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THE GLORY OF WOMAN

IS

THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

BY THE

REV. CHARLES COLCOCK JONES, D.D.

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FEAR OF THE LORD.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—PROV. xxxi. 30.

No one thing, in social life, more distinguishes a Christian from a heathen country, than the consideration in which *females* are held, and the important and influential station which is assigned them in society. As the farther you depart from Christianity, the deeper is the degradation of females, and the more miserable and polluted the state of society; so, the nearer you approach to Christianity, and the purer its nature and the more efficient its influence, the higher is the perfection of female character, and the more virtuous and happy the community at large.

How great is the responsibility of females in Christian lands, to improve the blessings which God confers upon them through his holy word! Alas! there appears to be but a portion of them, who feel and endeavour to meet this responsibility. Many seem to vie with the heathen in vanity, and their influence is against the holy and purifying and life-giving religion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although they are cast by the hand of their Creator in a softer mould, and around their persons gather the strongest attractions, and the sweetest charities of life, yet have they had much to do in the ruin of our race. They, too, are

depraved, and by nature are children of wrath, even as others. And in setting out in life, they too, forget what is the chief end of man, and love the world, and serve the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. They wander far away from God, the fountain of living waters, and hew them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Jer. ii. 13. And we mourn over their sin and folly, and, in bitterness of spirit, see them go down to their graves without hope! They have mistaken the true glory and happiness of woman; they have persevered in impenitency; they have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the Spirit of grace; and judgment and fiery indignation have overtaken them at last, and consumed them as the adversaries of the Lord! "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 31. Oh! to think of their gentle frames holding such stout spirits of rebellion against the Lord, yea, against that condescending Redeemer, who humbled himself to be "*born of a woman*," and who, through all his weary and troublous life, showed them his special favour, and graciously received their ministrations of gratitude and love! Can the daughters of Eve lift up the heel against the "*Seed of the woman*?" Can they unite with the serpent, who beguiled them unto death, to bruise Him who comes to lay down his life for their redemption, on the cross? Nay, rather, will they not lift up their voices and weep, beholding the holy Sufferer there? Will they not come under the cross, with Mary his mother, and with Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, and confess him before all his cruel enemies, and embrace him in his agony and death, as their Lord and their God?

Truth and candour oblige us to make a difference in our

judgment of the characters of the daughters of men, and in the praises which we bestow upon them. The word of God teaches us in the text, that, whatever women may possess, the true ground of the excellency of their character, or, in other words, the true glory of women, and that which they are to prefer before all things else, and which forms the just foundation of their praise, is—*the fear of the Lord*. Let us pursue the text in the divisions of it, now indicated.

And FIRST: *The glory of woman is the fear of the Lord.*

“The fear of the Lord” is “the beginning”—the excellency—the chief part “of wisdom.” It is but another expression for *true piety*. Solomon thus speaks its praise: “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.” Prov. iii. 13–18.

The woman that feareth the Lord has, through grace, been brought to a true sight and sense of her sins: she has repented and sought forgiveness and salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. God hath shed abroad his love in her heart, and she has experienced joy and peace in believing. She has approached the Saviour in humility, and bowed down and washed his feet with the tears of her sincere contrition, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. To her Jesus has said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee—go in peace.” She hath seated herself with Mary at his feet, to be taught and led, and to be sanctified and saved by

him. She has sacrificed her beauty and favour, her talents and family, her station and wealth, and all that she possesses, *to the Lord*. Hear the language of this new-born soul : "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Psa. lxxiii. 24-26. She "hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." Luke x. 38-42.

You perceive that the work with her is *inward*. She hath been truly "called of God." She hath been "born again—born of the Spirit." She is "the child"—the "daughter" of the Lord.

Many women—some in the morning of life—hurry forward to a *profession* of religion. That profession they know to be reputable. They are told that piety adorns the female character and renders it attractive, and that it is a passport to favour and honour and prosperity, and they seek a profession of religion as a kind of recommendation, or as a happy finish to their other accomplishments. It is viewed as an important something, which the opinions of society have made an indispensable requisite in female character. True, in making a profession, which is a most solemn and responsible act, their conscience may be awakened. They may feel something of duty to God : something of the duty to repent and believe. Reading or hearing the word, they may do many things, and do them gladly : they may lay great restraints upon themselves, and make what they and others consider great sacrifices for religion's sake ; yet what is the conclusion of the whole matter ? *They are not truly converted!* They have been looking upon religion as a mere worldly affair, calculated to advance their worldly standing

and prosperity. God and his glory have not been in all their thoughts. However, they have *professed* his name. They are lifted up with pride and self-approbation. They think they have done something that renders them worthy and amiable. They are—added to all their other good things—members of the church. Miserable delusion! It is all a *profession*! They are still what they ever were! How soon do these females manifest that the love of God and of Christ is not in them! Do you ask in what manner? Judge for yourselves. Behold the vanity and frivolity of their lives. Behold how they “mind earthly things.” Behold their weak and sinful compliances with the foolish, hurtful and trifling fashions, and amusements, and customs of the world: their profanation of the Sabbath day, and contempt of the house of God and the solemn services of it: their disregard of parental authority, and sometimes open rebellion against it: their indifference to the opinions of the wise and the good, and avoidance of their society and observation: their neglect of their Bibles and of secret prayer: their ill-temper to their superiors, inferiors and equals: their disposition to ridicule persons and things, sacred and good: their pride, love of dress and show: their idleness: their tattling and slander, “speaking things which they ought not,” and things of which it is “a shame to speak” at all: their cherished malice, revenge, covetousness, and many other secret and sinful ways! Are *these* “the fruits of the Spirit?” Unstable souls! Deceitful workers! The apostle characterizes you as “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God:” “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:” “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” 1 Tim. v. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 4-7.

