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The Treasure of Vowed Chastity
in Secular Persons
1621
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NOTE

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References: Allison and Rogers 827; STC 15524.
THE
TREASURY
OF VOWED
CHASTITY
in Secular Persons.

Also the
WIDOWES
GLASSE.

Written by the R.R. Fathers Leonard
Lesius, and Patius Andronicus,
both of the Society of Iesus.

Translated into English by
I. W. P.
Permissis Superiorum, 1621.
TO THE
HONORABLE
AND RIGHT
VERTUOUS GENTLEWOMAN,
MRS. ANNE VAUX.

HONORABLE,
AND RIGHT
WORTHY,
The constant
report of your vertuous
life.
The Epistle

Life, in the State where-of this little Booke entreteth, hath invited me to entitle the same unto your Name in particular, which was written for the profit of all in general, who have a true desire to imbrace the State of vowed Chastity, and yet remaine in the world among secular persons.

If the subject seeme new, or strange to any, I doubt not, but hauing atten-
DEDICATORY:
attentively read, & con-
sidered the severall passa-
ges therein, they will re-
maine abundantly satis-
fy'd. For it was no part
of the Authors intention
(who is knowne to be fa-
mous, both for learning
and piety) thereby to de-
rogate from other States of
life; but rather, by shew-
ing the good, & commo-
dity, which may proceed
by embracing of this;
those that be more per-
* 3 fect
The Epistle

feet in themselves, might hereby, be the more honoured, and reverenced of all.

Neither, indeed, is there anything at all proposed in this ensuing Discourse, which hath not been practised in the Primitive Church, by persons of both sexes; & for that cause so much admired, and extolled by the ancient Fathers of those days: Howsoever the
DEDICATORY.

The same may seeme not to have beene in some later ages, so much in vse, and therefore thought now behoofefull to be again renewed to our memory, in these tymes of so great necessity, for the spirituall good of soules, and increase of Charity, now halfe extinguished in the Christian world.

The profit that may, & doth redound to such

*4 as
THE EPISTLE
as desire to practise this state of vowed Chastity, remaining in the world, will neither be small, or uncertain, if the same be embraced with that sincerity of heart and virtuous manner of life as it ought: wherein I know your seife to have made good profe, these many years, by reaping a plenteous harvest of the fruits, and heaping vp a maffe of Treasure, against the com-
DEDICATORY.

comming of your heane.-ly Spouse, to present him withall, to the unspea-
keable comfort and con-
solation of your soules e-
ternall Happynes.

To this little Trea-
tise, I haue adioyned the WIDDOWVES GLASSE, the which I humbly in-
treate you, to present, in my Name, to your two most worthy Sisters, who for the long, constant, & most exemplar professiо

of
The Epistle

of that noble, and worthy state of chaste Widowhood, may seeme to clayme a just Title therunto. But I deemed not my labour in translating it, worthy to be presented to so honourable Matrons, in a Dedicatory part: not doubting but the same wilbe more gratefull, comming through your handes, who are so sincere a kin into them, both by Nature & Grace; seeing
DEDICATORY.

seeing Virginity, and Widdowhood, have ever been accounted Sisters, and betroathed to the same Eternall Spouse Christ Iesus.

Accept then (Right worthy Gentiewoman) these few sheets of paper, by me translated out of Latin, as a future earnest of some better gift, where- with I intend to present you ere it be long. And in the meane ryme, amongst
The Epistle

Among the many of your pious and devout exercises, forget him not, who will ever remaine

Your devoted servant,

I. W.

The
THE
GOOD AND
COMMODITY
Of the state of life, which
some professe, living in
the world, and vowing
Chastity.

Here be not
waiting in these
our daves, a-
mongst secular
persons very ma-
ny, as well Widdowes, as
A Virgins
Virgins, who aspyring to perfection, have a desire (as farre as they may conveniently) to sequester themselves from the troubles and incommodes of the world, thereby to employ their minds more freely and securely in the service of God.

For whome notwithstanding, to live in Monasteryes, either it is not so convenient or els grounded upon sufficient reasons they may be otherwise resolved. For the ways & manners of serving God are divers, & those who cannot aspire to
of Chastity. to the bigness & most perfect; are not therefore constrained to content themselves with the meanest & least noble.

Wherefore many there be who living in the world, rejecting the vanity of rich and costly apparel, and taking a plain & simple habit, consecrate their Virginity to Almighty God; and avoiding the converseation of secular persons (as much as they may) do employ themselves wholly in the offices of Charity and Devotion.

Yet nevertheless, becas
cause there be not wanting some, who (I know not out of what zeal) care at the Institution of such manner of life, I am for this respect wonne, at the intent of a special friend, to declare out of holy Scripture, and ancient Fathers, in what degree such kind of life in the Catholike Church is to be esteemed: for the satisfaction of whom in a matter of such importance, and so much pertaining to the good of soules, I have purposed to handle it in eight little Chapters following, where
of Chastity. 5
where, in the first, it is proved out of holy Scripture, that this kind of life is pi-
oun and laudable.

In the second, the same is proved by Exaples out of holy Scripture, and Eccle-
tsial and historyes.

In the third, the same is convinced by the Authori-
ties of holy Fathers.

In the fourth, the same is confirmed by Theologicall Arguments.

In the fifth, the same is also confirmed out of the
fewe of Chastity.

A 3

The
The Treasure

The first, containeth a solution to certain objections made, concerning the merits of Marriage & Chastity.

The seauenth, setteth downe certaine admonitions & aduices, to be exactly followed in this estate.

The eipl, sheweth that this manner of life, is truly and properly called an E-estate.

Chap.
of Chastity. 7

CHAP. I.

Wherein it is proved out of Scripture, that, that kind of life, wherein some, Men or Women, living in the world, leaving of costly apparel, and using plain and modest attire, doe vow Chastity, is laudable and meritorious before God.

There be many in this age who using over much the liberty of their own judgments, disallow of this kind of life: yet by what reasons, or upon what grounds they are moved so to do, belongeth not to the subject.
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which Iouinius the ancient heretike (& these also of his coate even in these tymes) hath alledged, I cannot imagine. Neither do I think they have any other, unless perhaps they consider the difficulties which this manner of life is subject unto, & are terrifyed with more dangers of living chast in this, then in the state of religion. For which cause they may thinke it more se-cure to vow Chastity in the one, then in the other. But nevertheless it is to be held as a point of faith, that this State
of Chastity.

State is not only lawful, but also commendable, and of great merit before Almighty God; and the same practised not only of men, and women, but also of youth itself.

This is evident from the holy Scriptures, where our Lord himself (Matt. 19) doth openly commend this Institution. For first when the Apostles hearing the speeches of our Blessed Saviour concerning Marriage, answered, 'Sic sit etc. If such be the condition of man, linked ynto a wise
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wife (to wit, that it is lawfull to haue but one, neither to be so separated from that one, that whiles she liues he may take another) it is better not to marry, & incurre such a servitude. To whom our Lord replyed, appro
ing that which they had layd: Non omnes captivitatem &c. all approched not this speach but only such to whom e it is giuen: for there be those who haue made themselves Eunuches for the kingdom of heauen &c. He who can understand this, let him understand it. Heere
of Chastity.

Here our Lord spake of single life in general, commending the same also in those who live in the world; first, when approving the answer of his aforesaid Apostles (who then thought not of living in Monasteries, or being Religious) he said: Non omnescaptant &c. All apprehend not this word; as though he should have said, you rightly infer, that it is not convenient to marry, but few there be who understand a thing of so great, & high a Mystery.

Second-
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Secondly, when distinguishing three sorts of Eunuches, he sheweth, that those do greatly please him, who have made themselves Eunuches, that is to say, who have exempted themselves from Marriage, for the Kingdom of Heauen: To wit, that being thereby made more free, from the burthen of such a clogge, they may runne the faster vnto it, and enjoy it more safely and abundantly.

