

A SERMON,
PREACHED AT BROAD OAK,

JUNE 4, 1707,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

MRS. KATHARINE HENRY,

RELICT OF MR. PHILIP HENRY,

WHO FELL ASLEEP IN THE LORD, MAY 25, 1707, IN THE 79TH YEAR OF HER AGE.

BY HER SON,

THE REV. MATTHEW HENRY, V. D. M.

PROVERBS xxxi. 28.

Her children shall arise up, and call her blessed.

THIS is part of the just debt owing to the virtuous woman, that answers the characters laid down in the foregoing verses; and part of the reward promised and secured to her by him, who, in both worlds, is, and will be, *the Rewarder of them that diligently seek and serve him.*

It is, indeed, enough to make them truly and eternally happy, that virtuous people are *blessed of God*; that the Lord Jesus is *raised up* in his gospel to *bless them*, will *arise up* at the great day to *call them blessed*,—*come ye blessed of my Father*; of him they are sure to be blessed. *He that sows righteousness, has that sure reward*; and *those whom he blesseth they are blessed indeed*; his pronouncing them happy makes them so. This is enough to engage us all to, and encourage us all in, the study and practice of virtue and piety, that the praise of it, whether it be *of men* or no, is *of God*. If men should be unrighteous, yet God will not, to *forget the work and labour of love*; though men should put slights, God will put honours, upon those that *fear his name*.

Yet, *ex abundantia*, over and above, this is *thrown in* as the reward of virtue, that among men also ordinarily it hath its praise; all that are wise and good, to be sure are of God's mind, and will say as he saith, and praise those whom he praiseth; and even in the consciences of others too, it is many times powerfully made manifest. *If there be any*

virtue, saith the apostle, *if there be any praise*; which intimates that *virtue* is a *praise*, not only Phil. iv. 8. praiseworthy, and the real praise of those who wear that crown, but is attended with the praises of others who praise it, and praise God for it. What is heaven, but *holiness in honour*,—*grace crowned with glory*? shining in the perfection of lustre to the blessed inhabitants of the upper world; and such praise as a dark and weak capacity is able to give in this distant and imperfect state is made likewise to attend virtue, and is one of the present recompences of obedience in obedience. *In keeping of them there is this great reward.*

It follows here, verse 30.—*A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*; which is, (1.) A promise to those who are virtuous, that they shall have not only the *comfort of it* in their own bosoms, living and dying, but the *credit of it* also among their relations, friends, and neighbours, of whom they shall be had in honour, both present and absent. (2.) It is a *precept* to those that are about them, that they give them the praise of it. That of Solomon the Jews read as a precept, Proverbs x. 7. *Let the memory of the just be blessed*; and, therefore, when they make mention of any eminent saint, they add, *Sit memoria ejus benedicta*, Let his memory be blessed. We call the burying of our dead friends, the *last office of our love* to them, but it is *not so*, there is a *further office of love* owing to them, a debt to their memories, which we must always be *paying*, and must not, while we live, think ourselves discharged from.

Though we must not make the praise of men our chief end, far be it from us to do so. If we seek honour from men, we implicitly slight that which comes from God, as not sufficient to reward our services, and balance our losses; yet in order and subordination to the glory of God, we must have an eye to our reputation with men. *Let your light so shine before men*, in a good conversation, which is both pleasing and guiding as the light, *that they may not only hear your good words, but see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven, from whom proceeds every grace, and every good and perfect gift, and who, therefore, is the Father of all those lights.* Not that they may see your good works, and glorify you; you must expect to be abused and vilified, and not seek your own glory; but *see your good works, and glorify your Father, and that from him all your glory may result and be reflected.*

We are to value things as they are rated in God's books, and there we are told that a good name is better, not only than precious ointment, but than great riches, not only than all the pleasures, but than all the profits, of this world. A good name^a is a name for good things with God and good people; and this is therefore to be valued, desired, and pursued, because it is an honour to religion; gives occasion for the thanksgivings of many to God; it is an advantage to us in serving God and our generation; and when we are gone will be an encouragement to those that shall come after us, to keep close to the ways of God and godliness. And, therefore, *whatsoever things are honest and lovely, amiable and of good report, let us think of those things, and abound in them.*

The praise which particularly attends the virtuous woman, is here described to come, among others, from her own children; *her children shall arise up and call her blessed.* This virtuous woman, then, is not a recluse, one shut up and cut off from the business of this life, and the affairs of a family, under pretence of devotion, and separation to God. The church of Rome makes such only their religious, as they call them, and celebrates their sanctity, who abandon the relations they have, and abjure those they might have, as if none but they entered into religion and professed it. But the scripture canon gives other measures by which to judge of religion, and other rules by which to steer in it, than their canons do. *I will, saith the apostle, that they marry, bring up children, guide the house, and give no occasion to the enemy to speak re-*

^a Be careful to walk so that you may get and keep a good name, but not by unlawful means, Gen. xl. 4. Many discommend themselves to draw on others' commendation. Provide honest things, Rom. xii. 17. 2 Cor. viii. 21. Phil. iv. 8. Avoid all appearance of evil, Eccl. x. 1. 1 Thess. v. 22. Sin stains a good name.—*Judas, not*

proachfully, as they do, who, under pretence of overcoming the world, overrun it. And they that in these things faithfully serve God and their generation, not only give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully of them, but give occasion to all to speak honourably of them; and, among the rest, *their children shall arise up and call them blessed.*

1. It is here implied, that it is a great comfort to those who are good themselves, to see *their children rising up*, risen up. Many good people are taken away, and see their children but just come into the world, putting forth like flowers, when they that should have nursed them up are removed from them, leave them in the cradle, or leave them, as we say, to the wide world; this occasions them some sad thoughts upon their death-beds, and if other difficulties be got over, yet this makes them loth to die; but in that case, it is a comfort that the fatherless, motherless children, may be, must be, left with one that will preserve them, and who has many a time remarkably owned and blessed the orphans, and proved himself the best of guardians; *he is the Helper of the fatherless* that commit themselves to him. Psalm x. 14.