Such profession, so vain and shallow, must not be confounded with that fear of the Lord which is the glory of

woman. A difference must be made between women *professing*, and women *possessing* godliness.

The work of the woman that feareth the Lord is not *inward* only, but it exhibits itself *in her life*. Her fruit is unto holiness. Your observation will convince you that she "walks with God," daily: that religion is her comfort, her refuge, her strength, and her delight and happiness.

She giveth herself conscientiously to the *duty and the privilege of secret prayer*. Morning and evening and at other times, she retires to her closet, and having shut to her door, she humbly kneels and prays to her heavenly Father, "which seeth in secret."

She giveth herself conscientiously to the *reading and study of God's holy word*. Sweeter than honey to her taste is that word. In all times and seasons that pass over her, she seeks therein for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that she may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. She venerates that holy book, and makes it, above all the customs and opinions of the world, the man of her counsel, and her rule of duty.

She giveth herself to *sobriety and watchfulness*. She adorns herself in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with brodered, or plaited hair, or with gold, or pearls, or costly array. She pleases best, and is best pleased in herself, with Christian simplicity and neatness of dress: for her adorning is that of the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Her manners are not rude, nor wild, nor boisterous. Her voice is not heard afar off, but in all her conduct, and in her personal manners, she studies dignity, modesty and propriety.

She giveth herself to the *faithful observance of the holy*

Sabbath. She doth not absent herself on vain pretences from the public worship of God in any portion of the day. Neither doth she misspend any of its precious moments in prolonged sleep and in idleness, nor in visits of friendship or ceremony, nor in dinner, nor in evening parties or entertainments, nor in parties going abroad for recreation and pleasure. Nor doth she misspend its precious moments in frivolous worldly conversation, nor in reading improper books and papers, nor in writing letters, either of convenience, or of ordinary business, or of mere friendship, nor in unnecessary worldly employments and domestic avocations. If she be the head of the household, she commands her children and all under her authority to keep the way of the Lord, and to observe the holy Sabbath sacredly and throughout all its hours; for she calleth the Sabbath "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable:" and on that day she doth delight herself in the Lord. Isa. lviii. 13, 14; Ex. xx. 8-11.

She giveth herself to the *services of the house of God*. She feels it to be her duty and her privilege to be present in his sanctuary, and at all the ordinances of his house, and nothing but actual and unavoidable necessity detains her at home, or any of those who are subject to her control. She inwardly delights in the worship of her God and Saviour. Her worship is spiritual and sincere. She keepeth silence in God's holy temple; her behaviour evinces quietude, sobriety and reverence. She unites in the prayers and praises of Zion with the spirit, and listens to the voice of the preacher as to the voice of the messenger of God, and applies the truth to her own soul, and feeds by faith upon the provisions of his house. Her fellowship, with the disciples of her Saviour, is that of love without dissimulation, and she returns in peace to bless her own family and household.

She giveth herself to *love the brethren and the ministers of God*. She has been taught by the Spirit of God to love the brethren, yea, out of a pure heart, fervently, and without respect of persons. That love reveals itself in an expression of sincere good will towards them; in acts of kindness, performed in public and in private, according to her opportunity and ability, and their necessities. It reveals itself in a tender regard for the purity of their characters; the preservation of their good name; the promotion of their peace, and that of their families, and the advancement of their interests, both temporal and spiritual. She knows what a delicate thing is the reputation of God's ministers, and how much their success in their work, and the honour of religion, depend upon their being "of good report" with all men; she is therefore watchful against a spirit of criticism and of fault-finding, uncharitableness, and detraction. She upholds them by her friendship, her prayers, her godly example; and it is her pleasure to give them hospitable entertainment in her own home, and to receive the benefit to her family of their conversation, example and prayers.

She giveth herself to *good works*. These are her "adornment;" the adornment "which becometh women professing godliness." Not content to receive the grace of salvation in her own soul, moved by gratitude and love, she would help forward that work with all mankind. Willing to communicate, ready to distribute, she giveth of her labour and of her substance for the support and furtherance of the gospel at home and abroad, and for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and useful publications. Looking not upon her own things, but also on the things of others, and being ready to every good word and work, she takes an active part in prayer meetings, in benevolent societies, and especially in Sabbath schools. Faithfully and prayerfully she watches over the

children and youth committed to her charge, and God crowns her instrumentality with his blessing. She rejoices over converted souls, and will rejoice in that day of final account. She follows the footsteps of the Divine Redeemer, who went about doing good.

She giveth herself faithfully to the *duties of her family and household*. Here is her peculiar, her delightful, yet responsible field of labour, assigned her by the Lord. If she be an *unmarried* woman, then she fulfils in the family the duties of an affectionate, respectful and obedient daughter. Confiding in her parents as her best friends, she taketh no steps, formeth no friendships, receiveth no attentions, contracteth no engagements, without their advice and hearty concurrence. Fearful of inflicting a wound and a disgrace upon them; of disappointing all their fond expectations, and perhaps bringing down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; it is her prayer, her effort and her happiness, that she may be their comfort and their joy. As a sister, she is kind and tender; neither overbearing nor exacting, envious nor jealous, but cheerful, agreeable and useful, and thus quietly and efficiently commending her piety to the praise of all.