Thirdly when he saith, He that can understand this mystery, let him understand it
of Chastity. 13 it: as if he should have said, I contraine no man, but exhort al, for it is a great benefit to abstaine from mariage for the kingdome of God. Therefore he who hath so great a courage, that he hopeth he shalbe able to apprehend & imbrace so great a good, let him not neglect it.

Wherefore since our Lord did not only commend this state in generall, but also in particular according to which the apostles vnderstond him, & which might have beene practized at that tyme; it followeth manifestly
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It is, that the same is commendable, and most acceptable unto God, being practised also by those that live in the world.

Neither can it be said, that our Lord spake not of the vow of Chastity, but only of the simple purpose and use thereof: for to be made an Eunuch, is not only to abstaine from Marriage, but also to bereave oneself of all ability thereof, and of all other carnall pleasure; which is done in effect also, by the vow of Chastity. For even as the corporall
corporall making one an Eunuch, cuts off all sufficiency or carnall act, or delight: So likewise the spiritual making one an Eunuch, which is effected by the vow of chastity, dispensable al morall faculty to farre, that we may not vse any such delight lawfully, making it morally impossible (as it is incompatible with justice) to do it. For what we cannot lawfully do, may be absolutely said, that we cannot do, and is said to be (justly) impossible.

From whence it is, that holy
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holy Fathers usually out of this place of Scripture produce the vow of Chastity, because a spiritual making one an Eunuch, cannot be otherwise effectuated, then by vow. See S. Augustine in his booke of holy Virginity, cap. 30. S. Hierom in his book against Iosimian, and upon this place of S. Matthew, cap. 19. The same is dearly proved out of the Apostle 1. Corinth. 7. where he greatly prayseth singleness of life, professed in divers manners of estate, and observed also in the world, and in privat housles
of Chastity. 17 bowles, for as then Monasticyes were not yet begun. Dioseimuptis &c. I speak both to the unmarried, &c to Wid- dowes, that it is good for the to remain in that estate, as I have also done. And an-gaine: I should have abbe as I my selfe, that is, I desire that all should be continer, as it will appeare out of that which follows. De Virginibus &c. As for those that are virgins, I have no expresse commissi-on to them from our Lord, but I give them Counsell (to wit, that they remain in their Virginity) as having obtayned
obtayned mercy of Almighty God, to be faithfull, &c. And againe, Sinuperit virgo &c: If a virgin marry, she winneth not, but such notwithstanding she haue the tribulation of the flesh, that is to say, many troubles cares, and afflictions &c. Again: Ignav qui &c. Therefore he which giueth a virgin in marriage, doth well, but he which doth it not, doth better. Also, Beatio erit &c. She shall be more happy if she remaine so still (to wit, unmarried) according vnto my aduice, for I think that
of Chastity. 19
that even I my felic, have the spirit of God. In all these places the Apostle comends the love of Chastity, and Virginity, &c. in the world and in private houses, as it was observed at that time.

For in Ancient times, when the faithful were most devout, many followed the advice of our Saviour, in such manner, as they had then opportunity to do it, as is manifest out of the Acts of the Apostles; where many having sold their goods & beswore the money in common, embraced poverty.
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poverty. It is very probable therefore, that there were a greater number of those who embraced Chastity, than others, both because that virtue was more noble and profitable, and also because there might be many poor folks which had not goods and possessions to sell, or if they had, yet perhaps could not sell them; all which notwithstanding might profess Chastity.

Neither is it to be doubted, but that many obliged themselves by vow thereunto, since they embraced it out
of Chastity. 21 out of a desire of perfection and zeal to please Almighty God. And it is more perfect a great deal to keep it with an entire resolution, than only with an uncertain and mutable purpose.

Finally also, because they embraced it out of the motive of our Saviour's own advice and commendation thereof; and that which our Saviour comended was the voluntary making of themselves Eunuches, which is effected by vow, as hath bin said before. The same is collected also out of the Apostle
22 The Treasur
postle I. Tim. 5. Adolescentiores
viduas &c. Take none of the
younger sort of widows,
&c. which is meant that
they should not be admitted
into the function or minis-
tery of deacons, or into the
number of the Alumnae or Pu-
pils of the Church. Cùmenem
&c. for that, saith S. Paul, af-
ter they have lived licentiously
in Christ, at last also
they will not sticke to mar-
ry, frustrating their former
Faith: that is, they will
break the vow of Chastity
which they had made be-
fore; for the word Faith, is
taken
of Chastity. 23
taken in this place for Promise, or obligation due by promise: as for example, to give one's faith, is to give one's promise; to keep faith, is to keep promise; to frustrate faith given before, is to break promise, and a promise made to God, is a vow.

From hence it is manifest, that it was a custom in the primitive Church, for Widdowes also to vow Chastity, so that without a mortal sin, & being guilty of damnation, they could not marry again: besides that
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that every act of Concupiscence, yea and the very marriage itself was injury against Christ; for so much is signified in these words, After they have lived licentiously in Christ, that is to say, after they have lived lasciously and luxuriously, wronging our Saviour Christ, to whom they had bound themselves by vow, and were become enslaved to him, at length also they will not sticke to marry. After this manner the Council of Carthage the 104. Canon, and S. Chrysostome upon this
of Chastity. 25

This place is to be noted & pondered of all such as have made vow to Almighty God of perpetual Chastity, for that without being guilty of eternal damnation, they can neither marry (especially with an intention to consummate) nor otherwise enjoy carnal delight, which also is the opinion of all the Fathers, who interprete this place to be of promise made unto God.
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God. The vow of Chastity.

Finally, wherefoever holy Scripture commendeth Virginity, it speaketh in general; neither is it to be restrained unto those alone, who live in Monasteries. And all rewards and privileges of Virginity there rehearsed, belong unto all holy Virgins, as in the 3. chap. of the Booke of Wisdom: Felix est sterilitas &c. happy is he that is barren and undefiled, which never knew any impure bed, the shall have fruit in the behou-
houlding of soules that are
blessed &c. Apoc. 14. It is
granted only vnto Virgins
(sequi Agnum quocumq; iterit) to
follow the Lambe where-
soever he goeth, and to sing
that new Hymne in Isay 56.
To Eunuches which keep
Gods divine Commande-
ments, is promised an e-
verlasting name, and a high
place, and a degree in the
City of Almighty God.

Some will object that,
that place of the Apostle 1.
Tim. 5. saying: Volo tunicies
ubere &c. I would have the
younger sort to marry, to
bring forth Children and keep house &c. makes clear against that which we have layd. To this I answere, that it is not to be vnder-

flood of all Widdowes that are young, but only of those which cannot live contin-

ent, and are not otherwise obliged by any vow: for it is better that such should marre, then live inconti-

nent, and give scandall to the vnfaithfull, as the A-

postle infinuateth in the same place.

Also the holy Father St. Chrysostome in his 15. Homily

upon
of Chastity. 29

upon the 1. to Timothy, affirmeth, that the Apostle speaketh there of such widows, who being freed from the yoke and government of their husbands, live dissolutely, become idle, prattlers, wanton, curious, running up and down to their neighbours houses, &c. the like. And it is manifest out of the text itself, that the Apostle speaketh of such, when he sayeth: Volo &c. I would have the younger sort to marry. S. Ambrose also in his booke of Widdowes explicateth S. Paul. Pro remedio satisf. nuptias C 3 &c.
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30  

He persuaded Marriage as a remedy, but not prescribed it as a choice. S. Hierome in his 8. Epistle to Salains, asking: Cur nuptias Paulus indulserit &c. Why did S. Paul favour Marriage? Presently he added: iam quedam &c. Some have already declined after Sathâ: whereby we may understand, saith S. Hierome, that these speeches rather signify a helping hand to be lent to those that are fallen, than the reward of a crown to those which stand firm. See then (saith he) what these
these second Marriages be, which are yet to be preferred before the condition of a Brothell-house: for some have declined after Satan; therefore a young Widow which cannot, or will not containe her selfe, let her rather take a husband then the diuel. So S. Eirem. Out of which it appears that it is not convenient for all young Widowes to marry, but onely such who are subject to the vices a-bowe named, to wit, in whom there is manifest danger of Incontinency, or which
The Treasure
which cannot live chaste,
or will not use means to
do it.