But if God prolong the days of his people in the land he has given them, so that they live to see their children grown up, and applying themselves to the service of God in their generation, likely to honour God in their day, as the parents did in theirs; it is very comfortable, and makes it easier to them, when they are called, to bid farewell to this world, and very comfortable to think that their children will be praising God on earth, when they are praising him in heaven. You that are parents, who see your children risen up, and bidding fair for usefulness on this earth, and happiness in a better place, bless God for it; look upon it as one of the comforts of the lengthening out of your life, that as you yourselves, through grace, grow riper for heaven, so you live to see your children, by the influence of the same grace, setting their faces thitherward. This may encourage you to say,—*Now let thy servant depart in peace.*

When godly parents are removed by death, and the place they adorned and filled up must know them no more, it is a very happy thing, and bodes well to the land, to the age, to the next age, if their children rise up in their room, a generation of humble, holy, serious Christians, followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. It is very threatening, and an ill omen to the public, when (as Moses saith to the two tribes and a half, Numbers xxxii. 14.) *a generation of sinful men riseth up*, in the room

Jacovist. If you honour God, he will honour you, 1 Sam. ii. 30. Walk humbly.—This is a grace very much adorning, Prov. xviii. 12. Phil. ii. 8, 9. Be tender of the good name of others, Matt. vii. 1, 2. P. Henry. Orig. MS.

of their sinful parents, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and *augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord*. But, on the contrary, it is comfortable to those who are concerned for the honour of Christ, and the prosperity of his church, to see a generation of godly people rising up in the room of their godly predecessors, to bear up the name of Christ in his truths, ordinances, and laws, and to be to him for a name, and a praise, and a glory, *a seed to serve him*, and the interests of his kingdom among men, which shall be *accounted to him for a generation*; when it may be said, as it is of the church, Psalm xlv. 16. *Instead of the fathers shall be the children*. It is for the honour of God's promises concerning the *seed of the upright*, and of his covenant with them; it is for the credit of good education, and an answer to many prayers, when the children of religious families are religious, when the entail is preserved, and piety becomes an *heir-loom to a house*; but if it should be interrupted or cut off in particular families, we may, with comfort, assure ourselves that the sacred line shall be as long as the utmost line of time. *Children shall rise up to bless the Lord*, if not our children; though there be a degeneracy in some families, we hope there shall be an improvement in others to balance it. So that in every age the Son of David shall not want those that will be his witnesses, though not always alike numerous, or alike conspicuous, yet *one generation shall certainly praise his works to another*; children shall be *created*, rather than fail, to *praise the Lord*; children raised up out of stones to Abraham, even out of the stones of Jerusalem, to cry *Hosanna*. The promise is sure, it is inviolable, it is what we may depend upon, that the name of Christ shall endure for ever, whether in our families or no we cannot tell, but somewhere it shall, and his throne as the days of heaven; so that as long as the world stands, there shall be a people in it, in one place or other, that shall fear God, and work righteousness, and be accepted of him. Let God alone, to secure his own interest, do his own work, and fulfil his own counsels. When the mystical body is completed then cometh the end.

Her children shall rise up. We will suppose the virtuous woman described here to have finished her course, and then *her children rise up*, i. e. stir up themselves, with so much the more vigour and zeal, to pursue the same course, and do so much the more and better service to God and their generation. *Note*, The dying of old Christians should be the quickening of young ones. When our godly parents are removed, and an end put to their usefulness, it is time for us to *rise up*, to put forth ourselves with so much the more liveliness and resolution in serving Christ and striving against sin, that we may do something towards making up the breach, and re-

^b Dear father would tell us,—It is not enough to be where prayer is, (that is easy,) but we must *pray*—put a shoulder to every

pairing the loss. When good people are removed, it is time for those that are left behind to stir up themselves, and contrive what they shall do more for God, that those that are gone may be the less missed; to apply themselves with a double diligence to all the services of religion, that though there be fewer hands, there may not be less work done. *Moses my servant is dead*, saith Joshua i. 2. *God. Now therefore, Joshua, arise*.

Such and such good Christians are dead, that prayed much, and did much good, *now, therefore, let us arise*, that are left behind, and take so much the more care and pains in religion; that though there be fewer praying, teaching, giving people, yet there may be no less praying,^b no less teaching and exhorting one another, and no less good done. Holy Job, speaking of his own afflictions, and approaching death, saith, *upright men shall be astonished at this*, astonished to see such Job xvii. 8.

a useful man as Job removed in the midst of his usefulness; and many such astonishing breaches have been made upon us; astonished to see those soon removed, that could be ill spared. Sometimes *the sun goes down at noon*, and no marvel if at that we stand astonished, and know not what to make of such dispensations; the flowers are plucked up, while the weeds are left to grow. But shall we then succumb and sit still in astonishment? Shall we lie down and despair of keeping up the work of God? By no means. The innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite, and resolve to make his part good with him; shall neither desert the cause, nor despair of success, but exert himself so much the more for the glory of God, that religion's righteous cause may not sink for want of hands to bear it up.

2. The children of the virtuous woman that *rise up*, shall *call her blessed*. It is her honour that she shall be praised by them, by them that were best acquainted with her, and most indebted to her. It is their duty to praise her in return for all the care she has taken of them, the pains she has taken with them, and the pleasure she has taken in them; *give her of the fruit of her hands*, so the honours paid her by her children are, and *let her own works*, those she bore, those she nursed, those she taught, *praise her in the gates*.

That this place has lately parted with a virtuous woman, I believe you will all own; one that was here a pious, prudent, generous, charitable house-keeper about threescore years; born here, and that here spent almost all her days, and here ended them in a good old age, with a great deal of holy security and serenity of mind. One of whom it might be said as it was of Ruth, *All the children of my people do know that she was a virtuous woman*. You have been told of it from this

petition to help to heave it heavenward. Mrs. Savage. Diary. Orig. MS.

place already,^c and have been stirred up (God grant the excitement may not be in vain) to follow her and others, who are gone before us to the better country, Hebrews vi. 12.