If she be a *married* woman, and bear the sacred and tender name and relations of a wife, then doth she love her husband, and do him good, and not evil, all the days of his life. "Who can find a virtuous woman?" saith Solomon. She is the woman that feareth the Lord, and "her price is above rubies." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." How beautiful is the expression, and how true! "*The heart of her husband.*" He has found a home for his affections, a bosom unfailingly faithful and true, to which he can always come, and upon which he can rest with the most perfect confidence, and with the sweetest peace, and the

calmest repose. His love is all her own. He trusts in her, and that safely: "so that he shall have no need of spoil," that is, of *riches*. She is all the world to him: his chief treasure, and more to him than all riches. She is ever with him, and all that he hath is hers. By her prudence, and industry, and frugality, she will make riches for him. Her soul is bound up with his. His interests, his character, his reputation, are her own. Though he meet with reverses in fortune, with evil from the evil men of this evil world; though he suffer in character; though the beauty and vigour of youth be gone, and he decline in years, or fall a prey to lingering disease, and be laid upon a bed of affliction and pain, yet she will never leave nor forsake him, but endure and suffer with him, and be a ministering spirit of life and of love around him and to him. She reverences her husband in her family, and supports his authority and influence there; and submits to him in the Lord, without peevishness, contention or discontent; and endeavours as a duty, in all her married life, by domestic virtues and graces, to make his own home, and her own person and society, the most attractive to him of any in the world. "By chaste conversation coupled with fear," she wins him over unto the Lord, "if he obey not the word:" and if converted, then it is her joy to see his "soul prosper," and to walk with him "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless."

And her *children*! Oh, who may speak the love, the tenderness, the unceasing cares, and the unwearied labours of a Christian mother! There is no eye like a mother's eye. There is no ear, no heart, no hand, like hers. These children "are an heritage of the Lord." They are "his reward." They are her "olive plants round about her table." She is grateful for them, and happy in them. To God hath she dedicated them. In his nurture and admonition doth she

bring them up : and for them she seeks first "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." She teaches their little tongues to lisp, "Our Father, which art in heaven." She prays with and for them, and unites with her husband in praying with and for them, and in every effort for their religious instruction and salvation. She leaves them not to the care of servants, or of any other persons, to the exposure of their health to injury, or of their characters to corruption and vice. She is choice in their associations, and brings them up to a strict observance of the Sabbath, the reading of God's holy word, and to secret prayer. Her soul travails in birth for them until Christ be formed in them the hope of glory. No cares, no privations, no self-denials are too great for her to endure for their good. She doth not weakly indulge them to their ruin, but imbueeth them with principles of modesty, virtue, truth, temperance, justice, honesty and patriotism. She shapeth their manners and habits to gentility, neatness and order ; giveth a spur to their industry, energy, and charity ; storeth their minds with knowledge by the best education which she is able to command for them ; and buildeth them up in noble, generous and elevating sentiments, and thus she fitteth them for time and for eternity.

If she be a *step-mother*, and have *step-children*, she will consider them a solemn trust which she has voluntarily assumed. She has entered into the place in the family, and into the labours, and comforts, and possessions of their own mother ; and she will be a mother to them. She will make no painful distinctions between her own children and the children of her husband's former wife ; she will not look upon them with an evil eye, and oppress and cruelly treat them ; nor will she breathe upon them with the cold breath of neglect, and envy and jealousy, meanly mortifying them,

and rejoicing in all the evil she sees in them, or in the sorrows, and disappointments, and neglects which they are called to endure. Nor will she strive, with the subtlety and maliciousness of the evil one, to poison the mind of their own father against them, and wean his affections from them, and so make them strangers, and worse than strangers, in their own father's house. Nor will she covet the property they have, nor try to dispossess them of it for the benefit of herself and the children of her own body. She remembers that they are motherless ones; that her children may one day be as they are; and that with God is her account.

If she be a *widow*, and hath passed through the agony and desolation of that hour when God took away the stay of her heart and the delight of her eyes, she "trusteth in God." He is her refuge and her portion, and she continueth in supplications and in prayers, night and day, and so liveth unto the Lord.

Is she a *mistress*? Then hath she "a Master in heaven." Her servants are immortal beings, like herself, and are hastening to death, judgment, and eternity. Their spiritual, as well as temporal, good demands her earnest regard. She doth not teach nor require them to falsify in her service, or for her sake; nor doth she encourage them to bear the news of the neighborhood to her ears, and so become spies and impudent tale-bearers and secret mischief-makers. She is not above the duty and the pains, according to her ability and opportunity, of instructing them in the way of life. She encourages her husband in his efforts to do them good. And should he not be a professor of religion, or should he be one criminally negligent of his duty, she will still feel it her duty to promote their comfort, morality and religion. She will not, like many, sit down in the enjoyment of every comfort of life, and never give herself the least concern to

know the condition and wants of those through whose instrumentality her comforts are prepared or do really come, and have no more feeling for them, and take no more interest in them, than if they dwelt on the other side the flood!

