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*Last hours of Christian women,
or, An account of the deaths of ...*

Henry Clissold



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H. Adlard, sc.

*"My good sister, let me intreat you
to learn to die."*

LADY JANE GREY

LAST HO

SOME

FROM THE

"Live to



LAST HOURS OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN;

OR,

An Account of the Deaths

OF

SOME EMINENT CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

FROM THE PERIOD OF THE REFORMATION TO THE BEGINNING
OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

BY THE

REV. HENRY CLISSOLD, M.A.

“ Live to die, that you by death may gain eternal life.”—LADY JANE GREY.



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P R E F A C E.



THE present age is distinguished by a great advancement in general knowledge. This intellectual progress is not confined to either sex, or to any particular class; it is almost universal. Young English women, however humble their birth and station, are diligently instructed in our parochial schools. Numerous institutions promote the education of the middle class of society in languages and sciences. Colleges are being established in many quarters, where professors of repute direct and promote the learning of pupils in the higher branches of literature.

Considering the future influence for good or for evil, which our English women will one day exercise on each household respectively, on husbands, children, and servants, and therefore collectively on the entire nation, it is of supreme importance that religious principles and habits be so implanted in their youth, so rooted in their education, as to grow with their growth,

and strengthen with their strength; that religion may never be supplanted by mere human knowledge and attainments, which, however useful and necessary, were not designed to supersede that divine wisdom, which, descending from above, is so inseparably connected with the soul and her future well-being, when tongues shall cease, and human knowledge shall vanish away.

Valuable is the testimony afforded by one of our English Churchwomen on this very subject. She had made great progress in the mathematics, the classical languages, and general philosophy. Her strong memory and exalted mind made her covet more and more knowledge, and in this particular alone, she would often say, "It was a sin to be contented with but a little." But after all this, with profound humility of mind, she would cry out with St. Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord."

"I have heard her say," we are informed by her biographer, "that human learning was worth nothing, unless it leads to the knowledge of Christ revealed in the Gospel as the only Saviour. What availeth Solomon's skill," she would ask, "in all the works of Nature, if by them we be not brought to see the God of Nature? What is it to be so skilful in astronomy, as that, by the

motions of the heavens, we can foretell things here below, if we never study by our holy practices to come thither? What is it to be so skilful in arithmetic, as that we can divide and subdivide to the smallest fraction, if (as God hath revealed to us in His Holy Word), we do not learn to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom? What is it for a physician to be skilful in foreseeing and preventing the diseases of the body, if (as God hath revealed unto him) he knoweth not where to find that balm of Gilead, the wine and oil of that Samaritan, the Lord Jesus Christ, to pour into the festered wounds of his own soul and conscience?"

While engaged in our studies it will be wise to compare the mere temporary use and application of many kinds of knowledge with the infinitude of the divine life, which, in its effects, advantages, and duration, is commensurate only with eternity itself. Are not the refinements and accomplishments of the present day, frequently carried to such an excess as almost to obliterate the principle from the youthful mind, that religion "is the one thing needful?"

What can impress upon the mind a more powerful conviction of the wisdom of being religious, than a contemplation of these instances which so forcibly remind us that it is appointed

for us once to die, and that much is required to fit us for that change; and that pleasant vanities, personal accomplishments, and a progress in elegant literature and modern languages, cannot afford the required assistance in such a work?

While thoughts of wisdom, derived from a consideration of the end of all things, suggest many warnings against the unprofitable hours of idleness, vanity, and pleasure, reflections upon the extensive influence of female piety afford many encouragements to a diligent, useful, and religious course of life. The personal piety of the prophet Samuel, and those numerous benefits which he conveyed to the nation as ruler and judge, were the divine response to his mother Hannah's supplication and tears. We know not how much of the faith which is in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit may have imparted to the soul of the youthful Timothy, through the teaching of Lois and Eunice, or to how great an extent their instruction may have enabled him "as a child to know the Holy Scriptures," which made him "wise unto salvation." His knowledge was conveyed, and his character formed under a mother's care, and he became one of the greatest ornaments of the primitive church, preaching the words of eternal life, and as overseer or bishop, in-

trusted to "commit the same truths to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also."

From these instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures we may pass on to the succeeding history of the Christian Church, which presents to us several examples most clearly showing the religious impressions produced by mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, on the minds and habits of those dwelling under the same roof; many individuals, whose characters had thus been formed, being raised, in after life, by Divine Providence, to the highest stations of honour and usefulness in the Church of Christ; and affording unto woman every encouragement from above to cultivate the saving knowledge of religious truth, and, so far as she can, assiduously to communicate the blessing to others.

Macrina, the sister of St. Basil the Great, was named after her grandmother. When yet a child, Macrina manifested a strong religious feeling, and delighted in works of piety. Before she was twelve years old she knew the Psalter by heart. On the death of her betrothed, Macrina led a single life, and devoted herself to the duties of the family circle, assisting her mother in the education of her numerous brothers and sisters, of whom St. Basil the Great was one. He was born A. D. 329, in the town of Neo

Cæsarea, and, from his infancy, he was dedicated to God. Lying at the point of death, his life was granted to the faithful prayers of Basil and Emmelia, his father and mother. From the tenderest age lessons of piety were carefully bestowed upon him—the effects of which were permanent. For, with beautiful simplicity, St. Basil says, in one of his letters, “the idea of God which I had from my blessed mother, and from my mother Macrina, has ever *grown* with me.” Much of his childhood seems to have been spent under the roof of his grandmother, who had been herself a pupil of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and was well able to lay a good foundation for the future learning of her grandson. The history of the Church testifies how great was the Divine blessing bestowed on the labours of those pious women.

The biography of St. Chrysostom affords a somewhat similar instance. The father Secundus died shortly after the birth of his son, Chrysostom, leaving him in the tutelage of his mother, Anthusa, named also Secunda, who became a widow at the early age of twenty. He could hardly have had a better guardian; for her character seems to have been one of no ordinary stamp; it was marked with piety, decision, and prudence. Young as she was she might have

pleaded her need of an assistant and protector to her children. Anthusa, however, resolved to devote herself entirely to their education, and so to bring up her son, that in after years she might take pleasure in reflecting on the sacrifices she now made for him. The gratification experienced in the piety and persuasive preaching of her son, far exceeded her expectations.

Of St. Ambrose it is recorded that he enjoyed the greatest of all domestic advantages, the constant influence of a happy, pious, home. His sister, Marcellina, resided with her mother, and devoted herself to works of charity and piety. Her superior age, and the holiness of her life, gave Marcellina the strongest influence over her brothers. They seem always to have preserved for her a most devoted affection, amounting almost to veneration, and throughout his most active episcopate, Ambrose corresponded amply and confidentially with this beloved sister, who received the recompense of beholding in him one of the most eminent of the Fathers of the Christian Church.

Of Gregory, the father of Gregory Nazianzen, we thus read in Dr. Cave's lives of the primitive Fathers.¹ "He had been unhappily educated in an odd sect of religion, a kind of

(1) Third vol. octavo, pp.2 and 3, "Lives of the Primitive Fathers," by W. Cave, D.D.

Samaritan mixture, made up of Judaism and Paganism, or rather some select rites of each. The chief instrument of his conversion was his wife, who continually plied him with prayers and importunate persuasions, which at length made impression. A Providential circumstance happened which turned the scale. He dreamed one night, that he sung that passage in David's Psalms, 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.' This way of singing seemed a little strange to him, but withal inspired him with a secret pleasure and delight. The good woman, his wife, was not to be taught how to improve the passage, which she explained and urged with all its advantages; she magnified the mighty kindness and condescension of heaven, pressing him not to be wanting to his own salvation, nor any longer to resist the call of God, but immediately to break through whatever stood in the way to hinder him. He now yielded up himself to her importunity, and that nothing might be wanting, an opportunity presented itself to crown and complete it. Leontius, bishop of Cæsarea, passing that way, received Gregory as a catechist and baptized him."

Of Nonna, the mother of Gregory, to whom we have just alluded in the preceding narrative, as having been an instrument in the hands of God

for the conversion of her husband, it is further related, that she was one of the most eminent of her sex. A woman descended from a pious family, whose virtues she improved to such a height, that (if we may believe the account which her son everywhere gives of her) she became for piety the wonder of her age. Children she then had none, at least but one daughter (if Gorgonia was her eldest), and was eagerly desirous of a son, in which behalf she often solicited Heaven, promising, as Hannah did in the like case, if God gave her one, she would entirely devote him to His service. Her prayers, like those of Hannah, prevailed above, and God, to satisfy her present importunity, was pleased to grant to her the thing for which she asked. No sooner was the child born, than, careful to perform her vow, she immediately consecrated and gave him up to God. We need not say to how great a height in the Church the providence of God raised this son of a pious mother's prayers, and no wonder that God hearkened to the petitions of such a wife and mother as Nonna, and that He blessed her with the conversion of her husband, and the dedication of her offspring to Himself, so that the son, Gregory Nazianzen, became one of the greatest ornaments in the Church of Christ.¹

(1) "Lives of the Primitive Fathers," by Dr. Cave.

However interesting and encouraging these instances may be, the examples of Monica and St. Augustine are still more so. Never were these lines more suitably applied,

“ ’Twas Thine own comfortable word
That made the lesson known ;
Of all the dearest bonds we prove,
Thou countest sons’ and mothers’ love
Most sacred—most thine own.”

We, therefore, present in full a narrative which so clearly establishes the truth, that a mother’s religious influence combined with a mother’s love is a sacred instrument used by God himself to turn a sinner from the error of his ways. This was instanced in the case of Monica, the mother of St. Augustine. We will, however, first mention her persevering and successful efforts to convert her husband. Monica, the wife of Patricius, and the mother of St. Augustine, was distinguished by an ardent love of the sacred scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation. Her pious wishes with regard to her husband were not finally disappointed—they were fulfilled after many years of prayer ; for before his death, Patricius, who before had been a heathen, and a man of a violent temper, became a Christian, and was baptized, and gave corresponding proofs of the renewed heart, mind, and disposition.

Such an excellent wife would be a good mother. St. Augustine loves to dwell upon her excellencies, for to her, under God, he owed his earliest impressions of religion. She watched over her little son with the tenderest care, and entered him, when young, among the Catechumens.

Notwithstanding her care, St. Augustine fell into the Manichæan heresy. His affectionate and religious mother spared no pains to reclaim her son from error. She had, after much anxiety and many prayers, succeeded in converting her husband, and doubted not that her Heavenly Father, who willeth not the death of a sinner, would favour her endeavour to reclaim her son. For this purpose she consulted a learned and pious bishop, entreating him to converse with St. Augustine, and shew him the falsity of the doctrines which he held, and thus bring him back to the right path. The bishop, who was well versed in such matters, replied, that, "At present Augustine was too much puffed up by his own learning, and too self-sufficient to profit by his admonitions; but let him alone a while," he said, "only pray to God for him; he will of himself, by reading, find what that error is, and how great its impiety." Monica was but half satisfied, and renewed her entreaties and tears that the bishop would see her son; till he, almost vexed

with her importunity, dismissed her, saying, "Go thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish." These words became prophetic of St. Augustine's conversion, usefulness, and true greatness in the church of God.

For when at Rome, and while still attached to the Manichæan heresy, St. Augustine was seized with a dangerous illness. "Had I parted hence," he says, "whither had I departed but into fire and torments, such as my misdeeds deserved in the truth of Thy appointments?" (Confessions ix. 16.) But his mother's prayers were rising unceasingly for him, and they won "the healing breath" for him, and Augustine recovered. He refers with emotion to what would have been the agony of his mother, had he died in this state of impenitency and heresy. From this time a new light seemed to open upon him. In the Psalms he found afterwards the richest and most unfailing delight. Monica, too, was of great use with her tranquillity of age, motherly love, and Christian piety. (Sermon 180 and 307).

We now advance near to a result which shews that "Wisdom is justified of her children," and that God rewards the pious parent with an answer to her prayers.

St. Augustine left Milan with Monica and his son. They arrived as far as Ostia, when God, having granted all the prayers of the pious Monica, saw fit to call her from this world. One evening, the mother and the son stood gazing on the sea, and talking of those things which were of eternal interest to both, or as St. Augustine himself tells us, "We were discoursing together, alone, very sweetly; and forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we were inquiring between ourselves, in the presence of The Truth, which Thou art, of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be, which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man;'" at last Monica said, "Son, for mine own part, I have no further delight in anything in this life. . . . One thing there was for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see thee a member of Christ's universal Church before I died. My God hath done this for me more abundantly, that I shall now see thee withal, despising earthly happiness, become his servant. What do I here?" (Confessions, Book ix. x. 26.)

Shortly afterwards she was taken ill, and told her children that she should die there. Monica's illness lasted but nine days; and thus, in the

fifty-sixth year of her age, November, 387, this venerable Christian woman expired.

God had permitted her to be the humble instrument of converting her husband and reclaiming her son. Monica could experience no higher degree of joy in this world. She was enabled to say, "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for *mine* eyes have seen thy salvation;" and at the same time, to appropriate the cheering words of the angel to St. Paul, "Lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." If Christian relatives and friends are permitted to recognise each other in heaven, how indescribably great the felicity of this Christian mother, in rejoining her husband and son! for she beheld in them the proof that there is a God who heareth prayer, and the pledge that there are no supplications more acceptable to Him, than those which are offered from the heart of a Christian wife and mother.

Having thus considered those examples presented by the primitive Christian church, which encourage the piety of woman, we will adduce some instances from the history of our church.

In the sixth century Bertha persuaded her husband Ethelbert, to receive the words of eternal life, and induced the Saxons to embrace

Christianity. Many other instances of the kind we might have adduced, but there are some, the details of which we cannot omit, so suitable are they to the object we have in view, the illustration of those many domestic and public benefits, with which God blesses the piety of woman; and we purposely select our examples from the humbler walks of life, to anticipate the objection, that while queens and others in high life have urgent motives for a life of industry and piety, they who live in comparative retirement, have no such incentives, nor any rewards equivalent to the required sacrifice and self-denial of worldly enjoyment.

Of Richard Hooker's father and his pious mother, we are thus informed by Izaak Walton. "They were not so remarkable for their high birth, as for their virtue and industry, and God's blessing on both." Of the exercise, influence, and reward of the mother's devotion we thus read, and on the same authority. "When about eighteen years, he (Richard Hooker) fell into a dangerous sickness, which lasted two months, all which time his mother, having notice of it, did, in her hourly prayers, as earnestly beg his life of God, as the mother of St. Augustine did, that he might become a true Christian, and their prayers were both so heard as to

be granted, which Mr. Hooker would often mention with much joy, and pray that he might never live to occasion any sorrow to so good a mother, whom he would often say he loved so dearly, that he would endeavour to be good, even as much for his mother's sake as for his own." ¹ This son, the subject of her prayer, became one of the best men and ablest divines in the Church of England, and this blessing, we have reason to believe, may have been an answer from above to a mother's entreaties at the throne of grace.

Archbishop Usher's first steps towards learning, his first entrance into her gates, were guided by two incomparable aunts, both of them born blind, "but of most seeing intellectuals, well acquainted with letters, in a way extraordinary to our manner of knowing them. They, at the same time, taught him to know his alphabet, and the use thereof in advancing letters into words, teaching him to read in his own native tongue, and also to spell and read the mind of God in his own conscience, and the sacred writings of the Bible." ² They had the satisfaction of observing that the blessing of God attended their anxious

(1) Walton's Life of Richard Hooker.

(2) Life of Archbishop Usher, prefixed to his Body of Divinity, pp. 3 and 4. Edition, 1702.

labours, in those strong religious impressions which they conveyed.¹

The next example which we present of the reward annexed to female piety, is that afforded by the mother of Bishop Hall. His mother was a woman of rare sanctity, whom afflictions, both of body and spirit, had chastened and blessed. The influence of her piety was felt within the circle of her acquaintance, and her son could look back to her instructions and conversations in the bosom of her own family, with the most grateful remembrance. "How often," he says, "have I blessed the memory of those divine passages of experimental divinity which I have heard from her mouth! What day did she pass without a large task of private devotion, whence she would still come forth with a countenance of undissembled mortification. Never any lips have read to me such feeling lectures of piety, neither have I known any soul that more accurately practised them than her own. Temptations, desertions, and spiritual comforts, were her usual theme. Shortly, for I can hardly take off my pen from so exemplary a subject, her life and death were saint-like."² This same Joseph Hall, who

(1) Venerable Richard B. Hone, M.A., Archdeacon of Worcester.

(2) Life of Bishop Hall, by the Venerable R. B. Hone, M.A., Archdeacon of Worcester.

received the benefit of her prayers and pious converse, was, in after life, set on a hill as a burning and a shining light, not only to guide and cheer us in the paths of religion, but also to assure all pious mothers in the Church, "your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

"Whatsoever thou takest in hand remember the end,¹ and thou shalt never do amiss." (Eccles. vii. 36.) This is the voice of wisdom crying aloud to each successive generation; and if the precept were more generally observed, our aims and pursuits would be more worthy of immortal and responsible beings. To impress this truth more deeply on the minds of our readers, we have brought before them the closing scenes of life, as presented to us in the examples of those who died the death of the righteous, not one of whom regretted, in her last hour, the choice she so wisely had made, or bewailed the life of faith and holiness, which, influenced by God's grace, she had so happily selected. Their blessed experience has been bequeathed, as a most valuable legacy, to succeeding generations. They are God's witnesses, that "Wisdom is justified of her children," that, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

(1) "Remember thy latter end," as it is expressed in the Latin copies. Doyly and Mant's Bible.

To shew the connexion which the Author of our being has made between a happy death and a holy life, is one of the chief objects in this little work.¹ We shall therefore give some insight into the religious principles and practices of these holy women; we shall observe the training of their minds, and discipline of their tempers, their habits of devotion, public and private, their daily study of God's word, and delight therein, their love of the divine ordinances and the holy sacraments, their fears and doubts, their trials and sorrows, their joys and consolations, their meekness in health and resignation in sickness, their faith in life and triumph in death. Persuaded that the best way to prepare to "die the death of the righteous," is by living his life, we desire to present a view of those Christian graces and virtues, which so eminently distinguished these servants of God, that following their good examples, so far as they followed Christ, "we may, with them, be partakers of everlasting life."

We must not expect to read, in these memoirs, of those stirring events which are found recorded in general biography. While the offices of the state and the bar, the senate and the battle-field, are filled chiefly with men of aspiring minds

(1) For a help to a preparation for death, the reader is referred to the Preface of "Last Hours of Christian Men," by the same Author.

and worldly renown, the Christian woman is discovered in the more quiet retreat, and unobtrusive walks of homely life and duty, directing her domestics, instructing her children, comforting the distressed, visiting the sick, and distributing to the wants of the needy. So that truly it may be said "her life is hid with Christ in God."

If we could faithfully picture to ourselves one of these English Churchwomen, we should see her leading a godly and a quiet life, making the Saviour's Sermon on the Mount the test of self-examination and the rule of conduct; led by the spirit of charity to visit fallen greatness in an alms' house, and to converse with a brother or sister in affliction, though under a low thatched roof; walking abroad to gather the healing herb, as nature's simple remedy, where medical aid could not be procured, and waiting patiently beside the bed of the sick, the aged, and infirm, during the hour of sleep, that the sufferer, on awaking, may hear the voice of prayer, or the word of consolation.

If we visit her at home, we should see her as a wife, using the influence of love, to lead her husband into the paths of virtue and religion; thus making the sacred friendship of the married life, a means for uniting their souls indissolubly in heaven; abstaining from luxury in food, and all

needless expense in dress, that she may have more to give to the sick and aged, the orphan and the widow. As a mother, we behold her carefully bringing up her children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and by her example encouraging them in the way to heaven. As the mistress of a family, ruling well her household; and, considering the servants as an integral portion of the household of God, and of the Church of Christ, which he has bought with his precious blood, catechising, teaching, and directing them in the way wherein they should go; to subdue the pride of station, to nourish the feeling of humility, and to encourage others in the path of industry, plying the wheel, the needle, and the distaff, in the midst of the family circle. In general intercourse with the world, introducing religion, so as to edify her friends and acquaintance, at the same time, not making it the subject of curious speculation or flippant discourse; meek in manner, the law of kindness dwelleth on her lips; on all occasions endeavouring to repress anger, strife, and hatred; deaf to the voice of the malicious, the tale-bearer, and the slanderer, she is ever ready to censure them by silence, or, if need be, by gentle reproof.

If we view her in reference to the highest and most important of all duties, we shall find her

striving to perform her baptismal vows and promises, especially those which bound her to renounce the pomps and vanity of this wicked world; to preserve alive the spirit of devotion in herself and household, carefully performing the duties of public and family prayer, and kindly assisting her domestics in a preparation for partaking, with herself, of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and to avoid, as much as possible, the intrusions of the world, devoting herself, at stated times, to private prayer, meditation, and reading of God's word.

Above all, we notice that humility is her distinguishing feature, for, while she is assured that without holiness no one shall see the Lord, she is persuaded that her faulty and defective services can be accepted only in and through the merit and mediation of her Saviour, that there is no other name by which she can be saved, no other ground or title to eternal life, and that it is only in the robe of Justification by Christ, and of Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, that she can be accounted meet to be a "partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Thus arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, she patiently awaits the hour of her departure, knowing that death is not a termination, a cutting off of being, but merely a transition, a

passing from an earthly to a heavenly state. All circumstances relating to the time and place of her removal, she leaves to infinite love, and unerring wisdom, convinced that He who has guided her by His counsels here, will hereafter receive her into glory.

In many respects this may be considered an ideal picture, and you may feel not able to copy it; but though some parts are obscured by time and others obliterated by custom, are not the chief parts drawn from real life, worthy of study, and capable of imitation ?

Such patterns may surely teach us to use this world as not abusing it, to set our affections on things above, and not on things of the earth; to make our pursuits and pleasures, our talents and learning, our thoughts and actions, our time and opportunities, subordinate to the one great purpose of life, a preparation for an eternal existence, and in so great a work ever to look unto Him for grace and assistance, without whom we can do nothing; always remembering that this world is not our home, that it is our school of probation, in which we are to be trained by habits of self-discipline and divine dispensations, for another, a better, and a glorious state of existence.

THE Reader will observe that a large portion of this work consists of passages from authors contemporary with those whose last hours are here recorded. The fidelity of the narratives has thus been preserved: and the frequent variations occurring in the language and style will hence be accounted for.

This little book is earnestly recommended to the perusal of those who are in health, that it may prove of greater use and benefit to them in the time of sickness. "Remember," says Robert Nelson, "to be that in health, which you will wish to have been when you come to die."

A companion volume to this, by the same Author, on the Last Hours of Christian *Men*, has been published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and may be obtained at any of the depositaries of the Society.

MONTPELLIER, SOUTH LAMBETH,
January 1st, 1851.

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LAST HOURS

OF

CHRISTIAN WOMEN.

LADY JANE GREY.

DIED 1554.

LADY JANE GREY was proclaimed Queen of England by the Duke of Northumberland, whose son, Lord Guildford Dudley, she had married, and who had persuaded her cousin, King Edward VI., to settle the crown upon her by a formal deed of settlement. The nation, however, generally did not acknowledge her as their Queen, nor did she herself desire the crown. Mary, who, as the sister of Edward the Sixth, was the hereditary successor, caused her and her husband to be imprisoned under sentence of death, which, however, was not immediately executed: but in the following year, 1554, some persons having raised an insurrection in her favour, she was beheaded by order of the Queen, as were her husband and father.

Lady Jane very early in life gave astonishing proof of her abilities, and though there was very little difference in age between her and King Edward VI., who was thought almost a miracle, yet in learning she was not only equal to him,

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but his superior. Her person was extremely pleasing, but the beauties of her mind were still more engaging. She had great abilities, and greater virtues, and, as Bishop Burnet says of her, "she was the wonder and delight of all that knew her." She was a great proficient in secular learning, still greater in divine knowledge. By diligence and perseverance she so numbered her days as to apply her heart unto wisdom. Well versed in the classical, and many of the more recent European languages, she was also well skilled in Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic; so that she was enabled to enjoy the reading of the Bible in its original language.

She was remarkable for a sedateness of temper, a quickness of apprehension, and a solidity of judgment, which enabled her not only to become the mistress of languages, but of sciences; so that she thought, reasoned, and spoke upon subjects of great importance in a manner which greatly surprised even persons of the best judgment and abilities. And yet she was in no respect elated by these extraordinary endowments, but was remarkably gentle, humble, and modest in her demeanour.

Mr. Roger Ascham, who was tutor to the Princess, afterwards Queen Elizabeth, came to pay a visit to Lady Jane Grey at her father's seat at Broadgate in Leicestershire. While all the rest of the family were hunting in the park, he found her at her studies, reading a book which related to the Immortality of the Soul; and when asked, why she should lose such pastime in the park? smiling she answered, "I wist all their sport in the park is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant." "And how

came you, madam," said Mr. Ascham, "to this deep knowledge of pleasure? and what did chiefly allure you to it, seeing not many women, and but very few men have attained thereto?" "One of the greatest benefits," she replied, "that ever God gave me is, that he sent me so sharp and severe parents, and so gentle a schoolmaster.¹ Thus my book hath been so much my pleasure, and bringeth dayly to me more pleasure, and more, that in respect of it all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles unto me." "I remember," adds Mr. Ascham, "this talk gladly, both because it is so worthy of memory and because also it was the last talk I ever had with her, and the last time that ever I saw that noble and learned lady."

Here then we see the advantage of the principle adopted in this work, which would present the reader with some notices of the religious life, in order to show its connexion with the peace and happiness of the Christian's death. We have seen with what assiduity she read the Holy Scriptures in the original language; the conversation with Feckenham the Romanist, and the letters which she wrote to her sisters, &c., show that the leading truths of Christianity were not received by her merely as theoretical truths; it is evident they were the foundation of her principles, the resting-place of her hopes, the stay of her heart and mind amid those changes and chances of this mortal life, which she was soon about to experience in so remarkable a manner.

Many are the proofs afforded of her excellent understanding, her proficiency in learning, and her heavenly spirit, which ascended to the highest

(1) Dr. John Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, was her tutor.

elevation of human life with sincere reluctance, and descended from it with as sincere pleasure. But the brighter parts of her piety and goodness are still to be seen, of which, that we may have a clear and full view, let us particularly attend her in the sunset of life, and collect, if I may so speak, every ray which adorned her in her preparation for death, and even in her last moments. History itself has never afforded a more remarkable instance of one of so tender an age, and of her gentle sex, enduring such a cruel death, with greater fortitude and resignation.

The Christian principles which supported her she urged on the notice also of Mr. Harding, in a letter which she wrote to him, from the close of which we make the following extract :—

“ Last of all, let the lively remembrance of the Last Day be always before your eyes, remembering the terror that such shall be in at that time with the runnagates and fugitives from Christ, which, setting more by the world than by heaven, more by their life than by Him that gave them life, did shrink, yea, did clean fall away from Him that forsook not them ; and contrariwise the inestimable joys prepared for them that, fearing no peril, nor dreading death, have manfully fought, and victoriously triumphed over all the powers of darkness, over hell, death and damnation, through their most redoubted Captain, Christ.

“ Be constant, be constant, fear not for any pain ;
Christ hath redeemed thee, and heaven is thy gain.”

On her receiving the notice that she must prepare for her approaching death, she said, “ You are much deceived if you think I had any desire of life, for I assure you that I long for nothing so much as death.”

Bishop Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, furnishes us with the following memorials of the latter part of the life of Lady Jane Grey, who, at eighteen years of age, had attained to this great proficiency in learning, but who was more ennobled in her death by the exercise of Christian fortitude and resignation. "The Lady Jane Grey had now lived six months in the constant expectations of death. Feckenham, afterwards Abbot of Westminster, was sent to her three days before by Queen Mary to prepare her to die. He had a long conversation with her, but she answered him with that calmness of mind, and clearness of reason, that it was astonishing to hear so young a person of her sex and quality look on death so near her, with so little disorder, and talk so sensibly both of faith and holiness, of the Sacraments, the Scriptures, and the authority of the Church. Feckenham left her. She wrote to her father (see the letter) to moderate his grief for her death, which must needs have been great, since his folly had occasioned it. She rejoiced at her approaching end, since nothing could be to her more welcome than to be delivered from that valley of misery into that heavenly throne, to which she was to be advanced, where she prayed that they might meet at last. She sent her Greek Testament, which she had always used, to her sister, with a letter (which also see) in which, in most pathetic expressions, she sets out the value she had of it, and recommended the study and practice of it earnestly to her. She had also composed a devout prayer (see the prayer) for her retirements, and thus she spent the last moments of her life."¹

The following is a brief extract from the letter which she wrote to her father but a few days before

(1) Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. ii.

she suffered death ; she being then about eighteen years of age. " Father, I can so patiently take it, as I yield God more hearty thanks for shortening my woeful days, than if all the world had been given into my possession with life lengthened to my will. Thus, good father, I have opened my state to you, whose death is at hand ; although to you, perhaps, it may seem right woeful, to me there is nothing more welcome, than from this vale of misery to aspire to that heavenly throne of all joys and pleasure with Christ our Saviour ; in whose stedfast faith, if it be lawful for the daughter so to write to her father, the Lord that hitherto hath strengthened, so continue you, that at last we may meet in heaven, with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." To Lord Guildford Dudley, her husband, she said, that in the other world " friendships were happy, and unions indissoluble, and that theirs would be eternal, if their souls carried with them nothing of terrestrial, which might hinder them from rejoicing." Her last words were, " Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

An exhortation written by Lady Jane Dudley, the night before her execution, at the end of the New Testament, which she sent to her sister, the Lady Catharine Grey :

" I have here sent you, my dear sister Catharine, a book, which although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, or the curious embroidery of the artfullest needles, yet inwardly it is more worth than all the precious mines which the vast world can boast of ; it is The Book, my only best beloved sister, of the Law of the Lord ; it is the Testament and last will, which He bequeathed unto us wretches and wretched sinners, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy ; and if you with a

good mind read it, and with an earnest mind follow, no doubt it shall bring you to an immortal and everlasting life; it will teach you to live, and learn you to die; it shall win you more and endow you with greater felicity than you should have gained of our woeful father's lands; for as if God had prospered him, you should have inherited his honours and manors, so if you apply diligently to this book, seeking to direct your life according to the rule of the same, you shall be an inheritor of such riches, as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, neither the thief shall steal, neither yet the moths corrupt. Desire with David, my best sister, to understand the law of the Lord your God: live still to die, that you by death may purchase eternal life, and trust not that the tenderness of your age shall lengthen your life; for unto God, when He calleth, all hours, times, seasons are alike; and blessed are they whose lamps are furnished when He cometh, for as soon will the Lord be glorified in the young as the old. My good sister, once more, again, let me entreat you to learn to die: deny the world, defy the devil, and despise the flesh, and delight yourself only in the Lord. Be penitent for your sins, and yet despair not; be strong in faith, yet presume not; and desire with St. Paul to be dissolved and to be with Christ, with whom, even in death, there is life. Be like the good servant, and even at midnight be waking, lest when death cometh and stealeth upon you, like a thief in the night, you be, with the servants of darkness, found sleeping; and lest when for lack of oil you be found like the five foolish virgins, or like him that had not on the wedding-garment, and then you be cast into darkness or banished from the marriage. Rejoice in Christ, as I trust you do: and seeing you have

the name of a Christian, as near as you can, follow the steps, and be a true imitator of your master, Christ Jesus, and take up your cross, lay your sins upon his back, and always embrace Him.