CHAP. II.

The same is proved by examples:
out of holy Scripture, and the
custom of the Church, most
frequently practised from the
first beginning of religion, even
into these days.

First of all, doth here
present her, selfe our
blessed Lady, as guide and
Author of this Institution,
who living in the world at
her owne command, and
free from being subdued to
any
any other, referring also her proper goods, vowed unto God perpetuall virginity, & this either before, or immediately after her Marriage.

And truly, if before her marriage (as it is most likely she did, and S. Augustin in his Book of holy virginity cap. 4. doth thinke most probable) then she contracted not marriage afterwards of her owne accord, but rather moved thereunto by divine Revelation, by which also she was assured that there should be no danger to
The Treasure
to loose her virginity, and
that her husband also should
binde himselfe by the like
vow of Chastity; wherefore
the neuer consented neither
expressly, nor in effect to any
matrimonial Act. For al-
beit that in the contract of
Marriage, there is power
given to the husband over
his wifes body, yet by this
revelation she was assured
that it should in her neuer
actually take effect. And as
the for her part had chosen
to prevent it, so likewise
her husband should preface-
ly do the like.

But
of Chastity. 35

But if she made her vow after Marriage, it is to be said that she contracted Marriage, not with an absolute consent to consumat the same, but in such manner as she referred her selfe wholly to the providence of Almighty God, relying altogether upon his divine will and pleasure. Moreover it is most manifestly probable that our Blessed Lady had vowed Chastity, out of these words of S. Luke: Omnado sed istu et c. How that this came to passe, since I know not man that is
36 The Treasure
is to say, how shall I con-
ceive a Sonne, that cannot
know Man, because I am
bound by my vow of Virgi-
nity? for so the holy Fathers
Athanasmus, serm. de sanctissima
Deipara, Gregory Nissin in his
Oration on the birth of our
Saviour, S. Augustine in his
book of holy Virginity cap.
4. S. Bernard in his fourth
sermon super missus est &c. do
teach; and reason it ethic.
doth likewise manifestly
convinced. For otherwise
her objection to the Angel
had beene to no purpose,
since it might have beene
answer,
of Charity. 

answered unto her, Now thou shalt know man, and concave. Therefore her objection, I know not man, is the same, that I cannot know man: even as he who hath vowed to abstaine from flesh or wine, being invited layeth: I eat not flesh, I drink not wine, I frequents not banquets etc.

An innumerable multitude of Virgins presently followed the example of our B. Lady, in so much that one howse, to wit of Philip the dead, had 4 daughters remaining virgins, as
38 The Treasure
it is manifest out of the Acts of the Apostles Chap. 21.
who also were indued with the spirit of Prophecy, as it is there said: which as S. Hierome witnesseth in his Epistle to Demetriades, was granted them as a reward of their Virginity.

S. Philip the Apostle before his Apostleship, brought up three daughters also, whereof two remaind virgins till they were very old as Polycrates in S. Hierome reporteth De Scrip. Ecclesiast. in Polycrate.

S. Petronilla daughter S. Peter vowed
vowed virginity, and for fear of losing it, obtained sudden death from Almighty God.

S. Tecla at the persuasion of S. Paul, imbraced the same, as S. Ambrose witnesseth in his second booke of Virgins.

S. Iphigenia daughter to the King of Ethiopia, by the counsell of S. Matthew, as Abdias writeth in her life.

Marsia Dominica daughter to Clemens the Confess, & S. Peter's host at Rome, at the persuasion of S. Clemen, as S. Bede witnesseth in his History.
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Martyrologie the 7. of May, or as it is set downe in his life, at the persuasion of Nereus and Achilleus.

S. Valeria at the persuasion of S. Martialis, as appeareth out of his Epistle ad Tholosanœ, Chap. 8.

S. Prudentiana & her sister Praxedes, by the Counsell of the Apostiles, or Aposto-
icall men.

Finally S. Anatolia, Apollonia, Ballina, Barbara, Pelagia, Catherina, Cecilia, Agatha, Agnes, Lucia, Basilla, Christina, Dorothea, Emerentiana, Prisca, Euphemia, Saturnina, Susanna, Vicy-
of Chastity. 41
Victoria, Theodora, and innu-
merable others contynued
virgins, in the world, euem
to their death, and honou-
red their virginity with the
crowne of Martyrdome.

Moreover it is manifest
out of S. Cyprian, S. Ambrose &
S. Hierome with other holy
Fathers, that there were in
those ages infinite who co-
secrated their virginity to
Almighty God, although
they entred not into Mo-
nasteries, but dwelt either
in their Parentshiewses, or
in their owne, retayning
the vse of their proper
D3 goods
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goods, or else lived many
together in common.

The same appeareth also
out of the testimony of Faustus
Manicheus in S. Augustine,
in his 30. Boke against Faustus
the 4. Chap., where Faustus
objecteth Ne videatis
hinc &c. Neither do you see
here, both your virgins to
be noted of being deceived
by the doctrine of the Dis-
uell, and yourselves to be-
come his Prelats, who con-
tentiously always incite
them to this profession, by
your persuasions, that there
is almost now in your
Chur-
Churches a greater number of Virgins, then of married women.

By which speech two things are to be noted, that Bishops & Prelates, every where through the whole world, did earnestly incite those that were under their charge to the profession of Virginity, and that the number of those who did publicly profess Virginity, was as great as those that were married. See S. Ambrose in his 30 book of Virgins, where he sheweth the same most evidently.

Amongst
Among these also many were very eminent and wealthy, as the daughters of Senators, and Princes, and many of them had waiting women to follow them when they went abroad, as it appeareth out of S. Hierome in his 8. Epistle to Demetriades, where he also warneth such Mistresses, that, as they themselves go modestly in their apparel, so they should cause their women of attendance also to avoid vanity in their attires, & see that their habits were modest and grave.

Be-
of Chastity. 45

Besides many Fathers have written of the attire, and discipline of Virgins, as Tertullian, S. Cyprian, S. Ambrose, S. Hierome, in divers places of their workes. All which they directed specially unto such, as living out of Monasteries at their owne government; embraced virginity. And the said holy Fathers do warne the that they should not be seen in publique without veils, and civilly accompanied; that they should not use secular ornaments; that they should abstaine from pain-

ring
The Treasures
ning, and vanity in their
cloathes; that they
auoyde unprofitable mee-
tings, marryages and ban-
quets; that they shoule
give
their almes with a pure in-
tention to the reliefe of or-
phans, and such as were in
distresse. All which things
it is manifest do belong to
such as are at their owne
disposing, and retaine their
proper substance.

Neither have we on-
lv examples of Charity in
single or unmarried folkes,
but also even in those the-
selues which are married,
which
which to auoyd tediousnes I omit. See Marulus in his 4. booke the 7. and 8. chap. Fulgosus in the 4. chap. Ignat. in his 6. Booke. Out of which it ap-
peares euidently, that this instirution of imbracing & pro-
scing Chastity, in the world, hath beene most frequent and usuall, euer
since the beginning of the Church, and therefore ve-
ry commendable and meri-
torous.

C H A P.
The same is witnessed by the testimonies of holy Fathers.

M. ERVAIL LOVS are the commendations which holy Fathers give to this state of life, which are no less referred to such as obserue it in the world, then to those which profess it in Monasteries. S. Ignatius in his epistle to the Colossians calleth Virgins (so vowed unto God) the Priests of Christ, because they offer their bodies to God as a sacrifice, "Eas quae in virginitate degunt."
of Chastity.