Her life, in her family, is marked with *industry*. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." She is "a keeper at home;" and within her own doors, is the evidence of her ceaseless activity. Time is precious. "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household." She is energetic. "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms." She is not *above* work, but worketh willingly. "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." She expendeth her skill, and industry, and perseverance upon things not curious, showy, and frivolous, but upon things useful and durable. When her husband goes abroad, he bears about him in his dress and appearance, the marks and evidences of the love and care of a wife that feareth the Lord. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." For her sake he will be honoured and honourable. For *her sake*, though *he* may not be worthy of it, his friends and neighbours will respect and assist him.

She is *provident*. She looks forward and keeps an eye upon the future as well as upon the present wants of her household. She lays up in store against the season of coming necessity—against the heat of summer and the cold of winter. "She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with double garments." She wastes not the provisions of her house, nor the resources of her family. She involves not her husband, nor herself, in debts and embarrassments, by expensive entertainments,

and by aspiring after associations and a style of living beyond their standing and their means, through pride and ostentation. She assumes no obligations, and opens no accounts which she cannot surely meet, for she is honest, and will owe no man any thing, but to love one another. Her providence and economy end in prosperity, for "she considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."

She is *prudent and kind*. Her speech, in her family, is cheerful, yet seasoned with gravity and the salt of grace. She backbiteth not with her tongue, nor receiveth, nor endureth, nor taketh up a reproach against her neighbour. She goeth not from house to house, a busy-body in other men's matters. Her loins are girt about with truth: she neither maketh a lie, nor uttereth the lies of others. She giveth no advice to others, nor doth she countenance that in them, which might involve her and her family in painful collision with neighbours who dwell securely and peacefully by her. She will brave evil for truth and righteousness' sake, yet will she not readily become a party in other men's quarrels. She heareth both sides, and acteth the part of a peace-maker, for she hateth strife and letteth it alone ere it be meddled with. "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

And she crowns her household by making it one of *charity*. In her, the poor and the distressed find a ready and sympathizing friend. She feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, and visits the sick and those in prison, and ministers unto them: yea, it matters not if they be the evil and unthankful; it matters not if men be her enemies, she will forgive and do them good. None who know her fear to venture on her goodness. The Master hath said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive:" and she feels it to be so in

her very heart. "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Here, then, is plainly set before you, "the woman that feareth the Lord." The faith wrought in her by the Holy Ghost purifies her heart and enables her to overcome the world. Whatever there is of beauty, of excellency and of loveliness in female character, dwelleth rightly in her; she possesses that which is emphatically the true glory of woman. And this is the first part of the text. We proceed to the

SECOND division: namely, that this fear of the Lord is to be preferred before all things else.

The hearts of women are set in them, naturally, to covet beauty, and riches, and talents, accomplishments, and the favour of men.

Beauty hath its attractions and its influence. When it is bestowed, it is the gift of God; for we made not ourselves. It is he who causeth us to differ one from another. Nor is this gift to be despised; it is to be used to God's glory. But it is not to be coveted for its own sake, nor gloried and trusted in as a possession and a portion. What saith the text? "Favour," that is, gracefulness, or beauty itself, "is deceitful:" for the words "favour" and "beauty," in the text, mean the same thing. She who prides herself upon the possession of beauty, and trusts in it as a portion, is *deceived*. Beauty promises more than it ever performs. A woman is led to expect from it, more than she ever realizes. She is blinded and deceived by it, and drawn into many sins and follies.

It lays the foundation for *pride* and *haughtiness*. She carries herself above others, less favoured, and for her presumptuous airs she receives their hatred in return. She is filled with *vanity*, and her simple displays meet with contempt. She becomes *jealous* and *suspicious*. Trifles discom-

pose her. She cannot bear neglect; she cannot endure a rival. She loses good friends and makes bitter enemies. To cherish her beauty and add to the fascination of her charms, and the extent of her reputation, she devotes herself to dress and show, and to company and great assemblages, and her habits incline to dissipation and extravagance, and a foundation is laid for additional traits in her character of *covetousness* and *selfishness*. Carried away with self-conceit, and the admiration and flatteries of men, she wastes her precious time in the care and adornment of her person, to the neglect of the cultivation and improvement of her mind, and too frequently degenerates into a beauty without intelligence, vapid and tasteless: a flower bereft of its fragrance, to be delicately plucked and cherished, but after a little time, carelessly, if not rudely, cast away!

Beauty deceives and sometimes *lures to ruin!* It lays a vain and giddy creature open to the attentions and flatteries of specious, designing and unprincipled men. Her head is turned: she is spell-bound—infatuated! She resists all influences to the contrary, powerful and affecting as they may be, and she bestows her affections and her person upon a man, the most unworthy of men:—or, it may be, she makes shipwreck of character and standing for ever!

Beauty is not only “deceitful,” but it is “*vain.*” It is empty. It cannot be depended upon, for it soon decays, and the fashion of it passes away for ever!

Does the beauty depend upon the smiles, the caresses, and attentions of men? Her beauty grows old and commonplace. It wanes in its freshness and brightness, and they turn to some newer and brighter one. Does she depend upon the warm attentions and fervid devotion of the man who has made her his companion for life for her beauty's sake? The charm vanishes on possession, and love having

no better foundation, is but a mere passion; like a flame kindled with stubble, it rapidly burns out, and disappointment and misery usurp its place.