“ Now, as touching my death, rejoice, as I do, my dearest sister, that I shall be delivered of this corruption, and put on incorruption; for I am assured that I shall, for losing of a mortal life, win one that is immortal, joyful, and everlasting. The which I pray God grant you in his most blessed hour, and send you his all-saving grace to live in his fear, and to die in the true Christian faith; from which, in God’s name, I exhort you, that you never swerve, neither through hope of life, nor fear of death; for if you will deny Him, to give length to a weary and corrupt breath, God Himself will deny you, and by vengeance make short what you by your soul’s loss would prolong; but if you will cleave to Him, He will stretch forth your days to an uncircumscribed comfort, and to his own glory; to the which glory, God bring me now, and you hereafter, when it shall please Him to call you. Farewell, once again, my beloved sister, and put your only trust in God, who only must help you. Amen.

“ Your loving sister,
“ JANE DUDLEY ¹.”

We will here add those portions of a prayer written by her which may be of some use to others, when in greatness of trouble.

“ O Lord, Thou God and Father of my life, hear me who flyeth unto Thee only in all troubles

(1) Writings of Edward VI., Lady Jane Grey, and others. 8vo. London, 1831.

and miseries. Thou, O Lord, art the only defender and deliverer of those that put their trust in Thee, and therefore I, being defiled with sin, encumbered with afflictions, unquieted with troubles, wrapped in cares, overwhelmed with miseries, do come unto Thee, O merciful Saviour, craving thy mercy and help, without the which so little hope of deliverance is left. Albeit it is expedient, that seeing our life standeth upon trying, we should be visited sometime with some adversity, whereby we might both be tried whether we be of thy flock or no, and also know Thee and ourselves the better; yet Thou that saidest Thou wouldest not suffer us to be tempted above our power, be merciful unto me, I beseech Thee, that I may neither be too much puffed up with prosperity, neither too much pressed down with adversity, lest I being too full, should deny Thee my God, or being too low brought, should despair. Oh! merciful God, consider my misery, best known unto Thee, and be Thou now unto me a strong tower of defence, I humbly require Thee. Suffer me not to be tempted above my power, but either be Thou a deliverer to me out of this great misery, either else give me grace patiently to bear thy heavy hand and sharp correction. It was thy right hand that delivered the people of Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh, which for the space of four hundred years did oppress them, and keep them in bondage. Let it therefore seem good to thy fatherly goodness to deliver me, for whom thy Son Christ shed his precious blood on the cross. How long wilt Thou be absent? For ever? O Lord, hast Thou forgotten to be gracious, and hast Thou shut up thy loving-kindness in displeasure? Wilt Thou be no more intreated?

Is thy mercy clean gone for ever; and thy promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Why dost Thou make so long tarrying? Shall I despair of thy mercy, O God. Far be that from me. I am thy workmanship, created in Christ Jesus; give me grace, therefore, to tarry thy leisure, and patiently to bear thy works, assuredly knowing, that as Thou canst, so Thou wilt deliver me, when it shall please Thee, nothing doubting or mistrusting thy goodness towards me, for Thou knowest better what is good for me than I do, therefore do with me in all things what Thou wilt, and plague me what way Thou wilt. Only in the meantime arm me, I beseech Thee, with thy armour, that I may stand fast, my loins being girt about with verity, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and shod with the shoes prepared by the gospel of peace, above all things taking to me the shield of faith, wherewith I may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and taking the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is thy most holy word, praying always with all manner of prayer and supplication, that I may refer myself wholly to thy will, abiding thy pleasure, and comforting myself in those troubles which it shall please Thee to send me, seeing such troubles be profitable for me, and seeing I am assuredly persuaded that it cannot but be well all that thou dost. Hear me, O merciful Father, for his sake, whom Thou wouldest should be a sacrifice for my sins; to whom with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory. Amen."

When addressing those who surrounded her she concluded with a confession of her faith. "Wherefore, my lords, and all you, good Christian people, I most earnestly desire you all, to pray

with me, and for me, while I am yet alive, that God of his infinite goodness and mercy will forgive my sins, how numberless and grievous soever, against Him; and I beseech you all to bear me witness that I here die a true Christian woman, professing and avouching from my soul, that I trust to be saved by the blood, passion, and merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, only, and by no other means, casting far behind me all the works and merits of mine own actions, as things so short of the true duty I owe, that I quake to think how much they may stand up against me."

Having finished a speech ending with this confession, she repeated the fifty-first Psalm in a most devout manner from beginning to end. Her last words were, "Lord, into thine hands I commend my spirit," when she submitted herself to the stroke of death.

The following is the translation of some verses written by her in her place of confinement:—

"Harmless all malice, if our God is nigh;
Fruitless all toil, if He his help deny.
Patient I pass these gloomy hours away,
And wait the morning of eternal day."

REFLECTION.—In trouble, sickness, and the approach of death, let us seek our consolations in the Word of God, and we shall not be disappointed; for heaven and earth shall perish, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.



CATHARINE PARR.

DIED 1548. AGED 39.

CATHARINE PARR was the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Parr, of Kendal, who bestowed on her a learned education. She became the queen-consort of Henry VIII. : a station which her piety and good sense adorned. She always took great delight in conversing with the sacred writings, and the investigation of divine truths, which soon dissipated the clouds of ignorance, and set before her in a true light the doctrines of the Gospel. She seems indeed to have had a serious disposition from her infancy, but the devotional exercises in which she engaged in early life were according to the dark superstitions of that age. These errors she not only afterwards retracted, but forwarded the Reformation, and advanced and encouraged the Protestant cause. She saw very plainly that the principles of religion she had first imbibed did not correspond with the inspired writers. But though she had a considerable share of learning, joined to an excellent understanding,

yet her great modesty would not permit them to be her only guide in matters of such great importance, for she kept several eminent divines constantly with her to solve her doubts and instruct her in the true religion. With these learned men, who were her chaplains, she used to have private conferences, as often as opportunity would permit, about the doctrine of the Reformation, and the abuses which were then crept into the Church. She had a sermon preached to her every day, in the afternoon, in her chamber, which generally lasted about one hour, at which time the ladies and gentlemen of her court, and others who were disposed to hear, were present. To all this she added great application and industry in the study of books of divinity, particularly of the Holy Scriptures.

We have thought it proper thus to present the particulars relating to her religious life, and the assiduity with which she read, heard, and studied, the sacred writings, in order to show how great is the effect which a Christian woman may produce on the destinies of a nation. With a meek and unassuming manner, and a mind deeply imbued with the truths of the Bible, she exercised a great influence over her husband; nor will it perhaps be known until the coming of the last great day, to how great an extent England may have been indebted to Catharine Parr, in inducing her husband to complete the work of the Reformation.

The sincerity of her religious feeling was severely put to the test, and satisfactorily established. Moved by his affection for her, the King saved her from the snares of a ruthless Chancellor. The events of that period were so mutable and the tempers with which she had to deal, so capricious, that, spiritually, she must have died daily.

It is said, indeed, that the attempt of the Lord Chancellor to apprehend her and commit her as a prisoner to the Tower, awakened all the faculties of her soul, and put her upon the employment of her thoughts in pious meditations and prayers, and upon making due preparation for eternity. The following are selected from her thoughts, prayers, and meditations, and are added to this work chiefly because they supply excellent motives to resignation, which may be used by others who with her might say, "In the midst of life we are in death."

"Lord Jesu, grant me thy grace that it may always work in me, and persevere with me unto the end!

"Grant me that I may ever desire and will that which is most pleasant and acceptable unto Thee.

"Lord, Thou knowest what thing is most profitable, and most expedient for me. Thy creature I am and in thy hands. Lead me and turn me where Thou wilt. Lo I am thy servant, ready to all things that Thou commandest; for I desire not to live to myself, but to Thee.

"Lord Jesu! I pray Thee grant me thy grace, that I never set my heart on the things of this world, but that all carnal and worldly affections may utterly die, and be mortified in me. Grant me above all things, that I may rest in Thee, and fully pacify and quiet my heart in Thee! For Thou, Lord, art the very true peace of heart, and the perfect rest of the soul, and without Thee all things be grievous and unquiet. My Lord Jesu, I beseech Thee be with me in every place, and at all times, and let it be to me a special solace gladly for to love to lack all worldly solace. And if Thou withdraw thy comfort from me at any time, keep me, O Lord, from separation (from Thee), and make me patiently to bear thy will and ordinance!

O Lord Jesu! thy judgments be righteous, and thy providence is much better for me than all that I can imagine or devise. Wherefore do with me in all things as it shall please Thee; for it may not be but well, all that Thou dost. If Thou wilt that I be in light, be Thou blessed; if Thou wilt that I be in darkness, be Thou also blessed! If Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou highly blessed; and if Thou wilt that I lie in trouble, and without comfort, be Thou likewise ever blessed. Lord, give me grace gladly to suffer whatsoever Thou wilt shall fall upon me, and patiently to take at thy hand good and evil, bitter and sweet, joy and sorrow, and for all things that shall befall unto me heartily to thank Thee! Keep me, Lord, from sin, and I shall then dread neither death nor hell! Oh! what thanks shall I give unto Thee, which hast suffered the grievous death of the cross to deliver me from my sins, and to obtain everlasting life for me. Thou gavest us most perfect example of patience, fulfilling and obeying the will of thy Father, even unto death. Make me wretched sinner obediently to use myself after thy will in all things, and patiently to bear the burden of this corrupt life! For though this life be tedious, and as a heavy burden to my soul, yet nevertheless through thy grace and by example of Thee it is made much more easy and comfortable than it was before thy incarnation and passion. Thy holy life is our way to Thee, and by following that we walk to Thee that art our Head and Saviour! and except Thou hadst gone before, and showed us the way to everlasting life, who would endeavour himself to follow Thee, seeing we be yet so slow and dull, having the light of thy blessed example and holy doctrine to lead and direct us?

“ O Lord Jesu, make that possible by grace that is to me impossible by nature !

“ Thou knowest well that I may little suffer, and that I am soon cast down, and overthrown with a little adversity; wherefore I beseech Thee, O Lord, to strengthen me with thy Spirit that I may willingly suffer for thy sake all manner of troubles and afflictions,” &c.

The number as well as piety of these compositions, and the pains she took to procure the translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase, sufficiently show how much of her time and thoughts, amidst all the business and ceremonies of her exalted station, was employed in order to secure her everlasting happiness, and sow the seeds of piety and virtue in the minds of her people. In God's Word she found a perennial source of divine consolation and support during the remainder of her life, the termination of which was rather sudden.

She died A.D. 1548, about two or three years after King Henry VIII., and during the latter part of her life, which was a scene of trouble, had great reason to seek her comfort in the use of those divine principles in which she had been instructed from above. Dr. Parkhurst, one of her domestic chaplains and afterwards bishop of Norwich, in memory of her, composed an epitaph in Latin, the two last lines of which have been thus rendered into English verse :¹—

“ In night and griefs we pine away ;
She triumphs in the blaze of day,
And, with th' angelic choirs above,
Attunes the harp to joy and love.”

REFLECTION.—Since thou canst not, upon any reasonable grounds believe thy will to be wiser

(1) The Life and Writings of Catharine Parr, queen-consort of King Henry VIII.

than that of the Supreme Being, it becomes thee to resolve thy poor, short-sighted, and inconsiderate desires, into the will of the omniscient and most wise God. For since it is a most wise will, so it must necessarily be the best and most beneficent of arrangements. What reason hast thou to suspect the beneficence of His dispensation, whose will alone gave thee thy being, in order that He might communicate his goodness to that being of thine, which He freely gave thee? It is true it may be thou dost not see the reason, the end, the use of his dispensations, yet be content with an implicit submission, to resign thyself up to his disposal; and rest assured it shall be best for thee. Though thou yet canst not understand what it means, thou wilt hereafter acknowledge that "Just and True are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."¹

MRS. JANE RATCLIFFE.

DIED AUG. 17, A.D. 1638.

SHE was the niece of Edward Brerewood, first Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, in London.

The Rev. John Ley, Prebendary of Chester, wrote her Life. From his account, which is here transcribed, it would appear that she combined intellectual attainments of the highest order, with the most ardent and practical piety. "By her frequent and attentively hearing of sermons, and reading good books, the Bible especially, in which she took an incredible delight, and by putting questions to persons whom she thought best able

(1) Rev. xv. 3.

to answer them, she became an excellent proficient in religion, though she did not undertake to extend her instructions beyond her own children and servants.

“While she declined much acquaintance with the world, she shone gloriously in the knowledge of God and divine things. It might be truly said of her, that the word of God dwelt richly in her in all wisdom. So far was she, when she conversed, from speaking ill, especially of the absent, and her superiors, that she rather concerned herself to look to her own life, than to censure others. She was frequently and fervently conversant with God, not only in the public ordinances, but in her private exercises of devotion. Her service to God in this kind was drenched in tears; and, though in prudence she used much privacy in the duty of prayer, yet the exercise of such a singular gift, as she possessed, could not be concealed from her servants and some secret female friends, who sometimes, when they were sick and harassed with fears, would prevail upon her by importunity to pray with them, and when she yielded to them, and God seemed to yield to her by answering her request, were apt, as there was reason, to ascribe the good effects to her fervent entreaties.

“She highly prized the Word of God, and in the blessed sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, she felt such a divine refreshment, that she might truly say she had meat to eat which others knew nothing of.

“She kept at a great distance from doting upon the world, and though while she lived she must of necessity be in it, yet she had such an overcoming love to the Lord Jesus Christ, that for His sake she estranged herself from it,

as appeared by her abstaining from the delights of sense, which she showed by her frequent fastings from meats and drinks, and by her abstinence from such sports and pastimes as she had been too immoderately addicted to formerly.

“Solomon makes Contention to be the daughter of Pride. Peaceableness, then, is the daughter of Humility; and if so, the humility of this worthy person eminently showed itself in that she could endure contradictions, reproaches, &c., without a quarrel or breach of peace with any, being still ready to deny herself and to yield to others, as far as she could with a safe conscience. Her humility was most amiably evidenced in her not undervaluing or envying the gifts of God in others. In lowliness of mind she esteemed others better than herself.

“She often presented and arraigned herself before God’s tribunal, to bring herself down in abasement as guilty before Him, imploring pardon on her knees at His hands; and she sunk the lower before Him by comparing her own faultiness, infirmity, and wretchedness, with His infinite purity, power, and majesty. She always held it for a maxim with her, ‘that if it be good to be esteemed virtuous, and most desire to be so esteemed, that it is much better to be so indeed, for that the substance of a good thing is always to be preferred before the semblance of it.’

“Her constancy also in religion was very remarkable, by which her heart was kept right with God, and steadfast in his covenant. Her faith was grounded and settled, so that she was not carried away with every wind of doctrine. What she was for faith and godliness at first, the same she was afterwards, at all places, at all times, and in all companies. But for the measure of grace and

holiness she was like a growing plant in a garden. By spiritual nourishment and daily exercise of her graces, she advanced apace towards the stature of Christ. Her path was indeed the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

“An undoubted testimony of her true love to God, was her desire to die out of a fervent affection to Him, so that she feared a long life would keep her too long from the fruition of Him. Death, which worldlings are most afraid of, she so much wished, that her friends pleaded with her to be pleased with life, though she, not being satisfied with their arguments, contended against them by contrary reasons.”

She had in readiness some special considerations, to be remembered at the time of her departure, which she left under her own hand, and which are as follow, under the two articles,—Why she desired to die; and why she did not fear death.

“First,—Why I desire to die.

“I desire to die, because I want, while I live here, the glorious presence of God, which I love and long for, and the sweet fellowship of angels and saints.

“I desire to die, because, while I live, I shall want the perfection of my nature, and be as an estranged, banished person from my Father’s house.

“I desire to die, because I would not live to offend so good a God, and grieve his Holy Spirit, for his loving kindness is better than life itself, and He is abundant in mercy to me; and it many times lies as a heavy load upon my heart to think of displeasing Him.

“I desire to die, because this world is generally infected with the plague of sin, and some

have this plague-sore running upon them, and I myself am tainted with the same disease ; so that, while I live here, I can be in no place, nor in any company, but I am still in danger of being infected, or of infecting others ; and if this world hates me because I endeavour to follow goodness, how will it rejoice if my foot do but slip ! and how woeful would my life be to me if I should give occasion for the world to triumph or blaspheme on my account. I cannot choose but desire to die, when I consider that sin, like a leprosy, hath so corrupted me, that there is no soundness in me : my mind, my memory, my will, and my affections, yea, my conscience, are still impure. In every faculty of my soul there is a miserable mixture of vile infection, which makes me weary of my life ; and all this is the worse because it is incurable, and a constant companion of my life ; so that I can go no whither to avoid it. There is no business that I can dispatch, that concerns my happiness, but there is a mutiny in my heart. Though the works of God be all fair, yet there are in my nature many defects, insufficiencies, mistakes, and transgressions ; so that I may say innumerable evils have compassed me about ; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. I therefore desire heaven for holiness, rather than for happiness, that I might sin no more. I desire that condition in which I may most glorify God. I desire to die, because of Satan's perpetual assaults. I can stand no where before the Lord on earth, but one evil spirit or another is at my right hand, and I must of necessity enter into conflict with them and their temptations, and be buffeted by them, which is a thousand-fold worse than death. It is more easy to wrestle with flesh and

blood than with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickednesses and the rulers of the darkness of this world; for they are subtle and cruel, and, like roaring lions, they go about seeking whom they may devour.

“I desire to die, because by death I shall rest from the hard labours of this life. I desire to die, because nothing in this world can give me solid and durable contentment. I am less in liking of life, and have the greater desire of death, when I consider the misery that may come both on my body and estate. Fearful alterations may come. Besides, I daily suffer the loss of my friends, who were the companions of my life, and the channels of much pleasure to me; and those whom I lose by my life, I shall find by my death, and enjoy in another world to all eternity. As for my leaving my children it doth not much trouble me, for that God who hath given them life, and breath, and all they have, while I am living, can without me provide for them when I am dead. My God will be their God, if they are His; and if they are not, what comfort would it be to me to live? My life would be exceeding bitter to me if I should see them dishonour God whom I so much love.”

The reasons why she did not fear death were as follow:

“I fear not death, because it is but the separation of the body from the soul; and that is but a shadow of the body of death¹. Whereas the separation of the soul from God by sin,² is death indeed.

“I fear not death, because death is such an enemy as hath been often vanquished, and because I am armed for it, and the weapons of my

(1) Rom. vii. 24.

(2) Isa. lix. 2.

warfare are mighty through God, and I am assured of victory.

“I do not fear death for the pain of it; for I am persuaded I have endured as great pains in life as I shall find in death, and death will be the cure of all my pains—and because Christ died a terrible and cursed death, any kind of death may be blessed to me—and because that God, who hath greatly loved me in life, will not neglect me in death, but his Spirit will strengthen and comfort me, all the time of the combat. I do not fear death for any loss, for I shall only lose my body by it, and that is but a prison to my soul, or an old rotten house or tattered garment. Nay, I shall not lose that neither, for I shall have it restored at my Saviour’s second coming much better than now it is; for this vile body shall be like the body of Christ, and by death I shall obtain far better life.”

To promote divine love in her soul she prepared a breviary of God’s principal benefits to herself, for meditation upon her death, and as the materials of thanksgivings to Him, which are as follow :

“How shall I praise God? 1. For my conversion. 2. For His word, both in my affections to it, and the wonderful comforts I have received by it. 3. For hearing my prayers. 4. For godly sorrow. 5. For fellowship with the godly. 6. For joy in the Holy Ghost. 7. For the desire towards death. 8. For contempt of the world. 9. For private helps and comforts. 10. For giving me some strength against my sin. 11. For preserving me from gross evils both before and after my calling, &c.”

By these means she made further advances in holiness and sanctification, and preserved a greater

distance from great offences; for he who is afraid of a small sin, will not easily grow bold to commit a greater one. Her love to God was strong as death, and indeed much stronger; so that death could not dismay her, for she desired daily to look death in the face, nor could he hurt her more, than what she was contented to endure; for though it was not likely that she should pass through the narrow straits of death without some tossings, and difficulties, yet she was well satisfied to venture into them, as they were the ready passage to come to God, whom she so much longed to see. If news came to her of any losses in her estate, as sometimes there did of great ones, yet she was never put out of temper with these ill tidings, having these considerations ready at hand to compose her spirit. "It is that God who gave all who now takes away some, why should I take it ill? He would not have me be in love with, and trust in, uncertain riches, which were never true to any one who trusted them, but to trust upon Himself, and I willingly renounce them to rest upon Him. He can, if He see it good, recompense the loss in the like, or some better kind. If He takes more from me, there will yet be many poorer than myself; and if He takes away all my goods, He can give me contentment without them, for He is all-sufficient, and so, though I have nothing, yet I may be 'as possessing all things.'¹ The world and I must part, and whether we be loosened from each other by degrees, or torn asunder all at once, all is one to me. What God chooses, is best for both of us, for his glory, and my good, if I murmur not against Him, but willingly, as is my prayer, give way to His will."

(1) 2 Cor. vi. 10.

Her path was indeed the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. During her sickness, as she had the free use of all faculties, her soul no doubt was employed in holy meditations, for which she had kept in store many particulars of importance to be remembered by her at the time of her departure out of this world. Her desires were strong for a speedy dissolution, so that she adopted the requests of David, "Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation;"¹ and, "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me."² The springs of her vehement desires were that she might attain to the beatific vision and enjoyment of Him after whom her soul longed. And now the hour came when her desires were to be granted in the very kind she wished, by the gate of death to pass to the Author of life, which she did in such a calm manner, that when she was thought to be asleep, she was found to be dead.³

PRECEPT.—In all our trials and troubles, let us put our trust in God: His power and goodness will support us in the time of need.

" Who place on Zion's God their trust,
Like Zion's rock shall stand;
Like her, immoveably be fix'd
By His Almighty hand."

(1) Ps. xxxviii. 22.

(2) Ps. xl. 13.

(3) Life and Death of Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe, by the Rev. John Ley, Vicar of Great Budworth, and Prebendary of Chester Cathedral. Ed. 1640, p. 85, et seq., &c.



MRS. ELIZABETH DERING.

DIED JULY 26, 1640.

SHE was the wife of Mr. Charles Dering, the youngest son of Sir Anthony Dering, Knt. The chief labour of her life was rightly to learn so to number her days as to apply her heart to wisdom ; and her biographer states that she attained to such a portion of heavenly wisdom, that the like is rarely to be found in either her sex or age.

The account of her sickness and death has been written by the Rev. Robert Marriot, Vicar of Lenham, in Kent, who has transmitted to us the following interesting narrative :—

“ It is the end which crowns the action, and the last day is ever to be expected, and happy can no man be said to be till death hath showed how he departed. Therefore I will leave you to judge more fully of her life by some remarkable occurrences before her death.

“ Her strength decaying, the glass of her life being well nigh run out, those motions of grace that were in her became now more quick and

lively towards her end, mounting up her soul on a swifter wing towards her happiness. The Spirit of God did now fill the sails of her affections with more than an extraordinary desire of her wished-for haven.

“ But Satan, envying that so fair a vessel should arrive at the port without a storm, raised a sudden tempest of doubts and distrustful thoughts in her soul, labouring thereby, had it been possible, to wreck her faith upon the rock of despair; and God, willing to show his strength in her weakness, suffers for a time this eclipse of his wonted presence, being delighted to see her, with the disciples, rowing and towing against the streams of Satan’s temptations, whilst the Saviour walks by on the waves ready to succour her in the greatest necessity.

“ The chief care of her friends was how to compose her doubts, and to comfort her weak and feeble mind. To this end they requested my assistance, the pastor of that place wherein she then rested; and considering the office required to be an essential part of my ministerial charge, to support the weak, and to bind up the broken-hearted, I was gladly entreated to assist with the best counsels that lay in my power for the re-establishing her peace.

“ Being come unto her, and sorrowing to behold her in the extremity of affliction, I addressed myself to apply unto her what comfort God should enable me to minister, assuring her that these spiritual desertions for a time are familiar to the dearest of God’s children; instancing in David, in Job, and in St. Paul, with other saints, whose particular trials I dilated upon, adding moreover, that God, like a wise Father, is not always kissing His sons, but many times correcting them; and

that His love in their humiliation is as much magnified towards them by the saving effects of it as is His mercy in their exaltation. I told her father, that the sense of her weakness which she complained of was not weakness, but strength; for it comes not from our corruption that we feel our corruption, but from God's grace; and that the detestation of sin, with a desire to repent, is true repentance indeed, and a manifest work of the Spirit; and though God find in us many things that He likes not, yet He ever loves and likes this in us, that we do dislike and loathe ourselves; for God respects not so much our state as our purpose, nor regards so much what we are as what we desire to be. For a desire to be good, is a good step to, yea, a good part of, goodness itself. I prayed her therefore not to wrong herself so much as to imagine she could not repent, while she professed she hated sin, and desired to repent, nor to offer that indignity to God's mercy, as to fear He should be unwilling to forgive and pardon what she was so willing to forego and part withal.

“I showed her also concerning her want of faith and spiritual feeling (of which she had lamented the deficiency), how that, though God might suffer her faith to faint, yet would He never suffer it to fail; and that it is the firmest faith, when a man can say, with Job, ‘Though He kill me, yet will I trust in Him.’ For our own feeling is no fit judge of faith, for that is often overwhelmed with temptations; but faith must be judged of by the Word of God. Now the Word tells us that faith is not always a burning lamp, but sometimes, yea, often, a smoking flax, which is so weak that it sends out neither heat nor flame, but only a smoke; and yet the Lord will not quench this small spark of faith, neither will it perish, being begotten of immortal

seed, viz. the Word of God, which endures for ever. Again, we know a little, or a sick man, is a man, as well as a great, or a sound one, and a foul and a feeble hand may receive an alms as well as a fair and a strong one; so, little and weak faith is faith as well as that which is great and firm, and the one may as truly apply Christ as the other; for we do not imagine that faith doth justify us because our faith in us is strong and perfect (for it is commonly weak, and always imperfect), but it justifies us for the object which it apprehends, that is, Christ the Mediator. Nor are we so much to conclude of faith, from the firm persuasion it works in us, as from the resting and relying thereby on the merits of Christ for salvation.

“ Moreover, I laboured to possess her with this truth,—that God can be no more said to forsake His servants, when for a time He hides away His face, than the sun can be said to be set when it is but under a cloud; for howsoever the sensible presence of God’s Spirit, whereby He makes His children to feel Him by the gracious effects which He works in them, be subject to changes and eclipses; yet the secret presence of His Spirit never departs from them, but is continually ruling, guiding, and sustaining them in all their troubles, according to His promise in the Old Testament and in the New. Yea, by virtue of this secret presence, He entertains life in our souls when to our judgments we are become altogether dead and senseless, as there may be life and sap in a tree when it hath neither fruit nor leaves, which is evident by our standing in many temptations wherein we could feel no present grace upholding us.

“ Thus having spent some time with enlarging

on these, and adding many other comforts out of the Scripture, which need not here be repeated, endeavouring to satisfy her in every doubt, and perceiving a great part of her distemper to be occasioned by the weakness of her body, the weariness of her spirits, and the want of rest, I took my leave of her for that time, not without this acknowledgment of comfort from herself, that she hoped I had done her some good, promising, at the entreaty of her friends, to visit her again within few days; which accordingly I did the Friday following. When, being conducted to her chamber, she told me, she much rejoiced at my coming, being persuaded that she should reap comfort by my discourse, and requested me to pray with her, whereunto she had a great desire. I then offered unto her the assistance of my prayers, which she accepted. And while we were entreating at the throne of grace on her behalf for the return of God's favourable presence, and the light of His countenance upon her, and that He would again restore her to the joy of His salvation, I applied unto her that petition of David: 'Lord, comfort the soul of thy servant; for in Thee hath she put her trust.'

"The Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, having dispelled in good measure those mists of diffidence which eclipsed the light and peace of her soul, began again to shine forth in his wonted clearness, reviving and cheering up those drooping affections which had so long languished in the want of His comfortable presence, insomuch that, to my great rejoicing, I found her magnifying the mercy which before she doubted of, and comforting herself with those Scriptures from which before her soul refused the comfort. I told her I did heartily bless God for this happy

change in her. And she replied, that the grace of Christ was sufficient for her, upon whom she did wholly rest and rely for her salvation, disclaiming all conceit of worth or merit in herself, entreating me to pray to God for her, that it would please Him to pardon those distrustful thoughts which she had formerly of His goodness, and to perfect that re-assurance of His love in her heart, she joining with us very cheerfully and devoutly all the time, expressing a marvellous longing for the fulness of spiritual and heavenly joy; insomuch, that while I uttered that petition of the prophet for life, 'Do well unto Thy servant, that she may live and praise Thy name,' she interrupted me, saying, 'O pray only for my soul; for I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.'