But *we must also bear record*, and we ^{3 John 12.} may do it with the more assurance, because you know that our record is true; nor can we be suspected of partiality herein, but might rather be charged with injustice and ingratitude should we neglect to pay this debt. You then will witness for us in this matter, that now the virtuous woman is gone to receive the reward of her virtue in a better state; her children, those of them that are left behind, rise up and *call her blessed*; while those of them that are gone before, are sharers with her in her blessedness. It is a comfort to us, and we reckon it a great instance of the distinguishing mercy and favour of our God, that we are the children of those whom we have reason to call blessed. The greatest honour that some children can do to their parents, is only, like Shem and Japhet, to conceal their shame, and cast a mantle over their follies: but, blessed be God, we need not that. Nay, we may go further than the daughters of Zelophehad did in the account they gave of their father, of whom they could say that he had not been any of the plagues of his generation, Numbers xxvii. 3. We can say more than that of our parents, that they were not only blessings to their family, but blessings to the country, blessings to the age in which they lived; and for this their children shall rise up and *call them blessed*.

Doctrine. That the children of virtuous and godly parents ought to rise up, when they are gone, and call them blessed.

Here I shall endeavour to show,

1. What is the character of those parents to whom this honour is due from their children.

2. What is the duty of the children, that they may, in a right manner, discharge this debt to the memory of their good parents.

For the first. What must the parents be, that their children, when they are gone, may *call them blessed*? If the parents be atheistical and profane, drunkards and unclean, swearers and sabbath-breakers, and scoffers at religion, or if they be mere carnal worldlings, if covetous and contentious, deceitful and oppressive, the children have no reason to *call them blessed*. If the way of the parents be their folly, let not their *posterity approve their sayings*,

nor like a vain conversation ever the ^{Palm xlix. 13.} better for its being *received by tradition from their fathers*. They who train up their children in ungodliness and immorality, in prejudices against religion, and enmity to the serious professors of it, and so help to ruin them, the day may come, when their children will rise up in judgment against them,

and call them cursed. But such black instances make ours shine the brighter.

Her children! Whose? Why, the children of the virtuous woman here described. *Her husband, he praiseth her*, for his heart *safely trusts in her*, and that gives her no small commendation; yet that is not all, he takes all occasions to speak well of her. The children do the same, and both concur in the matter of praise. Now let us briefly inquire after some of the characters of those whose children must *rise up and call them blessed*; and this inquiry I intend, not only for a just encomium of her that is gone, and indeed of both our parents, but for instruction of myself, and others of you that are parents. Let us learn so to qualify ourselves, by the grace of God, and so to carry ourselves, that our children may *rise up and call us blessed*. As children should be afraid of losing their parents' good wishes, so parents should be afraid of doing any thing justly to lose their children's good word and good will.

Now for the drawing of the character of those whose children shall call them blessed, I shall look but little further than the two verses before the text, and the two verses after it; and there we shall find that such as are wise, and such as are kind, such as are industrious, and such as are charitable, such as are virtuous, and such as are truly pious and religious, their children shall *rise up and call them blessed*. Such, by the grace of God, our parents were. May the same grace make us such.

1. Those that are *truly wise* deserve praise. And this is part of the character of the virtuous woman here, that she *opens her mouth with wisdom*, verse 26; she is not doomed, nor hath she doomed herself, to *perpetual silence*; but what she doth say, wisdom has the dictating of it, and it turns to her praise. Wisdom not only *makes the face to shine* for the present, but leaves a good report to succeeding generations, like the after-beams of the sun when he is set, surrounded with which he lies down in honour.

If we be wise, we shall not only be *wise for ourselves*, but wise also for our children, and for their good, especially if we *open our mouth with wisdom*, and so instil into their minds what they will afterwards have use for; if we know when to speak, and what, and how; if we speak calmly and considerately; if our heart study to answer; if our lips bring forth wisdom out of a good treasure of it in the heart; if we put away all that foolish talking which corrupts good manners, and debaucheth the minds, especially of young people, and *keep our mouth as with a bridle* at all times, particularly when our children are before us, they will have reason to call us *blessed* for setting them an example of the good government of the tongue. Children learn to speak

^cIn the funeral sermon, by Dr. Benion. See *ante*, postscript,

and Appendix, No. I.

from their parents and nurses: let them from us learn to speak well, and not to mix the language of Ashdod with the Jews' language. We have the bending of the bough when it is yet young and tender, let us be wise in managing it, that we may set it right. We know how long a word^d from a parent to a child, that is just coming to years of understanding, will be remembered. I know it by experience. What the vessel is then seasoned with, it will retain the savour of. Let us then open our mouths with wisdom, that our lips, if they do not feed many, yet at least may feed our own children, with wisdom and understanding.

Some of you will say, that you have now lost, I am sure I have lost, a very discreet and prudent counsellor, that not only ordered her own affairs with wisdom, but knew very well how to advise others, and was many a time *eyes to the blind*; one that was very well versed in Solomon's Proverbs, and the rules of wisdom which may be fetched from thence for the conduct of human life, and knew how to apply them, and to *use knowledge aright*. Let us in like manner stock ourselves with the principles of wisdom, govern ourselves by the rules of wisdom, submit ourselves to the laws of wisdom, and be ready, on all occasions, to speak pertinently and to the purpose; that, *opening our mouths with wisdom*, our children may suck it in when they are young, and show it forth when they are old, and then they will have reason to rise up and *call us blessed*.