Yea, how vain, how empty is it! A single fit of sickness despoils it of its glory. And sickness too, induced, perhaps, by fashionable modes of dress, and by most imprudent exposures, conceived to be necessary, by those who would live fashionably; and so, the heedless female sacrifices herself, upon her own altar. Age certainly, either with slow or rapid progress, takes away the rose from the cheek, and furrows the face with wrinkles. The brilliant complexion fades; the sparkling eye grows dim; the pearly teeth decay; the glossy hair is frosted; the fine figure loses its round and perfect proportions:—the days of youth and beauty are over and gone! Presently comes ghastly death. The frail “tabernacle” shrinks into paleness, leanness and corruption, and we are obliged to bury our dead out of our sight. We consign the body, once so beautiful and so attractive, to the dark, damp and lonely grave: “for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” How deceitful and how vain a portion is this!

And what will it avail in the day of judgment? How strange the infatuation! How extraordinary the idolatry! That an immortal being should make a god of its own frail face and earthly tabernacle of flesh and blood, and fall down and worship and serve itself, “the creature, more than the Creator, who is over all blessed for ever!” “Idolaters—shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Rev. xxi. 8.

The hearts of women are set in them to covet *riches*. If they are born to riches, they look to them to cover over defects in personal charms, and in education, and in talents and in standing. Their possession, in their opinion, entitles

them to consideration, and to elevated and flattering connections in society. If they are not born to riches, they desire them, as in themselves capable of gratifying every want, of commanding every attention, of subduing enemies, creating friends, affording comfortable establishments, and supplying them with all the conveniences and elegancies and luxuries of life. They will be independent of the world, and say, We will take our ease, eat, drink and be merry. Such are the fancies that fill their minds. But God warns us of "the deceitfulness of riches." They yield not what they promise, nor what we fondly and confidently anticipate from them. When possessed, they bring cares and troubles to protect, to preserve, to manage and to improve them: and they give rise to fears and anxieties lest we be deprived of them and sink into poverty. They tend to foster pride, hardness of heart, selfishness, worldly-mindedness and forgetfulness of God. In themselves they cannot confer happiness. Our true happiness depends not so much upon our outward circumstances, as upon the inward state of the soul. The diamond may glitter upon a bosom swelling with disappointment and grief. Misery may recline in the palaces of kings.

But what will you say, should the wealthy woman become an object of speculation, and be affianced to a man that seeks not her heart, but her estate? The step once taken cannot be retraced. It is for life! Too late she discovers the deception to which she has fallen a victim. If she be a woman of honour and sensibility, language fails to give you an adequate conception of her disappointment and chagrin. Happy shall she be, if she is enabled to restrain her feelings of absolute hatred, contempt and disgust at the perfidious wretch she has taken to her bosom! Happy shall she be, if she *can* bear up under the intolerable load that oppresses her, and find some objects of interest in her family, to beguile her

thoughts, and to engage her affections, and contribute something towards domestic happiness and peace!

And here are other considerations. Is she not liable to *lose* her wealth and to become poor? "For riches certainly make themselves wings: they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." Prov. xxiii. 5. And is there not a time for her to *die*, as well as others? Will not death separate her from all that she here possessed? Can she "give God a ransom, that she should still live for ever, and not see corruption?" Psa. xlix. 6-9. Riches shall not profit in the day of wrath, when God shall deal in judgment with her soul! Prov. xi. 4. And when she *is dead*, having heaped up riches, doth she know who shall gather them? Psa. xxxix. 6; or what blessing or what curse they may be to those who come after? "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them," Psa. lxii. 10, for they certainly are not the true glory of woman.

Females pride themselves upon their *intelligence and learning; their accomplishments and wit; and upon the favour and the praises of men*. These are all talents of value, good in their places and when applied to proper uses. But they are not the true glory of woman. Take woman at her best estate in this life. Grant her beauty and wealth; adorn her with talents and learning, and with accomplishments and wit; and enrich her with every social virtue, and present her spotless, pure and lovely, and of good report before men: yea, enable her to say, as did the young ruler in the gospel, who came kneeling to the Saviour for instruction, "All these have I kept from my youth—what lack I yet?" and what will be our Lord's reply? "*One thing thou lackest.*" That want overbalances all that you possess. You see it to be so. The crown has not been put upon your head. The love of God is not in you, and, dying without repentance and faith,

you will die without hope. Your end shall be, "to be cut off!"

We must return to the woman "that feareth the Lord." She it is that hath chosen "that good part which shall not be taken away from her;" the one thing needful, which is to be preferred before beauty and riches, and wit and learning, accomplishments and the favour of men; and passing by all others we say with the text, in its

THIRD and last division, "*she shall be praised.*" When you behold her sobriety, her love, her gentleness, her meekness, her kindness and virtue; when you behold her neatness and industry, her prayerfulness, peacefulness, conscientiousness; her decision and benevolence, yea, all the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, living and abounding in her, how lovely does she appear! She is an angel of light on earth, and she shall be honoured, respected, venerated, loved and praised by the *children of men*.

She shall be praised by her *parents*, in the family, for her dutifulness and affection; the comfort of her mother, the darling of her father's heart, the sweet associate of relatives and friends.

She shall be praised by her *companions*, for the purity of her character, and her bright and unobtrusive example before them.

She shall be praised by her *husband*. His heart rejoices in her; he remembers all her love, and surrounds her with his tenderness, and he saith with gratitude, "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers, and a prudent wife is of the Lord." Prov. xix. 14; xviii. 22.