Adeunt &c. Account, saith he, those who live in the state of Virginity, as Priests of Christ.

S. Athanasius in his little worke of virginity, about the end, sayth: Magna virtus continentiae &c. Continency is a great vertue, purity is a thing worthy to be boasted of, great arc the prayes of Virgins. O Virginity, treasure inconsumable, garland never to be withered, temple of Almighty God, house of the holy Ghost, Margarite most precious, succedum of death & hell, 

life
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life of Angels, crowne of Saints &c. S. Cyprian in his book of the habit and discipline of Virgins: Nunc nobuad Virgines sermo est &c. Now speake we of Virgins, sayth he, of whom by how much their glory is the more eminent, by so much their care is the greater. This is the flower of ecclesiastical bud, the ornament and grace of spiritual grace itselfe, the hopeful towardnes of praise and honour, a worke entire and uncorrupted, the image of God correspondent to the sanctimony of our Lord
of Chastity. 52
Lord, the more beautiful part of Christ his flock &c.
And afterwards: spimum
pollicitatis et c. If thou ex-
pect the reward of promise,
thou wilt count thy labour
little: Immortality shall be
given to him, that perse-
uereth; perpetual life is
proposed a reward; our
Lord promiseth a king-
dom: preferue ye Virgins,
prefere that which you
have begun to be, preferue
that which ye shall be, for
great is the reward provi-
ded for you &c.
That which wee must
E 2    be
The Treasure
be hereafter, you have begun to be already; yee pos-
sisse in present the glory of
the Resurrection in the age
to come; yee pass through
the tymes without taking
infectiō from them as long
as yee persever in Chastity
and Virginity; yee are e-
quall even to the Angells of
God, solide and untoucht;
Virginity only endures, on-
ely lasteth for euer.

The first Precept (S. Cy-
prīs goeth still on) of Almi-
ghty God, commanded to
increase and generate; the
second persuaded Conty-
nency
of Chastity. Whilst the world was rude & unpeopled, by our fertility, by generation we were multiplied, & grew to the increase of mankind: but now when the world is peopled and filled, those who are capable of Chastity are made Eunuches spiritually, after the manner of things that are made vselesse to the Sex, for the kingdom of God. Hitherto S. Cyprian.

S. Basil in his booke of true Virginity faith: Virginity is certainly a great and excellent thing, which ma-
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keth a man incorruptible like unto God himselfe; but it passeth not from our bodies into our souls; yet being the propriety of an incorporeal nature, keeps also our bodies incorrupt with a precious integrity &c. Virgins have before hand indewed themselves with that which by divine virtue, must be perfected in vs at the Resurrection; for living here like unto Angels, they neither marry, nor are married, but are both in virtue of minde, & integrity of body, equal unto
of Chastity. The same Father expounding also the words of the Prophet Esay 56. of Eunuches, he writeth in this manner. Pro humana nomine &c. Instead of a humane name, sayth our Lord, I will give them a name of Angells which are immortall, that, they may have heauen and the fairest part thereof to remaine in, and that dwelling in the most beautiful scarce of heauen, that is to say, in my house, within the inclosures thereof, they may receive not only the nature of the Angels,
56 The Treasure
Angells, and the honour of perpetuall succession, being sufficient of themselves to continue an eternall succession of their kind, in themselves, for life everlastinge; but also that they may have a principall place amongst Angells, and a name indeleble, which for the great splendour in their beauty shall never decay &c.

S. Gregory Nazianzen in his Verses in the prayse of Virginity singeth thus: Salve Virginitas &c.

Haile Chastity the gift of only Heaven.

Parent
of Chasity. 57
Parents of a pure life, by whom are given
Our greatest goods, part even of Christ, and one
That is celestial spirits companion:
Nor ever knew of unchast bed the touch,
For God himselfe and his faire Quire are such.
S. John Chryso tome in his booke of Virginity the cap.
2. saith: Virginity so much excels marriage, by how much heav'n doth earth,
And Angells mortal men. And againe in the 12. chap.
Humanity since it is inferiour
The Treasure

Turn to those happy spirits
the Angells, as farre as it is
able, triueth to attaine vn-
to their perfection. And
how? Angells marry not,
nor take to them wives, no
more doth a Virgin. Angels
wayting alwayes about the
throne of Almighty God,
do serue him: to doth a
Virgin. Wherefore S. Paul
calls them away from all
cares, that they may con-
tinually imploie themselues
in the servise of God, with-
out hauing wherein hauill
to be distracted. Againe,
chap. 37. Dare any one after
all
all this compare marriage with virginity, or but once bring the one in presence of the other? S. Paul sufficeth not this, who interposeth a great distance betwixt these two, where he saith: the one thinketh on matters belonging unto God, the other on matters belonging to the world.

S. Ambrose in his first booke of virgins faith Nec immersis &c. deserueth hath virginity derived from heauen the manner of her life, since it is in heauen that her Spoule hath his dwelling place. This
The Treasure

This clowde passing thorough the Ayre, Skyes, & Quires of Angells themselves, hath found out the word of God, euen in the bosome of God the Father, and hath filled its bowells therwith. For who is it, that having found so great a good, will leave it? For thy Name is an oynment powdered out, wherefore young virgins, and maides have loved thee, and taken thee vnto them. Finally, that is not my saying, Because those which neither are nor will be married, shall be
of Chastity. 61
be as the Angells of God in
heauen.

Let none therefore mer-
uaille(faith S. Ambrose fur-
ther) that they are copared
to the Angells of God who
are lincked and united in
the God of Angells &c. Let
us compare therefore the co-
tents of married women,
with the lowest and least
happines of Virgins.

Admit (faith he further)
that some great woman
should boast of her fertility
& the fruit which she hath
brought forth: by how
many the more Children
F the
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the hath beene delineated of, by so much the greater have beene the panges & paynes which she endured. Let her reckon the iev which she hath of her children, and withall the may: count like wise the troubles which they have caused her. She marryeth, and weepeth: & what wise vowes are these, which so sodenly must be repented &c.

Again. Yow have heard all yee that are mothers, in what vertues, in what order, and discipline yee ought to bring vp your chil-
Chastity. 63
childre, that you may have
some of your owne, by
whose merits your owne
sins & offences may be for-
given. A Virgin is one to
whom God hath given her
to be so, and therefore she is
his guilt, she is the reward
of her Parents &c. A virgin
is the oblation of her Mo-
ther, by whose dayly sacri-
fice Gods divine power is
appeased.

S. Hierome in his first
book against Iustinian cap. 1.
Ideoplasamas &c. Therefore
our Saviour Christ loueth
Virgins the more, because
of their owne accord they
give him that, which was
not exacted of them: and
it is a token of greater grace
to offer that which is not
due, then to give that
which they are compelled
unto.

And afterward: Gran-
disfastest &c. It is a worke
of great fayth, and much
verteue, when the Temple
of God is most pure to offer
it entirely as a burnt-sacrifi-
cice vnto our Lord, and ac-
cording to the Apostle to
be holy, afwell in body as
in spirit.

S. Au.
S. Augustine in his book of holy Virginity cap. 13. sayth: Virginall integrity is an Angelicall portion and a perpetuall medita- tion of incorruptibility in a corruptible body. Let all fertility of body give place vnto this, and all continency of married persons yeld vnto it, for the former is not in our owne power, the latter liueth not in eternity. The liberty of our will extendeth not vnto bodily fruitfullnesse. Matrimoniall Chastity is not found in Heauen.

Of Chastity.
They certainly shall have some reward above all others in that general immortality, who have already grown in their flesh somewhat that is not fleshly. Wherefore they are much overstruck, who think the good & commodity of this continency not to be necessary, for the kingdom of heaven, but only for the present world wherein we live.

In which last worlds he convinceth Louiniæ & the heretike of our times, who with him teach, that Vir-


ginity
of Chastity. 67

Virginity is only convenient to avoid worldly troubles.