"The Sunday following she heartily wished for some one to recommend her soul to God. It was my happiness to be there at that time; and they entreated me to perform that last office for her, which we hasted to do, perceiving her to decline apace, while she, to the admiration of all that were present, if we consider her great weakness, repeated after me, very zealously, almost whatever I delivered, and, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, she most devoutly rehearsed that word for word, which, as it was the first she learned, so I may truly say it was the last she uttered; for immediately hereupon she most sweetly and peaceably exchanged this life, leaving her surviving friends in a strait betwixt two, not knowing which to choose, whether more to mourn for her loss or to rejoice for her so blessed and happy departure."¹

(1) From the Sermon preached at Pluckley, in Kent, in August, 1640, by the Rev. Robert Marriot, Vicar of Lenham, in Kent.

Three REFLECTIONS by the Rev. Mr. Marriot.
 —1. As we ought when we feel heavenly emotions in our hearts to cherish them, so when we feel them not, we ought not to think ourselves contemned. 2. It is the endeavour of many believers so eagerly to pursue after more grace, as that they deny themselves the comfortable use of what they have. 3. Wherefore I would beseech them as to remember carefully to seek for more, so not to forget thankfully to acknowledge what they have, which is the only way to invite God to confer upon them a larger measure of spiritual consolation. To these we may add a fourth, of which the foregoing narrative is an admirable illustration, that though “sorrow endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.”



LETTICE, VISCOUNTESS FALKLAND.

DIED 1647. AGED 35.

LETTICE, VISCOUNTESS FALKLAND, was the wife of Lord Falkland. She is mentioned with great praise by Lord Clarendon, but is more distinctly

made known to us by the account of her "holy life and death," written by the Rev. John Duncan, the spiritual adviser of the family. As it is a principal object in this work to trace the connection between a holy life, and a happy death, and to notice how much daily religious exercises framed the soul for patience, resignation, and tranquillity in the last hours, we will present some notices of her early course of piety. "This elect lady," says the Rev. John Duncan, "set out early in the ways of God, in the dawn or morning of her age; there was care taken while she was young, that she should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; she came not from her nurse's arms without some knowledge of the principles of Christian religion.

"While she was very young, she paid an exact obedience to her parents, and as she began, so she continued this dutiful observance. Her mother never could remember any one particular, in which she had proved disobedient to her, or to her father.

"That her time might not be misspent, nor her employments tedious to her, the several hours of the day had variety of employments assigned to them, intermixing of prayers, reading, writing, working, and walking, brought a pleasure to each of them in their courses, so that the day ended too soon for all she had to do, and in her early youth she began to abridge herself of her sleep, and was often at a book in her closet, when she was thought to be in bed."

Whilst she was still very young, she worked a purse to hold her own alms, and would beg for money from her mother to fill it, as eagerly empty it again for the poor who came to her father's house, and who seldom left it without

alms from the young daughter, as well as from her parents. She was at this time constant in her private prayers, and when strangers occupied her own room, to which she commonly retired, she would ask the steward for the key of some other room, for that purpose, at her hour of prayer. About the thirteenth year of her age there was a storm of temptation raised in her, and some arguments the tempter had suggested to drive her to despair of God's mercy towards her. After some anguish of spirit, and patience in the combat, and earnest prayers, God's grace was sufficient for her.

After this conquest, her soul enjoyed much peace and tranquillity, she went on most cheerfully in holy duties, tasting much delight and comfort in them, and her heart was at times so full, that out of the abundance of it she would say, "Oh! what an incomparable sweetness there is in the music upon David's harp! Oh, what heavenly joy there is in those psalms, and in prayers and praise to God! How amiable are the courts of God's house! how welcome the days of his solemn worship!"

Nothing could hinder her from holy assemblies; every Lord's day constantly, forenoon and afternoon, she would be there among the earliest; and when she had no other means of going, she would walk three or four miles a day, young and tender as she then was; and at night, she reckoned the joy and refreshment of which her soul had been partaker, a sufficient recompense for the extreme weariness of her body.

Living within ten or twelve miles of Oxford, the residence of Lord and Lady Falkland was the resort of the most learned and religious men of the University, Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Morley, Dr.

Hammond, Dr. Earle, and Mr. Chillingworth. Thus some years passed, during which time she was most constant at prayers and sermons, and frequently received the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper: and although now and then she did not feel her usual spiritual comforts, but, instead of them, had some anguish and bitterness of spirit; yet, by the advice of good divines, and by her ordinary help of prayer, she soon recovered her peace and joy. Her husband fell fighting valiantly at the battle of Newbury, in the cause of his church and king. She received the blow as a loud call from Heaven to further advancement in holiness, fearing at the same time, that it might be also a punishment for her sins; and, therefore, strictly searching out every corner of her heart, and repenting anew of all her past offences.

Her first and great employment was to read and understand, and then to the utmost of her strength to practise our blessed Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel; and having read over most complete, though compendious comment upon that sermon, she set forthwith upon the work of practising it, beginning with those virtues to which the beatitudes are annexed. Her mercifulness was one of those virtues which she could not conceal from observation; much of her estate went yearly to such of her relations as were in need of assistance; some of her near neighbours, who were too old, or too young for work, were wholly maintained by her; to other poor children she contributed much, both for their spiritual and temporal well-being, by building a school, where they were taught to read and work. It was her great care in the management

of her estate, that no man, woman, or child should want employment; and to this she had more regard than to her own profit, as by such constant work, she kept them both from want and idleness.

As to the poor at home, and strangers at the door, she was very charitable in feeding the hungry, and refreshing the poor and weak; for clothing the naked she might be sometimes seen going up and down her house, begging clothes from her servants, which she repaid afterwards with new, that the poor might not go naked, or cold from her door; so that she was not only a liberal almoner to the poor, but also an earnest solicitor for them.

Her mercifulness was constantly exercised towards the sick; she spent large sums of money every year in providing antidotes against infection, cordials, and various sorts of medicine, which she distributed among her neighbours, when they were in need of them; attending herself to their wants, with skill, and care, and hiring nurses when they were required. She frequently visited the poorest cottages, waiting on their sick beds, and carried books of spiritual exhortation, which she read to them with words of holy counsel. She considered it the fit season for sowing good seed when their hearts were softened by sorrow and sickness; and at such times she would go daily to their sick beds, and has been seen sitting in a cottage waiting till a sick woman woke from sleep, that she might go on with her reading. At a later time, when she was too weak and sickly to do this in person, she would depute some of her friends or servants daily to visit the sick and carry her books with them, in which employment most of her family

who appeared fit for it were engaged from time to time. Thus to her works of corporal mercy, she added spiritual mercy too, relieving the wants of the body and of the soul together, and seeking to promote the health of both. For, as the handmaid of her Lord, she strove to follow both the precepts of His Sermon, and also the pattern of His life, when he cured at once the diseases both of soul and body.

As she was eminent for mercifulness, so she was for meekness also. She would often complain that her natural temper inclined her to anger, and being so well aware of it, she most diligently observed herself, and in a great measure conquered that froward inclination; the good measure of meekness in this respect which she attained to being the more commendable because of the many difficulties she met with in the endeavour. In the latter part of her life she was seldom free from trouble; spiritual afflictions and sorrow, or bodily infirmities, of weakness and sickness, or worldly losses in her estate; one or more of these or the like pressures were constantly heavy upon her, yet no impatience and little disturbance could be perceived in her, but when all these trials were at once present, her patience triumphed over them all. Thus thinking herself still a beginner, she practised daily those graces and virtues to which our Saviour annexed such special blessings, and studied to become more and more perfect in them. With equal diligence she practised the duty of prayer enjoined in the same sermon of our Lord, spending some hours every day in her private devotions and meditations; these were called by her family her busy hours; Martha's employment was her recreation; Mary's her business.

Her maids came into her chamber early every morning, and usually passed an hour with her, when she prayed, catechised and instructed. To this were daily added the morning and evening prayers of the Church, before dinner and supper; and another form of prayer, together with reading the Scriptures and singing Psalms, before bed-time.

She charged her servants to be present at all these hours of prayer, if their business allowed of it, but never suffered any one to be absent from all the services: if she observed any such, she sent for them into her chamber and prayed with them privately, making it a rule that at least every morning and evening, every servant in her house should offer the sacrifice of prayer and praises to God. Nor did she limit the services of her house to her own household, but opened her oratory to her neighbours as freely as her hospitable hall.

On the Lord's day she rose earlier than on other days, but often found the day too short for her private duties, and instructions of her children and servants, so that she would sometimes rise on Monday two or three hours before daylight, to supply what was left undone the day before.

In order also to prepare herself for the Sunday's duty before hand, she sequestered herself on the Saturday from company and worldly business, and seldom came out of her closet till towards evening, when her chaplain catechised in addition to the usual service of prayer.

She punctually observed the other holy days of the Church, and after the public service, she released her servants to their recreations, and the care of their own concerns, saying, "These days are yours, and as due to you, as ordinary days to my employments." On these days of rest she

went with her books to her unlearned neighbours, who were at leisure to hear her read, whilst their plough and their wheel stood still.

She strictly observed the Fasts of the Church, and such days as were appointed for solemn humiliation, which her whole family, great and small, observed after the pattern of the Ninevites. When the calamities of the country increased, she often wished that lawful authority would appoint not only the second Friday, but the last Wednesday in every month, to be kept solemnly throughout the land, that their fasts might be doubled as well as their troubles.

She was very careful in preparing herself to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; often at such times, fears and scruples arose within her, tending to keep her back from that heavenly banquet, but having cause, on examination and after advising with her minister, to consider them temptations from the devil, she put them by, and presented herself with an humble and a trembling heart at that blessed Sacrament. These fears and scruples, so far from prevailing to keep her from the Lord's table, occasioned a steady resolution on her part, that she would not, by God's help, thenceforth omit any opportunity of communicating; this resolution she always kept at home, and if she went to Oxford or London, her first inquiry was where and when there would be a communion, to secure which she would sometimes go to the other end of the city. She exhorted all her servants to accompany her to the Sacrament, and those who were prevailed upon, gave in their names two or three days before, that she might instruct them herself, and obtain the help of her chaplains to examine them and instruct them further; for which purpose, the

day before their receiving was free from their ordinary work. When they had received, she called them together again, and gave them such exhortations as were proper for them.

While she persevered in the religious course of life which she embraced in her widowhood, going on from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue, a fresh affliction was sent to quicken her. Her young and most dear son, Lorenzo, whom God had endowed with choice natural abilities, and who showed such fair blossoms of piety as made her affections towards him more tender, was taken from her. This, added to her former troubles,—the loss of her husband, her crosses in the world, and her spiritual affliction (which came often upon her), made her burden most heavy. She wept and mourned all the day long, and at night also watered her couch with tears, and weeping she would say, “Ah, this immoderate sorrow must be repented of, these tears wept over again!” Her quick sense of displeasing God by extreme grief soon allayed its vehemence. She retired into herself to hearken what the Lord would say unto her, in this louder call of affliction; and it seemed to be prompted to her that she was not yet weaned enough from the things of this world, and it was expedient for her that some of the worldly comforts she most delighted in, should be taken away, that her conversation might be yet more spiritual and heavenly; therefore this affliction seemed to call her to a greater mortification to the world, and a nearer conformity to Christ her Lord.

But fearing that her sorrow for her son was still exorbitant, she went again to ask counsel of her ghostly physician, the same eminent divine, as it appears, whom she consulted after her hus-

band's death; she acquainted him with those violent fits of sorrow, which of late had seized upon her for the death of her son, and he, by his good counsel, with God's help, cured this new distemper of hers, prescribing antidotes also to prevent a relapse into this malady of excessive grief.

She returned home, confessing that this very affliction was most fit for her, and that it should turn to her profit; and cheered by this confidence it was observed by those who saw her on her return, that a remarkable change had come over her, as great as that which passed upon Hannah when Eli promised a son in answer to her prayers.

Thus God made the spiritual medicine she had received effectual, and the antidote, too, for while she lamented the excess of her grief, she did not again give way to it.

She used her newly gained cheerfulness in making resolutions of farther progress in holiness, and set about running the last stages of her Christian race with greater speed than any former ones. Yet before she began upon the fulfilment of these new purposes, she was tried by a fresh temptation; she feared that her repentance was not sincere enough to be acceptable to God, and reasoned thus with herself, "My grief for my sins has not been so vehement as that for my son's death. I wept not so bitterly for them as I did for that, and therefore my repentance is not acceptable." In this anguish of spirit she hastened again to her learned friend, begging for his counsel, and having received comfort from his prayers and conversation, she returned home with fresh courage and cheerfulness.

This temptation to despondency being overcome, she entered upon the performance of her

resolutions, in obedience to the call of her last afflictions. The vanity of apparel she had cut off long before, and after her husband's death the richness of it, too, and what she spared in this she bestowed upon the poor members of Christ. She now began to cut off all other worldly pomp, she gave up that state which belonged to her rank, in her house, in her retinue, and at her table, and took more delight in seeing her revenues spent among a crowd of alms men and women at her door, than by a throng of servants in her house.

She made renewed efforts to subdue all disposition towards anger, avoiding for that purpose any conversation which might excite it, and stifling it if it arose, either by silence or turning to some other subject. She undertook at the same time the difficult task of taming the tongue; and for this purpose refrained for a while from speech almost entirely, then loosened it a little with two cautions. First, that "it never should speak evil of any man, though truly, but only upon a design of charity, to reclaim him from that evil." And because a vicious man is seldom reclaimed by any thing said against him in his absence, she gave peremptory charge to her tongue, that it should never speak evil of any man, however notoriously wicked, if he was absent and not likely to be amended by it.

The second caution her tongue received was, that "as much as was possible, it should keep in every idle word, and speak out only that which was to edification." So that in the latter part of her life she seldom spoke but upon subjects relating to the concerns of the soul, seldom even with her friends and neighbours on any worldly matters.

She resigned her will and understanding, as well as her affections, more and more completely, to the will and to the wisdom of God. "Whatsoever comes upon me," she said, "I will bear it patiently, because by God's will it comes; yea; I will bear it cheerfully, because by God's wisdom it is thus ordered, and it will work (as all things else) for mine advantage."

She resigned herself wholly to God, in doing as well as suffering, and made it her object in every thing to ascertain first what was her duty, and then to fulfil it. It was usual with her at night to compose herself to sleep, saying to her attendant, not without some joy, "Well, now I am one day nearer my journey's end;" comforting herself, that when her body should sleep in the bed of her grave, then the days of sin would be finished, and then she should be "perfect, as her heavenly Father is perfect." She was constant and resolute in her hours of prayer and meditation. The entertainment of guests, or the haste of necessary business did not detain her from her devotions; in her deepest griefs and disturbances, in her highest comforts and rejoicings, she was most constant at them, and even if she could not discharge these duties at her accustomed hours, yet her eyes were not suffered to sleep till she had gone through them. When she must lose her sleep, or God this His service, she readily decided which was fittest of the two.

Her last work every evening, was to review with diligence all the works of that day, her thoughts, words, and deeds; what had happened in this room or in that, what in this or that company, what good or evil she had done, what opportunities of benefiting others she had embraced or neglected; what comforts and blessings she had

that day received; and after this examination, giving thanks and begging pardon in every particular as occasion required, having communed with her own heart in her bed-chamber, she was still.

Thus she made proficiency in the several points of our Saviour's sermon, and, whilst increasing in faith and judgment, the weightier matters of the law, she would not leave the lesson undone. Having thus far improved herself, by the grace of God, in a holy and spiritual life, she now laboured to improve others also, and being made strong to strengthen her brethren. She entered into an agreement with her acquaintance, especially those with whom she conversed most frequently, that they should take liberty to reprove whatever they saw wrong in her, and also that they should give her the same liberty with them, saying to them, "There is no friendship without this; and if you suffer me to be undone for ever, or I you,—how are we friends?"

The warning which she gave to young mothers, not to exceed in fondness for their husbands and children, came suitably and affectingly from her. "Oh, I have had my portion," said she, "of these very comforts; with the first, no one woman more; but there is no lasting nor true pleasure in them. There is no real comfort from any espousals but from those of Christ."

The benefit she had received from pious and learned divines made her careful to provide such for her neighbours; to those clergymen who officiated in the parish, she would suggest what virtues might be properly commended in their sermons and discourses, assisting them with her experience, till they had gained some of their own, and constantly working with them in catechising the young and visiting the sick.

The remembrance of those heavenly comforts which she had often received from the Psalms, encouraged her to recommend them as daily and hourly devotions to all people.

Nor did she confine her care of improving others to the present age; she had also projects for posterity, of setting up schools and manufacturing trades in the parish, that by these she might shut out ignorance, idleness, and want. Her holy fear, like her other virtues, extended itself not only to greater matters, but to the least, and from her love as well as fear of God, she dreaded to offend him in the least particular. "If it be but a mote, may it not grow," said she, "to a beam in mine eye?"

Greedily aspiring after perfection, she feared the smallest errors, and if any of her scruples proceeded from her own carnal reason, or from Satan, to disquiet her, yet even that poison she turned into honey, taking occasion from those very scruples, to be more exact afterwards in her life.

Her trials determined her to this very strict course of life. The more her earthly affections were disappointed, the higher above earth she strove to raise her soul; and now but a short struggle remained, before she, like her husband, found the peace which both had sought in vain on earth. She had resolved to get loose from the multitude of her worldly employments, and to remove from her stately mansion to a little house near adjoining; and in that house and garden, with a book and a wheel, and a maid-servant or two, to withdraw herself from worldly business and unnecessary visits; and she took as great delight in planning this humiliation and privacy, as others do in advancement to honours and employments. On the last Christmas-day of her life she received

the Holy Communion ; occasionally she lamented her faith so weak, her repentance so faint, that it seemed as though God would not accept her. But her shield of faith in Christ's merits soon repelled these darts, and her wonted sanctuary of prayer secured her from this storm of temptation.

In London she strengthened herself yet more for the end of her race, by receiving the Holy Sacrament again ; but though her inward strength increased, her bodily strength was decaying, and her weak consumptive frame grew weaker by a cold that she caught there. Yet she set off to travel homewards, and at Oxford, as her cough and cold very much increased, she began to prepare for death, with most earnest prayers and holy meditations, suggested to her by a pious and learned divine.

After a while, they who were about her, fearing the pangs of death to be upon her, began to weep and lament ; the whole company grew sad and heavy ; she only continued in her former condition, not at all sorrowful, nor affrighted by the messengers of death. Then the physician coming, and upon consideration, saying, " Here is no sign of death, nor of much danger ; by God's help she may recover again ; " the whole company was very much comforted and cheered. She only remained in her former state of composure ; no alteration at all could be perceived in her, as if she had been the only party in the chamber unconcerned in it : neither fear of death could grieve nor trouble her, nor hopes of life and health rejoice her ; " I have wholly resigned up myself to God," said she, " and not mine, but his will be done, whether in life or death." She was not afraid to live, and still endure the miseries of this life (and ever and anon encounter with Satan too), because she had a

powerful God able to uphold her; nor yet afraid to die, and appear at God's judgment-seat, because she had a merciful Redeemer, willing to save her.

Thus she was brought from Oxford home, and now being far spent, and near her end, she could speak little, yet expressed a great deal of thankfulness to God, who had brought her safe, to die in her own house, among her dearest friends. And there she showed those friends a rare pattern of patience in the extremity of her sickness. But the tranquillity of mind which she had in these her last days was most remarkable, because at that period more especially Satan so often perplexes with violent temptations to impatience and murmuring against the Divine dispensations; but she was enabled, by divine grace, now on her death-bed, to tread Satan under her feet. There was not a word of complaint, nor the least disturbance or disquiet, which is a sufficient argument to us of her exceeding great calmness and peace; and this tranquillity of mind, more clearly now appearing at her death, than ordinarily in the time of her health, is a great evidence to me of God's most tender mercy and love towards her, and of some good assurance in her of her salvation.

This quiet gave her leave, though now very faint and weak, to be most vigorous and most instant at prayers; she calls for other help very faintly, but for prayers most heartily and often in those few hours she now lived: and after the office of the morning was performed, she gave strict charge that every one of her family, who could be spared from her, should go to church and pray for her; and then in a word of exhortation to them who stayed by her, saying, "Fear

God, fear God," she most willingly went to Him who made her; and was, we doubt not, admitted into heaven, into the number of the apostles and saints of God (on St. Matthias' day), there to reign in the glory of God for evermore.

In which moment of her death, there seemed as little outward pain as inward conflict; only her spirit failed, and so she vanished from us as if God had intended her here some foretaste, not only of the rest of the soul, but also of the ease of the body, which she should enjoy hereafter in heaven.

And having in a most acceptable manner practised the duties of our most blessed Saviour's sermon,¹ she is now, we firmly believe, a partaker of the blessedness too of that sermon. Through Christ's mercy she hath obtained mercy, and enjoys the vision of God in the kingdom of heaven, where she is most fully satisfied with delight, and comfort, and joy.²

REFLECTION.—There are many lessons to be learned from this very interesting and useful narrative; but there is one more especially worthy of observation, and we will give it in the words of her biographer. "And now you have observed that the growth of grace, which was most evident and apparent in her, especially these late years, (as if come from a blade to an ear, then to a blossom, and thence towards full maturity and ripeness,) was most of all promoted by the afflictions which God sent upon her; the loss of her

(1) She not only had much admired and studied the Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, but had also diligently "set herself to practise it."

(2) The Holy Life and Death of Lettice, Viscountess Falkland, by the Rev. John Duncan, as presented in Wilford's Memorials, and English Church Women of the Seventeenth Century.

dearest friends and other troubles were as a shower of rain to a crop of corn on a dry ground ; an evident benefit, and a present improvement by it. So may it be with every one who suffers inward or outward affliction !”

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SUSANNAH,  
COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK.

DIED 1649. AGED ABOUT 22.

BISHOP RAINBOW, who wrote her character and described her death, says that “ she was the second daughter of the Earl of Holland,” and speaks most highly of her piety, charity, and admirable talents devoted to the cause of religion. The following particulars are selected from the Bishop’s sermon respecting her, preached at Walden, in Essex :—

“ I shall speak but of those *things* which were the constant practice of her life, and such as may seem preparations for her death. She began the day with God ; and as she opened it, so she shut up the evening with the same key of prayer. Most commonly, as soon as she could break sleep from her eyes (or because she would not take her fill of sleep, which she thought she loved too much, others must wake her) gliding into her closet, and before she dressed her body (except some urgent occasion required it) she perfumed her breath with prayer, and then read her daily task in the Bible, which was the Psalms of David usually observed for the day of the month, and six chapters, intending by that course to read the whole Bible over twice in the year. Which I am confident she did not fail of doing for these last

seven years. For if necessity did compel her to omit once or twice, she doubled or tripled her number at the next opportunity.

She ordered herself first, and then all other things were set in exactest order, books, time, &c. She had digested her hours into methods for affairs, repasts, reading of books of humanity, divinity, devotion chiefly, as may appear both by the books marked in the margin, and noted with her own hand, as also by her papers and memorials when she began to read any book. Besides reading her tasks in the Bible, which she did for the daily bread and food of her soul, she, for pious recreation and more exact knowledge, had set time apart to examine the hard places by Diodati's notes, and others. She had marks of several kinds, some for difficulties, some for memorials of choice places, or pertinent to some peculiar purposes; and she noted such places as she intended to confer with divines or others about the meaning of.

She would wear no garments but those which were the gravest and most suitable to her disposition. And to check all thoughts of fancy, or delighting in outward ornaments, amongst some places in her Bible, at which she set a memento, and a mark to be often read, there did (after death) stick a pin, which she had fastened with her own hands in the margin, against that place in the third chapter of the 1st Epistle of St. Peter where the duty of Christian wives to their husbands is prescribed; but particularly it did point at the third, fourth, and fifth verses—"Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of putting on of apparel, or of wearing of gold; but let it be 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." The place is worth the consideration of all, especially of that sex.

Her grief did yield to faith and patience, and the comforts which she could fetch readily out of God's storehouse, and pertinently for her present malady, and the cure of it. When her first born son, her then only child, had the pangs of death upon him, she (after prayers and tears) sat very disconsolate, and when at the report of his departure, floods of tears would needs flow from her eyes; to stop these flood-gates she took her Bible, and fell to singing of psalms, until she had broken the violent torrent of her passion, and brought her soul to a cheerful submission to the will of God.

And so I shall have done with that part of practice wherein the course of her life was seen. I desire to add something of that which might seem to fit and prepare her for, or at least to attend her at her death.

Indeed her whole life was that which sound philosophers, or rather sound Christians, would have it, a constant meditation, or preparation for death. She was never long unprepared for that, the assurance of which, how great a comfort it has been to her surviving friends is not easily imaginable. Her behaviour on her death-bed was the most sweet, and the most comfortable and Christian that ever I heard of. She had totally resigned up herself, and expected every moment when the angels should fetch her soul from her body. She soon apprehended the fears of all about her, and earnestly begged now (as she did at all times), that she might be plainly dealt with concerning her condition for life or death, which



she would in no case endure to be dissembled to her, or concealed from her. Her friends observed her wishes, and confessed their hopes of life to be small, or not any, but desired her to submit to God's will in her dissolution.

How would you now imagine she received the sentence of death? with frights or fears, or sorrow and grief to part with the world, and her dear relations in it? Truly, with a very contrary guise. She sent for those who were most nearly related to her, and her kindred and friends, and composing her countenance and gesture to the most majestic and undejected gravity that I ever beheld, she fell to taking leave, bequeathing not her worldly affairs, but spiritual comforts, her fervent prayers, divine blessings, her weighty counsels and admonitions, fitted particularly and made proper to every one to whom she gave her heavenly legacies, especially to her lord, her children, her allies, and servants; and all were such as might tend to direct them in ways of well doing, by which they might, through Christ's merits, meet again in glory; but all this with such affection, such zeal, such courage, such demonstration of faith and assurance of her going now from pain and misery to joys unspeakable, that the image of that day and her aspect will never depart out of the memory of several who looked on. If you had seen her on her then supposed death-bed, you would have thought of Moses on Pisgah, or Jacob on his death-bed dividing his blessings; of dying Joshua, or of David, or the best composed saints.

To see her dearest pledges and relations, friends and servants standing by, flowing with tears and lamentations, and herself stedfast and unconcerned, counselling, comforting, blessing

them with her last breath (as she and they believed), it made an appearance as if all they had been the parties which must die, and she only to give them Christian advice to suffer death with patience; as if she had been in perfect health, they in present danger of death: such was her assurance and joy from the Holy Ghost, as if she had begun to taste eternity, and the happiness of that life in the very tidings of death!

Her legacy left to her two dear children was her desire to her lord, that, whatsoever provision he should make for their outward condition, she besought him they might be brought up in the strictest way of religion and life. The strictest ways were always counted best for her own self in her life, and now at her death she bore witness to them.

It seemed good to Almighty God to let the sun of her life go back some few degrees, after it seemed to be in the lowest point of setting.

To her father in his extreme affliction, God made her an inexpressible comfort. I speak not in regard of any temporal things, but to show that it was the service of his soul that she aimed at; as if her soul had been held in life for that purpose, that she might be an instrument to draw her father's with her to eternity,—let me tell you but this:—

When all his hopes of life were past, and after she, with the rest of those who were dear to him, had taken their final leave, that the rest of his hours might be spent with his spiritual comforters, she could not give sleep to her eyes, nor slumber to her eyelids, until she had once more visited and discoursed with him, but yet in matters relating wholly to eternity; and therefore, coming betimes in the morning, first timorously

into his chamber (after she had watched all night in a room hard-by for that purpose), when he had with joy discerned and welcomed her, they presently fell into conference; in which she, with an humble boldness, did so question and answer, gently wound and then give balm; in a word, she did so apply both law and gospel to him, that (being refreshed with these comforts) he cried out, "Happy am I that I should from a child of mine own receive such consolation!" And after that, he told a reverend divine, who came to administer the like consolation, that he thanked God he had a child there who was able to be his counsellor in all his doubts. After her father's death she said, that she could not, if it were possible and lawful, with her heart and judgment, wish him alive again, for she durst not wish him so sad a change as to leave heaven for earth, especially this earth as things now make it. To another she said, that now if God would give her leave, she would go into the country; and she had put her family affairs into such a way, that for herself she would have nothing to do but to be ready to die. For this let me note, there was not a night in six months since her last recovery from her sickness, that she rose not from off her knees from her prayers without tears running down her cheeks, as I am certainly informed by those who had reason to know it.

One remarkable occasion I shall mention, wherein she poured forth her soul in a large prayer, the words of which cannot be recollected but in effect; it was of such most fervent, melting, moving passages, as if she would take the kingdom of heaven by force; especially laying before God, his name, his attributes, his compassion, his Christ, all his comfortable promises,

which she fetched with most admirable skill, choice, and fluency, from every precious vein in the rich mine of his Word. At last, in a quiet kind of sleep, she yielded up her spirit to God that gave it.<sup>1</sup>

**MEDITATION.**—“ Her whole life was a constant preparation for death.” I see what reason the Church had to put that prayer into my mouth, “ In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver me.” And I see, too, what reason I have never to repeat that prayer but with the greatest zeal and devotion, “ that I may find mercy at that day.” But then (as I hope for mercy at that day) I must think of it, and prepare for it; and order my life according to that law, by which I am then to be judged, acquitted, or condemned.

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**FRANCES, COUNTESS OF CARBERY.**

DIED 1650.

**THIS** lady, who was remarkable for a holy life and a happy death, was the daughter of Sir John Altham, of Orbey. Jeremy Taylor preached her funeral sermon at the house of Golden Grove; he chose for his text the following passage:—

“ For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him.” 2 Sam. xiv. 14. After

(1) From the Sermon, preached at Walden, in Essex, by Edward Rainbow, D.D.

treating fully upon the subject of death, he proceeds:—

“ I have told you the necessity and the state of death, it may be too largely for such a sad story ; I shall, therefore, now with a better compendium, teach you how to live, by telling you a plain narrative of a life, which, if you imitate, and write after the copy, it will make that death shall not be an evil, but a thing to be desired, and to be reckoned among the purchases and advantages of your fortune. When Martha and Mary went to weep over the grave of their brother, Christ met them there, and preached a funeral sermon, discoursing of the resurrection, and applying to the purposes of faith, and confession of Christ, and glorification of God. We have no other, we can have no better precedent to follow: and now that we are come to weep over the grave of our dear sister, this rare personage, we cannot choose but have many virtues to learn, many to imitate, and some to exercise.