She shall be praised by her *children*. What worlds of love, what tender recollections, and what soothing, precious, and controlling influences are wrapped up in that one endearing word *mother*! Happy are the children who have a

mother "that feareth the Lord." They rejoice in her; they esteem and copy her virtues; they obey her precepts. Their own conduct and characters testify to her excellency. "Her children rise up and call her blessed." And when she sleeps in the dust of the earth, and they shall hear her sweet voice and see her kind face no more, and feel her gentle, tender hand upon them, and meet her warm kisses on their lips no more, they will cherish her dear memory, and visit her silent resting place with tears, and carry her counsels with them to their graves.

She shall be praised by her *servants*; for they cannot forget her condescension, her kindness, her instructions, and her care.

She shall be praised by her *neighbours and kindred*: "they will give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

She shall be praised by her *brethren, her sisters, and her pastor in the Lord*. She is a mother in Israel, a saint in God's house. Her light shines, and she is a comfort and a support to God's people. Zion hath one on whom she can depend for labours and prayers; one that is not weary in well doing; one that is flourishing, and bears fruit in old age.

She shall be praised by the *world around her*. Who can estimate the happy influence of a woman that feareth the Lord, upon the children and youth, the middle aged, and the aged, of all classes and conditions, who know not the Lord? She is a living epistle, known and read of them all. Her admonitions, her counsels, and her acts of kindness and benevolence impress their hearts and consciences, and she is made the instrument of arresting them in their downward career; of instilling into them right principles, and of leading them to the Redeemer of sinners.

And let me add, above all, she shall be praised by the *Lord God and her Redeemer*. The Lord will not forget the child of his everlasting love. He will not forget how he opened her heart to attend to the concerns of her soul's salvation. He will not forget to commend her wise choice, through his grace, nor to manifest himself to her, for her comfort and her joy. He will not forget her prayers night and day, nor her love for the courts of the Lord. He will not forget how she hath brought up her children, and guided her house; nor how she hath lodged strangers, and washed the saints' feet, and relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work, and given none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 1 Tim. v. 10-15. The Lord will be her God. He will be with her in life, and deliver her in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch her. Job v. 19. He will never leave nor forsake his saint, and when she is called to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, she shall fear no evil, for her Shepherd and her Redeemer will be with her, to comfort and support her there. Is she dead? How respectfully and tenderly are the last sad offices performed for her! The warm tears of her husband, bending over her and embracing her in an agony of grief, and the tears of her distressed children, are upon her cheeks. They would embalm and keep her sweet person from corruption if they could! How weep her friends and kindred, and the many who have assembled to pay her the last tribute of their respect! Her loss, how deeply felt! how sincerely deplored! At her funeral her pastor pronounces the words, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13. The grave has closed over her precious remains. They are left in the care of Him who is "the resur-

rection and the life." We follow her spirit into that upper and brighter world, whither it has been borne by the angels. She stands before the judgment-seat of Christ. He confesses her before his Father, and the holy angels. "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." See, he clothes her in a white robe; he places a crown upon her head, and gives her a palm of victory in her hand. She draws nearer unto the throne of God and the Lamb. See—she goes deeper into the glory that surrounds it. She casts her crown before it, and mingling with the redeemed, she sings with them the song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6. She is the woman that feareth the Lord. She is now "ever with the Lord." Blessed art thou in thy glory, thou sainted one! "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain—but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

I. Suffer me now, my female friends, to urge you, who have not made this happy choice, to choose at once the fear of the Lord.

When you remember what mighty influences you are capable of exerting upon your families, upon the congregations to which you are attached, upon the communities in which you dwell, and upon the world at large, and that these influences will flow down from you to generations yet unborn: when you remember what numerous talents Almighty God has given into your hands, to be used in his service and to his glory, and that he will shortly come in some day, or in some night, and require your souls, your immortal souls, of you; you ought not to be surprised that the ministers and the people of God desire you to choose the fear of the Lord.

How important! All your other acquisitions, yea, all the things you can possibly desire, are not to be compared with it! If you possessed the whole world, you would be poor indeed without the fear of the Lord. And why so? Because if you have not "the fear of the Lord," your soul cannot be saved. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Is not this the voice of the Redeemer himself? Oh, that your hearts might be opened to attend to his word, spoken to you!

You are not your own, but the Lord's. He has created you with his own hand, and redeemed you with the blood of his own Son, his own "unspeakable gift," to perishing men. You are, therefore, bound to love and to serve God supremely and for ever. This is your first, your greatest duty. All things are wrong, and will continue to be wrong with you, until this duty is, by the grace of God, properly attended to. And how criminally have you neglected it? Some of you are *daughters*, even in the morning of life, and blessed with all the means of grace and opportunities of salvation, perhaps having pious parents, who have done, and are now doing, what they can for you; and yet you have not "remembered your Creator in the days of your youth." Some of you are *mothers*. God has himself given you children. The awful responsibility of preparing them for eternity is placed in your hands, and you yourselves are "without Christ—having no hope—and without God in the world!" What a thought! Mothers without religion! Oh, shall those dear children lift up their eyes in torment, and see you at hand, and cling around your necks, and weep and wail in your ears, and press you down, deeper and deeper, in hell-fire for ever and ever! Some of you are *grand-mothers*, perhaps, and after so long a time, and after so many

mercies, have no saving faith dwelling in you. Are your gray hairs to go down without hope to the grave? It touches the heart to see an aged man walking in the ways of sin and death; but it is more affecting still, to see an aged woman in this state.