S. Fulgentius in his Epistle to Proba cap. 9. Dicimus a sancta nuptiis &c. We affirm (whereas those marry who cannot live continent) that holy Virginity as farre excelleth holy Matrimony, as that which is better excelleth that which is good, that with is high excelleth that which is low, that which is heavenly excelleth earthly, that which is holy, more holy, mortal marriage, marriage immortal, the flesh the spirit.
The Treasure

Fir, weakenes strength, the

fruit of a tráictory issue the

fruit of a braunch euerla-

fing, tribulation security,

vnsetlednes of mind tran-
quilliety, a good which is

momentary and ful of trou-
bles excelleth that which is

better, and accompanied

with joy euerlasting.

These & many other

things, holy Fathers have

written in the cōmendațiō

of virginity, by which the

e excellency & wörtly thereof

may be better known and

estemed, no one vertue or
caste of life being commo-
ded
of Chastity, with so great affection, and consent of holy Fathers, as this.

Hereupon, especially in former ages, an infinite multitude have embraced it, in so much that S. Ambrose in his 3. booke of Virgins affirmeth, That in the Eastern and Africá Churches, there were more virgins consecrated to Almighty God, then wee haue men borne in our parts here. And yet notwithstanding mankind is not therby diminished, but increased. If anyone (quoth he) imagineth
neth, that the number of mankind is diminished by the multitude of virgins, let him consider, that where there are few virgins there are also the fewer persons, and where the number of them is more frequent who are lovers and imbracers of Virginity, there also the number of men is more great. Consider how many Alexandria, & at the Eastern parts, with the Churches also of Africa, was wont every yeare to consecrate: fewer men are here begotten than there virgins consecra-
of Chastity.  

Secreted: the reason whereof is, that God will not be overcome with liberality: but if the Parents offer him a Child or two, he renews them eight or ten, granting fruitfulness, and fortunate Child-bearing to such as are mothers, and filling their houses with his blessing. Therefore even as faithful paying of Tithes, & liberality towards the poor, bringeth not poverty, since God by his providence prospereth and increaseth our substance, & maketh our fields the more fruitful.
72 The Treasure fruifull, as S. Hierome teacheth Serm. 219. de tempore; so the loue and affection to virginity hindreth not the world, nor wafleth the number of secular Persons, but obtayneth it a longer benediction.

C H A P. III.
The same is proved also, by reason.

The error of Jounian was, that Virginity did not excel Marriage, which he meant by virginity, taken absolutely and generally, whether it were pro-
of Chastity.

professed by persons living in the world or in Religion. He therefore who confesseth that virginity professed in the state of Religion, is to be preferred before Marriage, but not that which is imbraced in the world, is at least half a Louvinianist, because he is half of his opinion; nay rather he seems to be altogether of the same mind, and really a Louvinianist, because he denieth, that Virginity is of its own nature better than Marriage, wherein the Whole Errour of Louvinian
about this matter consist"ed. For if of it owne proper na-
ture it were better, it would followe, that the same be-
ing also professed in the world, would be better. See S. Augustine Cap. 28 ad
Quod-vult-Deum, and S. Jerome in his 10. booke against the
same Iovinian & c.

If it were not laudable and meritorious to vow
Virginity, living in the world, either it should be
for the great difficulty and morall impossibility of kee-
ping their vow in that estate, or els because Chasti-
ty
of Chastity.

75

ty is not better then marria-
g; for no other reason can be imagined. Nor the for-
mer, for it is an heresy of
the heresies of these our
dates, who for the difficulty
therof, affirme, that such a
vow is not to be made, un-
lesse the person know that
he is peculiarly inspired
with the gift of continen-
cy. Not the latter, for it is
the error of Iouinian afore-
said. Concerning the gift of
Chastity, it is to be held as
a point of faith, that this
gift will not be wanting
to any who will reloue to

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live chaste, if he do as much as lyeth in him to obteine the fame of Almighty God.

If there be so great difficulty to live chaste in the world, in so much that it is not meritorious for a man to bind himself thereto by vow; then such a vow is of its own nature vayne, & of no effect to him that makes it, and so he may freely breake that which is of such difficulty, as seems morally impossible. But this kind of reasoning may by no means be admitted; to wit, that such a vow is of
of Chastity. 77
of it owne nature vaine &
of no effect, and that it may
be broken without a most
grievous sin. See the above
mentiond testimony of the
Apostle r. Tim. 5.

It is very commendable & meritorious for yong
men also remayning in the
world to vow chastity, yea
the Church bindeth al such
as have taken holy Orders
therunto. Therefore if men
do it, & that it be commen-
dable in them to do so; why
should it not be the like for
women, such as are yonge,
both Maydes, & Widdows
especi-
The Treasure
especially, since men live in far greater danger by means of their greater freedome of concercation, and their lesse bashfullnes, together with more frequent occasions of temptation. From whence we see, it proceeds, that more men which vow Chastity in the world do offend against their vow then women: yet there are very few of that sexe who vowing Chastity in the world do violate their vow: in so much that oftestimes in a great city, for the space of many yeares, you shall not
not hear of any lunch: which is a signe, that it is a matter more easy for women to do then for men; & yet we see that men do laudably take upon them such vows: neither can they by any means be excused fro the, being once undertaken.

If it be meritorious to keep Virginity in Religion, why is it not also in the World? For the circumstance of the place alters not the merit of the work, but the excellency itself thereof, and a devout will unto it: and this pious inclination may
So may be had as well out of the state of Religion, when a Virgin purposeth with her selfe to abstaine from Marriage, and to consecrate her virginity to Almighty God, that she may serve him the more perfectly, that she may follow the counsell of our Saviour Christ, that she may imitate our Lord, and his most blessed Mother, that she may apply all her thoughts and affections to heavenly things, and to the health of her soule; for the excellency of the worke is equall on both sides. Therefore
of Chastity. For there is no reason, why the profession of Chastity in the World, should not be meritorious, as well as in Religion.

It is not only commendable in Monasteryes, but also in the world, to do other good works, as to pray, to fast, to give corporal and spiritual alms, to chastise our body, and to bind our selves by vow thereunto. Then if other good works loote not their worth & esteem, nor their merit before God by being done in the world; why should
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should Virginity, and singleness of life? Yea, as it is the more praiseworthy to be temperate, and to abstain from eating at a banquet, and to be able to bridle our appetite, even in the very midst of provocations; so likewise may it be a deed of greater merit to live chastely in the world, where occasions of falling are more frequent: As for example, when there are lawfull reasons why such occasions might not be conveniently shunned, which otherwise they would have willingly avoided. The
of Chastity.

The state of being Religious, and to be shut up in Monasteries, is not agreeable with the complexion of every one: yea a great many, either are not apt for this state, by reason of the weaknesses of their body, or for other causes, or oftentimes their minds are not easily wonne to it, and that most commonly for divers sufficient reasons, which it is not necessary to recalle: and who now should contain such to marry, or to enter into Monasteries? Why should it not be lawfull?
full for them to kepe their virginity in the world, 
& to vow themselfes vnto it? Is it either because they will not, nor cannot ascend to 
the highest degree, that they must be thence constrained to stay in the lowest, 
& may not keep a meane be-
twixt both? No man will thinke so, except he be in-
duced with the spirit of in-
ian. The counsells and ad-
vice of our Saviour Christ 
are not so necessarely uni-
ted one to the other, but 
that one may be followed 
without another, and by
of Chastity. 85 themselves, in divers degrees. Wherefore as those
who desire to observe the state of Poverty, are not bound unto Chastity; so
also those which embrace Chastity, must not therfore of necessity keep Poverty,
or Obedience, or shut themselves vp in Monasteries.

CHAP. V.
The same is proved out of the commodities which this state of
life, being professed, both in the world and in Religion,
doth bring with it.