2. Those that are *truly kind* deserve this honour. I say *truly kind*, for many are very *fond*, as David of Adonijah; but are therein really *unkind*. Those are *truly kind* that are wisely so; that are tender of their children's comfort, but not indulgent of their children's follies. That also is the character of the virtuous woman here, that *in her tongue is the law of kindness*, not the humour of kindness, or the pang of it, but the *law* of it, such kindness as receives law from wisdom, and gives law to the whole conversation. Those parents that have this law in their tongues, in their hearts, and are always under the commands and regulations of it, gain their children's love, and are entitled to their good word; those parents who make conscience of that command, which we have more than once among the laws of Christ,—*Parents, provoke not your children to wrath*, by haughtiness and moroseness, and keeping them at an unreasonable distance, by constant chiding, and severe correction, *lest they be discouraged*;—but who are *gentle towards them*, as becomes parents towards those that are parts of themselves, and that derive their follies from them; who reprove with the meekness of wisdom, restrain with reason and a due

consideration of all circumstances, counsel and admonish with compassion and affection, and rule with a steady, gentle hand; such parents as these the children will *rise up and call blessed*.

And for this I am sure we have reason to call our parents blessed; never were any more under the government of the law of kindness, kindness particularly to their children, than they were. To be kindly affectioned is of good report with all men, recommends religion as that which softens and sweetens men's tempers, fits them for all relations, and makes them the joy of all the societies they are members of; by this, among other things, they *obtained a good report*.

Would we then be called blessed, let us study the art of obliging, and not only be pitiful, but be courteous; pitiful to the miserable; courteous to all; let us be governed at all times by that wisdom from above, which is gentle and easy to be James iii. 17. entreated; let our passions be always under the check and conduct of religion and right reason; let all bitterness, and frowardness, and peevishness be put away from us, and every thing that is sour and supercilious; let us not be like Nabal, whose character it was, that he was such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him,—they that are so, trouble their own houses. But let us study how to put a due respect upon all, and particularly to convince our children that we love them, and seek their good; let the law of love rule in our hearts, and the law of kindness in our tongues, and let us study to make ourselves and all about us easy, always easy: be pleasing; be pleased; then shall our children *rise up and call us blessed*.

3. Those that are industrious and careful deserve this honour. This is the character of the virtuous woman here, verse 27.—That she *looketh well to the ways of her household*. And most of the characters given of her in the verses before fall under this head, where she is commended for her diligence and consideration, in the management of her house and the affairs of it, which is her particular calling, and that in which she is to abide with God. It is not made her praise that she spends her time in reading and contemplation; no, nor that she spends all her time in devotion neither, though she has her stated time for that. But that she *looks well to the ways of her household*, appointing them their portion of meat, and work too, in due season; has her eye upon all under her charge, to see that they both do and have what is fit. It is required from wives, that they guide the house, and they have need of wisdom to do it well. That is 1 Timothy v. 14. their place, their post. *Man goes forth to his work*

^d See an instance in Mrs. Savage's Memoirs, p. 167. *ut supra*;—1696. Monday, Nov. 24. I went to Broad Oak.

Tuesday. One expression of Mr. Steel's I had from dear mother, which I daily find the truth of. Speaking of the back-

wardness of our hearts to duty;—When we have time, we want hearts; when we think we have hearts to seek and serve God, then we want time;—*The heart is deceitful above all things; Who can know it?* Mrs. Savage's Diary, Orig. MS.

end to his labour, but the woman stays at home to hers. *Where is Sarah thy wife? Behold, in the tent; where should she be else? The virtuous woman is a good housekeeper; one that in managing the affairs of the house, prudently avoids both the extremes of undue sparing and undue spending; that doth not on one hand over-work her household, and yet, on the other hand, suffers them not to mispend their time and neglect their business; that orders every thing to its proper time and place, and yet is not over nice or troublesomely curious: that is neither anxiously careful with that fear which has torment and amazement, nor yet careless and thoughtless of the morrow. This is the wise woman*

that *buildeth her house*, while the foolish, by neglecting it, doth, in effect, *pull it down with her hands*, and let it go to wreck and ruin. This is she that knows and observes a due proportion between laying up for her children, and laying out upon them, so as that neither unduly exclude or intrench upon the other, but both according to their place. Such a mother in Israel hath this place now lost, that provided well for her household, with a great deal of ease and order, and looked well to all the ways of it, and answered all the characters of the virtuous woman here described; and if her children that reap so much benefit by her good example, and the good education she gave them, do not call her blessed, let every body call them ungrateful, and you can call them no worse.

And let all parents thus merit their children's respects, by consulting the prosperity of their family, and providing for them food convenient, both for the present and for hereafter, so as that there may be an equality, so far as human prudence, in dependence upon God's providence, can order. If all be laid out, and none laid by, they must afterwards come down,* and that will be a temptation one way; if all be laid by, and none be laid out, they will afterwards rise, and that will be a temptation another way. It is neither the wisdom nor the kindness of parents to their children, to make it all their care and business, either to hoard for them,—we have seen riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt,—or, on the other hand, to set them off with advantage to the world, by their making a show,—that likewise has been of fatal consequence to many,—but to give them an education according to their rank, to do all they can to fit them for business, for the service of God, and their generation according to the will of God; to give them good instructions, and good examples of humility, industry, beneficence, and honesty, to put up good prayers for them, and with them. And this is that care of children for which we must rise up and call our parents blessed.

* If a man keep but of even hand, his ordinary expenses ought to be but to the half of his receipts; and if he think to wax rich,

4. Those that are charitable, and *do good in their places*, are worthy of this praise; and this is here made part of the character of the virtuous woman, verse 20.—*She stretcheth forth her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.* Her prudence and diligence find out the poor and needy, the proper objects of her charity, and she leaves not the distribution of her alms with others, as if she thought it below her, but with her own hand relieves and succours the necessitous. Her charity is extensive to those at a distance, intimated in the stretching forth of her hand to them; it also intimates, that she doth it cheerfully and heartily, with a willing mind, and not grudgingly; drawing out her soul first to the hungry, and then reaching out her hand to them. Isa. lviii. 10.