“ I choose not to declare her extraction and genealogy ; it was, indeed, fair and noble. It is fit for us all to honour the nobleness of a family ; but it is also fit for them that are noble to despise it, and to establish their honour upon the foundation of doing excellent things, and suffering in good causes, and despising dishonourable actions, and in communicating good things to others, for this is the rule in nature; those creatures are most honourable which have the greatest power, and do the greatest good, and accordingly myself have been a witness of it, how this excellent lady would, by an act of humility and Christian abstraction strip herself of all that fair appendage, and exterior honour, which decked her person and her fortune, and desired to be owned by nothing

but what was her own, that she might only be esteemed honourable, according to that which is the honour of a Christian, and a wise person.

“ She had a strict and severe education, and it was one of God’s graces and favours to her.

“ She had the art to secure her eternal interest by turning her condition into duty, and expressing her duty in the greatest eminency of a virtuous, prudent, and rare affection, that hath been her own in any example. I will not give her so low a testimony, as to say only that she was chaste ; she was a person of that severity, modesty, and close religion as to that particular, that she was not capable of uncivil temptation, and you might as well have suspected the sun to smell of the poppy that he looks on, as that she could have been a person apt to be sullied by the breath of a foul question.

“ She would often discourse it to them that conversed with her, that her Lord would improve that interest which he had in her affections, to the advantages of God and of religion ; and she would delight to say that he called her to her devotions, he encouraged her good inclinations, he directed her piety, he invited her with good, and then she loved religion, which she saw was not only pleasing to God, and an act or state of duty, but pleasing to her Lord, and an act also of her affection and conjugal obedience ; and what at first she loved the more forwardly for his sake, in the using of religion, left such relishes upon her spirit, that she found in it amiability enough to make her love it for its own. So God usually brings us to Him by instruments and affections, and then incorporates us into his inheritance, by the more immediate relishes of heaven, and the secret things of the Spirit.

“ As she was a rare wife, so she was an excellent mother; for in so tender a constitution of spirit as hers was, and in so great a kindness towards her children, that hath seldom been seen a stricter and more curious care of their persons, their deportment, their nature, their disposition, their learning, and their customs; and if ever kindness and care did contest, and make parties in her, yet her care and her severity were ever victorious; and she knew not how to do an ill turn to their severer part, by her more tender and forward kindness. And as her custom was, she turned this also into love to her Lord; for she was not only diligent to have them bred nobly and religiously, but also was careful and solicitous, that they should be taught to observe all the circumstances and inclinations, the desires and wishes of their father; as thinking that virtue to have no good circumstances, which was not dressed by his copy, and ruled by his lines, and his affections; and her prudence in managing her children was so singular and rare, that whenever you mean to bless this family, and pray a hearty and profitable prayer for it, beg of God that the children may have those excellent things which she designed to them, and provided for them in her heart and wishes; that they may live by her purposes, and may grow thither, whither she would fain have brought them. All these were great parts of an excellent religion, as they concerned her greatest temporal relations.

“ But if we examine how she demeaned herself towards God, there also you will find her, not of a common, but of an exemplar piety: she was a great reader of Scripture, confining herself to great portions every day, which she read, not to the purposes of vanity and impertinent curiosities,

not to seem knowing, or to become talking, not to expound and rule; but to teach her all her duty, to instruct her in the knowledge and love of God to her neighbours; to make her more humble, and to teach her to despise the world and all its gilded vanities, and that she might entertain passions wholly in design and order to heaven.

“I have seen a female religion that wholly dwelt upon the face and tongue; that, like a wanton and undressed tree, spends all its juice in suckers and irregular branches, in leaves and gum, and after all such goodly outsides, you should never eat an apple, or be delighted with the beauties, or the perfumes of a hopeful blossom. But the religion of this excellent lady was of another constitution; it took root downward in humility, and brought forth fruit upward, in the substantial graces of a Christian, in charity and justice, in chastity and modesty, in fair friendship and sweet society: she had not very much of the forms and outsides of godliness, but she was largely careful for the power of it, for the moral, essential, and useful parts, such as would make her be, not seem to be, religious.

“She was a very constant person at her prayers, and spent all her time which nature did permit to her choice, in her devotion, and reading, and meditating, and the necessary offices of household government; every one of which is an action of religion, some by nature, some by adoption. To these also God gave her a very great love to hear the Word of God preached; in which, because I had sometimes the honour to minister to her, I can give this certain testimony, that she was a diligent, watchful, and attentive hearer. But her appetite was not soon satisfied with what was useful to her soul: she was also a constant reader of sermons,



and seldom missed to read one every day; and that she might be full of instruction and holy principles, she had lately designed to have a large book, in which she purposed to have a stock of religion transcribed, in such assistances as she would choose, that she might be readily instructed and furnished to every good work. But God prevented that, and hath filled her desires, not out of cisterns and little aqueducts, but hath carried her to the fountains, 'she drinks of the pleasures of the river' and is full of God."

Of her sickness and death, Bishop Jeremy Taylor presents to us the following account:—

"Toward the latter end of her days, she grew so fast in religion, as if she had had a revelation of her approaching end, and therefore that she must go a great way in a little time: her discourses more full of religion, her prayers more frequent, her charity increasing, her forgiveness more forward, her friendships more communicative, her passion more under discipline; and so she trimmed her lamp, not thinking her night was so near. In all her religion, and in all her actions of relation towards God, she had a strange evenness and untroubled passage, sliding towards her ocean of God and infinity with a certain and silent motion. And in this I cannot but adore the providence and admire the wisdom and infinite mercies of God; for having a tender and soft, a delicate and fine constitution; she was tender to pain, and apprehensive of it as a child's shoulder is of a load and burden; and in her often discourses of death, which she would renew willingly and frequently, she would tell, that 'she feared not death, but she feared the sharp pains of death.' The being dead and being freed from the troubles and dangers of this world, she hoped would be for her

advantage, and therefore that was no part of her fear: but she, believing the pangs of death were great, and the use and aids of reason little, had reason to fear lest they should do violence to her spirit, and the decency of her resolution. But God, that knew her fears and her jealousy concerning herself, fitted her with a death so easy, so harmless, so painless, that it did not put her patience to a severe trial. It was not, to all appearance, of so much trouble as two fits of a common ague, so careful was God to demonstrate to all that stood in that sad attendance, that this soul was dear to Him; and that since she had done so much of her duty towards it, He that began, would also finish her redemption by an act of a rare providence, and a singular mercy. Blessed be that goodness of God, who does so careful actions of mercy for the ease and security of his servants! But this one instance was a great demonstration, that the apprehension of death is worse than the pains of death; and that God loves to reprove the unreasonableness of our fears, by the mightiness and by the arts of his mercy.

“I know not by what instrument it happened, but when death drew near, before it made any show upon her body, or revealed itself by a natural signification, it was conveyed to her spirit. She had a strange secret persuasion that this should be her last scene of life: and we have known that the soul, when she is about to disrobe herself of her upper garment, sometimes speaks very excellent words; sometimes it is prophetic; sometimes God, by a superinduced persuasion, wrought by instruments or accidents of his own, serves the end of his own providence and the salvation of the soul. But so it was, that the thought of death dwelt along with her, and grew, from the

first steps of fancy and fear, to a consent, from thence to a strange credulity and expectation of it; and without the violence of sickness, she died as if she had done it voluntarily and by design.

“ She had, in her sickness (if I may so call it, or rather, in the solemnities and graver preparations towards death), some curious and well-becoming fears concerning the final state of her soul. But from thence she passed into a kind of trance; and as soon as she came forth of it,—as if it had been a vision, or that she had conversed with an angel, and from his hand had received a label or scroll of the book of life, and there seen her name enrolled,—she cried out aloud, ‘ Glory be to God on high! Now I am sure I shall be saved.’ Concerning which manner of discoursing, we are wholly ignorant what judgment can be made; but certainly there are strange things in the other world, and so there are in all the immediate preparations to it; and a little glimpse of heaven, a minute’s conversing with an angel, any ray of God, any communication extraordinary from the Spirit of comfort, which God gives to his servants in strange and unknown manners, are infinitely far from illusions; and they shall then be understood by us, when we feel them, and when our new and strange needs shall be refreshed by such unusual visitations.”<sup>1</sup>

CONSOLATION FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.  
—“ I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, 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.”<sup>2</sup>

(1) Bishop Jeremy Taylor’s Funeral Sermon on Frances, Countess of Carbery.

(2) Rev. xiv. 13.

THE HONOURABLE THE LADY LUCIE  
REYNELL.

DIED APRIL 18, 1652.

THIS truly religious person was descended from the ancient family of the Brandons. The family afterwards became allied to that of Sir William Waller, the Courtenays and Harcourts.

Though brought up in a place (London) which largely afforded, and too much invited the extravagances of youth, yet she set forth timely to seek, yea, found Him whom her soul loved, be-taking herself to prayer, reading, meditating, working, and such other religious duties as might hinder her from employing her time in those vanities, which many both of her age and sex, about her, forgetting thus to seek God, spent in painting, patching, and adorning themselves. She found the greatest riches to be the truest poverty, and that to be nothing was to be most; God always judging those things to be greatest which are most gracious. And the more to manifest this excellent grace she delighted not in the excess of apparel, nor the pomps and riches of the world; but made those honours which God had bestowed on her instruments of holiness; her eyes being taken up with higher objects than these transitory things. For, oh how little a point did she see all the greatness of this world to be! which made her constantly take a survey of her daily defects, weaknesses, and infirmities. By all which we learn, that she thirsted more after grace than greatness, and to glorify the Creator more than to pride herself in the creature. But I shall no longer strive to exalt her in the

description of this virtue, whose constant practice it was to abase herself; humility thus in greatness being, as I may say, sublime, and a virtue worthy of admiration in her.

Her devotion in the next place was very observable; no more had she now to do with the illusions of the world; she was for heaven, for glory, and the hopes of a joyful resurrection; not one who, with a superbiency of fancy, upheld only a profession wherein there was nothing to be seen but the phantasm of religion. No, her work was not on those needlework flowers which were more for show than for smell. She was much in prayer, which she made the key wherewith to open and shut the day; being the chief mark whereby St. Paul was to be known, "Behold, saith God, he prayeth." And such time as she allotted not to prayer, reading, holy conferences, and the like, being as fervent in spirit as zealous in meditation, she conscientiously employed in the works of her particular calling.

Gracious was she also in discourse, not too free nor over reserved, observing a mediocrity in her words. Oh, the abundance of grace that was poured out from her lips, none ever going away uninstructed, unsatisfied, or some way bettered by her. Her gravity, which by one is called the ballast of the soul that keeps the mind steadfast, made her speech not to be overmuch, well knowing that in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. Oh, the sweetness of the perfumed breath of this saint who spake and studied the Thessalonian language, tending to edification, to direct, quicken, and comfort those who heard her, many whereof were not a little warmed at the spiritual fire of her discourse, setting forth the goodness of God towards her, whose words

were so solid and advised, seasoned with the salt of a heavenly tongue, according to the Apostle's direction as that there seldom dropped any thing from her lips but seemed to flow from the clear spring of a sanctified heart. Her very presence affrighted the swearer into silence, and greatly reformed the lives of others.

She hated neutrality in matters of God's worship, and would not make new friends by changing her old religion, desiring to serve but one master, who she best knew was best able to preserve her; and having first chosen her stand on the fairest ground, it being good to lay a sure foundation in our mind, she still kept her station in a fixed position, without traversing up and down in the bye-paths of those who rent the seamless coat of our Saviour with their many divisions. And though all sorts had the liberty to resort to her, yet she warily avoided superstition on the one side, and faction on the other.

Neither may I omit the mention of her peaceable disposition. For of so composed a spirit and heavenly temper was she, as if she made it a great part of her study, directing all her actions by a gospel rule to live peaceably with all.

As it is reported of one that he threw all his gold into the river that he might the better study philosophy, so she studied nothing so much as Jesus Christ. In no way did she rest in any of her performances for then she thought she should sit down short of Christ. She made it her practice to improve all her honours and riches to God's glory. Thus, as her goodness sanctified her greatness, so her greatness supported her goodness. She laboured also to live much in a little time, being diligent in serving her generation, and living to God.

Of the closing scenes of her life her biographer thus writes:—“The death of this saint, no doubt, was precious in the sight of God; and shall it not be so in ours? Shall we make that death wretched which He makes blessed? If heaven ask the banns, let not earth deny them, she being now glorified with her God. I shall advert to several things very remarkable which made her bed seem so soft in the time of her sickness, made death the more welcome to her, and will greatly conduce towards a comfortable passage out of this life.

“She spent the time of her health well, laying up tears and prayers beforehand, and desiring God to teach her to number her days aright. This made death the less bitter to her, for she knew how to make the world her servant, and would not court and wait upon a vanity which would weary her in serving it, but never satisfy the expectation of those that pursue it.

“Next, she made acquaintance with death, and became familiar with it, taking notice of all its approaches, by considering the dissolution of others; she knew it was never good to defer the repairs until the furniture of our worldly lodgings grew rotten, the foundation shakes under our feet, and the whole structure ready to fall about our ears: she saw the shadow stealing on her dial.

“And however some observe, that it is not death, but the opinion of it, which makes it so terrible; and every one considers it according to the disposition of his own spirit; yet she still represented it aright unto her own soul, often considering that there was scarcely any thing which had not killed some one. She considered not only the nature but the manner of it; that we might die of joy or sorrow, and be taken hence

in the midst of our pleasures, or our greatest pains. Ah, how many poor souls want that acquaintance with death which she had! and may well cry out in their dying breath, 'Quo vadis!' whither art thou going, poor soul? for when she saw any object of this nature, 'Alas!' she would say, 'who can choose but weep over such sad souls, whose bodies are so near their graves, and their souls no ways provided for?'

"How much advantage-ground also did she get of her enemies, the world, the flesh, and devil, by every sickness it pleased God to lay upon her! Surely, a soul is never more fit to be a house for God, than when, with this lady, the spirit raiseth up the greatness of her courage, the body being cast down with sickness. With the Apostle she thus died daily; with him she prayed continually; nay, with him she was instant in prayer, by which means the sight of death was neither strange nor terrible to her when it came; having so often formerly beheld it in her serious meditation, and having, as it were, her grave in her house, her coffin lying by her many years before she died, as if all the days of her pilgrimage here she studied to wait till her change should come.

"But to draw near the time of her end. Oh, what pious thoughts did she send as harbingers to heaven, of whose eternal happiness her soul saw a glimpse through the chinks of a sickness-broken body! How did she quicken her pace, like rivers drawing near the sea, as she saw death making towards her! How admirable were those passages, and with what vigour of spirit poured forth on her last bed, like a passionate pilgrim longing to set foot on her own country! How patiently, also, did she endure those bitter conflicts of approaching death, expressing the lively confi-



dence she had of that mystical union with her Saviour, and earnestly aspiring at the fruition of those joys whereof she had here gotten an engagement by faith! She knew that death was but the body's seed-time, and that she had long been a plentiful sower, and therefore her soul had nothing now to do but to expect the crowning day, the funeral not only of her body, but of all her sins and sorrows being at hand.

“ So submissive was she to the will of God, as if with that good Father, who, on receiving the emperor's sentence of death, cried out, ‘ God be ever praised in vouchsafing to deliver me from the fetters of my body,’ she had said Amen to her own death, in assurance of receiving everlasting life, by the free mercy and grace of Him who took her hence; or with Hilarion, ‘ So many years have I served my God; and shall I now be afraid to go to Him?’ She well knew that Christ had conquered death for her, and to that end took our flesh upon Him, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, even the devil, and deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their life long subject to bondage: so as death, which embitters the comforts of this life to the wicked, was to her not only sweet but welcome.

“ When any seemed to comfort her with the hopes of life, ‘ I care not,’ said she, ‘ so God be glorified in my body, whether it be by life or death; I am ready to do the will of God; for, to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain! I go but for a time the way of all the earth, and to the house appointed for all the living; and who knows, if I should desire further length of days, whether I should not deprive myself of what is necessary to my salvation?’

“ Admirable indeed she was in the contempt of death! How often, with St. Paul, did she desire to be dissolved! When shall I be free from this body of sin? when shall I appear before my God? Full weary she was of that country, where the earth seemed as quicksilver, and steals away under our feet when we tread on it, and where to gather one rosebud, we meet with a thousand thorns.

“ I deny not, but that most men, naturally, fly death; but God’s servants stand still with this lady to meet it, and who, as it were, called death unto her. She forgot not that she was in the arms of life, and therefore nothing could dismay or affright her; for, with the Apostle, she accounted not herself dear unto herself, in what condition soever, so that she might finish her course with joy, and be made instrumental towards the setting forth of his glory.

“ Nor was she known to express the least murmuring or discontentment to any who were about her, or came to visit her in the time of her sickness. No distracted gesture could be read in her countenance, not so much as one distempered word or repining breath passed between her and death. For though she were ready to be offered, and had been many years taking her journey towards heaven, yet she was not tired with the length thereof, but well contented; the true temper of a Christian in dying, to hang longer, as it were, on the cross of this world, so as, at last, she might depart, not to herself, but to the Lord; as if she had said, ‘ I am a vessel of His own making; if He please to unmake me, why should I complain? or, if He make me new again, and render me happy, being here but miserable, why should I be troubled? If He please to have me

live, it pleaseth me; but if to die, I still refer myself to His holy will. If He visit me with sickness, be it so; if He send me health, I am content; or if death, I am prepared.' In every moment, crying out with St. Paul, 'Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do? my heart is ready, my God! my heart is prepared. It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good in his eyes! Either to let me serve Him longer in this house of clay, or to sing his praises eternally in the courts of heaven.'

"Such was God's infinite love and mercy towards her, as that in all the time of her sickness, God remembering whereof she was made, and considering that she was but dust, so far restrained the tempter as not to lay on her the least disturbance or disquietude of spirit. But such tranquillity of mind she then had, and so exhilarated was her heart, through God's inward comfort and working, that however wounded before, even almost to despair, with the guilt of her sins, she felt a marvellous strengthening and quietness within her, insomuch that those bones formerly bruised, now leaped for joy, being as one that seemed rather to be risen from the death of sin, or some deadly danger, than as one passing out of the world by the pains thereof.

"As her sickness increased, besides the diseases of old age, death's harbinger, she lay languishing some time, without any certainty to those about her, until almost the last, whether she were then about to put off the garment of mortality, though, with Hezekiah, she had set her house in order, and, with the Apostle, long before thought meet to put them in remembrance of her departure, knowing that shortly she was to go out of this tabernacle of clay.

“As her speech began to fail her, her prayers were turned into inward soliloquies betwixt God and her soul, which yet wanted not outward expressions, by sighs, tears, lifting up of hands and eyes, whereby, triumphing even in death, she recommended her soul to Him who gave it.”<sup>1</sup>

A PETITION.—May God Almighty grant, that we may all henceforth, with meek heart and due reverence, so read, hear, and receive God’s holy Word, that we may truly serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life: that we may constantly bless His holy Name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear: and that we may all of us have grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom; and happily at our latter end, through the grave and gate of death, may pass to a joyful resurrection, through the prevailing merits of our Blessed Redeemer.

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ELIZABETH, LADY CAPEL.

DIED JAN. 26, A.D. 1660.

HER Christian fortitude and composure in sickness and death are very worthy of being recorded. Lord Clarendon speaks of her as being “an excellent wife,” and the following memoir of the closing scenes of her life will show that she was an excellent Christian.

Having lost her husband in the cause of his

(1) From the “Life and Death of the Lady Lucie Reynell,” by Edward Reynell, Esq. Dedicated to Lady Margaret Courtenay, 8vo. London, 1654.

Church and King, about four years before her death, she lost her second son Charles, when she sent for her spiritual adviser, Mr. Barker, as she habitually did on any occasion of grief, and addressed him in these words:—"Sir, I pray be free and plain with me, and tell me seriously and unfeignedly what special sin or vice do you take notice of in my practice and conversation? For I am sure something is amiss, and something God would have amended in me, that he does thus continually ply me with crosses."

The account of her life is given by Mr. Barker, and he attended upon her death-bed, which, through the severe sufferings of several months, was the scene of inward peace and joy, as well as of unwearied patience.

"One time, indeed," he says (and never but that once), "when I was with her, I found her labouring under some inward conflicts and thoughtfulness touching her spiritual condition; but those such as right well became the pious hope and humility of a Christian: whereupon, when I desired her, that if any particular scruple did trouble her thoughts, and lay heavy upon her spirits, she would please to ease her mind of it, and let me know it, that I might the better fit and order my applications to her. To which she returned me this answer: that she had been very faithful in her examination of her conscience, and had desired God to assist and direct her in that search, and yet could not find out any one particular sin which did afflict her spirit more than another; but however, confessed herself a great sinner before God. She was (it seems) very desirous to take as much shame and guilt to herself as was possible, that so she might leave the more glory for the free grace and pardon of God.

“ And accordingly, still as she cast down one eye upon sin at any time, she was ever careful to keep the other firmly and steadfastly fixed upon her Saviour. This was the right complexion and constitution of her piety; an equal temperament of fear and hope, of humility and confidence; as her hope was evermore a fearing hope, so was her fear always a believing, hoping fear. She carried too deep a sense of sin in her conscience to be proud of any virtue or worthiness of her own, and was always (even under her greatest conflicts and agonies) too good a Christian to despair of pardon.”

Her last days were full of the grace of God, who granted that wish which she had often expressed with submission to his good pleasure, and gave her some sensible tastes of heavenly joy; fresh comforts daily breaking in upon her soul, her former fears vanishing, and her whole mind sweetly composed into a pious confidence. A few days before her death she spoke to the following effect, addressing herself to her minister. “ Oh, sir, what a gracious God have I! How rich in his mercies towards me! How favourable in his corrections of me! The thing which I so greatly feared (a painful, torturing death), He has turned into ease and comfort; and my worldly cares and thoughtfulness for the provisions of my children, He has also in a great measure taken off my hand: and now what do I lingering and tarrying here any longer? all my work is done, and the world has no further need of me. Why may not I forthwith go to my God? Is it not much better for me to be dissolved, and to be with Christ?” These and such like heavenly sayings were her usual discourses with him, so that he rejoiced whenever she sent for him.

On January 26th she sent for him four several times to pray with her, thrice in the morning and once in the afternoon, at which last time all her children, except one who was not then in town, were present, and joined in the prayers. Soon after, he was summoned again, to perform his last ministerial office, the recommendation of her soul into the hands of Almighty God, and then her senses beginning to fail, she drew her last breath a few minutes afterwards in much peace and sweetness.<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION.—From this example and from that of Lady Carbery's, we may learn that they who all their life long have been in bondage to the fear of death, may receive great consolation. Many are the servants of God who have experienced the same, their former fears vanishing as death approached, fresh comforts breaking in upon their souls, and their whole minds sweetly composed into a pious confidence.

(1) From the Sermon preached by the Rev. Edmund Barker, Rector of Buriton in Hampshire, and from the English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century.



LADY ELIZABETH LANGHAM.

DIED 1665.

SHE was the sister of the seventh Lord Hastings. Her humility was such, that she was never known in word or deportment to show any pride of spirit on that account; and her religion was of such a practical kind, that she adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things.

God having now made her meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of saints in light, accordingly thought fit to translate her thither.

Her sickness, of which she died, surprised her: and truly, such a surprise of death, in the very borders and confines of expected health, might well discompose and put out of frame any soul but such a one as hers, which always kept so good a guard that no event could befall her for which she was not well prepared.

During the twilight of hopes and fears, which sometimes held both her physicians and relations in suspense concerning her, she always seemed in her own inclinations to desire St. Paul's choice,



to depart and to be with Christ, desiring of her dear husband, who was humbly importunate with God, that he would not pray for her life, but for her soul, that God would make her fit to die ; or, if He pleased to gratify the desires of those who so affectionately desired her recovery, that He would so sanctify his hand unto her that she might obtain grace of Him to pay her vows ; for, truly, her great aim and design was, to be perfecting holiness in the fear of God : and the great request which she made for herself was, that she might be purified and refined ; and conformable hereunto was that former request of hers, which she expressed with the most emphatical vehemency : “ O that I could do the whole will of God ! ”

In other times of this her last sickness, when her husband, praying by her, prosecuted with earnestness his constant request for her recovery to health, and a longer life ; when the duty was over she would kindly chide the exuberancy of his affections, and desire him to rest content in God’s promise ; that all things should work together for his good, and to submit, as she wholly did, to His sovereign will, telling him withal, that he had no reason to let loose the reins to sorrow, if he saw her die with good evidences of her going to heaven ; and to allay his sufferings in his greatest fears of that separation which he so much deprecated, “ We came not,” said she, “ into the world together, nor can we expect to go out of it together ; yet is it a great satisfaction to me that I am going thither ; whither, after a while, you shall follow me.”

During the whole time of her sickness, she was very solicitous of her deportment and behaviour, under the afflicting hand of God, and afraid lest

the restlessness occasioned by her disease might be the fruit of impatience; for which reason, she would oftentimes, with a holy jealousy of herself, ask those about her whether she did not seem to them to be deficient in patience? and would seem to be troubled at the remembrance of the behaviour of such and such Christian friends, with whom she had been on their sick beds, as conscious to herself how far short she came of them.

Some conflicts with temptations she had, if they may be so called, or rather the tenderness of her own conscience, on account of the smallest omissions. But it pleased God that these thin and light clouds were soon dispelled and disappeared; the light of God's countenance breaking through them, and filling her soul with comfort; so that she told a friend that visited her, that she thanked God that, instead of a world full of troubles and miseries, God had now given to her the sight of a better country: and the prospect hereof, together with the clearing of her title to, and interest in it (a thing, which in her best health she expressed a great deal of solicitude for; inso-much, as she has sometimes said, with an emphasis of zealous earnestness, "Who is there that being once assured of the pardon of sin, would not be willing to die the next hour?") made her, now she had attained it, so willing and ready to resign up her soul into the hands of God her heavenly Father, as knowing whom she had trusted; and to lay down her earthly tabernacle, in exchange for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.<sup>1</sup>

**NARRATIVE.**—Even upon her dying bed, she

(1) From the Sermon, preached 1665, by Dr. Ford, Vicar of All Saints, Northampton.

requested her husband to train up their children in the exercises of strict godliness, and to take care that they were taught such evidences of salvation as might one day support them in their dying agonies.

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## LADY JANE CHEYNE.

DIED 1669. AGED 47.

LADY JANE CAVENDISH, who was married to the Hon. Charles Cheyne, was the eldest daughter of William, Marquis, afterwards Duke, of Newcastle. Whilst her father was abroad she and one of her sisters were in his house, which they garrisoned against the Rebels; and after showing her courage and loyalty during the siege, she became a prisoner there, upon the house being taken.

She loved to spend her leisure in writing pious meditations, as well as in reading good discourses. From her youth to her death-bed she failed not of prayer thrice a day, or, if her time was interfered with in the morning or at noon, she failed not to make it up at night.

She lived happily with her husband at Chelsea for nearly fifteen years, employing herself in charitable works, working with her needle when not busied with her books and writing, and continuing in her religious course, in which she loved to observe the fasts of the Church, as far as the tenderness of her constitution permitted.

In her last sickness, her sufferings were not often severe, and she was spared what she naturally dreaded,—extreme pain; for, during the

fits, which came upon her, her senses were lost for the time: in her intervals of speech, she used it mostly in devotion, and in many gentle, cheerful, and obliging expressions to her husband, children, doctors, and other mournful attendants.

In the three weeks' interval, during which there were good hopes of her recovery, she used often to say, that though she resigned herself wholly to the wise disposal of a good God, yet she, being in expectation of being called away, looked upon her recovery as a gracious kind of disappointment (these were her own words) by God Almighty. This she said, not out of discontent at her sickness, which she thankfully acknowledged, but (as having conquered the world, and being now in her passage to a better) out of her intuition of a glorious crown, that she trusted awaited her in heaven.

Now was the time, when all the powers of her soul, all her virtues and graces, were summoned together with united force, to make up the complement of her devotions; wherein she professed, to the equal comfort and grief of those that heard her, her confidence in God, her patient submission to Him, her holy resignation, her indifference to life, and her preparedness to die; of which, among many others, there were two remarkable instances: one to a reverend father of our Church, whom she told, with great unconcernedness, as he was discoursing piously to her, that she was not afraid to die; not that she had or feared any trouble or discontent here, but that she might enjoy the blessings of that better world: the other to her sad and afflicted husband, whom, as he was at her bedside praying to God that He would restore her again to health, that she might

live and glorify Him, when those that went down in the pit could not praise Him, she stopped in his prayer, and with a comfortable look and strong voice (though a great difficulty of speech had some time before possessed her), said, She would glorify God, whether she lived or died; and then recommended her children to His care.

These dear children of hers, as she often had in health, so she did now more frequently in her sickness, instruct; charging them to apply themselves much to reading; especially to be diligent in constant prayers to God; to be observant to their dear father, and transferring to him that affection which they had shown to herself; to pay him now a double duty, and to be entirely loving to one another: then, and not else, they might assure themselves of all good things from God and their father; further enjoining them to be respectful to those that had the charge of them, and ever to give ear to their just and virtuous advices; and carefully to decline the company of vain and impertinent persons.

As it was her only trouble in all her sickness, that her indisposition made her incapable of giving that attendance to the offices of religion, praying, meditating, reading, as she used to do; so, in the close, it was the great affliction of all about her, and that, which of any thing she herself showed most sense of, that her speech failed her; upon the loss of which, she had no other means of expressing those pious ejaculations she in her last sickness incessantly poured forth, but by sighs, and eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, whither we may presume she is gone, to increase the number of saints, whom the Church this day commemorates, and to enter into the joy of her Saviour. Her funeral sermon was preached at

Chelsea, on All Saints' day, 1669, by Dr. Adam Littleton.<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION BY BISHOP KEN.—The only way for a woman to gain honour, is an exemplary holiness; this makes her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband and her own works “praise her in the gate.” The sole glory, then, of that sex is to be good; for it is a “gracious woman” only who retains honour.



