the sacrifice which you have made, whether you were wife or sister, aunt or mother, relative or stranger.’*

It cannot fail to impress every reader of this beautiful description of the ‘*virtuous woman*,’ that the delineation chiefly regards the ACTIVE VIRTUES of the female character. It portrays the clever, energetic, and prosperous female, surrounded by circumstances that call forth her industrious assiduities, invest her with power, and array her with public honor; rather than the quiet, gentle, and retired sufferer, struggling with adversity, or crushed by oppression, whose virtues consist of submission to the will of God, and patient uncomplaining endurance of the wrongs of man, perhaps of her husband — and the brightness of whose character is admired by God

and angels in heaven, rather than seen and extolled by men on earth. To the latter I would say, look up with believing prayer to God for the grace that is necessary to fill your dark sphere with the illumination of that holy virtue, which with lunar radiance shines brightest in the night.

Little of the glory of the character which I have been describing may fall upon you in the secluded shades amid which you are called to dwell. In solitude, with no eye to pity, no voice to soothe, no hand to help — you may be called to drink the cup of sorrow. Well, drink it, as did the greatest and holiest sufferer who ever passed through our valley of tears, saying, ‘*The cup which my Father gives me to drink, shall I not drink it?*’ The time will come when he who loves you better than you love yourself, shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

To those who by divine grace are copying the pattern set before them in this chapter, and are in circumstances to do so, I would say, cast the veil of *gentleness*, *modesty*, and *humility*, over all these fine traits of active, energetic character. Let the passive virtues of your femininity blend with and soften the active ones. Be sure to single out that lovely feature, ‘*the law of kindness is on her tongue.*’ With all this courageous energy in womanly conduct, unite feminine tenderness and *softness*. Whatever else in character you maybe, still be a woman, with all a woman’s *grace* and *loveliness*; and while as a wife, a mother, and domestic manager, you wield the authority and exert the influence which belongs to you, remember still there is one in the family, I mean your husband, whose authority is still higher than your own, and that it is at once your duty, and will be for your happiness, meekly and gracefully, though not abjectly and crouchingly — to bow to him.

Young women, I beseech you to make yourselves familiar with this exquisite passage of Holy Writ. It must be a study for you. There is much, very much, to be learned from it. You will here see

that piety is the broadest and most solid basis of all female excellence, and so far from interfering with temporal duties, will, wherever it is genuine, quicken attention to them. Godliness is profitable for all things — and assists every lawful pursuit. There is not a single good quality in the character which it will not improve — and no one earthly interest, provided it is legitimate — which godliness will not effectually promote.

Do not allow yourselves to be imposed upon by the misrepresentations of its enemies, who will persuade you, if they can, that piety is unfriendly to general character, and inimical to personal happiness; that it enjoins harsh duties — and forbids pleasures essential to youthful enjoyment. Upon candid examination it will be found that this objection to it, like all others, is utterly unfounded. Is there a virtue or a practice which can adorn or bless humanity which piety does not enjoin? And as to its most solemn, and what some would consider its most sorrowful duty — I mean repentance — I would remind you that this is not the only exercise of true religion; for there is the joy unspeakable of faith, as well as the grief of contrition; and the latter leads on to the former, just as the shower in the sultry heat of summer portends and produces a cooler atmosphere. True religion forbids no pleasure — but only such things as are injurious to the soul. True religion substitutes the substance of happiness for its shadows. It resembles a fine country in spring, where the hedges bloom and every thorn produces a flower.

Perhaps it will be thought by some a pity that a delineation of the virtuous man, equally minute, comprehensive, and impressive, was not drawn by the hand which gave us this picture of female excellence. In diminishing of our regret however, it is observable how *much of what is here said may be copied into the character and conduct of the masculine sex*. There is scarcely a rule of conduct here presented which may not, with a little change, be observed by the husband, the father, and the master. This virtuous woman's

fidelity to her husband, personal industry, good management and diligence in her family, consideration for the comfort and necessities of others, kindness of speech and pity for the poor, courtesy to all, and especially her sincere and practical piety — belong to her husband also — and are required of him as well as of herself! These virtues are appropriate to both sexes. They are the GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE AND VIRTUE — though adapted here to the female sex. And therefore we recommend husbands to study this portraiture, not only to see what their wives should be, but what is required of themselves also.

But who of either sex is sufficient for these things? None but those whose sufficiency is of God; and He will ever bestow upon docile and humble petitioners at the footstool of his grace — that gracious aid which is equal to the exigency of every case. While enforcing your various duties, and calling upon you to form for yourself a godly character, which, after exhibiting to the admiration of every beholder on earth its graceful proportions — shall endure with unfading beauty and undiminished grandeur through eternity — I would also remind you of your own indecision, feebleness of purpose, exposure to temptation — and consequent necessity of divine assistance. To obtain this help you must have faith in Christ, the source of all spiritual efficacy, and earnest prayer to God; and none shall seek this grace in vain.