Those who do this, set their children a good example, going before them in good works; they likewise leave them, if not a *great*, yet a *good*, inheritance, which will be sweet and sure to them; and, though they may leave them so much the less of this world's goods, yet they will leave them so much the more of the blessing of God, which *maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow.* He that disperseth and giveth to the poor, has not only a *righteousness which endureth for ever*, but *wealth and riches*, also, *shall be in his house*, with which his posterity shall be blessed. What is so laid out is *bread* Pa. cxii. 2, 3, 9. *cast upon the waters*, which will be *found again after many days*; it is good seed sown in good soil, which will come up again with a great increase; it is put out to the best interest, and upon the best security, for it is *lent to the Lord*, and shall certainly be repayed more than a thousand-fold. This is another thing for which we have reason to rise up, and call our parents blessed; for they were *rich in good works*, as you very well know, yet without noise or ostentation. *The loins of the poor blessed them*, and, therefore, we should, in concurrence with the *blessing of him that was ready to perish.*

And let us, in like manner, recommend ourselves to those we shall leave behind, as Dorcas, who was celebrated for the *alms-deeds which she did*, not which she put others upon Acts ix. 36. doing, or which she purposed hereafter, or which she would do by her will; no; but which she *did* herself out of her own estate,—making her own hands her executors. *To do good, and to communicate*, let us never forget; for, *with such sacrifices*, both God and man are well pleased.

5. Those that are *virtuous*, their children shall rise up and call them *blessed*, especially those that *excel in virtue*, as it follows here, verse 28.—*Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.* Those we call virtuous, that are sober and temperate, just and righteous in their conversation, con-

but to the third part. Lord Bacon's Essays. Essay xxviii.

scientious in all they say and do, in all they design and endeavour, fair and honest in all their dealings, that have no blot cleaving to their hands, or to their hearts; that have been exemplary for that *integrity and uprightness* which doth become Christians, and will *preserve* them, and study in every thing to conform to the laws of natural religion, which are not repealed, but confirmed and improved by our Christianity. Devotion towards God, without justice and sobriety, meekness and compassion towards men, comes far short of that universal righteousness which is requisite to our acceptance with God. Hands lifted up will not reach heaven, unless they be *pure hands*, and *lifted up without wrath and contention*.

Virtue may be taken more strictly for vigour and boldness, and resolution in that which is good; courage and spirit in doing our duty, in facing difficulties, giving reproofs, bearing reproaches, improving opportunities, and pressing forwards towards perfection. The virtuous are those who are lively and cheerful in religion, that *sing in its ways*, and are *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; and, in this sense, she was a virtuous woman whom we have now lost.

Now, where there is *virtue*, there is *praise*; there is that which ought to be praised, that for which the children must rise up and call the parents blessed, especially those who *excelled in virtue*, as ours did. Those who have only made a profession of religion, who have rested in the shows and formalities of devotion, while their lives and conversations have been disagreeable, little reason will either their children or their friends have to *call them blessed*; for the name of God, and his doctrine, is evil spoken of through them; but those who beautify their profession by that which is *lovely and of good report*, who thereby bring honour to their families, and set them a good example, their children, who shall be blessed for their sakes, must *rise up and call them blessed*.

6. Those that are pious and religious towards God are entitled to this honour; verse 30;—*A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*. Moral virtue is a blessed thing, but it will not make us blessed without serious godliness. As righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true religion, so religion towards God is an essential branch of universal righteousness. It is the *fear of God* that crowns the character of this virtuous woman, without which, all the rest was of small account. Those that hereby *honour God, he will honour*, and will have us to honour.

Those that keep up a holy awe and reverence of

God upon their minds, that set him always before them, and have their eyes ever towards him, that have a regard to his authority over them, and, with an eye to that, submit themselves both to his precepts and to his providence; that make conscience of their duty to him, and are afraid of offending him; that devote themselves to his praise, and make it the business of their lives to glorify him, as the greatest and best of beings, and evidence it in all the instances of a steady, uniform, and undissembled devotion.

Those that make conscience of prayer in secret, and in their families; make a business of it, and take a pleasure in it; that delight in the holy word of God, and make it their meditation day and night; that converse much with it, and converse with others out of it; that call the sabbath of the Lord, *holy and honourable*, and honour God on that day; that call his courts amiable, and desire to *dwell in his house*, where they may be *still praising him*, and thus do the work of heaven while they are here on earth; that live a life of communion with God, conformity to him, and complacency in him; that have such a holy dread of God and his wrath, as drives them to Christ and his mediation, without which there is no standing before the just and holy God. Those that in their whole conversation, exemplify the fear of God dwelling and ruling in their hearts. Those that, not only by such a good example as this, but by their prudent and pious instructions, *teach their children also the fear of the Lord*, train them up in the ways of *pure religion*, under the conduct of the principles of catholic Christianity; not biassed to a party, nor soured with animosity and uncharitable prejudices; and in subjection to that *kingdom of God*, which is *not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. They that do thus, as they are *accepted of God*, so they shall be *approved of men*, and their children, in a particular manner, have reason to rise up and call them blessed. And such you know the parents were whom we are this day calling so.

And let this engage all that are parents to do likewise. Live in the fear of God, be in that fear every day, and all the day long. Bring up your children in that fear; look upon true devotion to be true wisdom;† and do all you can to preserve the entail of it in your families, that your children may be praising God for you on earth, when you are gone to heaven, and you and they may be for ever calling one another blessed.

For the second.—What is *the duty of children*, that they may discharge this debt, which they owe to the memory of their good parents? How must we

† It is recorded of Mrs. Hanmer, that she very much preferred the spiritual welfare of her children before their temporal; looking on the former as the true felicity, and on the latter, without it, but as a pleasant voluntary misery. The last Work of a Believer,

prepared for the Funerals of Mary, the Widow, first of Francis Charlton, Esq., and after of Thomas Hanmer, Esq. By Richard Baxter. p. 148. duod. 1662.

perform this service to those who have recommended themselves by those characters? I shall open this in six things.