LADY MARY WHARTON.

DIED 1672. AGED 57.

LADY MARY WHARTON was the eldest daughter of Henry Carey, Earl of Dover, and was connected, on her mother's side, with the ancient family of the Pelhams. Her husband was Sir Thomas Wharton.

She began without delay to perform her baptismal vow, finding those vanities in which her equals often took delight only a burden and a

(1) From “English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century.”

grievance. When she grew to years of discretion she was beloved by all those of her acquaintance who had devoted themselves to the fear of God, and who therefore were most dear to her.

She was never tainted with novel opinions and fancies, but well acquainted with and tenacious of the form of sound words contained in the Holy Scripture, and as they are taught in the Church of England, whereof she was a true and dutiful child, and was never moved by any arguments with which members of the Church of Rome endeavoured to make an impression upon her.

She studied the Scriptures and copied largely from them for her own use, increasing her knowledge by the writings of the best divines, and when she would recreate her mind with any pleasant discourse, besides her reading of serious history, she took great delight in reading Mr. Herbert's verses, most of which she could repeat without book. Besides her diligent and unwearied reading (which was not only part of her closet work, but usually her afternoon's employment when not hindered by company, or not exercised in needlework, for she was never idle) she constantly observed her designed and stated time for secret prayers: in which if she were at any time hindered by entertainment of friends, &c., yet would she redeem time even from her sleep rather than shorten her accustomed devotions.

She once heard a sermon by Mr. John Hudson, afterwards Bishop of Elphin, where he observed that mercies and blessings obtained by prayer will be sweet, and that we should especially record special mercies. She from that time resolved to keep a record of such special mercies as should be vouchsafed to her, especially such as should

be given after prayer, and in those papers where they were found recorded she made this prayer :

“ Oh my God, I desire now to come before thee, humbled in my soul for my own baseness and filthiness from head to foot ; every member of my body being ready and inclined to every sin ; every faculty of my soul being polluted and defiled with that foul and ugly sin wherein I was conceived and born : and to aggravate this, having received and still possessing more mercies and gracious dispensations from Thee, than (I think) ever any creature had. But it is Thy free grace which can as well give me a thankful heart as a receiving hand, which I beg for His sake upon whose account only I come before Thee, and have this confidence to approach unto Thee. And here, O Lord, through Thine assistance I desire to recount, as I am able, some of those innumerable mercies that I daily receive.”

Then after an enumeration of many general mercies, she thus proceeds : “ Good God, give me Thy grace likewise, that all this Thy goodness may not be in vain upon my poor soul. I bless Thy name for the gracious presence of Thy blessed Spirit at all times, when I set myself before Thee in earnest to seek Thy face and favour in private ; and especially at a fast I kept and sacrament I received when I was left all alone at Woburn, when I received much comfort,” &c.

Then again reckoning up many particular mercies received at the Lord's hands upon her prayers to Him for her husband and her son, among which she forgets not affectionately to mention the good means of grace and salvation they had lived under, and the contented, peaceable, plentiful, cheerful condition they had enjoyed ever since they came together. “ But these



(saith she), "are but one of thousands that I have and do enjoy; O give me to live in some measure answerable to this goodness of Thine."

After this manner she recorded the many special mercies, deliverances, blessings, which she, her husband, son, and family had received, noting the day and month of the year. And the whole contexture is in the same tenour of prayers and praises, ever desiring of the Lord, that he would give her to live the life of faith and thanksgiving; which was her frequent expression.

She was so much affected by the thought of God's loving kindness to her, that she could not forbear to speak of it in her private discourses with her friends. She would often do this in conversing with Mr. Watkinson, who came to the Rectory of Edlington in Yorkshire: while she was living there upon her first acquaintance, when he was but newly settled in the rectory, she said one day whilst alone with him, "Sir, God hath sent you hither to take care of our souls; therefore I entreat you that you would not spare faithfully to reprove whatever you shall see amiss in me." He resolved upon this encouragement to deal freely with her if occasion offered, but he observed such an uniform regard to duty and care of her deportment at all times, and towards all persons, that during the rest of her life he could find nothing in her worthy of reproof.

In religious conversations the part which she usually bore was of asking questions on such points as she desired to be further informed in, "with some affectionate expressions acquiring self application, and that seldom (if ever) without contrite tears. Her humble and contrite spirit would ever judge herself unworthy of offered comfort, yet would earnestly listen to it,

desiring with David to hear the voice of joy and gladness, admiring it, and not wilfully rejecting what she was urged to receive ; entertaining each argument with joyful tears which might give her any assurance or hope of divine favour through Christ, on whose merits alone she wholly relied, trampling under foot all conceit of any worth of her own righteousness."

The last time she ever received the Holy Sacrament was on June 9th, 1672, on which occasion she came out of the house after being long confined to it by want of strength, and from this time she never left the house again. She had once received the communion in private during her confinement, but had a longing desire to receive it in the public congregation. That morning she rose two hours earlier than for a long while she had done before ; the day was rugged and the air cold, so that she probably increased her disorder. Her husband having conducted her to the church, after the sermon she received the sacrament with more than ordinary devotion. On her return home she retired to her chamber, which she never left again, but died ten days after.

Apprehending, as it should seem a long while before her decease, that her strength might totally fail her at the last, she had written five years before her death two papers, addressed to her husband and her only son, from which we make the following selections :—

" My dear heart, Sir Thomas Wharton,

" Our good and gracious God will be thy great support and comfort in all conditions, and will make up all relations, without which none could have given any contentment. We have by His

mercies lived more happy days than almost any ; but changes must come to us, as well as to others ; therefore let us be thankful for all our good we have enjoyed ; and be willing and ready to give up what is dearest to us when He calls, who will do nothing to hurt us, being our most loving Father in Christ, who has bought us with His precious blood. This I believe ; Lord, help my unbelief, and give me to live the life of faith and thanksgiving ; and prepare for His will, whether life or death."

The first part of the letter to her son was as follows :—

" My dear Philip,

" I pray God to bless you ; and He who has raised you from many illnesses and weaknesses, raise your heart and life to some degree answerable to these great mercies, and all others which I am not able to reckon up. I am at this time, I praise God, well, and have no illness on me ; but grown old and often infirm, which makes me desire to leave something in charge with you, which you may read, and remember your old mother by.

" In the first place, love and fear God ; and press and strive every day to increase more and more in the love and service of Him, in whom you live, move, and have your being. There is no wisdom or policy like it ; and the more you converse with God's word and His people, the more you will find in it, and the better you will like it ; for in His service is perfect freedom. Let me conjure you to let no day go without reading the holy Scriptures, and other good books as you have leisure ; you will find them excellent company ; and do not only read, but

consider what you read, to remember it. I should be very glad you would early fit and prepare for the communion of the blessed body and blood of Christ; not rashly, because others do it, but advisedly; finding the want of it and the preciousness of it; which may give you a true hunger and thirst after it, and all other ordinances of God; upon which, I pray, attend very diligently."

After having given excellent advice to honour and love the King, to reverence, honour, obey, and love his father, she thus proceeds:—

"Let the fear of God first prevail with you; then the pleasing of your father, and your dead mother's injunctions, when she was alive; and consider well your vow made in baptism, which, though it were promised by others, yet you are bound to perform now, as your catechism teacheth you. To which end, consider the Church Catechism well, and there you will find your obligation; which I beseech God to enable you to strive to perform in resisting the world, the flesh, and the devil, and loving your good God and our neighbours."

After warning him against two sorts of people, the flatterer and the backbiter, she thus concludes:—

"My dear child, be careful of your ways, and let not these things, I say, be slighted by you; for they come from one that loves you, and wisheth your welfare, I assure you; by name, your old mother,

"MARY WHARTON.

"Feb. 26, 1667."

These papers she had kept in her cabinet ; and the day before she died, she gave them with her own hands to her husband and son, looking cheerfully, as she was used to do, though very faint ; and since the day when she last went to Church, unable to speak but in a whisper, and that with difficulty ; but she was cheerful to the last, smiling even in the face of death, and showing no impatience in her faintness and want of breath. " And as she lived in prayer, with it she took leave of the world, to go to her Saviour."<sup>1</sup>

MEDITATION.—" Smiling even in the face of death." Who would not wish to make such an end ? and surely it is in the power of every Christian, through the grace of God, to follow this example : and what sight upon earth is so desirable as to see a dying person cheerful, and a soul departing with comfort, with a certain prospect of a blessed resurrection. O God ! grant that this may be the case of myself, and of every one else, that we may live in the fear of God, and die in His favour, for the Lord Jesus' sake.

(1) English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century, p. 115, &c., and Wilford's Memorials.



THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ANNE, COUNTESS OF  
PEMBROKE, DORSET, AND MONTGOMERY.

DIED 1675-6. AGED 86.

SHE was the daughter of George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland, distinguished in Queen Elizabeth's reign; and of Lady Margaret Russell, daughter to Francis, Earl of Bedford. A memorial of her was written by Bishop Rainbow, from whose account it would appear that she was a person of great understanding, judgment, attainments, and piety.

When her religious principles were suspected by the Protector's government, some of the independent ministers, accompanied by others better disposed, came to her whilst her castle was garrisoned by Cromwell's soldiers, which it was for several months, and examined her as to her religion. "She made answer that her faith was built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, that is, upon the Holy Scriptures, the word of God, as delivered and expounded by the Church of England, whose doctrine, discipline,

and worship, as by law established, she was bred in, and had embraced, and by God's grace would persist in it to her life's end." Finding they could produce no effect they left her.

George Herbert sent her "A Priest's blessing. The Lord make good the blessing of your mother upon you, and cause all her wishes, diligence, prayers, and tears to bud, blow, and bear fruit in your soul, to His glory, your own good, and the great joy of, madam, your most faithful servant in Christ Jesu, George Herbert." The prayer was answered—the blessing was sent.

To an extraordinary piety she united a very remarkable degree of general information and useful knowledge. Bishop Rainbow says of her, "she had early gained a knowledge, as of the best things, so an ability in all commendable arts and sciences, as well as in those things which belong to persons of her birth and sex to know, insomuch that Dr. Donne is reported to have said of this lady in her younger years, that 'she knew well how to discourse of all things from predestination to slea silk.' That is, although she knew wool and flax, fine linen and silk, things appertaining to the spindle and distaff, yet she would open her mouth with wisdom, knowledge of the best and highest things, and if this had not been affected (attempted) by her, solid wisdom, knowledge of the best things, such as 'make wise unto salvation.' Her conversation was not only useful but also pleasant, as she would frequently bring out of the rich storehouse of her memory things new and old, sentences or sayings of remark, which she had read or learned, and with these her walls, her bed, her hangings and furniture were adorned, for she caused her servants to write them in papers, and her maids to pin them up, that she

or they in the time of their dressing, or as occasion served, might remember and make their descants (observations and discourses) on them. So that though she had not many books in her chamber, yet it was dressed up with the flowers of a library."

She traced her attachment for the Church and its ordinances to the early training of her mother, and persevered in it to the end of her life.

Bishop Rainbow thus speaks of her diary:—"She did cast up the account of her actions, and see what every day had brought forth. She did set down what was of more remark, or dictated and caused much of it to be set down in writing, in some certain seasons, which she contrived to be vacant from addresses; judging her time to be better spent thus than in that ordinary tattle which custom has taught many (of her sex especially) who have no business, and know no greater duty of life, than to see and be seen in formal visits and insignificant talk; as if it were a game to play away time, in which all parties cheat each other, yet never feel that they are cozened of a jewel most precious and irreparable."

Of her food and clothing it is said, "It will be held scarcely credible to say, but it is a truth to aver, that the mistress of this family was dieted more sparingly, and I believe many times more homely, and clad more coarsely and cheaply, than most of the servants in her house. Her austerity and humility were seen in nothing more than (if I may allude to Colos. ii. 23.) 'in neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.' Whether it were by long custom, to prove with how little nature may be content, and that if the appetite can be satisfied the body may be fed with what is most common and cheap; she



taught us that hunger and health seek not delicacies nor fulness.

“O that those who think they cannot live except they fare deliciously every day, would but make trial one year how they may preserve their own health and save their poor brethren from starving (by hunger or nakedness) out of those superfluities and surfeits by which they destroy themselves.”

“We may conclude that this great matron, who had such command over herself, had learned our Saviour’s lesson of self-denial, and St. Paul’s affirmation might be hers: ‘I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.’ These abridgments were in this lady a mortification, which humility and modesty concealed, but which wisdom and resolution did put in practice.”

Of her conversation, Bishop Rainbow says that “it was indeed meek, affable and gentle; her words according to the circumstances of persons in her presence pleasant or grave, always seasoned with salt; savoury, but not bitter. I had the honour to be often admitted to her discourse, but never heard, nor have been told by others, that she was invective or censorious, or did use to speak ill or censoriously of persons or actions, but she was especially cautious in censuring public persons or actions in matters of state.” When she received intelligence of the disastrous death of one of her grandchildren at the same time that two others of them were providentially saved, “she discovered a patient submission to the will of God in many Christian expressions, which soon after I did receive from herself; and several times after, when she was pleased to renew the remembrance of it, with much admiration and acknowledgment of the secret ways of God’s

judgment and mercies, on which she could enlarge with many heavenly expressions."

When age had deprived her of the use of her limbs, so that she could not go to her Church, her chamber was her place of prayer; not that the morning and evening service was daily performed there, but she seldom omitted morning and evening and at noon to offer up her private devotions to God, and in whatsoever posture she was, to send up some holy ejaculations. The Psalms for the day of the month were never omitted to be read by herself; or, when under some indisposition, read to herself by her attendants. She much delighted in that holy book: it was her companion; and when persons or their affections cannot so well be known by themselves, they may be guessed at by their companions. No greater testimony of a soul having her conversation in heaven, than by being conversant in that heavenly book, which, as hath been demonstrated, is fitted for all persons, suited for all occasions; to receive comfort or express sorrow; to cast down or lift up the soul with joy; to praise God, to expostulate with Him; to strengthen faith; to nourish hope; to stir up holy affection; to allay passion; to teach patience to wait God's leisure. So that, indeed, we may apply to this one parcel of Scripture, what St. Paul makes the scope of the inspired books, that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work. It is hardly possible for any one to be bad, that frequently reads and meditates on this book with desire to be good. He that reads and digests it shall be transformed into the image of it; be actuated by the spirit which breathes in it. No

doubt the compilers of our Liturgy had all this in their eye, when they made the reading a part of the Psalms of David so great a portion of the morning and evening service.

Besides this, which she did commonly read herself, she usually heard a large portion read every day, as much as one of the gospels every week, so that her soul was nourished with sound words, the words of faith, which must needs give her a growth in grace, and make a sincere heart. She took a particular delight in one chapter, which she used to repeat every Lord's day in the year, and never failed to do it; it was the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, which she had by heart in the best sense, had laid it up in her heart; and, truly, she could hardly find a better cordial in any one chapter in all the Scriptures; which how comfortable, how useful it may be to any Christian, in any condition, who desires with meditation and reflection to peruse, it may be sufficient to refer them to the serious reading of it; and I doubt not but they will approve this lady's wisdom and piety in her choice, and frequent application of it to herself; and she did so when death looked her in the face, repeating it the first day when her sickness, which proved mortal, seized upon her. As this might excite many graces,—faith, hope, so especially what is the proper effect of those while we are on earth,—patience: and on earth only these three plants grow,—faith, hope, patience; though they send their fruit to heaven, yet their root is only on earth; faith is perfected by vision; hope consummated by fruition, and at heaven's gates the patience of the saints leaves them; no more sufferings, pain, or grief: all tears are wiped from their eyes at the first glimpse of the beatific vision.

But, I say, in that selected chapter the greatest emphasis in it is to teach patience, either in inward afflictions of the soul, or outward pressures on the body; securing the soul against the fear of damnation, though under sinful infirmities; and sustaining the body and outward man, though under the cross and greatest afflictions; assuring that where patience hath endured to the utmost, when patience shall have perfected its work, it shall have its reward,—a crown at last.

As her death drew near, she expostulated with one of her nearest attendants, for being, as were the others who waited on her, so concerned and busy about her, and wished them not to take so much pains for her who deserved less. Asking also, why any, herself especially, should at any time be angry? why any of those outward things should trouble her, who deserved so little, and had been blessed with so much? By which, it might appear, that she had brought into subjection all great thoughts; she had cast down imaginations, and every high thing, bringing into captivity every high thought; and submitting the world and her soul to the obedience of Christ; her passions were mortified and dead before her: so that for three or four days of her last sickness, (for she endured no more,) she lay as if she endured no pain. She called for her Psalms, which she could not now, as she usually had done, read herself (the greatest symptom of her extremity), and caused them to be read unto her. But that cordial (in which she had always taken particular delight) kept, in Rom. viii., and in her heart; this her memory held to the last; this she soon repeated: no doubt to secure her soul against all fear of condemnation, being now wholly Christ's; having served Him in the spirit

of her mind, and not loved to walk after the flesh; having (as often as she affectionately pronounced the words of this chapter) called in the testimony of the Spirit to bear her witness, that she desired to be delivered from this bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and so to strengthen her faith and hope by other comfortable arguments, contained in the rest of that chapter, being the last words of continuance which this dying lady spoke. The rest of the time she lay quiet, as if ruminating, digesting, and speaking inwardly to her soul what she had uttered in broken words, and so breathed her last without disturbance, on March 22nd.<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION.—This chapter, viz., the 8th of Romans, which afforded to the Countess of Pembroke an inexhaustible source of hope and consolation through all her sickness, is particularly recommended to the perusal of all sincere Christians who are sick or afflicted. It commences with the words, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;” and ends with the words, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” As it is the duty of the

(1) From the Sermon, preached at Appleby, in Westmoreland, by the Right Rev. Edward Rainbow, D.D., Bishop of Carlisle; Wilford's Memorials, and English Churchwomen, &c.

shepherd to roll back the stone from the well's mouth, that the thirsty flock may be refreshed, so we desire to disclose those passages of Scripture, whence the wearied and heavy laden may derive unfailling consolation.



MARGARET GODOLPHIN.

DIED 1678. AGED 26.

SHE was maid of honour to Queen Catharine, and the wife of Sidney Godolphin, who, after the death of his wife, became Lord High Treasurer of England, and was created Viscount Rialton, and Earl of Godolphin.

In the midst of that general reign of wickedness, which characterized the dissolute court of Charles II., it is most refreshing to find, by closer search, some living witnesses for truth and holiness; some who passed their days as untainted by its evils, as is the clear sunbeam by the corruption of a loathsome atmosphere. Such an one was Margaret Godolphin, whose interesting life,

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written by the celebrated Mr. John Evelyn, has been very recently edited and published by the present Bishop of Oxford. Of this truly religious character the Bishop thus remarks:—"Puritanism did not contract her soul into moroseness; nor did she go to Rome to learn the habits of devotion. In the training of our own Church she found enough of God's teaching to instruct her soul: in its lessons she found a rule of holy self-denying obedience; in its prayers, a practice of devotion; in its body, a fellowship with saints; in its ordinances, a true communion with God her Saviour; which were able to maintain in simple unaffected purity her faith at court, in dutiful active love her married life; which sufficed to crown her hours of bitter anguish and untimely death with a joyful resignation and assured waiting for her crown. It was soon proved, by her experience, that 'whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.' This may be seen by a quotation from her own simple narrative:"—"At last, he (Mr. Godolphin) was sent abroad by his majesty, and fell sick, which gave me great trouble; and I allowed more time for prayer and the performance of holy duties, than before I had ever done, and I thank God, found infinite pleasure in it, far beyond any other; and I thought less of foolish things, that used to take up my time. Being thus changed myself, and liking it so well, I earnestly begged of God that He would impart the same satisfaction to him I loved; 'tis done (my friend), 'tis done; and from my soul I am thankful."<sup>1</sup>

Evelyn records the following circumstance,

(1) A judicious selection of similar narratives, to show how influential and truly blessed by God Christian friendship and religious advice have been, in reclaiming or reforming the characters of others, would be a useful and encouraging work in this important path of duty.

which shows that she was deeply impressed with the truth, that "In the midst of life we are in death:"—

"A few days before her reckoning was out, my Lady Viscountess Mordant giving her a visit, and finding her eyes swollen with tears, she told her she had been doing a sad, yet to her a pleasing thing, and that was the writing something to her husband, which she requested he would do for her (in case of sudden death), and then added the great comfort and satisfaction it was to her, that she had put her little concerns in order, and otherwise made preparations against all surprises, and was perfectly resigned."

Mr. Evelyn observes, that "she seemed to thirst after nothing more than to be with God; and verily what estimate she took of these poor satisfactions here! When I have sometimes reflected on the circumstances of her youth and cheerful temper, with the prospect of as much worldly happiness as she could desire, I have extremely wondered at her contempt of it; finding, likewise, that it did not proceed from any peevish discontent or singularity of humour, but from a philosophical, wise, and pious consideration of the vicissitude and instability of all earthly fruitions, and an ardent longing after that glorious state, 'where' (said she) 'I shall be perfectly at repose, and sin no more;'" and these were almost her continual thoughts and aspirations. "See how she entertains me" (writes Mr. Evelyn), in a postscript about the very time, of which the following sentence is an extract:—

"Let us pray that God's kingdom of grace being received into our hearts, his kingdom of glory may succeed, and so we be ever with the Lord; which, indeed, I long for, more than all



the satisfactions of this world." Could the wisest and holiest person have uttered (aught) more divine and piously serious? nor did she say this only; but she practised it; for with what devout and solemn preparations passed the rest of this fatal month! She received the blessed sacrament but two days before her illness, so preventing all possible surprise, and waited now, with her wonted alacrity and resignation, the approach of the conflict she was to enter upon.

Her departure Evelyn thus describes:—"With the most ardent prayers and offices of the holy man who continually attended, he earnestly, and we all devoutly recommend, and she quietly renders up her happy soul to her blessed Redeemer, in whose bosom she is now delivered from all earthly miseries, and assumed into those blissful mansions prepared for His saints, and such as like her excel in virtue." She was buried in the Church of Breague, in the parish of Godolphin, in Cornwall.<sup>1</sup> Thus died this incomparable lady, leaving her disconsolate husband, whose inexpressible grief and deep affliction would hardly suffer him to be a spectator of her languishments, drowned in tears, and prostrate at the mercy-seat.

Here, then, concludes Evelyn:—"Let us leave our saint at rest, but ourselves at none, till, by following her example, we arrive at that blessed repose whither she is gone before.

" Ah ! Thou who art  
The starry orbs above,  
Essential love,  
Reach forth Thy gracious hand,  
And send me wings for flight ;  
Set me upon that holy land,

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(1) From the "Life of Mrs. Margaret Godolphin," written by John Evelyn, Esq., and edited by Bishop Wilberforce, 1847.

O bring me to that happy shore  
 Where no dark night  
 Obscures the day, where all is light ;  
 A city there not made with hands  
 Within the blissful region stands,  
 Where we in every street  
 Our dearest friends again shall meet,  
 And friendships more refined and sweet,  
 And never lose them more !

Amen."

**REFLECTION.**—The wisdom of thus living prepared for death, and the happiness of so doing, in this as in many other instances, were clearly seen. If she had neglected the duties of faith, holiness, repentance, and prayer, during health, and postponed them to the period of sickness and the dying hour, the fatal folly of such a course would have been exposed ; for her illness was so sudden, severe, and short, that no sufficient time was allotted for such a work ; and she must have passed into the next world with gloomy horrors overspread, without the alleviations of hope. But she had lived, by the lively exercise of faith, holiness, repentance, and prayer, in a state of daily preparation ; and her end was therefore happiness and peace.

**NARRATIVE.**—A letter written by her was, after her decease, placed in the hands of her husband, containing this word of advice and consolation :—" Now (my dear), God be with thee ; pray God bless you, and keep you His faithful servant for ever. In Him be all thy joy and delight, satisfaction and comfort ; and do not grieve too much for me, since I hope I shall be happy, being very much resigned to God's will and leaving this world with, I hope, in Christ Jesus, a good conscience." And on the little babe, so newly born, she left the mother's bless-

ing:—"Now, my dear child, farewell; the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with thee, and remain with thee, ever and ever. Amen."



LADY MARGARET MAYNARD.

DIED JUNE, A.D. 1682.

SHE was the youngest daughter of James, Earl of Dysart. Having been deprived of the advice of her father, who was banished for his loyalty to King Charles I., she had, as her spiritual guide, the good Bishop Duppa, then of Salisbury, afterwards of Winchester; and it is stated, that she retained the happy influence of his spiritual advice to her dying day. It is said, to her honour be it spoken, that in an age when the generality of the nation were, like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, she still continued stedfast in the communion of the Church of Eng-

land. And when the priests and service of God were driven into corners, she daily resorted, though with great difficulty, to the public prayers. She was married to the Right Hon. William Lord Maynard, who became Comptroller of the Household to King Charles II., and King James II.

Bishop Ken preached her funeral sermon, and the following memorial will be given in his own words:

“Alas! we have nothing now left except this poor relic of clay, which in a few minutes must be restored to its native earth, and for ever hid from our eyes; the ‘gracious’ soul that informed it, is flowed back again to God, from whom it first streamed, and His most blessed will be done, who is compassionate and adorable in all His chastisements; yet, as we are flesh and blood, we cannot but feel the stroke which even His fatherly hand has given us.

“It is our loss only we can bewail; we grieve for ourselves, not for her; she has a joyful deliverance from temptation and infirmity, from sin and misery, and from all the evil to come; she is now past all the storms and dangers of this troubled life, and is safely arrived at her everlasting haven; she is now fully possessed of all that she desired, which was to be dissolved and to be with Christ; and we cannot lament her being happy. When we weep for common Christians, we are not to be sorry as men without hope; but when we have so many, so uninterrupted, and so undeniable demonstrations of the sanctity of a person as we have of this ‘gracious woman,’ we have no reason at all to grieve on her account, since we have not only a bare hope, but an assurance rather, that she is now in glory.

“Let us then alter our note, and rather honour than bewail her; she was a ‘gracious woman,’

and honour is her due; her good name, like a precious ointment poured forth, has perfumed the whole sphere in which she moved. To paint her fully to the life, I dare not undertake; she had a graciousness in all her conversation that cannot be expressed; and should I endeavour to do it, I must run over all the whole catalogue of evangelical graces, which do also concentrate in her character; I must tell you how inflamed she was with heavenly love, how well guided a zeal she had for God's glory, how particular a reverence she paid to all things and to all persons that were dedicated to his service, how God was always in her thoughts, how great a tenderness she had to offend her heavenly Father, how great a delight to please Him.

“Her understanding was admirable, and she daily improved it by reading, in which she employed most of her time: and the books she chose were only serious and devout, and her memory was faithful to retain what she read. She took not up her religion on an implicit faith, or from education only, but from a well studied choice, directed by God's Holy Spirit, whose guidance she daily invoked; and when once she had made that choice, she was immovable as a rock, and so well satisfied in the Catholic faith, professed in the Church of England, that I make no doubt but that she always lived not only with the strictness of a primitive saint, but with the resolution also of a martyr.

“I cannot tell what one help she neglected to secure her perseverance, and to heighten her graces, ‘that she might shine more and more unto the perfect day.’ Her oratory was the place where she principally resided, and where she was most at home, and her chief employment

was prayer and praise. Out of several authors, she for her own use transcribed many excellent forms, the very choice of which argues a most experienced piety. She had devotions suited to all the primitive hours of prayer, which she used, as far as her bodily infirmities and necessary avocations would permit, and with David, 'praised God seven times a day,' or supplied the want of those solemn hours by a kind of perpetuity of ejaculations, which she had ready to answer all occasions, and to fill up all vacant intervals; and if she happened to awake in the night, of proper prayers even for midnight she was never unprovided. Thus did this gracious soul, having been enkindled by fire from heaven, in her baptism, live a continual sacrifice, and kept the fire always burning, always in ascension, always aspiring towards heaven from whence it fell. Besides her own private prayers, she morning and evening offered up to God the public offices, and when she was not able to go to the house of prayer, she had it read to her in her chamber.

"Who is there that can say they ever saw her idle? No; she had always affairs to transact with Heaven; she was all her life long 'numbering her days and applying her heart to wisdom;' or, to describe her with her own pen, 'she was making it her business to fit herself for her change, knowing the moment of it to be uncertain, and having no assurance that her warning would be great.' Oh! happy soul, that was thus wise in a timely consideration of that which of all things in the world is of greatest importance to us to be considered, namely, our latter end!

"You may easily conclude that a saint, who was always thus conversant with her grave, and had heaven always in her view, must have little or no

value for things below, as indeed she had not; she did not only conquer the world, but she triumphed over it; had a noble contempt for secular greatness; lived several years, in the very court, with the abstraction of a recluse, and was so far from being 'solicitous for riches, for herself or her children,' that, to use her own words, she looked on them 'as dangerous things, which did only clog and press down our souls to this earth, and judged a competency to be certainly the best.'"

"All the temporal blessings the Divine goodness was pleased to vouchsafe her, she received with an overflowing thankfulness; yet her affections were so disengaged, her temperance and moderation so habitual, that she did rather use than enjoy them, and was always ready to restore them to the same gracious hand that gave them; but no one can express her thoughts so pathetically as her ownself: 'Oh!' says that blessed saint, 'since God gives us all, let us not be sorrowful, though we are to part with all; the kingdom of heaven is a prize that is worth striving for, though it cost us dear: alas! what is there in this world, that links our hearts so close to it!' And elsewhere she affirms, 'that all blessings are given on this condition, that either they must be taken from us, or we from them; if then we lose any thing which we esteem a blessing, we are to give God the glory, and to resign it freely.'

"She was a perfect despiser of all those vanities and divertisements, which most of her sex do usually admire; her chief, and in a manner sole recreation, was to do good and to oblige, and if we will be advised by one so wise to salvation, we are to seek for comfort and joy from God's ordinances, and not to take the usual course of

the world to drive away melancholy by exposing ourselves to temptation ; and this was really her practice, insomuch that next to the service of the temple, which she daily frequented ; there was no entertainment in the whole world so pleasing to her as the discoursè of heavenly things, and those she spoke of with such a spiritual relish, that at first hearing you might perceive she was in earnest, that she really tasted that the Lord was good, and felt all she spake.