Your prospects for eternity, my friends, are very dark and gloomy. Your spiritual interests demand your special care and attention, and you should give them immediate consideration. Your sins in general may not be as open, and gross, and startling as are the sins of men, yet you are both by nature and practice sinners. You are but flesh born of flesh; having a carnal mind that is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be. There is none of you that doeth good; no, not one. You have been walking in times past, and are now walking, according to the course of this world. You are not on the Lord's side, but are under the power of the evil one. God reckons you among the children of disobedience. Your days are spent in fulfilling the lusts of your fleshly mind. Oh, how far off are you from God! And they that be far from God "shall perish." You are numbered among the wicked, and "God is angry with the wicked every day." You are condemned already in your unbelief and impenitency. Yea, the wrath of God abides on you. Look up, O ye sinners! look up, and see the frown upon his awful brow! Look up, and see his hand stretched out over you, and a drawn sword in it! Be not deceived. The holy and sin-hating God is no respecter of persons, nor can he be mocked. Young, and tender, and delicate, and pleasant, and important, and cherished as you may be in your own eyes, and in the eyes of men; and good as you may think yourselves to be, and as men may tell you that you are, yet God, who knows your unregenerated, unbelieving, ungrateful, prayerless and rebellious

hearts, will reward you according to your works, and he will make you as stubble in the fire, in the day that he undertakes to deal with you. Then will he smite the crown of your defenceless heads, ye daughters of iniquity! Then will he take away all your joys and your pleasant ornaments. Your sweet odours shall afford no more delight, and you shall have burning instead of beauty.

O my friends! consider the fearful condition of your souls. Can you remain quietly, saying, Peace! peace! while you are hastening rapidly on to death and judgment, for which you are wholly unprepared? Come, come, make an effort. Break these chains that bind you. Cast off this lethargy of death. Care not for the observations of men. Be about the business of your soul's salvation. "Search the Scriptures"—long neglected as they may have been. You will find them testifying to you of Jesus, the almighty, all-sufficient, compassionate Saviour, whom you need. Go down upon your knees, unused as they may have been to bow to God, and with your heart and tongue make humble confession of all your sins—and break them off by righteousness. Plead with God to renew your heart, and open it as he did Lydia's. Plead with God to reveal his Son Jesus Christ in you, by his Holy Spirit, that you may believe in him with all your heart, and be no longer under condemnation, being justified by his blood. Plead with God to accept you in the Beloved, and implant his love and fear in your heart, and make you an heir of glory everlasting. The Lord have mercy upon you! He will not cast you out if you come in Jesus' name. The Lord turn you, and enable you to do this, and you shall be saved!

2. And be you, my friends, who fear the Lord, steadfast in your high profession, even unto the end. I mean, of course, those of you who *truly* fear the Lord. You, who

have *professed*, and have merely a name to live, while you are dead, and who in your consciences have little or no hope and comfort in your religion, less appropriate to yourselves than the promise nor blessing of the text. You shall *not* "be praised." You may think that you stand; you may flatter yourselves upon some sort of experience and evidence, that you fear the Lord; you may look upon yourselves with great complacency because you are esteemed Christians by members of the Church, and by your pastor, and it may be, because you are praised by men for your piety and good works; but you are deceiving yourselves. Your sincerely pious friends, who know you privately, and have opportunity of knowing you intimately, see very little of spiritual religion in the general course and conduct of your life. They stand in serious doubt of your conversion! And why are you less friendly with them and less free in your intercourse, and under more restraint, than with other light-minded, trifling professors, male and female, of your acquaintance? Why do you take a dislike to them for kindly revealing to you some of your faults, and suggesting to you some of your neglected duties? Why are you offended with the minister who insists upon some fundamental doctrine of God's word; or some plain duty; or some evidence that must show itself in the heart and life of the individual who is actually regenerated? Your heart is not right in the sight of God. Spiritual religion you have no experience of. To describe it, to insist upon it, to press it upon you, makes you feel uncomfortable, unpleasant, rebellious at heart. How perfectly has the Divine Redeemer, who knows what is in man, described your character:—"For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved!" John iii. 20. Oh, how little is the Church benefited by you! What are you doing for God? How much

does the cause of religion suffer at your hands, by your luke-warmness, your negative conduct, or your direct, yet disguised opposition, or by your absolute worldly-mindedness and deadness! How frequently do you give occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully, and you appear to be wholly unconscious of the evil of your words and ways! What bitterness of spirit, what malice, what prejudice, what fixed hatred, what rejoicing in evil, what revenge! Did you never read in God's word, that hypocrites, and deceivers, and unbelievers are found in his Church? Such barren fig trees do but cumber the ground in the vineyard. Such dry and withered, fruitless branches on the vine, are doomed to be cut off and burnt in the fire!

But thanks be to God, "there is a remnant" among you, my female friends, "according to the election of grace." Many of you do fear the Lord, in spirit and in truth. Of some of you it may with truth be said, the unfeigned faith that is in you, dwelt first in your grandmothers and in your mothers. God hath raised you up to take their places, now that not a few of them are dead and gone. Blessed is that church in which are seen mothers and daughters in Israel, succeeding each other as the generations come and go on the earth.