1. We ought always to maintain a grateful remembrance, and take all occasions to make an honourable mention, of our godly parents. We cannot keep them from the grave, but we may keep them from the *land of forgetfulness*; let their memories live with us when they are dead; live while we live, and be transmitted to those we leave behind; let them be always dear and precious to us, and being

Heb. xi. 4.

dead let them be like Abel, yet *spoken of*. Some think Laban's teraphim were the effigies of his ancestors, which, therefore, he would by no means part with. Let the remembrance of them be preserved in our minds, and then we have the best pictures of them, and such as we cannot be robbed of. This is part of the duty required by the fifth commandment, (which is the *first commandment with promise*),—*Honour thy father and thy mother*; honour their memories when they are gone.

This we ought to do in gratitude for all their kindness to us, both as parents, and as godly parents,—their kindness to our bodies and our souls.

(1.) As parents, they took care of our natural life, and preserved that lamp from being extinguished when it was first lighted, and a little thing would have blown it out.—*Why did we not die from the womb? why did we not give up the ghost when we came out of the belly?* It was because the *knees prevented us*, and the *breasts, that we should suck*. That tender, that earnest, care, which the God of nature put into the hearts of our parents concerning us, when we were in the helpless state of innocency; the pains they took with us, when we were unable to do any thing for ourselves, and perhaps froward with those that did any thing about us, is what we can never make a sufficient return for, either to them while they live, or to their memory when they are gone.

The great favours God bestowed upon his people Israel, are represented by the compassionate relief given to an infant, which intimates that that is a kindness never to be forgotten.

(2.) As godly parents, and upon this account much more, we ought to do honour to their names, and their memory should be doubly precious to us; remembering, that, in the sense St. Paul writes it

Philémon 19.

to Philemon, *we owe unto them even our own souls also*, under God. What should we have been that were *born like the wild ass's colt*, that brought into the world with us so much sin, and folly, and corruption, if we had not had good parents, who took early care, to the utmost of their power, to form us to that which is good? What should we have been if we had not been catechized and instructed in the principles of religion,—which we sucked in with our milk,—if we had not

been restrained from sin, and the springing up of the *root of bitterness* checked betimes? And, if we had not been directed and quickened in the way of our duty, and told plainly,—*This is the way, walk in it?* Notwithstanding all the advantages of our education, it is bad enough with us, and we have reason to complain of our ignorance and mistakes, our defects in our duty, and our proneness to sin. But how much worse would it have been with us, if we had never had those advantages! Perhaps we should never have learned to pray, if our good parents had not taught us when we were young, and trained us up to it; should never have been acquainted with the word of God, if they had not made us acquainted with it, and taken care, that, *from our childhood, we should know the Holy Scriptures*, as Timothy did, who, being so conversant with the Scriptures when he was a *child*, when he became a man, a *man of God*, was by that means thoroughly furnished for every good word and work; and if we, by the same means, be not so, in some measure, it is our own fault. They did their part.

Blessed were they of the Lord that took pity on us in our folly, and taught us the good knowledge of the Lord, of the Lord Jesus, and led us into an acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and him crucified; showed us the difference between good and evil, that we might *abhor that which is evil*, and *cleave to that which is good*; reasoned with us many a time about our souls and another world; set before us life and death, the blessing and the curse; followed us with precept upon precept, and line upon line; dealt with us as *reasonable creatures*, showing us what a rational thing religion is, and so *drawing us with the cords of a man*; dealt with us according to the capacities of our childhood, teaching us the things of God as we were able to bear them, with tenderness, and a gentle conduct, and so *drawing us with the bands of love*. This is what we ought always to retain the remembrance of, not only for our own benefit, but for their honour.

Blessed were they of the Lord, who followed the good instructions they gave us with constant and earnest prayers to God for us night and day; having presented us to Christ in our baptism, pursuant thereunto they oft presented us to him in their addresses to the throne of grace, and pleaded our baptism. A good stock of prayers they laid up for us,^s which we hope are upon the file in heaven, and that we, and ours after us, shall reap the benefit of them; for, it is true of prayer, what we say of winter, that it never rots in the skies. Such parents as these ought not to be forgotten, but to be daily remembered, and spoken of with respect, who daily remembered us, and whose prayers, like Cornelius's, came up before God for a memorial.

2. We ought to give God thanks for them; and

^r See Flavel's Fountain of Life. Works, vol. 1. p. 237. *ut supra*.

And, Life of the Rev. T. Cawton, p. 45. *ut supra*.

that is the best way of calling them *blessed*; blessing God for them, and for the benefit we had by them. They were themselves, and were to us, what the free grace of God made them, and no more; and, therefore, that grace must have all the glory. Whatever is blessed to us we must bless God for, for he it is that blesseth it, and so maketh it a blessing; he is the Author and Fountain of all that which is worthy to be praised; and, therefore, in him, as the Centre, all the lines of praise must meet. All is of him, and therefore all must be to him. We are not to pray to God for the dead, but we are to *praise* God for them.

Let us, then, who had godly parents, look far back in our thanksgivings, and bless God,

(1.) For his grace in them, which carried them on with comfort, and enabled them to finish their course with joy. Now, we have seen the *end of their conversation*, and with what a holy security and serenity of mind they put off the body, and removed to the world of spirits, we have reason to give glory to him who was the *Author and Finisher of their faith*; who led them on in their way, and bore them as *upon eagles' wings*, till he had brought them safely and comfortably to their journey's end,—to that blessed state, where they *receive the end of their faith* and hope, even the *salvation of their souls*.

We have reason to bless God for her that is now removed, who bid farewell to the world^a so very cheerfully,—said she had enough of it, and longed to be with Christ;—would not have her sickness called an affliction, but a welcome messenger to fetch her home;—and said, a little before she died, she hoped she knew, in some measure, by experience, what it is for a believer to *have eternal life abiding in him*; having little doubt of her future happiness.¹ For this she blessed God, and so should we.