“Amidst all her pains and sicknesses, which were sharp and many, who ever saw her show any one symptom of impatience ? So far was she from it, that she laments when she reflects, ‘how apt we are to abuse prosperity ;’ demands, ‘where our conformity is to the great Captain of our salvation, if we have no sufferings ?’ professes, ‘that God by suffering our conditions to be uneasy ; by that gentle way invites us to higher satisfactions than are to be met with here ;’ and with a prostrate spirit, ‘acknowledges that God was most righteous in all that had befallen her ; and that there had been so much mercy mixed with his chastising, that she had been but too happy.’ Thus humble, thus content, thus thankful, was this ‘gracious woman,’ amidst her very afflictions. Her soul always rested on God’s paternal mercy, on all his exceeding great and precious promises, as on a sure and stedfast anchor, which she knew would secure her in the most tempestuous calamities ; to his blessed will she hourly offered up her own, and knew it was as much her duty to suffer his fatherly inflictions as to obey his commands. Her charity made her sympathise with all in misery, and besides her private alms, wherein her left hand was not conscious to her right, she was a common patroness to the poor



and needy, and a common physician to her sick neighbours, and would often with her own hands dress their most loathsome sores, and sometimes keep them in her family, and would give them both diet and lodging till they were cured, and then clothe them and send them home, to give God thanks for their recovery ; and if they died, her charity accompanied them sometimes to the very grave, and she took care even of their burial. She would by no means endure that by the care of her plentifully providing for her children, the want and necessity of any poor Christian should be overlooked, and desired it might be remembered that alms and the poor's prayers will bring a greater blessing to them than thousands a year. To corporal alms, as often as she saw occasion, she joined spiritual, and she had a singular talent in dispensing that alms to souls ; she had a masculine reason to persuade, a steady wisdom to advise, a perspicuity both of thought and language to instruct, a mildness that endeared a reproof, and could comfort the afflicted from her own manifold experience of the divine goodness, and with so condoling a tenderness that she seemed to translate their anguish on herself.

“ And happy was it for others that her charity was so comprehensive, for she often met with objects so deplorable that were to be relieved in all these capacities, so that she was fain to become their benefactress, their physician, and their divine, altogether, or if need were, she bid them show themselves to the priest, or else took care to send the priest to them ; thus was it visibly her constant endeavour to be in all respects merciful as her Father in heaven is merciful.

“ She could bear long, and most easily forgive, and no one ever injured her but she would heap

coals of fire on his head to melt him into a charitable temper, and would often repay the injury with a kindness so surprising, that if the injurious person were not wholly obdurate and brutish, must needs affect him. But if any one did her the least good office, none could be more grateful; she would, if possible, return it a hundred fold; if she could not in kind, she would at least do it in her prayers to God, that out of His inexhaustible goodness He would reward him.

“ Her soul seemed to possess a continual serenity, at peace with herself, at peace with God, and at peace with all the world; her study was to give all their due, and she was exactly sincere and faithful in all her obligations; she kept her heart always with all diligence, was watchful against all temptations, and naturally considerate in all her actions; her disposition was peaceful and inoffensive; she looked always pleased rather than cheerful; her converse was even and serious, but yet easy and affable; her interpretations of what others did were always candid and charitable; you should never see her indecently angry or out of humour, never hear her give an ill character, or pass a hard censure, or speak an idle word, but she opened her mouth in wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness.”

“ As a mother, she was unspeakably tender and careful of the two children with which God had blessed her; but her zeal for their eternal welfare was predominant; and she made it her dying request, that in their education their piety should be principally regarded; or, to speak her own words, ‘ that the chief care should be to make them pious Christians, which would be the best provision that could be made for them.’

“ In reference to her son, it was her express

desire that he should be good, rather than either rich or great; 'that he should be bred in the strictest principles of sobriety, piety, and charity, of temperance and innocency of life, that could be; that he should never be that which these corrupt days call a wit, or a fine gentleman; but an honest and sincere Christian, she desired he might be.' She professed, 'there was nothing hard to be parted with but her lord and her dear children;' but though her passion (*i. e.* affection) for them was as intense for them as can well be imagined, yet for the sake of her God, whom she loved infinitely better, she was willing to part with them also; she had long foreseen the parting, and prepared for it, and 'humbly begged of her heavenly Father to take them into his protection:' she took care of their souls, even after her death, in the letters she left behind her, and comforted herself in an entire acquiescence in the good pleasure of her beloved, with hopes that she should still see them in heaven, and that she should, ere long, meet them there; and this consideration of meeting above, put her into a transport, which makes her in one of her letters cry out, 'O, how joyful shall we be to meet at Christ's right hand, if we may be admitted into that elect number!'

"In her family she always united Martha and Mary together, took a due care of all her domestic affairs, and managed them with a wise frugality, with a constant deference to God's merciful providence, and without either covetous fears or restless anxiety; but withal, 'she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his word, and of the two was still most intent on the better part.'

"She studiously endeavoured by private and particular, and warm applications, to make all

that attended her, more God's servants than her own, and treated them with a meekness and indulgence, and condescension, like one who was always mindful that she herself also had a Master in heaven.

“ Her near relations, and all that were blest with her friendship, had a daily share in her intercessions; all their concerns, all their afflictions were really her own; her chief kindness was for their souls, and she loved them with a charity like that which the blessed show to one another in heaven, in their reciprocal complaisance at each other's happiness and mutual incitements to devotion.

“ In respect of the public, which she often laid sadly to heart, her eyes ran down in secret for all our national provocations, and she had a particular office on fasting days for that purpose; which shows how importunate she was at the throne of grace to avert God's judgments, and to implore his blessings on the land.

“ And now, after all these great truths which I have said of this excellent lady, one grace I must add, greater than all I have hitherto mentioned, and it is, her humility; she was so little given to talk, and had that art to conceal her goodness, that it did not appear at first sight, but after some time her virtue would break out, whether she would or no; she seemed to be wholly ignorant of her own graces, and had as mean an opinion of herself as if she had no excellence at all; like Moses, her face shined and she did not know it; others she esteemed so much better, had that abasing sense of her own infirmities, and that profound awe of the Divine Majesty, that though she was great in God's eyes, she was always little in her own.

“After the Whitsun-week was over, she removed from Whitehall to Easton Lodge, in Essex, not out of any hopes of recovery, but only that she might have some little present relief from the air, or that she might die in a place that she loved, in which God had made her an instrument of so great good to the country, and which was near her grave; and you may easily imagine that after a life so holy, the death of this ‘gracious woman’ must needs be singularly happy; and so it was, not but that during her pains she had often doubts and fears that afflicted her, with which in her health she was unmolested, and which did manifestly arise from her distemper, and did cease as that intermitted; but the day before she died, God was pleased to vouchsafe her some clearer manifestations of His mercy, which in the tenderness of His compassion He sent her, as preparations of her last conflict, and as earnest of heaven, whither the day following He intended to translate her.

“How she behaved herself in her sickness, I cannot better express than by saying that she prayed continually; and when the prayers of the Church were read by her, or when the hour of her own private prayer came, though she was not able to stand or to help herself, she would yet be placed on her knees; and when her knees were no longer able to support her, she would be put into the humblest posture she could possibly endure, not being satisfied unless she gave God his entire oblation, and ‘glorified Him in her body as well as in her spirit,’ which were both God’s own purchase here, and were both to be united in bliss hereafter.

“On Whit Sunday she received the communion of the most holy body and blood of her Saviour,

and had received it again had not her death surprised us; yet in the strength of that immortal food she was enabled to go out her journey, and seemed to have had a new transfusion of grace from it; insomuch, that though her limbs were all convulsed, her pains great, and without intermission, her strength quite exhausted, and her head disturbed with a perpetual drowsiness, yet above and beyond all seeming impossibility, she would use force to herself to keep herself waking, to offer to God her customary sacrifice to the full, to recollect her thoughts, and to lodge them in heaven, where her heart and her treasure was, as if she had already taken possession of her mansion there, or as if she was teaching her soul to act independently from the body, and practising beforehand the state of separation, into which, having received absolution, she in a short time happily launched; for all the bands of union being untied, her soul was set at liberty; and on the wings of angels took a direct and vigorous flight to its native country, Heaven.

“ We have nothing then to do but to congratulate ‘ this gracious woman,’ in her eternal and unchangeable honour, and as she always and in all things gave God the glory here, so that His praise was continually in her mouth, for all the multitude of His mercies and of His loving kindness towards her, and is now praising Him in heaven. Let us also offer up a sacrifice of praise for her great example; her light has long shined before us, and we have seen her good works. Let us therefore glorify the Father of lights, at whose beams her soul was first lighted. Blessed, then, for ever be the infinite goodness of God, who was so liberal of His graces to this humble saint, who made her so gracious and so honourable. Blessed be His

mercy for indulging her to us so long ; for taking her in his good time to Himself, and for the happiness she has now in heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

**MEDITATION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION BY BISHOP KEN.**—“ To God be the glory of all that honour her graciousness did here acquire ; for to Him only is it due. Let, therefore, His most holy name have all the praise. To our thanksgiving let us add our prayers also, that God would vouchsafe us all His Holy Spirit, so to assist, and sanctify, and guide us, that every one of our souls may be ‘gracious,’ like hers ; our latter end like hers, and our portion in heaven like hers.”



LADY ELIZABETH BROOKE.

DIED 1683. AGED 82.

HER brother was created a Baron by King Charles I. Distinguished as was the family by this honour, it was more exalted by her humility, holiness, and piety. On the all-important subject of death, she thus wrote, bringing many weighty truths into one view :—

“ The expectation of death is profitable to a Christian :—The serious expectation of death, not forgetting judgment, frees us from the afflicting, discomposing apprehensions of it. It is of great service to the Christian ; it takes off the soul from carnal pleasures, covetous desires, and ambitious pursuits, and assists patience and contentment ; it helps the Christian to redeem his time ;

(1) Bishop Ken's Sermon, on the Death of Lady Margaret Maynard.

prompts him to settle the affairs of his soul, to put his heart and house in order, and to leave nothing to be done to-morrow that may be done to-day; it excites to frequent examination, quickens repentance, and suffers him not to continue in sin; it assists fervency in prayer, as it drives away worldly cares, and helps against distractions; for death is a solemn thing, and the thoughts of it breed a passion in the mind; and all soft passions cherish devotion. The expectation of death sweetens all labour, work, and duty, because of the everlasting rest to which death leads us."

"A lingering illness of several months' duration gradually confined her, first to her chamber, then to her couch, and, last of all, to her bed, accompanied sometimes with great pains, in the endurance of which patience had its perfect work. During this sickness her mind was calm; her conscience witnessed to her integrity, and she had a good hope in God, that perseverance would be crowned with glory. She expired almost insensibly, and had a gentle passage to that happiness which is the reward of faith and holiness."<sup>1</sup>

**MEDITATION.** — "During this sickness her mind was calm." Let this example teach us to consider the very happy state of all who thus die in peace, and in the favour of God; and let the constant expectation of that happy day that shall admit us into paradise, with a faith and hope full of immortality, sweeten all the troubles of this mortal life, and raise our sense and value for the joys of heaven so high, that we may no longer dote upon the short appearances of happiness we

(1) The "Life of Lady Elizabeth Brooke" by the Rev. Nathaniel Parkhurst, M.A., Vicar of Yoxford.



meet with here. "O Saviour, who hast redeemed us by Thy precious blood, make us so to behave ourselves here, that we may be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting!"



MARY EVELYN.

DIED 1684. AGED 19.

SHE was the daughter of the celebrated John Evelyn, and was remarkable for her piety and devotion, and also for her great attainments in literature. Her father describes her as being of "early piety, singularly religious, spending a part of every day in private devotion, reading, and other virtuous exercises; she had collected and written out many of the most useful and judicious passages of the books she read in a kind of common-place book, as out of 'Dr. Hammond on the New Testament,' and most of the best practical treatises." "Piety was so prevalent an ingredient in her constitution (as I may say), that even among equals and superiors she no sooner became intimately acquainted, but she

would endeavour to improve them, by insinuating something of religion, and that tended to bring them to a love of devotion; she had one or two confidants with whom she used to pass whole days in fasting, reading, and prayers, especially before the monthly communion." Her illness and death were followed by a full outpouring of paternal love, which can be given only in her afflicted and affectionate father's own words:—

"*March 7th, 1684.*—My daughter Mary was taken ill, and there soon was found no hope of her recovery: a great affliction to me; but God's holy will be done.

"*March 10th.*—She received the blessed sacrament; after which, disposing herself to suffer what God should determine to inflict, she bore the remainder of her sickness with extraordinary patience and piety, and more than ordinary resignation and blessed frame of mind. The patience, resignation, and humility of her carriage, in so severe and fatal a disease, discovered more than an ordinary assistance of the Divine goodness, never expressing a fear of death, or a desire to live, but for her friends' sake. The seventh day of her illness she discoursed to me in particular as calmly as in health; desired to confess and receive the blessed sacrament, which she performed with great devotion; after which, though in her perfect senses to the last, she never signified the least concern for the world; prayed often, and resigned her soul to God: may God (in whose bosom thou art at rest and happy!) give us to resign thee and all our contentments, (for thou indeed wert all in this world,) to His blessed pleasure! Let Him be glorified by our submission, and give us grace to bless Him for the graces He implanted in thee, thy virtuous life,

pious and holy death, which is indeed the only comfort of our souls, hastening, through the infinite love and mercy of the Lord Jesus, to be shortly with thee, and those blessed saints like thee, glorifying the Redeemer of the world to all eternity! Amen!

“Thus lived, died, and was buried, the joy of my life, and ornament of her sex, and of my poor family! God Almighty, of his infinite mercy, grant me the grace to resign myself and all I have, or had, to His Divine pleasure; and in His good time, restoring health and comfort to my family. Teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart to wisdom, be prepared for my dissolution, and that into the hands of my blessed Saviour I may recommend my spirit.

“A thread of piety accompanied all her actions, and now proves our greatest consolation. The papers which are found in her cabinet discover how she profited by her reading; such reflections, collections out of Scripture, confessions, meditations, and pious notions, evidence her time was not spent in the trifling way of most young women. I acknowledge, as a Christian, I ought not to murmur, and I should be infinitely sorry to incur God’s further displeasure.”<sup>1</sup>

(1) “Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn.”



FRANCES LADY DIGBY.

DIED A. D. 1684. AGED 22.

SHE was the eldest daughter of Edward, Lord Gainsborough, and the wife of Simon, Lord Digby.

Lord Digby gave the living of Coleshill, where he resided with his wife, to Mr. Kettlewell; who preached the funeral sermons for both his patrons. Of Lady Digby he thus records:—

“‘But the righteous hath hope in his death.’ She was a great instance of many virtues, nay, of some which are almost lost in practice, which seem to reign scarcely anywhere but upon men’s tongues, as if they were impracticable rules that were never intended to be followed and performed, but only to be praised and talked of. And I cannot do more right to those neglected graces, than to show the remiss and slothful world that they are more than words, and are real living things, made visible to all in the excellency of her practice.

“God had endowed her with an excellent nature, which prevented many of the great self-denials in religion, and made it to her a tolerable

easy thing. This is an invaluable blessing, bestowed by the Almighty, and it was eminent in her. To be universally kind and pleasing was one of the most natural things in her character, which made a religion of love to be embraced without opposition. And together with this kindness of nature, He had blessed her with much humility of mind, and with a just seriousness and composure of spirit, which made her apt for devotion and wise counsels, and easy to receive and retain any good impressions which should be stamped upon her.

“Heaven’s watchful care provided a husband for her, who to the intimacy of his relation to her as a wife, the chief of worldly friendships, coveted to add a nobler friendship still, which was grounded upon similarity of souls and virtuous foundations, and was designed to serve the most excellent purposes of religion in making each other wiser and better, which is the perfection of the wisest and most exalted friendships, between the most endeared persons.

“Thus liberally had God endowed this select soul with inclinations to virtue and goodness, and with opportunities to ripen and improve them. And had He spared her a longer life, wherein to employ the talents which he had given, we may justly expect the increase would have been in a greater measure and portion. But though her race was quickly done, for she died in the twenty-third year of her age, yet she had run much in a little time: in her green years she had attained a maturity in goodness, and was grown ripe in the true ends and arts of living, and the effect of these advantages was visible in an exemplary, and truly Christian conversation. To recount all her virtues is more than I can pretend to do; they were known only to God; but for the imitation of

those whom she has left behind her, I shall observe these following. Her piety was great towards Almighty God. She knew what honour and homage we all owe to Him, and was careful to discharge these duties. She would converse with Him daily in her closet-retirements, and constantly do Him service in the public assembly; not allowing herself to neglect the service of God for little reasons and inconveniences, which can keep none back, but those who have too little zeal for God, and too much slothfulness of spirit. And to show how sincerely she resorted thither, and not at all to set off herself, but purely for pious ends, at church she did affect plainness of dress, and sought not to recommend herself to others by elaborate attire and outward adorning; but only to God by the devotion of her mind, and the ornament of an 'humble' and 'a meek spirit, which in the sight of God are of great price.' She was in a constant preparation, as are all good souls for the Holy Sacrament, and careful to embrace all opportunities of joining in it: for since I had the happiness to observe her, she never missed a communion, but was always one in that highest instance of devotion, to offer up the sacrifice of a devout heart, and thankfully to acknowledge the stupendous love of God, and of our dearest Saviour to mankind. Such was the devotion of this fair saint towards Almighty God, which did not come upon her at intervals, but was a settled habit, which dwelt upon her spirit. And in all this she showed an inward and hearty piety, as one who sought to be plainly good between herself and Him who seeth in secret. For her religion did not seek to show itself in an affected outside, in studied appearance, in talk and noise; but in all the modesty, silence, and

gravity of a hearty and unaffected godliness. She was good after the best fashion, in an inward religion, which, though it showed itself in such reverent and composed mien, as naturally flowed from, and testified a spirit greatly affected; yet did not appear in anything which could seem chosen for display or affectation.

“ And as she was careful to address herself to God, so, which is a more real instance of a governing piety, could she resign herself quietly to His will in the bitterest trials of His Providence, and trust Him with all things. And to show the firm and settled confidence which she had placed in His care, when she was surprised by death, she looked upon the sweet babe, whom she was to leave behind her, as so secure in the custody of Almighty God, and the care of her dear husband, that the thought of it did not in the least trouble her.

“ As for the government of herself, and those virtues which were chiefly due to her own person; she was endowed with an even temper, and the command of her own inclinations, with humility, sincerity, and other virtues, and was a great example in all of them.

“ And then, as for her carriage towards all the world, how truly a Christian part did she act in a constant kindness, candour, and affability. In all these her life was full of deserved praise to herself, and very useful and instructive unto others, fit to direct the lives and excite the imitation of all those who had the opportunity of beholding it.

“ In a word, she was a truly excellent and amiable person, plentifully endowed with those qualities which may gain love, and with those virtues which deserve imitation. And she had this testimony to her worth, which shows not only

the reality but the greatness of it; she was not, as too many others are, best liked at first, but still grew higher in esteem, as she was longer and better known. For she had such a stock of true and solid goodness, as could not be discovered, especially through the veil which her modesty cast before it, till time drew it out, and still administered matter to those who beheld her, for a new and growing affection. She envied no person's condition, but was pleased and contented in her own. She was a sincere Christian, an ornament to her husband, by whom she was dearly beloved, and in her memory highly honoured, as she most justly deserved to be, and an extraordinary blessing to this family, who do resignedly submit to it as to what God has ordered, but who think the loss of such a treasure so great, that in this world they dare not hope to meet with anything that can repair it.

“ And what is still the crown and glory of all these perfections, amidst all this, she was, as I have hinted, so free from ostentation, and so opposite to anything that looked like seeking praise, that nothing in this world could excel her in these qualities. She was a person, as of a very great, so of a very concealed goodness, she used arts to hide her virtues, and would hardly be brought to acknowledge anything to her just praise, and did as truly take pains to avoid the opinion of being excellent in any endowments, as others do to obtain it. So that she was like the sun wrapt up in a cloud, her rays were cast all inwards, and, as far as she could order it, shone only to herself, and to Almighty God. She would, it seems, as far as she was able, be altogether good for His sake, and seek no worldly advantage by it: but at the same time that she



aspired to be great in goodness, she shunned the reputation of being so considered.

“Such were the virtues, and thus considerable were the attainments, of this pious soul in righteousness. And being so well stored in goodness, it may well be expected that she should have her share in comforts, and as the text says, have hope in her death; and so indeed it was.

“Her death was very sudden, expected by none, nor, in all appearance, by herself, till she awoke and said she was dying. This was very short warning; but though it may be sudden, it is never too soon to a good Christian. A well-spent life is such a preparation, that although it comes the most unexpected, death can never take them unprovided, but they may meet it upon any intimation. But this suddenness, though it could not endanger the safety, yet was a mighty trial of the clear conscience and firm hopes of this excellent person. Had she been conscious of any thing to affright her, then, no doubt, had been the time to fear, when the Judge had sent the summons, and called her in to come before Him. That clear conscience, which having been hitherto a faithful guide, proved now a comfort to her; this happy soul, in that surprise, had a clear, cheerful confidence, and a foretaste of that joy and peace which God was preparing for her.

“Though she knew that she was departing in haste, she could still spend some of those few minutes which she had yet remaining, to declare her mind in some things which she would have ordered; and observing her attendant to weep, with an even and undisturbed mind she rebuked her, and bade her not to weep for her, for she was about to be happy; and she humbly trusted, to be an angel in heaven.

“And thus I have endeavoured to give some account of this excellent person, and to unfold some of her virtues, which may bring honour to God, and the greatest benefit to ourselves, by our godly imitation of them. This, though to some who knew her not, or who looked not near or long enough upon her to discover a goodness so silent and secret, it may seem an ample, yet to those who knew her best perhaps will appear to be an imperfect picture. But I pretend not to give a perfect description of her. She was of such a modest goodness, and her virtues were so industriously concealed, that I believe that a just account of them is only known to God, and must then only be laid out at large to all the world, when He comes openly to reward what was done in secret. I have only designed to draw this fair saint in such virtues, as I desire, from her copy, to translate into others’ practice. For nothing is more instructive to the world, and more likely to bring virtue into practice, than to pourtray it in the lives and acts of pious persons. This shows men what they are to do in religion, and withal that it is a feasible thing to be attempted, and therein both directs and excites to imitation. I am sure that there is much to be learned in such a pattern as this is, and as the world has great need, so I hope it will reap some profit by such examples.”<sup>1</sup>

**NARRATIVE.**—The best remedy in afflictions, she said, was prayer to God; and when she was tried with them, she found the effect of it, in an humble, calm, and uncontestingly resignation.

**REFLECTION BY THE REV. MR. KETTLEWELL.**

(1) Rev. John Kettlewell’s Funeral Sermon on Frances Lady Digby.

—“ It is the best way of remembering the dead, and that which brings most advantage to ourselves and honour to them, to imitate what was good in them ; when the piety and humility, justice and charity, and other virtues of the dead are kept alive, and shown in the conversation of the living.”



QUEEN MARY II.

DIED 1694. AGED 32.

QUEEN MARY was daughter of King James II., and consort of King William III. Whatever opinion may be entertained of the part she took in the successful attempt made to dispossess her father of his throne and kingdom, yet we are assured by Bishop Burnet, that her sense of religion and duty not only operated in every great step of life of moment to herself and benefit to the world, but the whole of her character and behaviour abundantly evinced an extraordinary piety and virtue. Her punctual

exactness not only to public duties, but to her secret retirements, was so regular, that it was never put off in the greatest crowd of business, or little journeys; for these, though the hour was anticipated, the duty was never neglected. She took care to be so early on these occasions that she might never either quite forget, or even very much shorten that devotion upon which she reckoned that the blessings of the whole day turned. She observed the Lord's day so religiously, that, besides her hours of retirement, she was constantly thrice a day in the public worship of God, and for a great part of the year four times a day, while she lived beyond sea. She was constant to her monthly attendances at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and withdrew herself more than ordinary in preparation for some days before them. In them, as well as in all other parts of the worship of God, an uncommon seriousness ever appeared in her, without one glance allowed for observation. She spread a spirit of devotion among all who were about her, who could not see so much in her without being affected in something of the same manner themselves, though few attained to such a steady application as they beheld in her. In her demeanour in the house of God, everything was sincere as well as solemn, and genuine as well as majestic. She was not content to be devout herself, but she strove to infuse the same temper into all who came near, and chiefly into those whom she took into her more immediate care, whom she studied to form to religion with all the love and watchfulness of a mother. She charmed them with her instructions, and won them with her kindness. Never was mistress both feared and loved so entirely as she was. She dispersed good books of instruction to

all who were around her, and gave frequent orders that they should be laid in places of attendance, that such as waited might not be condemned to idleness, but might profitably entertain themselves.

She encouraged those whom she admitted to frequent access to lay before her all the occasions of doing good that might occur to their thoughts. So desirous was she to know both how to correct what might be amiss, and to promote every good design, that she not only allowed of greater freedom in bringing propositions of that kind to her, but she charged the consciences of some with a command to keep nothing of that nature from her, which they thought she ought to be acquainted with. She scarce ever expressed a more entire satisfaction in any sermon that she had heard, than in that of Archbishop Tillotson, against evil speaking. When she thought some were guilty of it, she would, by way of gentle reprimand, ask if they had read that sermon.

She was the delight of all who knew her, by the obliging kindness with which she treated all those who came near her. She made the afflictions of the unhappy easier to them by the share she took in them, and the necessities of the miserable the more supportable by the relief she gave them. She was tender of those who deserved her favour, and compassionate to those who wanted her pity. But what crowned all was her exact conformity to the rule of the Gospel in her munificence, so that no one knew to whom or what she gave, but those whom she was forced to employ in the communication of her bounty.

So far was she from entertaining a high opinion of herself, that she had a tender sense of anything that looked like a failure under her conduct, and was afraid lest some mistake of hers might have

occasioned it. When difficulties grew too great to be surmounted, and she felt an uneasiness in them, she made God her refuge, and she often owned that she found a full calm upon her thoughts, after she had given them a free vent before Him in prayer.

When melancholy events came from the immediate hand of Heaven, she said, "that though there was no occasion for complaint or anger upon these cross events, yet there was a juster cause of grief, since God's hand was to be seen so particularly in them."

This portion of the account of this truly religious woman is, in substance, drawn from Bishop Burnet's essay on her memory.

We also learn of her that she was distinguished by an open and native sincerity, which appeared in genuine characters in a manner quite free and unconstrained, which easily persuaded all who were about her that all was uniform and consistent, and was at the same time united with a charming behaviour, a most amiable sweetness, and the sprightliness as well as the freedom of a true good humour. A fresh and graceful air, more turned to seriousness, but always serene, that dwelt upon her looks, discovered both the perfect calm within, and showed the force as well as the loveliness of those principles which were the springs of so cheerful a temper, and so lively a deportment.

She had made no inconsiderable advances in knowledge, having read the best books in three languages, that were almost equally familiar to her. She gave the most of her hours to the study of the Scriptures, and of books relating to them.

In all those hours that were not given to better employment, she wrought with her own hands,

and that sometimes with as constant a diligence as if she had been to earn her bread by her labour. She considered idleness as the great corrupter of human nature, and believed that if the mind had no employment given it, it would create some of the worst sort to itself; and she thought that anything that might amuse and divert, without leaving any ill effects behind, ought to fill up those vacant hours that were not claimed by devotion or business. Her example soon wrought, not only on those who belonged to her, but upon the whole town to follow it, so that it became in her time as much the fashion to work as it had been to sit idle. In this particular, which might seem to be nothing, and was made by some a subject of raillery, a greater step was taken than perhaps every one was aware of to the bettering the age. While the Queen thus diverted herself with work, she took care to give an entertainment to her own mind, as well as to those who were admitted to the honour of working with her. One was appointed to read to the rest; the choice was suited to the time of the day, and the employment—some book or poem that was lively as well as instructive. Few of her sex, not to say of her rank, gave ever less time to dressing, or seemed less curious about it. Those parts of it which required more patience, were not given up entirely to it. She read often all the time herself, and generally aloud, that those who served about her might be the better for it. The whole was mixed with such pleasant reflections of her own, that the gloss was often better than the text.

Dr. Bates, who also describes her character, has thus observed:—"Her wise redemption of time from unconcerning vanities, was the effect and

indication of her tender and vigilant conscience. She considered her glass was continually running, and all the sands were to be accounted for. How should this great example correct those who are lavish of nothing so much as of time, which, being lost, is irrecoverable? The sun returns every day, but time never returns."

Having thus taken a view of her life and character, let us see what effect her religious principles had on the last scenes of sickness and death.

In all the pleasures of life she maintained a true indifference as to the continuation of them, and she seemed to think of parting with them in so easy a manner, that it plainly appears how little possession they had obtained of her heart. She had no occasion for these thoughts from any other principle, but a mere distaste of this life, and the aspiration of her soul to a better. She apprehended she felt once or twice such indispositions that she concluded nature was proceeding towards some great sickness; and accordingly she endeavoured to take full and broad views of death, that hence she might judge how she should be able to encounter her enemy; but she found such a quiet indifference upon the prospect, leaning rather toward the desire of a dissolution, that she said, "though she did not pray for death, yet she could neither wish nor pray against it; she left that before God, and referred herself to the disposal of Providence. If she did not wish for death, yet she did not fear it."

As this was her temper when she viewed death at some distance, so she maintained the same calm when in the closest struggle with it. In her sickness, that of the small-pox, she only was serene, when all was in a storm about her. The dismal sighs of all who came near her could not



discompose her. She was rising so fast above mortality, that even her husband, who was more to her than all the world besides, and to all whose thoughts she had been upon every other occasion entirely resigned, could not now inspire her with any desires of returning back to life. Her mind seemed to be disentangling itself from her body, and so she rose above that tenderness that had a greater influence upon her than all earthly things whatever. It seemed, indeed, that all that was mortal was falling off, when even that could give her no uneasiness. She received the intimations of approaching death with a firmness that neither bent nor softened under that which has made the strongest minds tremble. Then, when even the most artificial grow sincere, when the mask of hypocrisy drops and opens the full soul to view, it appeared what a perfect calm, and how sublime a piety possessed her. A ready willingness to be dissolved, and an entire resignation to the will of God did not seem to forsake her so much as one minute, nor had anything been left to be dispatched by her in her last hours. Her mind was in no hurry, but soft as the small voice that seemed to be calling her soul away to the regions above, she made her last steps with a stability and seriousness, that, how little ordinary soever they be, were indeed the correspondent harmonious conclusions of such a life as she had led. In her heavy disease she felt no inward depression, nor sinking of nature. She then declared that "she experienced the joys of a good conscience, and the powers of religion, giving her supports, which even the last agonies could not shake." Her constant gentleness to all about her never left her. That was indeed natural to her, but by its continuance with her

in her sickness, all visibly perceived that nothing could put her mind out of its natural situation, and usual state.