What unnumbered benefits have flowed from the prayers, and the faith, the precepts, and examples, and labours of pious women in all ages of the Church on the earth! Who dares despise them? God hath put great power into their hands for good, though he has not called them to the high places, and to the public work and services of office-bearers in his kingdom. How have they ministered to Christ with a boundless charity, in the person of his afflicted and suffering disciples! How have they laboured in the gospel with the pastor of the flock, and with a fervent zeal that could not

be quenched! How have they sustained declining churches, bringing in again the reviving influences of God's Spirit, not staggering at the promise through unbelief, but strong in faith, giving glory to God! How have they honoured and enjoyed the means of grace by a constant attendance amidst all discouragements! How have they kept up meetings of prayer and schools, for the training of children and youth for happiness and heaven! How have they infused life and energy into benevolent societies and missionary operations! What numbers of husbands, sons and daughters, and servants, relatives, friends, and neighbours, and strangers, yea, *heathen* in distant lands, have been, directly and indirectly, converted and brought home to God, through their instrumentality! The grace of God hath wrought mightily in them, and through them, and will continue so to do, till time shall end. How many of them being dead, yet speak! Their remembrance shall outlast that of queens. Our heavenly Father hath "*sons*" and he hath "*daughters*" also; and the Lord will give them a crown of righteousness and of glory, "in that day."

Be steadfast, my Christian friends, and press forward in the fear of the Lord. "Look not behind you:—Remember Lot's wife!" You know the value of religion; the preciousness of Christ; the power of his love; the sweetness of his Spirit; the glorious hope of his salvation. You would not exchange it for all worlds. That merciful God who has led you thus far, and some of you through painful and dark hours, through grievous afflictions, temptations and trials; through sicknesses and dangers of death, and who has been with you, and comforted and sustained you, be assured, will "*never leave nor forsake you*" in time to come. "Commit the keeping of your souls to him, in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." Be strong in the Lord, and in the power

of his might, and say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Gird up your loins, be watchful, be sober. Set your light upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Continue, by your pious examples, to cheer and animate your brethren in the Lord, and by your efforts to uphold every good work. Continue, by your prayers, your works of faith and labours of love, to draw down blessings upon your families, your churches, and the world. And when it shall please God to call you from his service here on earth, it will be to enjoy him in heaven for ever. Generations that come after you, shall rise up and call you blessed. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

THE SAVIOUR'S REGARD FOR WOMEN.

(FROM COX'S FEMALE SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.)

The personal conduct of the divine Author of Christianity, tended to elevate the female sex to a degree of consideration in society before unknown. During the life of our Lord, women were admitted to a holy familiarity with him, attended his public labours, ministered to his wants, and adhered to him with heroic zeal, when their attachment exposed them to insult, danger and death.

Immediately after the marriage at Cana in Galilee, where he attended with his mother, he accompanied her with his brethren and disciples to Capernaum. That excellent spirit, for which he was remarkable from his earliest years, continued to influence his mind in maturer life, and taught him justly to appreciate and perfectly to exemplify the domestic and social duties. He did not scruple to converse with a Samaritan woman, who came to draw water at Jacob's well; though his disciples, in whose minds Jewish prejudices continued to prevail, expressed their astonishment at his condescension. Never was there so fine a specimen of patience, gentleness and humility, blended with true dignity, as upon that remarkable occasion. He instructed her ignorance, endured her petulance, corrected her mistakes, awakened her conscience, converted her heart, and eventually honoured her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her Samaritan friends. At another time, when the disciples rebuked those who brought their little children to him, that he might put

his hands on them and pray, he kindly interposed; and evincing the most sympathetic tenderness towards the solitudes which, on such an occasion, would necessarily pervade the maternal bosom, he said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven: and he laid his hands on them." On various occasions, when he performed some of his most illustrious miracles, females were personally concerned, and shared his distinguished notice and condolence. Such particularly was the case when he met the funeral procession at Nain: it was that of a young man, represented in the simple and affecting language of the evangelist, as "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." The meeting was apparently casual; but Jesus was instantly and deeply impressed with the circumstances: he in particular felt compassion for the weeping parent—addressed her in kind and gentle terms—remanded the spirit from its eternal flight, to inhabit again for a season the body from which it had so lately departed, and delivered the reanimated youth to *his mother*. He blended his tears with those of Martha and Mary, at the sepulchre of their brother; and after instructing them upon the subject of the resurrection from the dead, restored him to their wishes and affections. Women "ministered unto Jesus of their substance;"—"the daughters of Jerusalem" bewailed him when he was led to crucifixion—and the women that followed him from Galilee were deeply interested spectators of his sufferings, observed his sepulchre, and prepared spices and ointments. It was Mary Magdalene who enjoyed the honour and happiness of a first manifestation after Jesus was risen from the dead, and she was commissioned to go and inform the rest of his sorrowing disciples.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

THE greatest discrimination is necessary to enable mothers to adapt themselves to temper and circumstances. Their influence is great, and so is their responsibility. Discretion should be their crowning feature. They should watch the first dawn of conscience, and withhold blame until the moral sense has done its duty. They should rebuke in private, as if none was aware but they of the existence of criminality. They should warn with tears, that love may work a channel for reformation in the obdurate heart. They should join counsel with prayer, uniting the springs of human action with the machinery of an invisible, yet omnipotent power. On them mainly depends, under God, the formation of the religious habits of the young and rising generation. Their lessons, though presently overlooked, will be ultimately felt with pressing urgency. The recollection of maternal piety has often rushed upon the soul in scenes of vice, and succeeded in reclaiming the offender when every other human means had failed. How many, who are now walking along the narrow way, can exclaim with the enchanting poetess—

“And if I e'er ~~to~~ heaven appear,
A mother's holy prayer,
A mother's hand and gentle tear,
That pointed to a Saviour dear,
Have led the wanderer there !”