(2.) We must bless God for our benefit by that grace. Though they could not give us grace, no more than they could give us being, yet God was pleased to make use of them, as instruments in his hand, in the beginning and carrying on of that good work. God enabled them to teach us, and pray for us; he made them guides to us, and faithful monitors, and made their words to be to us as goads and nails. Now, *Thanks be to God, who put that earnest care into their hearts* for us, even to travail in birth again, till they hoped they saw Christ formed in us. Has there been in the hearts of our parents, ministers, or friends, an earnest care for the welfare, the eternal welfare, of

^a Thus beautifully expressed by Mr. Baxter, as a motto for his own picture.

Farewell, vain world! as thou hast been to me,
Dust and a shadow, such I leave to thee.
The unseen life and substance I commit
To him that's substance, light, love to it.
Some leaves and fruit are dropp'd for soil and seed;
Heaven's heirs to generate; to heal and feed:

our souls? Blessed be God, that *put it into their heart*, and made it such a blessing to us!

David thanked God for sending Abigail to meet him, and, with her wisdom, to stop him from going on in a sinful way. Surely, we have much more reason then to thank God for our parents, who directed us into the good and right way. Blessed be God, that sent them; and blessed be their advice; and blessed be their memory.

3. We must own the goodness of that way of religion and serious godliness, which they chose, and wherein they walked,—even to the end, till they finished their course. We *call them blessed*, in calling that blessed which they so highly valued, and valued themselves by; in calling religion's ways, *ways of wisdom*, and those ways of wisdom, *ways of pleasantness*. It is a great matter to us, in the government of ourselves, whom we call blessed; whom we think well of, as in the best and most desirable condition; whose *sayings we approve*, and with whom we wish to take our lot. Even Balaam desired Psalm xlix. 13. to die with the righteous, and have his *end* with them; but we must think it desirable to *live* with the righteous, and have *our way* with them. The fundamental error of a carnal world is, that they *call the proud happy, whom God resists*, Malachi iii. 15. and *bless the covetous, whom God abhors*, Psalm x. 4. They think worldly people, that have abundance of the wealth, and mirth, and gaiety of this world, are the only happy people; now, it is necessary that this mistake be rectified, as the Psalmist rectifies it, Psalm cxliv. 6. where he owns it to be the sentiment of the most,—*Happy are the people that are in such a case*,—that live at ease, and grow rich,—but pronounceth it his sentiment, that, rather,—*Happy are the people whose God is the Lord*. There are, then, hopes of young people, that they will do well, when they call their godly parents blessed, and reckon that, though they made no great figure in the world, were not dignified with pompous titles, did not raise estates, nor obtain a name like the names of the great ones that are in the earth, yet they were truly honourable, truly happy.

(1.) We must reckon that they were truly honourable; and value ourselves more upon it, that we are a seed of saints, than if we were a seed of nobles. This will quicken us to pursue honour in the same way in which *they obtained a good report*. Though there were those, perhaps, of the fools in Israel, that might reproach and despise them, and say all manner of evil against them, for Christ's sake, yet we

Them also thou wilt flatter and molest,
But shalt not keep from everlasting rest.

Poems, new ed. p. 114.

¹ Good old Mrs. Doughty, sometime of Shrewsbury, who had long walked with God, and longed to be with him; and was among us an excellent example of holiness, blamelessness, contempt of the world, constancy, patience, humility, and (which makes it strange) had a great and constant desire to die, though she was still

must reckon it was their honour, and honour enough, that they were accepted of God, respected and valued by all wise and good men, and perhaps made manifest also in the consciences even of those that were bad; and even the reproach of Christ was their praise, their riches, *greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*; it is an honour to be dishonoured for Christ, much more to be loved and esteemed for his sake. They that live and die in Christ, live and die in honour. Do we believe this?—Let us then but have the same honour our godly parents had,—a name for that which is good with those that are good, the honour of doing good in a low and narrow sphere,—and we covet not to *make a fair shew in the flesh*.

(2.) We must reckon that they were truly happy,—happy in the enjoyment of themselves, and of what God had given them in the world; happy in the quiet and repose of their own minds; and happy in the prospect of better things in the better country.—We have reason to say,—That the ways of God and godliness, in which our good parents walked, were good ways,—*ways of pleasantness and peace*,—that the yoke of Christ is easy and gentle, and very sweet. They told us many a time, and abode by it to the last, that they had found the Lord Jesus a good Master, and his work good, even its own wages, and a present great reward of obedience in obedience. Let us set to our seal that this is true, and account that true holiness is true happiness; for, in heaven, where there is the perfection of happiness, there will be the perfection of holiness; and, let us account them happier in the love and favour of God, the comforts of the Spirit, the testimony of a good conscience, and the earnest of eternal life, than if they had had all the delights of the sons and daughters of men, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces. And let us put in for the same happiness, by following them as they followed Christ.

4. We ought to be very sensible of our loss, when such parents are removed from us. If we call them *blessed*, we call them *blessings*, and reckon that we were greatly blessed in them while they were continued to us, and therefore, that now they are removed, the hand of the Lord is gone out against us, and he is contending with us. It concerns us, therefore, to accommodate ourselves to such a providence, to *hear the rod, and him that appointed it*,—to understand the meaning of it, and answer its intention.

(1.) Wherein we have been in the least defective in our duty to our parents, or other relations, when they are removed from us, that is a call to us, a loud call, to renew our repentance for it, and to pray for pardon in the blood of Christ. This is a time to bring to remembrance; it is sin that provokes

God to take our dear relations from us, that were comforts to us; and, therefore, when we mourn for death, we must mourn for sin, for *the wages of our sin is their death*.

(2.) We ought by it to be minded of leaving the world, too; for *we are not better than our fathers*; they are gone, and we are going, drawing after them apace;—*Thou shalt be gathered to thy people*, saith God to Moscs, *as Aaron thy brother was gathered*. We must leave the world, as our parents left it. Let us, therefore, learn of them to die, and let their removal to the grave help to make it the more familiar to us, and engage us to converse more with it, that we may get more ready for it.