I close a series of discourses on which, in consequence of the rarity of the effort and the delicacy of the subject, I entered, not indeed without some hope — but with much fear and trembling. So far as the pleasure of my own mind in preparing and preaching them, and the monthly attendance upon their delivery from the pulpit, were concerned, my expectations were more than realized. In laying down rules, pointing out defects, and occasionally in comparing the excellences and the faults of the sexes, I have had a somewhat difficult task to perform, and I can scarcely presume to hope that in the performance of it, I have given satisfaction to all parties. I must

be contented (and it is no small matter to be so,) with the conviction that I have endeavored to hold the balance with a steady and impartial hand — and in this I have satisfied my own conscience. I have praised, where praise was called for, and that was very often — but my commendation has not degenerated into flattery. And I have blamed, when blame was just — but it has been without bitterness. My object has been to promote the happiness of both sexes, by improving the character of the one on which so much of the happiness of both depends; and to advance the welfare of society by purifying its earthly source. How far I have succeeded it is impossible that I should ever know, and in the absence of certainty I must be comforted with hope.

I have looked upon woman as related to both worlds, as being bound to this world — by the ties of a wife, a mother, and a domestic manager; and to that world which is to come — by the grander and more enduring bond of immortality; and therefore as having to attain not only to social excellence — but to that which is individual in special relation to God, heaven, and eternity. I have contemplated you, my young friends, as the future wives and mothers of the next generation — and have endeavored to prepare you for discharging the duties of these momentous relationships. It has been my aim in these sermons, to open and prepare for you a smooth passage through this earthly state, gathering out of your way as many stones, and planting as many flowers as I could. And imperfect as may have been my counsels, and defective as may have been my views, I am confident that if my advice be taken and my rules observed, though there may be much sorrow in reserve for you — there will not be lacking a large share of consolation and happiness. It will be your fault, not mine, if your life becomes a dreary blank — a desert without an oasis — a wilderness without a spring.

But I have looked beyond this world, to that state where you will find yourselves with all those tender ties fallen from around you, and yourselves standing alone in your individuality and immortality. I

am duly aware, and I wish you to be so, that you sustain a personal relation to God, which requires an appropriate and prescribed line of conduct towards him, and for the neglect of which no other duties, excellences, or merits whatever, can be a substitute. It is not merely what you have been as a woman in society, or as a wife, a mother, or a manager in your family — but what you have been towards God, that will decide your lot in the day of judgment. You may have been the most exalted, noble, and learned of women; the most faithful of wives; the most devoted and kindest of mothers; but if, with all this, you have not had repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus, and true holiness — your domestic virtues, as they had in themselves no relation to God, and in their performance no reference to God, will, in the end, meet with no recompense from him — and instead of *‘Well done, good and faithful servant,’* you will hear nothing more than, *‘On earth, she had all the reward she will ever get.’*

Young women, contemplate your situation as I do, and as I now present it to you. There, further than the eye can reach, stretches out the vast plain of earthly existence, with all its varied landscape, its numerous roads, its busy population, its duties, its pleasures, and its dangers; you are traveling across it, and needing guidance, assistance, protection, and comfort along the way. Step by step you are going on, never stopping, but ever advancing, to what? To that *‘boundless ocean of eternity’* which lies beyond — on which you must soon embark — and on which so many of your fellow-travelers are every hour adventuring. Yes, yes, you are emigrants passing through time to embark for eternity! And ought you not, like other emigrants, to prepare for the voyage, and for the country to which you are going? Shall your attention be so taken up with the plain across which you are traveling, as to forget your embarkment upon the ocean that lies beyond it? Does one of all the thousands who are now crowding onto ships to immigrate, forget that he is soon to leave his country for one beyond the sea? Oh, no! And will you forget that you must soon, and how soon you know not, perhaps next year, or next month, immigrate to eternity? By what motive shall I induce

you to prepare for eternity! By what? Only by itself. For if Eternity be not enough to induce you to prepare for Eternity, by what other motive can I hope to succeed?

I now, in conclusion, refer you to that day and that scene, when the result of all ministerial efforts for the spiritual welfare of mankind, and of this among the rest, shall be ascertained and made public. Before that dread tribunal, you and I must appear. Not one single person of all who heard, or who shall read these discourses, will then be absent; and among the things to be brought into judgment will be this feeble, yet sincere and earnest, endeavor for your spiritual benefit. In reference to some of you it will, I fear, be found that I have been '*the savor of death unto death;*' but it is my prayer and my expectation, that to very many I may be '*the savor of life unto life.*' '*For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy!*'

- 1 Thesalonians 2:19-20