The cause why this state of life is so com-
H mended
The Treasure
mended by holy Fathers;
as well in the one as the
other, are the manifold
comodities which it bring-
geth therewith. For in both,
it is an imitation of An-
gelical life; in both it is the
making of our body as it
were a burnt-offering to
Almighty God; in both it
is a spiritual Marriage, in
which Christ is the Spoule;
in both it freeth from the
irksome slavery of Marria-
age, and from the troubles
which belonge vnto it;
in both it deliuereth the
mind from infinite cares
&
of Chastity. & troubles; finally in both it maketh it free, and at liberty to apply it belike unto God, and to dwell as it were mentally and spiritually with the Blessed, in community of heavenly things.

First it is an imitation of Angelicall life, as holy Fathers everywhere do deliver, out of the opinion of our Lord Matt. 22. Because as Angells marry not, nor are troubled with carnall concupiscence, but are ever attent to divine matters, & entertaine themselves alwayes in them; so in like
manner Virgins are sayd to anticipate the glory of the Resurrection, because marriage after the Resurrection shall cease.

Virginity is a burnt-offering: for as in a burnt-offering the thing sacrificed is killed, and afterward all of it consumed in the honour of God, that no part thereof remains for humaine use: so likewise a Virgin must first kill all carnall affection in herself, & afterward offer vp her body, mortified after this sort by the fire of Charity, to Almighty
of Chastity. 89
mighty God, and rescure
no part thereof to any hu-
maine or carnall vse.

She is a spiritual marriage, because by vow she is
bound into God as to her
husband: for as the band of
carnall marriage is not to
be loosed; neither also is
that of spiritual; yea that
of spiritual Marriage, is
much more indissoluble;
for it cannot be loosed by
death it selfe, but continu-
eth in all eternity. Againe,
as carnall marriage is effec-
ted for the mutual enjoy-
ing and comfort of both
persons,
persons, and the bringing forth of children: so this Marriage is made, that the soule may please God the better, and receive help & comfort backe againe from him, and that it may converse more familiarly, and with the greater delight with Almighty God, as with its Spouse.

And finally, to the end that having receaue seed of divine grace from him, an immortal and glorious issue may be begotten to inherit in the world to come: wherein Spiritual Marriage
of Chastity. 91
is farre more happy then carnall; for the latter is to the end, that of impure and corruptible seede, another man may be begotten, and that but to enjoy a mortall life, and thereby subiect to infinite miseries: but the other is to the end, that out of diuine seed a mortall man should beget, not another mortall man, but himselfe, to an immortall and happy life. Therefore he persuadeth himselfe first vnto this marriage, and afterward by word & example profiseth others. To this may be lik-
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wife added, that as in carnall: marriage, titles, and dignityes, and all the goods of either is communicated to both: so likewise in spirituall, the goods and dignities of the espoused, belongeth also to the Spouse.

The desire of a wife is, that she may have a husband, who is faire, noble, rich, powerfull, and courteous, and if it happen that she get such a one, she thinketh her life happy. But how much more happy, is a Virgin whose husband is the most fairest, most noble,
of Chastity. 93
ble, most rich, most powerful, most gentle, and immortal Lord of heaven and earth, of Angells also, and of men. See more of this in S. Ambrose in his first booke of Virgins.

For as much as belongs to the benefits and commodities of holy Virginity, they are generally three. The first is, that it freeth the mind from innumerable troubles and afflictions unto which the state of matrimony either by means of the wife or by means of the children is subject unto; which
which the Apoistle intimateth 1. Cor. 1. when he speaketh in this manner of those which are married: *Tribulationem carnis habeunt huiusmodi.* Such shall have the tribulation of the flesh. And first of all, is the servitude of the wife, by reason that she hath not power of her owne body, & is made subject in all things to her husband, must endure his frowardnes, his insolencies, his banquetting, drukenes, jealously, suspicion, incontinency, adultery, taunts, & blowes. Also the must folow
low him, sticke alwayes to him, obey him and serve him as his slawe; so that many slauers in the world have a more tollerable bondage, then some wiuies unhappily married; whilst he spends her wealth and subsance at dice, at play, in drinking, banquetting, prodigall giuing, improfitable bargaines, improuident contentions, and divers other wayes, which his wife is not able to remedy.

Moreover he leaveth the charge of providing for the whole house-hould to her
her, and yet alloweth not wherewithall sufficiently to do it; and bringeth her oftentimes even into that extremity, that she groweth halfe desperate. In the mean tyme being oppressed and overcome with too much impatience, she often curseth her husband, and wiseth all ill hap to befall him, and desireth nothing more then his death. Neither are these things rare and seldom, but the whole world is full of them.

Now if we should add unto all this, the troubles that
that come continually by
means of children, there
would arise even a whole
world of miseries & afflictions. And although in
the carnall Act of marriage
there seemeth to be now &
than a little pleasure: yet of
it owne nature, it is both
unclean (as a thing where-
in we differ not fro a beast)
and also full of shame and
immodesty; & in a moment
it is past, and afterward re-
warded with innumerable
discommodityes. For pre-
ently after Conception,
there followeth a kind of
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irksomenes, idle dreams, giddines, unsetlednes of the head, melancholy, convulsion of the heart, stringes, absurd longings after meates, and a general perturbation of nature.

Then follow the paines of child-bearing which are both violent to the sense, &c oftentimes endure long, and to many bring death also; and then the Child being borne, with what great care and solicitude must it be brought vp, vntill it come to be of some strength and perfection of nature.

How
of Chastity.

How many tymes a day must it be made cleane, fed, made vp, apparralled, laid to sleepe, rockt in the cradell, taken out againe to give it suck, and be held out. How many times must it be flattered and intreated with faire speaches & with a thousand pretty hypocrisies and flatterings, to make it leave crying, or to sleepe?

These are the contynuall exercises of such as be Mothers, and in such they are employed. Not onely all day long, but also most part of the night, so that they can
too The Treasure
can scarce take any rest but
with often interruption.
I omit the fitfulness, the ill favour, the weeping, crying, & brawling, which
they are constrained daily
to suffer. I omit also the
cares and troubles, which
they have when their chil-
dren begin to grow big, &
to be exposed to divers chas-
es of the world. What
great griefs they have, if it
chaunce they should mis-
carry and dye; if by evil
company they should be al-
lured to villainy and dishonesty; if they should prove
stub-
of Chastity. 10x stubborne and disobedient against their Parents; if they should spend & walt their Parents goodes at play, drinking, or at any other unlawful game; if without their Parents consent they should marry.

To these affictions the whole life of all such as are mothers, is always subject; for albeit the Parents be very devout and religious, yet it happens oftentimes that the children be wicked and lewd, and with their misdemeanours, and ill living, torment their Parents.
as we have examples in Adam and Cain, in Noah and Cham, in Abraham and Ismael, in Isaac and Esau, in Jacob and many of his sons, in David, Amnon, and Absalom, with infinite others: therefore since sacred virginity delivers from all this, it is deservedly to be numbered amongst the greatest benefits that are.

Another commodity of virginity and single life is, that it frees the mind from all cares of governing a family, of increasing the flocke and wealth of their estate.
of Charity. 103
estate, of marrying their
children, & of leaving them
ample Patrimonyes; for of
these foure things all Par-
ents are for the most part
most careful & solicitous;
yea commonly their minds
are so wholly addicted and
given to such businesses, as
they can scarce ever thinke
seriously on God, or things
belonging to the good of
their soule.

These things they keep
always in minde, in these
things they spend all their
thoughts and affections,
these things to waste and

14 were
The Treasure
were out all the ability &
powers of their minde, as
they have no strength left
to consider, or thinke upon
things that are eternall.

Greatest therefore is the
misery of this estate to be
pittyed; for the bondage of
the mynd is more hurtfull
a great deale, then that of
the body; and the losse of
good thoughts, is a greater
damage, then the losse of
money.