A few hours before she breathed her last, when he who ministered to her in the best things had continued in a long attendance about her, she was so free in her thoughts, that apprehending he might be weary, she commanded him to sit down, and repeated her orders till he obeyed them; a thing too trifling in itself to be mentioned, but that it discovered her presence of mind, as well as the sweetness of her disposition. Prayer was then her constant exercise as often as she was awake: and so sensible was the refreshment that her mind found in it, that she said she thought it did her mind more good, and gave her more ease, than any thing that was done to her. Nature sunk apace. She received the blessed sacrament with a devotion that inflamed as well as melted all who saw it.

That being over, she gave up herself so entirely to meditation, that she seemed scarcely to regard any thing beside. She was then upon the wing. Such was her peace in her latter end, that though the symptoms showed that nature was much oppressed, yet she scarcely felt any uneasiness. It was only from what she perceived was done to her, and from those intimations that were given to her, that she judged her life to be in danger; but she scarcely knew herself to be sick by any thing that she felt at heart. Her bearing so much sickness with so little emotion, was for a while imputed to that undisturbed quiet and patience in which she possessed her soul. But when she repeated it so often, that she felt herself well inwardly, it then appeared that there was a particular blessing in so easy a conclusion of life, that

had been led through a great variety of events with a constant equality of temper.

Though from a perusal even of the preceding narrative from Bishop Burnet's essay on her memory, the blessed effect of Christianity will have been seen in framing the mind to a meekness and resignation in the hour of affliction, which reason, unaided by religion, could never have attained unto, yet the following additional particulars of the closing scenes of her life, extracted from Bishop Burnet's "History of His Own Time," will be not only interesting but also instructive.

"When she was first taken ill, the next day her illness seemed to go off. I had the honour to be half an hour with her that day," says Bishop Burnet, "and she complained then of nothing. The day following she went abroad, but her illness returned so heavily on her, that she could disguise it no longer, for her indisposition increased upon her, and within two days after, the small pox appeared with very bad symptoms. The king was struck with this beyond expression. He called me into his closet, and gave a free vent to a most tender passion; he burst out into tears; and cried out that there was no hope of the queen; and that from being the happiest, he was now going to be the miserablest creature upon earth. He said, that during the whole course of his marriage he had never known one single fault in her; there was a worth in her that nobody knew besides himself.

"Never was such a universal face of sorrow seen in a court or in a town as at this time; all people, men and women, young and old, could scarce refrain from tears. The new archbishop attended on her; he performed all devotions, and

had much private discourse with her: when the desperate condition she was in was evident beyond doubt, he told the king he could not do his duty faithfully unless he acquainted her with the danger she was in: the king approved of it, and said, whatever effect it might have, he would not have her deceived in so important a matter. And as the archbishop was preparing the queen with some address, not to surprise her too much with the tidings, she presently apprehended his drift, but showed no fear or disorder upon it. She said, she thanked God 'she had always carried this in her mind, that nothing was to be left to the last hour. She had nothing then to do, but to look up to God, and to submit to his will.' It went further indeed than submission, for she seemed to desire death rather than life, and she continued to the last minute of her life in that calm and resigned state. She was almost perpetually in prayer; the day before she died she received the sacrament, all the bishops who were attending being admitted to receive it with her: we were, God knows, a sorrowful company; for we were losing her who was our chief hope and glory on earth; she followed the whole office, repeating it after the archbishop. After the sacrament was administered, she composed herself solemnly to die. She slumbered sometimes, but said she was not refreshed by it, and said often, that 'nothing did her good but prayer.' She tried once or twice to have said something to the king, but was not able to go through with it. She ordered the archbishop to be reading to her such passages of Scripture as might fix her attention, and raise her devotion. Several cordials were given, but all was ineffectual. She lay silent for some hours: in conclusion, she died on

the 28th of December. She was more generally lamented than (perhaps) any other princess in our nation and history.”<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.—  
 “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”<sup>2</sup>

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ANNE BAYNARD.

DIED 1697. AGED 25.

ANNE BAYNARD was born at Preston in Lancashire, and was the only child of Dr. Edward Baynard, Fellow of the College of Physicians. Her character was given by Collier in his great Historical Dictionary, as follows:—

“Anne Baynard, for her prudence, piety, and learning, deserves to have her memory perpetuated; being not only skilled in the learned languages, but in all manner of learning and philosophy, without vanity or affectation. She had a great contempt of the world, especially of the finery and gaiety of life; she had a great regard and veneration for the sacred name of God, and made it the whole business of her life to promote His honour and glory.”

Mr. Prude, the minister of her parish, in his funeral sermon, thus speaks more fully of her character and attainments:—“As for learning, whether it be to know and understand natural

(1) Bishop Burnet's Essay on the Memory of Queen Mary, and his History of his own Life and Times, &c.

(2) Isa. xl. 6. 8.

causes and events, to know the courses of the sun, moon, and stars; the qualities of herbs and plants; to be acquainted with the demonstrable verities of the mathematics; the study of philosophy; the writings of the ancients, and that in their own proper language, without the help of an interpreter, these things she was not only conversant in, but mistress of. She had from her infancy been trained up in the knowledge of them, and had made a great progress therein.

“ She took great pains to perfect her knowledge in the Greek tongue, that she might read St. Chrysostom in his own language. She was very conversant in the Greek Testament, and not satisfied with reading only, she set herself to the composing many things in the Latin tongue. Her strong memory and exalted mind made her covet more and more knowledge, and in this particular alone she would often say, ‘it was a sin to be contented with but a little!’

“ But after all this with what profound humility, with what prostration of mind would she cry out with St. Paul, ‘ I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.’

“ In which study she was no small proficient, and had often by her nervous arguments, and by the grace of God which was in her, sent to silence some of those bold men who have attempted, even in these days, to revive that old and baffled heresy of Socinus, and she much lamented that such opinions should gain any footing or entertainment among Christians.

“ I have heard her say (Mr. Prude continues) that human learning was worth nothing, unless it leads to the knowledge of Christ revealed in the Gospel as her only Saviour. ‘ What availeth

Solomon's skill?' she would ask, 'in all the works of nature, if by them we be not brought to see the God of Nature? What is it to be so skilful in astronomy as that by the motions of the heavens we can foretell things here below, if we never study by our holy practices to come thither? What is it to be so skilful in arithmetic, as that we can divide and subdivide to the smallest fractions, if (as God hath revealed unto us in His Holy Word) we do not so learn to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom? What is it for a physician to be skilful in foreseeing and preventing the diseases of the body (as God hath revealed unto him), if he knoweth not where to find that Balm of Gilead, the wine and oil of that Samaritan, the Lord Jesus, to pour into the festered wounds of his own soul and conscience?'

"She was a true and constant Churchwoman, a great asserter and defender, both of the order and economy of the Church of England, and pitied the breaches and schisms which discussion had made in the pure and spotless religion of the most Holy Jesus. She would often say, that pride and self-conceit were the two main pillars on which that fabric of dissension stood, and therefore wise and considerate persons would easily conclude it to be built upon a weak and sandy foundation. And as to heresy, so she was a professed enemy to Atheism and profaneness, and held the sacred name of God in such reverence, that she always bowed or stood up, when any occasional discourse offered itself that way.

"She was a constant frequenter of the Word and Sacrament; and the prayers of the Church which call for our daily attendance, she never missed, unless hindered by some bodily infirmity,

to which of late she had been too subject. Her private piety and devotion were no less, and in her chamber she 'communed with her own heart,' privately examining the state of her soul, that she might 'stand in awe and sin not!'

"She caught at all opportunities of retirement, that she might have the better intercourse with heaven, and prepare for death by daily dying in holy solitude.

"She spent no time in dressing or adorning herself, and out of the allowance given her she laid aside a part for charitable and pious uses.

"Her constitution was infirm, and two years before her death she was walking alone in the churchyard where she was afterwards buried, when resting herself in the porch, a sudden thought broke in upon her mind, that in a short time she should die and be buried there, which, far from casting any gloom upon her spirits, rather made her in love with the place, so that ever after she liked to retire there, and chose it for her burial place.

"Her Christian love for the souls of men made her importunate in her intercessions for the good of the world, and gave her courage and discretion above her years or sex, to benefit the souls of those she conversed with by friendly reproof, good counsel, or learned and pious discourse.

"On her death-bed she desired Mr. Prude to exhort all young people to the study of wisdom and knowledge; and then just before her departure she spoke these words upon the subject, which were, he says, faithfully penned down, and delivered into his hands: which we use as a Precept.

" 'I desire that all young people may be exhorted to the practice of virtue, and to increase



their knowledge by the study of philosophy, and more especially to read the great book of nature, wherein they may see the wisdom and power of the great Creator, in the order of the universe and in the production of all things. It will fix in their minds a love to so much perfection, frame a divine idea and an awful regard of God, which will heighten devotion and lower the spirit of pride and give a habit and disposition to this service; it will make us tremble at folly and profaneness, and command reverence and prostration to His great and Holy Name.'

“That women are capable of such improvements, which will better their judgments and understandings, is past all doubt; would they but set to it in earnest, and spend but half that time in study and thinking which they do in visits, vanity, and folly. It would introduce composure of mind, and lay a sound basis and groundwork for wisdom and knowledge, by which they would be better enabled to serve God, and help their neighbours. She died in June 1697, in her twenty-fifth year, and was buried in the churchyard of Barnes, in Surrey.”



LADY GETHIN.

DIED 1697. AGED 20.

SHE was the wife of Sir Richard Gethin, Bart., of Gethin Grott, in Ireland. Dr. Birch, Prebendary of Westminster, observes of her, that to her acquired abilities, were joined a natural probity of temper, a meek and candid behaviour, a remarkable justice and charity of action, and, above all, a sober and unaffected piety: and yet, as Bishop Atterbury observes, in a parallel case, all this goodness and all this excellency was bounded within the compass of twenty years; for no longer was she allowed to live among us.

She was snatched out of the world as soon almost as she had made her appearance in it: but she had learned betimes how to die, and what estimate to make of this flattering and inconstant world. The day before her death she devoutly received the Holy Communion, which she said she would not have omitted for ten thousand worlds; and plainly evinced her sure and certain hope of future bliss. Hear how emphatically this young person speaks of death:—

“ To have death easy, think of that glorious

life that follows it. We can endure pain for health, much more for glory. How many crowns and sceptres lie piled up at the gate of death! Have we so often seen ourselves die in our friends, and should we shrink at our own change? Hath our Maker and Redeemer sent for us, and are we loath to go to Him, who will put us in possession of a glorious inheritance? 'Twas for us our Saviour triumphed over death: is there any fear of a foiled adversary? He that lives Christianly dies boldly: he that lives miserably dies willingly: he that knows death, and foresees glory, dies cheerfully and triumphantly." Without reluctance she surrendered up her pious soul to God who gave it.<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION. — Hence we learn, that if we would form a right estimate of earth and heaven, we should long to exchange the one for the other. What would an angel give for the best estate or place upon earth? Why do not we believe that a time is coming, when we shall be as much above all the glories of this world as the angels are now? Yes; we believe this; but our fault is, we do not lay it to heart: we do not compare the happiness of heaven with the present advantages we either aim at or enjoy: we do not, as the Apostle tells us all true believers do, "Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;" that is, a true believer keeps his eye upon what he expects hereafter, and will not be diverted from pursuing

(1) From the Funeral Sermon, preached in Westminster Abbey by Dr. Birch, Prebendary of Westminster; and George Ballard's *Memoirs of Remarkable Women*.

a crown of glory that fadeth not away, by every tempting trifle he meets with in the way.

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LADY MARY HASTINGS.

DIED 1698.

SHE was the fifth daughter of Ferdinand, Earl of Huntingdon.

Mr. Willes says of her in her funeral sermon, "that having upon principles of judgment and conviction fully satisfied herself, she conscientiously and devoutly adhered to the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the Church of England. She preferred a holy, pure, and even angelical life, to any of the gaudy vanities of the world. To know God, and to be like Him, was her first great endeavour. Her devotions were performed at least three times a day, for which she used the most private concealments, not only to avoid disturbance, but (what she more shunned) discovery. And, to assist, enlarge, and enforce her devotions, she added to them frequent fasts.

"To nourish this course of devotion, she daily drew succours from the Holy Scriptures, beginning and ending every day with some portion of them, and this not as a task or custom, but as a peculiar delight, which appeared when she resided at Derby, and the bell at four in the morning, even in the winter season, was the certain summons to her devotions. In her meditations on the Word of God, she drew assistance not only from public sermons, but from the best and soundest expositors that our Church afforded."

“She attended the church upon all occasions, and her mind was so much fixed upon the offices of religion, that whenever she could escape from business or company, she took up some work of devotion, and returned to those spiritual fruitions with new appetites and impatient desires. But the chief of all her joys was the blessed Sacrament, where she found the most satisfying refreshments; she laid hold of every opportunity to partake of that holy mystery; and during her residence in London she communicated every month. She prepared herself with such acts of devotion and religious strictness as if it had been the last act of her life, and that she were to pass from the altar to the tribunal; from the table of our Lord to His judgment seat.”

“In the midst of such a preparation for the Communion she was seized with that disease which soon after became mortal to her; and thenceforth dismissing all worldly cares, she examined her past life with strictest scrutiny. What passed between God and her own soul we do not pretend to know, but she discovered a trouble, not without bemoaning herself, that she had not improved her time as she ought to have done. One thing more seemed to touch her thoughts, which was, that she had set her heart too much upon her little child, so jealous was she lest her natural affection to an only child should cause any abatement of her love to God. Her mind was clear throughout her sickness, and rested in Christian confidence on the merits and intercession of her dear Lord and Saviour. She used her perfect sense and memory to the last in devout prayers, meditations, and discourses, with all the suitable employments of a departing soul.”<sup>1</sup>

(1) English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century.

REFLECTION.—“ She bemoaning herself that she had not improved her time, as she ought to have done.” If this servant of God, whose life was almost a series of religious exercise, could yet bewail her loss of time, what shall be said of those who have devoted so little of their time to the serious concerns of religion. Archbishop Usher said, if nothing else would bring him in guilty before God, his sins of omission most assuredly would do so.

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THE RIGHT HON. LADY CUTTS.

DIED 1698. AGED 18.

THIS lady was the wife of the Right Hon. John Lord Cutts, of whose bravery at the siege of Namur, Rapin gives an account.<sup>1</sup>

The celebrated Dr. Francis Atterbury, then Dean of Carlisle, and Chaplain to Queen Anne, and afterwards Bishop of Rochester, has supplied the following particulars of the exemplary life and tranquil death of her who is the subject of this memoir. The ministers of the Gospel, who are entrusted with so many methods of promoting piety in the world, are among the rest entrusted with this, of truly representing to the minds of men such shining patterns of virtue, as are most likely to engage their attention and increase their imitation.

At her private devotions she was very punctual and regular; morning and evening came not up more constantly in their course, than her stated hours of private prayer; which she observed not

(1) Vol. xiv., 8vo. ed., pp. 237, 238, 239.

formally as a task, but returned to them always with desire, delight and eagerness. She would on no occasion dispense with herself from paying this duty, no business, no common accident of life, could divert her from it; she esteemed it her great honour and happiness to attend upon God; and she resolved to find leisure for that, for whatever else she might want it. In her public devotions she was full of humility, devotion, and fervency. Her behaviour during the time of Divine service was very devout and solemn. When the bread of life was distributed she was sure to be a devout and never-failing communicant; and the strictness of her attention, and the reverence of her behaviour were, if it were possible, raised and improved on those occasions. The lively image of a crucified Saviour, then exhibited, could not but make very many impressions on a mind that abounded with so much pious warmth and tenderness.

Of all books the Book of God was that in which she was most delighted and employed; and which was never for any considerable time out of her hands. No doubt she knew and felt the great use and sweet influence of it, in calming her mind, and regulating her desires, and lifting up her thoughts towards heaven; in feeding and spreading that holy flame, which the love of God had kindled in her heart, and which she took care by this means, to keep perpetually burning.

And in this Book of God she was more particularly conversant on God's day; a day ever held sacred by her, and which, therefore, always in her family wore a face of devotion suitable to its dignity. It was truly a day of rest to all under her roof. Her servants were then dismissed from a good part of their attendance upon her,

that they might be at liberty to wait on their great Lord and Master, whom both she and they were equally bound to obey.

To the poor she always showed herself very compassionate and charitable. Of the other delights, with which a high fortune furnished her, she valued this, that it gave her an opportunity of pursuing the several pleasures of beneficence, and of tasting all the sweets of well doing. "She delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and she caused the widow's heart to sing." Retirement and privacy she always loved, and therefore chose it, when after the death of a near relation who had the care of educating her, she was at liberty to have lived otherwise. Such were her religious habits of life, and they are related to show how necessary a holy life is to a happy death. Thus did she prepare and dispose herself for the enjoyment of that perfect rest, the celebration of that endless Sabbath, which she is now entered upon; thus did she practise beforehand upon earth, the duties, the devotions, the customs, and manners of heaven.

And yet all this goodness and all this excellence was bounded within the compass of eighteen years and as many days; for no longer was she allowed to live among us. She was snatched out of the world as soon almost as she had made her appearance in it. Like a jewel of high price, just shown a little and then put up again, we were deprived of her by that time we had learnt to value her.

As her life was short, so her death was sudden: she was called away in haste, and without any warning. One day she drooped, and the next



she died; nor was there the distance of many hours between her being very easy in this world and very happy in another.

However, though she was seized thus suddenly by death, yet was she not surprised; for she was ever in preparation for it, her loins girt (as the Scripture speaks), and her lamp ready trimmed, and burning. The moment almost that she was taken ill, she was just risen from her knees, and had made an end of her morning devotions. And to such an one, a sudden death could be no misfortune. We pray, indeed, against it, because few, very few, are fit for it; and the Church is to proportion her forms to the generality of Christians.

In truth, she could not be called away more hastily than she was willing to go. She had been used so much to have her conversation in heaven, and her soul had been so often upon the wing thither, that it readily left its earthly station upon the least notice from above; and took the very first opportunity of quitting her body, without lingering or expecting a second summons. She stayed no longer after she was called, than to assure her lord of her entire resignation to the Divine will, and of her having no manner of uneasiness upon her mind; and to take her leave of him, with all the expressions of tenderness. When this was over, she had nothing more to do with her senses; she sunk immediately under her illness, and, after a short unquiet slumber, slept in peace.

She is gone to the place where all tears are wiped from her eyes; where there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. She is gone, and her works have followed, and will follow her, to her great and endless advantage. God grant that,

when we also follow her, we may do it with as little surprise, and as much cheerfulness.<sup>1</sup>

**REFLECTION BY BISHOP ATTERBURY.**—It is better, doubtless, to go into the house of mourning, than into the house of feasting; but upon this condition, that we come better out of the one, than out of the other: that we leave our vanities and our vices behind us; that we lay aside our affections towards this world, and our indifference towards another; that we put on holy and hearty resolutions of being, even now, what we shall wish we had been hereafter when the fatal hour approaches; and of living the life of this righteous person, that we may die her death too.

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ANNA LADY HALKET.

DIED 1699. AGED 78.

ANNA LADY HALKET was a woman trained up in the school of affliction, that she might hereafter be fit to join them who have come out of great tribulation. Her father was descended from the Earl of Tullibardine's family, and of such acquirements, that King James I. chose him to be preceptor to his son, Prince Charles; for the faithful fulfilment of which office, he was afterwards made Provost of Eton College: the whole family were devotedly attached to the cause of Charles I.

The mother's chiefest care was to instruct her children in the principles and practice of religion, teaching them to begin and end every day with

(1) "Fourteen Sermons by Francis Atterbury, D.D., Dean of Carlisle, and Chaplain to Queen Anne, 8vo. ed. 1708. Discourse on the death of Lady Cutts, p. 179, &c.

prayer, and reading a portion of Scripture in order, and daily to attend the church as often as there was occasion to meet there, either for prayers or preaching, backing all her instructions with her own pious examples. In her youth, she had attended plays and other diversions, yet she looked back to them afterwards with so much regret for any time vainly wasted, that she became more frugal of her time for the future. Of impatience under affliction, she thus wrote:—  
“Impatience in suffering makes things worse; nothing doth allay affliction so much as seriously to consider, that it is either for trial or correction; if we overcome the trial, we may glory in tribulation; if we receive correction, we may esteem ourselves happy; since whom God loves, He corrects. Let me ever be mindful of this, that all things work together for good to them that love Thee. By accustoming myself to patience, under lesser trials, I will imitate them who being to run a long race, do prepare themselves for it by running it by degrees, until they attain breath enough to endure the farthest course: so by little and little, I will use myself to run that I may obtain.”

In 1647 her mother died. “Her afflicted daughter, considering that now she wanted one eye which used to be watchful over her, resolved to walk more circumspectly; and not trusting her own resolutions, she very devoutly gave up herself to the conduct of God in these words:—  
‘Blessed God, as Thou hast hitherto directed me, be Thou still, I humbly pray Thee, a guide to my youth; and though there be none now on earth to whom I can address myself with that confidence as I did formerly to my mother, yet Thou art pleased to give me leave to call Thee

Father; and to Thy throne of grace will I direct my supplications. Hear me, I beseech Thee, and grant my requests: be pleased to give me the will and power to love and fear Thee as I ought. Give me modesty and temperance in all my words and actions, that wherever I live, or whatever I do, I may not give occasion to others, to judge uncharitably, or bring a reproach upon myself: That I may, as much as possible, live peaceably with all, without quarrel or dissension: That if it be thy pleasure to continue me in this single life, I may so live as that I may be a good example to others; but if Thou pleasest to have me change my condition, then I beseech Thee direct me to such an husband as may improve my faith, my love and fear of Thee: I desire nothing in this particular but the fulfilling of Thy will, and that I may show myself obedient to Thy law which Thou hast commanded. Many are the troubles of Thy servants, but Thou hast delivered them out of all: therefore on Thee will I put my assurance. Oh leave me not to myself, but whatsoever ill I see in others give me grace to avoid, and what I see good to imitate; so shall I walk uprightly all my days, and when death comes, shall sleep securely in the grave.' She had also this pious ejaculation: 'My God, Thou hast from all eternity decreed the event of all things, and nothing can change or resist Thy will; direct me unto that way which is most pleasing unto Thee, and let it ever be so to me. Give me, I beseech Thee, patience, temperance, and discretion, which may prove fences to a virtuous and godly life.'"

Of disquietude, arising from the fears of future evil, she thus remarks:—"I have ever avoided the curiosity of knowing what is to happen, as being both unlawful and disquieting; for if evil,

the trouble of it is anticipated in the expectation; if good, the impatience perhaps of enjoying it, would be greater than the pleasure of fruition: but now I endeavour to make myself happy with the hope of being happy hereafter; and in nothing do I find so great content, as in being content with all things." Of the comfort of prayer, and the Divine presence in affliction, she writes thus:—"When my soul is lifted up to Thee, O Lord, object of all perfection, nothing can afflict; absence of friends, or their unkindness, the calumnies wherewith I am reproached, my being as a pilgrim in a strange land, none of these punishments, nor the sins that do occasion them, make me repine when I am with Thee, my God; because in Thee, I find comfort in all conditions. What soul can be partaker of such mercy, and not be lifted up to Thee? In my prosperity, I lift my soul to Thee, to praise Thee; and in my adversity, whither can I go but unto Thee for help, who never failest them that seek Thee? Therefore, they that know thy name will trust in Thee."

After imploring the direction of God in prayer, she married Sir James Halket. The death of all her children but one, and of a very hopeful youth, the only son of Sir Henry Newton and his wife, who was her own sister, were great trials of her patience and submission, and called forth pious and suitable meditations which she wrote down, as was always her custom. But the saddest and heaviest of her trials followed, for her husband fell into a languishing distemper, from which he did not himself expect to recover, though his physicians apprehended no danger; he gave up himself wholly to prepare for death, which he met with great composure and Christian courage.

His wife attended him throughout his illness, and though of a weak constitution, was enabled to endure the greatest fatigue, and gratify his preference for being waited on by her rather than any other. On September 24th, 1670, he gently breathed out his spirit, his two eldest sons being at that time in France; he received an honourable burial, greatly regretted by all who knew him. His upright, religious, and charitable character fitted him in every way to make his wife happy; and her biographer adds, that "he loved much to be at home, and diverted himself in useful contrivances, for improving his house, gardens, and inclosures." Her grief for his loss was not a violent passion, which soon passes over, but such a real sense of his worth and her own loss, as preserved in her a fresh and lively remembrance of him during more than twenty-eight years that she survived him.

The first time she went to bed after his death she awakened out of sleep with these words in her mouth, "A widow indeed!" which made such impression upon her, that she could not be satisfied till she found the place where it was wrote, 1 Tim. v. 3, 5. She fixed her thoughts on the characters there given of a widow indeed, resolving to make them her example: among them, finding one is to wash the saint's feet, and seeing neither the climate nor custom of the country required the literal performance of that duty, she resolved to obey it in spirit, by being ready and willing to do the meanest offices, that may be any ways helpful to such: and seeing the best through infirmities and the corruption of the world, are subject to sullyings, she would wipe them off as much as she could. She applied herself to look over the promises which are made to

the widow and fatherless, that they might be her support, as also to search what were the peculiar duties required of one in her circumstances, as a Christian, as a widow, and as a mother. As a Christian she resolved to learn that first lesson, to be meek and lowly in heart, and set always before her, for her study and practice, the comprehensive rule of Christianity, Phil. iv. 8. As a mother she pitched on the examples of Lois and Eunice, 2 Tim. i. 5, and iii. 14, and from Prov. xxii. 6, 9, 15, she found her work chiefly lay in instruction, correction, and example. As a widow, she fixed on that forementioned passage, 1 Tim. v. 2, 5, 10, for her rule, and chose Anna for her example, of whom it is recorded, Luke ii. 36, 37, that "she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." She considered with herself that God was pleased in a peculiar manner to show His regard and compassion to the sad and solitary condition of widows, making it a part of pure religion, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. She thought, therefore, that in gratitude they ought to be singular in their devotion to God, and in zeal for His honour and glory.

Having arranged her temporal affairs to her satisfaction, she removed from Pitfirren to Dunfermline, where she had a convenient lodging, and an easy and retired passage through the garden to her husband's burial place, which she frequently visited, that by continual remembrance of him, she might live as became his widow and one devoted to God, and prepare the more earnestly for the time when she hoped to be laid by him.

When she came to her lodgings, she blessed

God for such a comfortable habitation, and dedicated herself and her family anew to Him, praying that all the conveniencies she enjoyed might remind her of His goodness, and be used to His glory. She resolved also to give a good example in her neighbourhood, living at peace with those near her, trying to gain their love by her good services, and to cause as little occasion of evil speaking as was possible.

Her first opportunity of receiving the Holy Sacrament was at Toryburn, where she solemnly consecrated her widowhood to the Lord, begging grace to behave like one "whose husband and maker is the Lord."

As she professed, so she endeavoured to practise, wishing to be as holy as the greatest saint, and humble as the greatest sinner, loving God like the angels, and doing good to all the world; but still mindful that she lived in a state of trial and infirmity, she would be frequent in self-examination that she might daily repent of her sins, and give praise for any victory over them; "and in this way she was able to say, to the praise of God's grace, that there was no sin of her life of which she did not as heartily repent as she desired pardon, and as sincerely resolve and endeavour to amend her life as she desired to attain heaven."

About two years after Sir James' death, she went to Edinburgh, partly to visit the duchess of Lauderdale, her near kinswoman, and partly in the hope of procuring some advantage for her own child, and for her husband's family. As usual she committed herself and her designs to God, and resolved to adore His goodness, whether they proved successful or not. In this representation of a court, she met with great civilities,



favourable looks, and good words, but nothing more, and she returned from it, blessing the quietness of her own lot, free from the restraints and troubles of a more public life, and interpreting the disappointment of her projects as an intimation to her to depend on God alone.

“She had earnestly begged of God that no company or converse might divert her from her duty on the anniversary day of her husband’s decease, or make her forget that she was a widow devoted to God; and that there might be nothing done by intemperance, excess, or any other way to displease God, but that the joy and satisfaction, and all the expressions of mutual kindness and respect which were suitable to that occasion, might be managed with a due regard to the honour and glory of God, the author of all blessings and comforts. And on her return in October to her own home, and her quiet solitary life, (which was more pleasant to her than the greatest confluence of company, or variety of diversions could be to others), she blessed God for the gracious returns he was pleased to give to the requests of His humble handmaid.”

In the following year she paid two charitable visits, one of them to a nephew of her husband, who was dying, and much troubled in conscience at the recollection of a wicked life, doubting whether it was possible that he could be forgiven. She exhorted him not to despair, but be the more fervent in seeking mercy; advising him at the same time to be particular in confessing those sins which were most heinous, and to warn others against his evil courses; she left him with the promise that she would remember him in her prayers as he desired.

When involved in troubles, she applied herself

to the study of extracting good out of all those cross occurrences that had befallen her, or what might afterwards befall her; and wrote a very devout tract on this subject, which she entitles, "The Art of Divine Chemistry," in which she became a great proficient. She had been taught by afflictions from her youth, and yet blesses God, who had made her saddest crosses occasions of many comfortable experiences of his infinite goodness, compassion, and power; in supporting her under them, and making them, in the issue, work together for her good.