(3.) Now we want our parents to pray for us, God calls us to pray so much the more for ourselves and for our children. Now we want them to instruct and advise us, we must meditate more in the word of God, that best of counsellors, and keep a stricter guard over our own hearts and ways, that thus we may the less feel the loss of them.

5. We ought to think much of that happy state to which our godly parents are removed. We must call them *blessed*, not only for what they were, but for what they are; think and speak much of the blessedness of that world into which God has now sent for them from this world of ours. We have a great deal of reason to be *confident of this very thing*, that now, they are *absent from the body*, they are at home *with the Lord*. Call them *blessed*, then;—blessed indeed; for, they are not only at rest from all their labours, but are *entered into the joy of their Lord*. In this sense it may be asked,—*Your fathers, where are they?* (Zechariah i. 5.) Your godly parents, ancestors, and friends, that are fallen asleep in Christ; *where are they?* And what a comfort is it to think where they are; not lost, not perished; not cast, as they suspected concerning Elijah, *upon some mountain, or in some valley*. No, though we are much in the dark concerning the particulars of the state of separate souls, yet we are sure, in general, that, to them, to whom *to live was Christ, to die will be gain*. *Where are they?* Why, they are where they are perfectly and perpetually blessed in the immediate vision and fruition of God within the veil; infinitely more happy where *they are*, than where *they were*. *Where are they?* Why, they are in the mansions of light and bliss, that are in our Father's house above; in the New Jerusalem, in the paradise of God, where they *hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat*. They are in the best company, employed in the best work, and enjoying a complete satisfaction. *Where are they?* Why, they are where there are no complaints, nothing to interrupt their communion with God, or cast a damp upon their spirits. Death has

done that for them which ordinances could not do, — has perfectly freed them from that body of sin and death which was here their constant burthen; and hath set them, for ever, out of the reach of Satan's fiery darts, which were here their terror. The spirits of the just are there *made perfect*, beyond the perfection of Adam in innocency, for they are immutably confirmed in it. *Where are they?* Why they are where they would be; in their centre, in their element. They are where they have longed to be in that blessed state, towards which, while they were here, they were still reaching forth, and pressing forwards.^k Let us, then, *rise up, and call them blessed*; for, *blessed, thrice blessed, are the dead, which die in the Lord.*

And this will be of use to us;—

(1.) To comfort us in reference to them now they are gone; for *we sorrow not as those that have no hope*; blessed be God, we do not. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me*;—there is no occasion for it. While our friends are here with us, in this vale of tears, it is our duty, when they are in distress, to weep for them,—for, therein we weep with them; and it is our duty to *weep with them that weep*; but they need not be wept for upon their own account, that are not only not weeping, but have for ever taken their leave of weeping, and have had *all tears wiped away from their eyes*. While *one member suffers*, it is fit *all the members should suffer with it*; but, if that member be honoured, let all the members think themselves honoured with it. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to my Father*. While we are here in the dark, and at a distance, they are *made nigh*, and *see face to face*. While we are struggling with our difficulties, and groaning under our burthens, *without are fightings, within are fears*,—they are easy and safe, and abundantly satisfied.

(2.) To encourage us in our Christian course, work, and warfare, let the consideration of that happy state into which they are gone before, make us always to abound in the work of the Lord, because our labour will not only not be in vain, but will be abundantly recompensed. *In due season we shall thus reap*; and, therefore, *let us not be weary in well-doing*. If we *sow to the Spirit*, as they did, we shall *reap life everlasting*, as they did. Say then, *We will go with you*, for we have heard God *was with you*, and we believe you *are with him*; and, therefore, let nothing turn us from following after you.

6. We ought to tread in the steps of their virtue and piety, and imitate them in every thing that was praiseworthy. To commend that which was good in them, and not to copy it out into our own hearts and lives,—to commend the way they walked in,

and not to walk in it ourselves, is to give ourselves the lie, and *out of our own mouth shall we be judged*. Are not we under the same obligations to be religious that they were? Is it not as much our concern as it was theirs? Are not we as much bound to serve God, and our generation, in our day, as they were in theirs? May not our children expect we should take the same care of them, that our parents did of us,—set them as good examples, and pray as much for them? Let us resolve, then, to walk in the same spirit, in the same steps; and, in the strength of divine grace, to *follow them, who are now, through faith and patience, inheriting the promises*; and endeavour *not to come behind in any gift, in any grace, in any duty*.

We are concerned thus to follow them,—

(1.) In pursuance of the good education they gave us. They laid a good foundation by the lessons they taught us, the counsels they followed us with, and the good exercises they trained us up in; let us, therefore, while we live, be building upon that foundation, till the *top-stone* be at length *brought forth with shouting*. We have been led into green pastures by still waters; let us, then, by our holy strength, and serviceableness, praise our keeping, and commend our education by living up to it, and giving the like to our children, and thus *call them blessed*, to whom we owe so great an advantage.

(2.) In compliance with the good example they set us, and in conformity to that, by which the instructions they gave us were both explained and enforced, and we were both directed and encouraged in the way of our duty. It is the praise of all the godly kings of Judah, that they *walked in the way of David their father, and turned not aside*.

(3.) In kindness to the world we now live in, and the generation in which our lot is cast. There is a great gap made by the removal of good people, let us endeavour to fill it up, by doing good in the place where God has cast our lot, as they did that are gone; that it may be said, while we survive,—They are not gone, but they still live in us.

(4.) In expectation of the bliss of that world they now live in. Their serious piety was found unto praise, and honour, and glory, in this world, and will be much more so at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, having an eye to the same *joy set before us, run with patience the same race set before us*; let us proceed with holy vigour and resolution, and persevere with an unshaken constancy. We serve the same Master, have a promise of the same Spirit, and a prospect of the same recompence. Let every one of us, therefore,—Hebrews vi. 11.—*shew the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end*.

^k The above beautiful passage may remind the reader of Mr. P. Henry's remarks at the funeral of Mr. W. Lawrence, referred

to in the Life of Mr. Samuel Lawrence, in this vol.