The third commoditie of
virginity and singel life is,
that it maketh the minde,
being freed from the cares
and
and troubles of Marriage, more fit & prepared to serve Almighty God, and procure its owne safety: and this is the greatest good of this life. For which cause it is commended specially by the Apostle the 1. Cor. 7. where he saith, Mulier inmarrē
A woman unmarried, and a Virgin thinketh on what belongeth unto God, that she may be holy, both in body and minde.

There is nothing better nor more healthfull unto our soule than to serve God, and to endeavour the ob-

sayning
The Treasure
teyning of our soules well-
fare. To this purpose were
we made, & adorned with
these noble faculties of our
soule, Understanding, Mem-
ory, and Will. Wee have
not received these to emple
them about tranitory and
sereile matters, without an-
ny fruit at al, but to address
them to eternall and celesti-
all things, for our great be-
nifit and advaintage. All
earthly things are to base &
côemptible for our minds
(which is above all visibile
things) to fixe, and exercise
it selfe there about. The
shortnes
of Chastity. 107
Shortnes it selde of our life, togetheuer with the uncer-
tainty & necessity of dying, might jutly recall vs from
the care of temporall mat-
ters, & addresse our thoughtes to the soliciutude of things
eternall. Whereupon the
Apostle 1. Cor. 7. sayth : Te-
piubreue est &c. Time is short;
it remaines, that such as
have wives, be as those who
have them not; and those
who mourne, like those
who mourne not; & those
who reioyce, like those
who reioyce not; and those
who buy, like those who
possesse
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possesse not; and those who
vse this world, like those
who vse it not; for the fa-
shion of this world passeth
away &c.

By which words he
teacheth us, that we should
be no more affected and ad-
dicted to transitory things,
then as if they did not be-
long unto us. We ought to
have care of nothing so
much, as to avoid eternal
punishment, and attain
to everlasting joys: for in
comparison of these, all the
good or ill of this world,
ought to be of no accoun:
So
So that if there were nothing but madness practised in the world, this would be the greatest, to neglect the highest and everlasting things, & to follow that which is base and transitory, with so great hazard of eternal damnation.

Therefore as that manner of life is miserable, and to be avoided by all wise men, which intangleth the mind with care of base & earthly things, howsoever glorious and honourable they seem: So on the contrary, is that state happy &
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most delysiously to be imbrac
ced, which freeth the mind
from all these cares & trou
bles, and affordeth it com
modity to meditate on hea
venly things, and to apply
it selfe to the obteyning of
its owne welfare. And such
is single life, as it hath byn
showed.

Neither in women on
ly, but also in men single
life hath all these effectes:
for most of those things
which we haue sayd before
of women, haue place also
in men: yet men in Marri
age are most commonly ex
posed
of Chastity. Opposed to more discommodities and inconveniences than women, because the whole care of maintaining the household, and of the greatest business lyeth upon him; and infinite disdaines of the wife, offences, jealosies, suspicions, complaints, and frowardnes are to be endured, as S. Hierome protesteth it, very elegantly out of Theophrastus the Philosopher in his first booke against Toinianus, whose words it seemeth be egood to set downe.

Fortun, inquit, Aureolus &c.

K. 2 Heere
The Treasure

Here is brought (quoth he), a little goulden booke of Theophrastus written concerning marriage, in which he asketh this question, Whether a wise man should marry a wife or no? And when he hath defined, that if she were fair, wel broght vp, of good Parents, and if she were healthfull & rich, with these conditions a wise man might somtimes marry; he presently inferreth: But all these seldom match togethe in marriage, therfore it is not behooffull for a wise man to marry
of Chastity. 113
And then he lets down divers reasons which the same Philosopher alledgeth for his opinion.

First (quoth he) it hinders the study of Philosophy; for no man can serve his bookes and his wife at once. There are also many things which are necessary for the use of women, as gay apparell, gold, jewels, expenses, waiting women, variety of household stuffe, guilded horse-litters, and coaches. Moreover you shall have all the night long no-thing but pratling, & com-

K 3 plaintes
plaintes that this Dame weares better clothvs when she goes abroad then she: This Lady, or Gentlewo-
man is much honoured and respected of all whereloe-
er she comes; whilst I, poore loule, am despised &
contemned of every body. Why did you look so ear-
nestly on my Neighbours wife? Why did you talke
with her mayd? Are you
come fro the Market, what
haue yee bought? &c.
Her husband cannot haue
a friend or companio, but
straight she thinketh that the
the love of another is her hatred. If there were a learned Maister in everny town, men should neither forfake their wifes, nor be able to walke with so great a burden. If she be poore, it is cost to help her; if rich, a torment to endure her.

Moreover there is no choice of a wife, but what a one seeker you chance to take, if she be colerique, if a fool, if deformed, if proud, if flutterish, what fault seeker she hath, we learn that afterward. A Horse, an Alle, an Ox, a Dog, the worst
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wrait have a man can enter-taine; his apparel also, his kettles, his chayres, his cups, his earthen pots, all these a man may prove before he buy them, only his wife must not be shewed before she be had, for scarce a man should so dislike her, that he would never have her.

You must alwayes be looking on her face, and commending her beauty, for scarce least if you looke on another, she thinkes that her beauty displeaseth you. She must be called Mistress and
of Chastity.

and her Birth-day must be made a Holy day: you must swear by her health, and you must pray that she may outlive you: you must reverence her that nurst her, and her also that bare her when she was a little one, her servant, her brother-in-law, her little dandling, her pretty Page, her byred Procur, and her Eunuch forsooth, for the longer continuance and more security of lust (under all which names are prettily couched Adulterers.) And whose-locuer of all these she affecteth.
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&cetb., he must be beloved
too, cuen by those to whom
they are vngraceful!

If you commit the go-
vernment of the whole
house to her charge, you
must be her servant. If you
reserve any part of it to
your selfe, she thinks you
wil not trust her, & straight
turneth into hatred, and
scoulding, and vnles you
beware of her berymes, you
are in danger to be poyso-
ned.

Old women, Wifards,
brakers of Jewels and silke
apparel, if you admit any of
these
of Chastity. 

these into your house, you are in danger of cuckoldeing: and if you forbid them, you do her wronge to suspect her.

But to what end is it to watch her narrowly, when a wife that is unchaste can never be restrained: & if she be chaste, she ought not to be restrained; for the constraint of chastity is but an unfaithfullkeeper. She only is truly to be named chast who can be otherwise in the will. A faire wife is a bawbe, as well in other mens eyes, as in his that hath her. A
The Treasure

But will sooner desire others then they her. It is a hard matter to enjoy that alone which many men seek after; and it would be a trouble to have such a one, as no body would vouchsafe to affect. Yet it is a lesser misery to have an illfavoured wife, then to keepe a faire one true. There is nothing safely possed by one, which of every body is worth for.

One sollicits with his comlynes, another with his wit, another with his pleasantnes, another with his money; by some means or other
Of Chastity. 121
other at all the Fort will be
taken, which is on every
side so strongly besieged.

But it may be objected,
that it is necessary for a ma
to have a wife, to take
charge of the expenses of his
houlfe, or to be a comfort
to him when he languis-
eth, or to auyd solitary-
nes. To this I ansürre, that
a faithful servant obeying
the authority of his master,
and doing his business ac-
cording to his will, dispos-
eth of matters a great deale
better then a wife, who
thinketh that her Mistres-
ship
ship could in doing that which is against her husband's will, that is to say, to do that which she hath a will to, not that which she is commanded to do.

And as for attending & comforting a man when he is sick, his friends and servants, or such poor souls as he hath made beholding unto him, may better do it then she, who upbraides him, as it were, with the teares which she theedes for him, yea tells the very fault and worse therof, in hope to be his executor.

And
of Chastity.

And by this boasting of her carefulness, never leaves him, till with her perpetual trouble, she drives him into utter desperation.