"She never ate her morsel alone—the fatherless and 'indigent widow shared with her; her kitchen and table sustained many poor families, and the apothecaries' accounts were considerable every year. She admitted the truth of the representations made to her, that justice ought to go before charity, but she found it hard to withhold help from the needy. In these difficulties she was assisted by the liberality of several persons of rank who supplied her charities, and by some who sent her considerable presents, in return for the good they had received from her medicines. If at any time she felt disquieted, she quickly checked herself, and asked pardon for her distrust after so many great deliverances. 'If,' said she, 'I had full bags to go to at all times I might be extravagant, and forget the hand from whence all comes; but now I am kept in constant dependence on God, and every little supply puts me in mind of the bounty of the Giver.'

"In the multitude of these her thoughts, she applied as usual to God for counsel, and his comforts did delight her soul, for she was as much revived by that passage of the thirty-seventh psalm, 'Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt

thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,' as if by an audible voice, it had been addressed to her from heaven.

“In August 1687, hearing it recommended as a great help to a devout life, to meditate some time every day on the sufferings of Jesus, she immediately resolved on the practice of it; and for the better performance of it, she divided the history of His passion into seven periods, with proper meditations for each day of the week. She received the news of the death of her son in a truly Christian manner, saying, ‘O God of all pity, look upon me in mercy, and support me under this sad stroke, that I may not offend Thee, nor sin against my own soul, nor do anything to be an ill example to others.’”

She applied herself to her cordial in all troubles—meditation and prayer; and sadly regretted the want of that great allay of all spiritual and temporal troubles,—the Holy Eucharist. She greatly delighted in frequent communion, and not having in Scotland that desirable occasion every month as in England, she endeavoured to make up that want, by laying hold upon all opportunities which offered yearly, not only in her own parish, but in all the churches round about, within three or four miles; and on every occasion when she approached, she was as serious in her preparation, as careful and devout, as if it were the first, or should be the last. Whenever deprived of her regular opportunities of communicating, she communicated spiritually on those days on which she had been accustomed to receive the communion in church.

As a ball when forcibly struck down rebounds the higher, so what had beaten down her worldly hopes raised her faith to a more stedfast per-

suasion, that God, who is the Comforter of those who are cast down, would still be her God and guide unto death, saying, with the Prophet Habakkuk, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." She had some time before fixed her meditations upon Phil. iv. 6, 7; and experimentally found the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeping her heart and mind, through Jesus Christ, from being disquieted by outward pressures.

About the middle of March, 1699, when she was in her seventy-eighth year, she had symptoms, which she presently took to be the harbingers of death, and daily found its approaches in the decay of her strength and vital spirits; but while the outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day, the God of hope filling her with all joy and peace in believing: for she knew in whom she believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which she had committed to Him.

Some days before her death, after her pains had vanquished all the remaining forces of nature, and had brought her so low, that oftentimes life was scarcely discernible in her, she little more conversed with any but God, and was seldom heard but in her pious ejaculations, which were frequently uttered with all the effort that her weak state was capable of. On Saturday, the 22nd of April, 1699, she finished her warfare, and entered into the joy of her Lord.<sup>2</sup>

(1) Hab. iii. 17, 18.

(2) English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century.

Her piety had nothing of moroseness or affectation, but was free and ingenuous, as if natural, full of sweetness and gentleness, which made it amiable and impressive. Her gravity and seriousness had a grace and air so taking and agreeable, as begot both reverence and love. Her frowns and severest reproofs were mixed with tenderness, good will, and kindness. Though passion was her great predominant, she had so far overcome it, that it did seldom transport her; if at any time it did, she severely censured herself. Whenever her passion began to arise, she usually stopped the eruption of it, by reflecting on the parable of the Ten thousand talents, and hundred pence. She considered also that the best have their failings, and the worst may have some good things in them.

She was a person of great knowledge, having searched for it as for hid treasure, especially in those inexhaustible mines of the Divine Oracles, where the most excellent knowledge is found. She was so well acquainted with these sacred books, by long and frequent converse, that she was able to urge any point of faith or duty of Christian practice, from the most pertinent passages. She had digested all her knowledge into a solid principle of true wisdom, for regulating her own life, and edifying others.

“ She much delighted in God’s House, and the public worship, and was a conscientious observer of the Lord’s day; and had made this remark, that according to her frame and temper that day, such was her disposition the week following. She was careful that all her family served the Lord, and when she wanted a Chaplain, performed the offices of morning and evening worship herself, enjoining them private devotion;

and to such as needed, she composed forms of prayer for their use.

“She was very moderate in her sentiments about disputable points, sadly regretting the divisions and animosities occasioned among Christians by them. She heartily approved the doctrine and worship of the Church of England, in which she blessed God that she had been initiated and educated.

“She divided the twenty-four hours into three parts, allotting five for devotion, ten for necessary refreshment, nine for business; her hours of devotion were from five to seven in the morning, from one in the afternoon to two, from six to seven, and from nine to ten. This order she carefully observed; and if at any time she was diverted from observing the hours of devotion, she made it up from the other divisions: yet she did not confine her devotion to these stated hours, but all the day long, however employed, she endeavoured to keep up a spiritual frame; and in the night time, when she did awake, she was still with God, and had then her meditations, her songs and prayers.

“She was ever employed either in doing or reaping good. In the summer season, she vied with the bee or ant in gathering herbs, flowers, &c. for the mortar or boiling pan, and was ordinarily then in a fit dress, making preparations of extracted waters, spirits, ointments, conserves, salves, powders, &c., which she ministered every Wednesday, to a multitude of poor infirm persons, besides what she daily sent abroad to persons of all ranks, who consulted her in their maladies.

“Notwithstanding of her many difficulties, she was generally of a cheerful temper, pleasant coun-

tenance, and always of an obliging behaviour, which proceeded from a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith and charity. She was swift to hear, slow to speak, and when she spoke, it was with grace, ever projecting to make others better by her converse; yet managing it in such an humble manner, as if she designed rather to receive than to give instruction.

“She had a singular dexterity to divert and shuffle out unprofitable talking, and introduce serious discourse; which, if she could not effect, she would then pleasantly converse with God and her own soul, in the midst of company, without discovering herself or disturbing them. She was equally eminent both for the contemplative, active, or practical part of Christianity. Contemplation had so spiritualized her mind that almost every object suggested pious thoughts to her.

“For instance; one day sitting alone in an arbour at Charleton, in a very stormy day, where the trees round about her, cracked with the violence of the roaring wind, though she heard the noise, and saw the effects of the storm, yet she enjoyed as serene a calm, as if no storm had been in the air; upon which she reflected on the great peace and tranquillity of a good conscience, and the safety and security of being under the shadow of the Almighty. (Ps. xlv. 1., and xci. 1.)

“Observing a sheep feeding pleasantly among thorns, at a distance from the flock, she thought it an emblem of her own state, a stranger in a strange land, far from her nearest relatives, encompassed with difficulties, yet through the mercy of God, finding a pleasant pasture, and enjoying a cheerful and undisturbed mind.

“Observing the bees sucking and working

upon the flowers which grew at her husband's grave, her thoughts suggested to her, in imitation of them, to draw instruction from that monument of mortality."

NARRATIVE AND REFLECTION.—1. Lady Halket, looking on a map which she used as a screen, and observing many cross lines, remarked, "If the geographer had such skill to make all these cross lines concur, to discover the usefulness of his art for the help and direction of navigators, how much more can the great Maker of the universe order all the most cross dispensations to be useful for our direction in our Christian journey?"

NARRATIVE AND REFLECTION.—2. She had her picture drawn with her right elbow leaning on a rock, carelessly stretching forth her hand to a stream of water, which gushing out of a grot fell on her hand and immediately fell off. The water and the rock were two emblems. She had found earthly comforts unstable as water, and therefore not much to be regarded, but to be let come and go without concern; and her only support under all the varieties of troubles and disappointments, had been her leaning on that Rock of Ages, whence she had sucked honey and oil to sweeten and soften all cross dispensations, adding, "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock; and exalted be God, the Rock of my Salvation!"



## LADY ELIZABETH HASTINGS.

DIED 1739. AGED 57.

SHE was the daughter of Theophilus, seventh Earl of Huntingdon. Mr. Robert Nelson, in one of his letters, applied to her the text, "Many daughters have done virtuously; but thou excellest them all." Such an attestation from such a man makes it evident that she was a person of no ordinary attainments in piety and holiness. She was a liberal contributor to the Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and for the Propagation of the Gospel. She aided many other excellent charities, and was a great benefactress to Queen's College, Oxford.

Her early years were spent in a quiet and uniform way, and it is said of her, that "she followed not the world in its vain and trifling amusements, and things much worse than them; but kept close to her baptismal vow, as she was progressively taught and understood it."

In order to increase the stock of wisdom and knowledge which she had laid in by her own endeavours, and by assistance from appointed ministers under whom she lived, she cultivated the friendship of such learned men, as Archbishop Sharpe, Mr. Nelson, Dr. Lucas, and others, of which friendships she spoke with joy more than twenty years after the latest of these holy men had left this world. Her attendance and apparel were such as became her station; her support of the body by meat, drink, and sleep, was bounded by necessity, and the intervals of sleep were employed in pious meditations, or prudent thought

as to the duties of her Christian calling. She studied the Word of God daily, that by it she might amend her life ; other books that she used were wisely chosen for soundness of doctrine and sentiments. She began every day with supplications, prayers, and intercessions in private, praying with all earnestness and purity (sincerity) of heart, and throughout the day she remembered the eye of God over her, raising up her soul to Him with holy aspirations. Four times a day all her family, who were not necessarily engaged, assembled to attend prayers, and chiefly the holy service of the Church, read, for the most part, by the established minister. She delighted in public worship, and constantly attended it, with a grave and awful demeanour, free from affectation.

She practised charity, both by almsgiving, visiting, and consoling the sick and afflicted, receiving the poor at her house, sending sums of money to a distance. There were other contributions on a larger scale. If it is asked how all this could have been done out of such an income, it can only be answered that to Him who scattereth abroad is promised an increase, and that this lady's economy, with the simplicity of her own wants, allowed her to give liberally, "for they that walk in the spirit as she did, die progressively to every vanity, and take coldness and indifferency at the things that are without them, and do not mind the things pertaining to the flesh, none of its many hurtful gratifications ; but chastise it and keep it under, as knowing it to be the seat of their most dangerous and deadly enemies." She entered into society, but always with a guard upon herself, which restrained her talents for conversation within the bounds of religion, charity, and courtesy, and enabled her dexterously and pleasantly to

introduce religious subjects in which was her real delight.

Lady Elizabeth ever honoured the Priests of God for the sake of their office, and for her and their great Master. "She lived in the communion of the Church of England, and never started from it, so much as in thought, to her dying day, and though her conscience was most tender and carefully instructed, and scruples sometimes occurred to her in other matters, yet not one scruple ever disturbed her about the lawfulness of adhering to the Church of England. She mourned deeply for any attempts made to corrupt and overthrow the mysteries, the faith, any one of the essentials, which, under authority of Scripture, are taught by our Church, and would as much have dreaded to let an infidel book approach her dwelling as if it had been the plague."

Mr. Barnard, in addressing his book to Lord Hastings, then a boy, who was nephew to Lady Elizabeth, and heir to a great part of her estate, refers hopefully to the time when he shall be of age to reside at Ledstone, "where Lady Betty hallowed one place by her private, another by her public devotions; where, in her drawing-room, she maintained a visible pre-eminence over the highest and finest of her sex, or elsewhere cast herself upon a level with the lowest and meanest of them; where without doors, in one verdant recess, finding and adoring her Creator in all things, she received the early approaches of the sun, in another attended upon his going down."

When she had entered her fifty-fourth year, she began to suffer from the effects of an injury, which she received in her youth, and which now required a most painful operation for removing the evil; when a clergyman (apparently the Rev.

Mr. Barnard) wrote a letter, in which he touched upon the necessity of sufferings, setting forth briefly those that Christ endured in the flesh; that He will bring all his followers into likeness of, and conformity to, Himself in all things; that sufferings were the way to his perfection, and must be to ours; and are the expressly declared condition of our being glorified with Him; the truest marks and characteristics of our adoption; the most sovereign medicines that come from heaven for all our latent sickness.

This letter was shown to Lady Elizabeth; and with more emotion than was usual to her, she said, "She would not wish to be out of her present situation for all the world, nor exchange it for any other at any price;" for, indeed, in her former life, she had often expressed some uneasiness that her own sufferings, according to her reckoning of them, were little or none; and one who had a station under her, not unskilled in this kind of knowledge, believed that the sufferings which came upon her at last, were for this purpose among others: to solace her spirit, and to strengthen her assurance, that she had every mark and token of her favour and acceptance with God.<sup>1</sup>

She continued her every-day life with great meekness and tranquillity, without any change of her temper, in serenity and cheerfulness, till the time appointed for the operation; sitting loose and indifferent for life or death, as is expressed in the prayer, which Mr. Barnard composed for her use upon this occasion, the whole of which being too much for this little book, a part only will be inserted:—

(1) Heb. xii. 5—8. 1 Pet. v. 10.

“ O my God! again I humble myself before thy footstool, in deep and hearty acknowledgments, that Thou art righteous in all Thy ways, and holy in all Thy works; and that Thou, of very faithfulness, hast caused me to be troubled.

“ I bless and praise Thee for all Thy mercies, which from my youth up, until now, have embraced me on every side; and shall I receive all this abundant good from Thee; and shall I not receive some evil? Yes, O my God! I will not only receive it, but bless and praise Thee, for calling me to this trial of patience and submission to Thy blessed will; for this gracious pledge and token of thy love; for this thy wholesome medicine for the sickness, decays, and pollutions of my spirit; and, above all, that Thou art pleased more and more to transform me into the likeness of Thy blessed Son, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

“ O do Thou, for His sake, for the sake of Thy beloved and mine, in whom Thou hast wrought for us most plenteous redemption, do Thou, who alone art able, bring me out of this furnace of affliction; and grant, that either for life or death, according as Thy good pleasure shall appoint for me, I may come out of it as gold purified seven times in the fire.

“ Be Thou my strength and my support, and of all those who shall be about me in the hour when we shall stand in greatest need of Thy presence; and drive from me and from them, both then and for ever, every fear that is injurious to the fear of offending Thee.

“ And when anguish shall come upon me, and the iron shall enter into my soul, oh! then imprint upon my spirit the blessed hands and the feet, that were pierced for me; and for Thy tender

mercies' sake, sweeten my bitter cup with some sense and feeling of the inconceivable sufferings of my dear Redeemer; that I may even then, so far as Thou shalt enable me, behold and see that for my sake, and for the sake of sinful man, no sorrow was ever like his sorrow.

“And if this sickness shall be unto death, then let me say, if not with the resignation that He did, yet with all the resignation that I can, ‘Not my will, but Thine be done.’

“And as I pray for myself, so do Thou open and enlarge my heart, and continue to me the same holy desires for all mankind, in the most acceptable words of Thy blessed Son, ‘Our Father,’ &c.”

She endured the trial with unflinching courage and patience; becoming her desire to be likened by sufferings to her Lord; and on the following night, though unable to sleep, she rested in thankfulness to her God for the support He had afforded her, and for the many blessings she enjoyed, offering up her heart in love, gratitude, and adoration.

She recovered sooner than had been expected, so far as to be able to resume her former mode, though with some variety of employments, in all of which, she intended the glory of God, or the good of mankind.

As she approached the end of her pilgrimage, so far was she from relaxing her diligence, that in spite of her bodily weakness, she seemed rather to quicken her pace; increasing in the fervour of her prayers, and abundance of her alms, as earnestly as if now only she were beginning to turn to God, and to repent as death drew near; for her hunger and thirst after righteousness still stimulated her.

The disease, only repressed for a time, returned with fresh malignity, and induced the fear that she might be called to a repetition of her former suffering, to which she looked forward with the same patience as before, and with a prospect of death and of happiness growing near to her. For several months she was unable to turn herself in her bed, and her appetite failed; yet still she had strength for prayer, and it appeared that not one hour passed without it.

She did all she could to comfort her household by her cheerfulness, and grateful acceptance of their attentions to her; passing by mistakes or neglects without notice.

She wrote letters to her friends, or dictated them when she became unable to write, full of sweet counsel; while many came to her house to see her, and hear her last words; for she engaged those about her in heavenly conference, as long as she had strength to speak; and preserved her attention to the speech of others when her strength was gone.

She delighted in the society of holy persons, and the mutual warmth and light imparted by communion with them. The more need she had herself of comfort, and even in the necessary increase of her expenses, she sought the more to assist those in need, saying often to such as were about her, "Where is there a poor member of Christ whom I can comfort and refresh?"

For several months she was unable to attend public worship, from which she never had been kept by any trifling hindrances; indeed, even after her illness, she continued to go, when wanting sleep, and apt to suffer from cold; but when it became impossible for her to reach the church, she had the service read at home daily, and the

Holy Sacrament administered to her every Sunday. She now suffered less pain, and, indeed, less illness, than could have been expected; and by careful attendance, her sufferings were alleviated as far as possible. Her faith in her Saviour had now been growing for more than fifty years; and in Him was her trust, that He would finish the work He had begun in her; and accept her, notwithstanding all her imperfections. About six hours before her death, she summoned, for the sake of her household, those especially who had seldom seen her in the time of her long illness, to strengthen and enforce everything that she had done, or shown them before, by her dying counsels. She had wished, in like manner, to take leave of the whole village, but was restrained by her physician; and being anxious to have the last offices of the Church administered to her in the most solemn and regular manner, she set aside the services of two or more excellent clergymen, then in the house, and sent for the vicar of the parish, whom she had held in honour for twenty years. When this last service was performed, her soul seemed to receive some of the happiness of heaven; her eyes, though languishing under years and sickness, shone bright as diamonds (as one said, who was present); and all who looked on were amazed at the transport now granted to her spirit. She broke out with a raised accent into words such as these: "Lord, what is it that I see! Oh, the greatness of the glory that is revealed in me,—that is before me!" and some time after she had so said, she fell asleep.<sup>1</sup>

The following additional memorial of her (much abridged) is taken from Wilford's Memorials and

(1) English Churchwomen of the Seventeenth Century, and Wilford's Memorials.



from English Churchwomen. "She 'did justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with her God.' The whole Christian religion was early implanted in her heart, which was entirely formed and fashioned by it. She learned it from the sacred Scriptures, and the faithful depository of everlasting truths, the Church of England; whose genuine daughter she was.

Her life had chiefly for its directions two great objects, how she might exalt the glory of God, and how demonstrate her own good will towards men. The first she sought by employing all her powers and capacities for his honour and service, and whatever related to it was ever in motion and never discontinued, but so far as the weakness of human nature made it necessary. Her supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, as they were directed towards heaven, they easily ascended thither, and the holy flame was rarely suffered to languish, never to go out. Her benevolence to her fellow-creatures was such as the good angels are blessed with, warm and cherishing, wide and unbounded. Thousands and ten thousands has she comforted and relieved, many has she enriched and advanced, and the collective mass of mankind daily had her blessings and her prayers.

Such was the late Lady Elizabeth Hastings, not after the gaiety of youth was over, and the gratifications of it became deadened by much using; but in its early beginning, through all the stages of life, down to its most glorious conclusion. And well may it be called so, for make what demand you will of every Christian virtue, and the same might have been exemplified in her last long and tedious sickness. Her patience under God's visitation, and her absolute resigna-

tion to His will; the continual labour and travail of her soul for the enlargement of His Kingdom, and the increase of His glory; her heaviness and mourning for the sins of other men; her unwearied studies and endeavours for their recovery and eternal welfare; her generous and charitable appointments; her tender and affectionate expressions to her relations, her friends and servants, and her grateful acknowledgments to her physicians, and to those who more immediately attended on her, would require pages to set them in a proper light." Who, on reading this account of such a holy life and happy death, will not pray from the heart, let me live the life of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers.

REFLECTION.—Though a Christian may have passed through all other departments in the school of probation for heaven, yet if he has not been exercised in the department of affliction, his education can scarcely be considered as complete training for the society of those above, "who have come out of great tribulation."

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MRS. ELIZABETH JONES.

DIED FEB., 1799.

SHE was the daughter of the Rev. Nathaniel Bridges, and wife of the Rev. William Jones, who was chaplain to Bishop Horne. He was also incumbent of Nayland, in Suffolk, the author of "The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity," and "The Book of Nature Explained," and to him

we are also indebted for the publication of "The Scholar Armed against the Errors of the Times."

She was a help meet for him, and might have sat for the picture drawn by Bishop Horne from the 31st chapter of the Book of Proverbs, in his sermon "On the Female Character." Like Zacharias and Elizabeth, this happy couple were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless; he in the care of his parish, as nearly as the difference of the times would permit, after the example given by the divine Herbert in "The Country Parson," and she co-operating with him in all his designs, for the good of the people committed to his charge. The account which he has given of the departure of his excellent wife is very affecting and instructive: for it shows most forcibly how much the piety and usefulness of woman endear her to her friends and relatives, and commend to all, by the attractiveness and influence of female example, the religion of God our Saviour. To illustrate what we have said, we make the following extract from the Life and Letters of the Rev. Wm. Jones, prefixed to his works by Mr. Stephens.

In the year 1799, "the sorrows of his heart were (greatly) enlarged." It began with a severe trial, the irreparable loss of his beloved wife, with whom he had lived in sweet converse for near half a century. In the following letter to the Rev. Dr. Glasse, on the mournful event, he thus pours forth all his soul:—

"Feb. 10.

"My dear Friend,

"Though I am in a very low and sorrowful state, from the pressure of a troublesome memory upon a broken heart, I am not insensible to the

expressions of your kind consolatory letter; for which I heartily thank you, and pray that the effect of it may remain with me. The prospect which has been before me for several weeks past has kept my mind (too weak and soft upon all tender occasions) under continual, and, as I feared, insupportable agitation; till after a painful struggle, *no relief could be found but by bowing my head with silent submission to the will of God*, which came to pass but a few days before the fatal stroke. I have found it pleasant in time past *to do the work of God*, to demonstrate his wisdom, and to defend his truth, to the hazard of my quiet and my reputation; but, oh my dear friend! I never knew till now what it was *to suffer the will of God*, although my life has never been long free from great trials and troubles. Neither was I sensible of the evil of Adam's transgression, till it took effect upon the life of my blessed companion, of whom neither I nor the world was worthy. If I could judge of this case as an indifferent person, I should see great reason to give thanks and glory to God for his mercies. We had every preparatory comfort, and death at last came in such a form as to seem disarmed of his sting. A Christian clergyman of this neighbourhood, who is my good friend, administered the communion to her in her bed-chamber while she was well enough to kneel by the side of him; and he declared to me afterwards, that he was charmed and edified by the sight, for that *the peace of heaven was visible in her countenance*. I saw the same, and I would have given my life if that look could have been taken and preserved; *it would have been a sermon to the end of the world*. On the last evening she sat with me in the parlour where I am now writing, and I read the lessons

of the day to her as usual, in the first of which was this remarkable passage, '*And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.*' Of this I felt the effects, but made no remarks. On her last morning, we expected her below stairs, but, at eleven o'clock, as I was going out to church to join with the congregation in praying for her, an alarming drowsiness had seized upon her, and she seemed as a person literally falling asleep; till at the point of noon, it appeared that she was gone, but the article of her dying could not be distinguished, it was more like a translation.

"I have reason to remember, with great thankfulness, that her life was preserved a year longer than I expected; in consequence of which, I had the blessing of her attendance to help and comfort me under a tedious illness of the last summer, under which I should probably have sunk if she had been taken away sooner. It so pleased God, that when she grew worse, I became better, and able to attend her with all the zeal the tenderest affection could inspire. But how different were our services! She, though with the weakness of a woman, and in her seventy-fifth year, had the fortitude of a man, I mean a Christian, and *all her conversation tended to lessen the evils of life, while it inspired hope and patience under them.* The support which she administered was of such a sort as might have been expected from an angel; while I, when my turn came, was too much overwhelmed with the affliction of a weak mortal.

"My loss comprehends every thing that was most valuable to me upon earth. I have lost the *manager*, whose vigilant attention to my worldly affairs, and exact method in ordering my family, preserved my mind at liberty to pursue my studies

without loss of time, or distraction of thought. I have lost my *almoner*, who knew and understood the wants of the poor better than I did, and was always ready to supply them to the best of our ability. I have lost my *counsellor*, who generally knew what was best to be done in difficult cases, and to whom I always found it of some advantage to submit my compositions: and whose mind, being little disturbed with passions, was always inclined to peaceable and Christian measures. I have lost my *example*, who always observed a strict method of daily devotion, from which nothing could divert her, and whose patience under every kind of trial, seemed invincible. She was blessed with the rare gift of an equal, cheerful temper, and preserved it under a long course of ill-health, I may say, for forty years. To have reached her age, would have been to her impossible, without that quiet, humble spirit which never admitted of murmuring and complaining, either in herself or others; and patient, quiet sufferers were the favourite objects of her private charities. It might be of use to some good people to know, that she had formed her mind after the rules of the excellent Bishop Taylor, in his 'Holy Living and Dying,' an author of whom she was a great admirer in common with her dear friend, Bishop Horne. I have lost my *companion*, whose conversation was sufficient of itself, if the world was absent, to the surprise of some of my neighbours, who remarked how much of our time we spent in solitude, and wondered what we could find to converse about, but her mind was so well furnished, and objects so well-selected, that there were few great subjects in which we had not a common interest. I have lost my best *friend*, who, regardless of herself, studied my ease and

advantage in every thing. These things may be small to others, but they are great to me; and though they are gone as a vision of the night, the memory of them will always be upon my mind during the remainder of my journey, which I must travel alone. Nevertheless, *if the word of God be my companion and his Holy Spirit my guide, I need not be solitary*, till I shall once more join my departed saint, never more to be separated, which God grant in his good time, *according to His word and promise*, in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“ From your faithful and afflicted

“ W. J.”<sup>1</sup>

REFLECTION.— “ The peace of heaven was visible in her countenance. If that look could have been taken and preserved, it would have been a sermon to the end of the world.”

This concluding narrative presents to us a beautiful example of the excellency of woman when acting on Christian principles. In one and the same form, she is the Personification of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

No account could more accurately portray the religious character and parochial industry required in a clergyman's wife, so that it may remind many who are thus circumstanced of their respective duties, and recommend a life of usefulness and piety.

A Manager,— whose vigilant attention to domestic arrangements lightened the burthen of her husband's cares; an Almoner,— who knew the poor and supplied their wants; a Counsellor,— who could advise what was best to be

(1) Life of Rev. W. Jones, prefixed to his works, by W. Stephens.

done in difficult cases; an Exemplar,—who observed a strict method of daily devotion; a Companion,—whose good and engaging conversation rendered a recourse to worldly parties, and vain amusements, needless and undesired; a Friend,—who, in everything studied the advantages of others: these her graces and virtues arose out of Christian principles. Such a life devoted to the glory of God, and the good of her fellow-creatures, we might reasonably expect, would be blessed with a peaceful and happy departure from this world to a better. We need not be surprised, therefore, that to her “death came in such a form, as to seem disarmed of his sting,” and that, “the peace of heaven was visible in her countenance.”

Though not officially connected, like her, with parochial duties, we have all of us a sphere of usefulness, in which we may more or less be enabled to resemble this Christian pattern of piety, meekness, and active benevolence. The perusal of this narrative may therefore be beneficial to all, and it reminds us of that vivid description of a diligent and a godly woman, with which Solomon closes his book of Proverbs:

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

“Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.

“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.



“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

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

“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”<sup>1</sup>

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Suitable as a conclusion to this work is the following part of Bishop Ken's Sermon on Lady Maynard.

“All this while I have not done justice to my subject, by affirming in general, that goodness is honourable, I must therefore be more particular, and enquire why Solomon does here instance in the woman rather than in the man, ‘a gracious woman retains honour.’

“And the reason seems to me to be either this, that as vice is more odious and more detested, so, on the other hand, virtue is more attractive, and looks more lovely in women than it usually does in men, insomuch that the ‘gracious woman’ shall be sure to purchase and to ‘retain honour.’

“Or it is because men have more advantages of aspiring to ‘honour’ in all public stations of the Church, the court, the camp, the bar, and the city, than women have, and the only way for a woman to gain honour, is an exemplary holiness; this makes her children rise up and

(1) Proverbs, xxxi., 10, 11, 12, 20, 25—31.

call her blessed, her husband and her own works to praise 'her in the gate,' the sole glory then of that sex is to be good, for it is a 'gracious woman' only who 'retains honour.'

"Or is it because women are made of a temper more soft and frail, are more endangered by snares and temptations, less able to control their passions, and more inclinable to extremes of good or bad than men, and, generally speaking, goodness is a tenderer thing, more hazardous and brittle in the former than in the latter, and consequently a firm and steady virtue is more to be valued in the weaker sex than in the stronger, so that a 'gracious woman' is most worthy to receive and to 'retain honour.'

"Or it is, because women, in all ages, have given many heroic examples of sanctity; besides those recorded in the Old Testament; many of them are named with great honour in the New, for their assiduity and zeal in following our Saviour, and their charity in ministering to him of their substance; they accompanied him to Mount Calvary, lamented His sufferings, waited on the Cross, attended the sepulchre, prepared spices and ointments; and, regardless either of the insolence of the rude soldiers, or of the malice of the Jews, with a love that casteth out all fear, they came on the first day of the week, before the morning light, to embalm Him; and God was pleased to honour these holy women accordingly, for they first saw the angel, who told them the joyful news that he was risen; and, as if an angel had not been a messenger honourable enough, Jesus himself first appeared to the women, the women first saw and adored him; and it was those very gracious women whom our Lord sent to his disciples, that women might be the first

publishers of his resurrection, as angels had been of his nativity. Our Saviour Himself has erected an everlasting monument in the Gospel, for the penitent woman that anointed Him; and God incarnate honoured the sex to the highest degree imaginable, in being born of a woman, in becoming the Son of a Virgin Mother, whom all generations shall call blessed; and I know not how to call it, but there is a meltingness of disposition, and affectionateness of devotion, an easy sensibility, an industrious alacrity, a languishing ardour in piety, peculiar to the sex, which naturally renders them subjects more pliable to the Divine Grace than men commonly are: so that Solomon had reason to bestow the epithet gracious, particularly on them, and to say that a 'Gracious woman retaineth honour.'"

THE END.

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