But if her finger chance to ake, he must be fikke for it, and never budge from her bed side. Or if she be a good wite, and of a sweete disposition (which notwithstanding is a rare bird) he must groane with her, whilst she is in child bed, & be payned with her danger.

As for the avoyding of solitarines, a wise man can
124 The Treasure

never be alone: he hath present all those which are, or euer were good, in his thoughts, & freely placeth his mind on what he will. That which he cannot do with his body, he embraceth with his thoughts, & if there be scarcity of men to converse withal, he talketh with God; he is never less alone then when he wants all company.

Besides it is a most idle thing to take a wife, in regard to have children by her that his family may not be extinct, or that he have help
help & ayde in his old age, and also to know who shall inherit that which he leaves behind. For what is one the better when he is going out of the world, that another is called by his name, when as a sonne cannot presently be like his Father; and there are an infinite number of other men also perhaps called by the same name. Or what booteth it to nourish those at home, who we hope may be helps to us when we are old, who perhaps they either dy before vs, or become of such
a perverse disposition, as they will not succour us; or if they themselves come to maturity of years, perhaps they think their parents live too long.

And as for heirs, our friends & our neighbours whom we love, are better & more sure heirs unto us, being chosen thereunto by us freely, the those whose we are conserved so have whether we will or no: though indeed it be a for more assured inheritance to make our selves our own heirs, (by doing good
good workes whilst we live, (for otherwise we do but abuse the same) then to leave it, being gotten all by our owne industry and pains, to the unceraintyles of any others whatsoever.

These reasons and the like Theophrastus discussing, what good Christia might he not make ashamed of such vanities and troubles, whose conversation ought to be in heaven, and who dayly sayth Cupio dissoluel &c. I desire to be dissolved and be with Christ as though he who may be a coheyre with
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with Christ himself, should desire to have man to be his heire, and should wish for children, and be delighted in the succession of his posterity whom he perhapsh Antichrist shall pervert; when notwithstanding wee read that Moses, and Samuel preferred others before their own children. Neither yet did they account the children whom they sawe displease Almighty God.

Thus farre are S. Hierome's words, who afterward confirmeth the same with exam-
examples out of the old Testament. By which it is
manifestly shewed how far single life in the world is to
be preferred above Marriage, and out of how many
discommodities & cares it doth deliver a man; and
what abundance of help it affordeth to a man, to
passe over pleasantly, and quietly this temporal life,
and obtain a high degree in the everlasting. All which
things if they should be exactly weighed and con-
sidered of most men, I doubt not, but there would be
farre
The Treasure
farre fewer who would so much admire, love, and
imbrace the felicity, that Marryage oftentimes bring
gether with it.

C H A P. VI.
Of the Merits of both States of
life, to wit, of unmarried
and married.

Some one will object,
that if the paines and
troubles of mothers be great
in bearing and breeding
their children, and in sup-
porting the conditions and
injuries of their husbands;
great also are the merits of
endu-
of Chastity. 131
enduring them: which merits such as are virgin cannot have. Whence the Apostle calleth 1. Tim 2. faith:
Salvation &c. She shall be lauded, by bringing forth children &c.

I answer, that Parents may be moved with a double affection, to beget and bring up children: to wit, with a mere humane and natural affection, &c. with a spiritual or divine. A natural affection is, when any one delecteth children for the continuance of his name & family that he may have
The Treasure
have heires to whome he may leaue his goods; that he may out-lieue his owne death in his posterity; that he may be honoured in their children. All these are humaine respects and affections, and therefore of no merit, or esteeeme before God; yet of their owne nature they are not ill, but indifferent. Wherefore those who out of such affection doe contract Marriage, or begget childre, or bring them vp begotten, merit nothing before Almighty
of Chastity. 133
mighty God, and loose all
their labours and charges
which they are at, as far
forth as this; to wit, that
they shall not receive etern-
nal reward for them, but
only a temporal comfort
or commodity. For as an hu-
maine affection is not me-
ritorious before Almighty
God, no more also is the
work which followeth out
of it, although it be frequent
and laborious.

In like manner to love
and follow Honours, Rich-
nesses, Magistracy, Digni-
ties and Pleasures for the
M com-
The Treasure

commodity, splendor and
sweetnes which we per-
tceive in them, although of
it selfe it be no sinne; nei-
ther likewise is it of any de-
fert, but rather apperteyneth
to the delight of such things
as are the concupiscence of
the flesh, of the eyes, and
pride of life, and which pro-
ceede out of a corrupt natu-
re, not out of the inspiratio
of divine grace.

The same likewise is
to be sayd of the affections
of Parents, whereby they
will and procure these co-
ents & pleasures vnto their
chil-
of Chastity. 135

children. For even as while they desire and obtain these things for themselves, they deserve nothing at the hands of Almighty God; no more likewise do they when they do the like in their children's behalf: yea this affection is not only not meritorious before Almighty God, but also it is not so much as a work of any virtue.

For first of all, that it not a work proceeding out of any divine or infused virtue, it is manifest, since it may be found also in Hea-

M 2 thens
thems themselves, and the most wicked persons that live. Also that such affections proceed not out of any morall or Philosophicall vertue it is plaine, for they respect not their object, as they are honest and reasonable, as the natures of such vertues require, but as they are delightfull & commodious, or honourable.

Whence it is, that no man by such an affection becometh praiseworthy, which is the propriety of vertue. As no man is worthy of prayle, for that he loueth or getteth
of Chastity. 137

getteth riches, honors, plea,
lures, or for loving his child
because he is fair, or because
he is like him, or for singing
well, dancing well, speaking
well, or being indewed
with such like civil ornaments or qualities. All such
affections are only natural
and indifferent, and there-
fore of no desert or merit in
the sight of Almighty God
before his Tribunal Seate.

Therefore as he which
 giueth almes to the poor
 prodigally, and vayne
 tiously to make himself ho-
noured and esteemed the
more of men, according to the wordes of our Saviour, shal haue no reward before Almighty God, but recea-
Ueth all his reward in the prayses which he geteth of men in so doing: So those,
which marry for respect of pleasure or riches, those which desire to haue chil-
dren, or to bring them vp to haue contentment, who day and night onely take care, how they may leaue them a large and ample inherita-
ance, that they may promote them to honours, offices, dignities, or weal-
thy
of Chastity. 139

thy marriages, deserve no-
thing before God, but re-
ceive their reward in the
temporal contentments,
which by this means they
procure, either to them-
se, or to their children.

Therefore to speake truely, their labours and
cares are all lost; neither do they reape any fruit at ail
to be accounted of from all
this; for nothing is to be e-
steemed of any great vew,
but that which is everla-
ing.

All temporal things are of small account, passing
M 4 away
away as shadows, & therefore most unworthy to spend all the vigour & principal acts of our soul about the, which were ordained for things eternal. He saith holy Scripture everywhere calleth us from the love and desire of riches, honours, and pleasures, and calleth us that such as are poor, meek & oppressed, are only happy.

Neither are all these labours and pains of parents only unprofitable, but they are also hurtful, and the original cause of infinite evils.
of Chastity.

From hence it is, that there are such an infinite number of men in the world, who damn their own souls (which otherwise might have been saved) for their children's sake, to make them rich, or to promote them to Honours. For those that will become rich as the Apostle witnesseth, fall into temptation, and the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which send them headlong into damnation, & destruction; for covetous desire is the root of all mischief.

Marriage doth commonly force
force men headlong vnto this desirre, for al me would make their children rich &c leave them a large inheritance; so that desirably also for that cause, that state of life is not to be greatly desired, which maketh all our paines and cares, most commonly, not only unprofitable for our welfare, but also dangerous and hurtfull vnto vs. If it be not auoyded. Yet it followes not from hence, that wedlocke is euill: for neither Riches nor Honnors be euill but good, which God allo
Of Chastity. 143

sometimes belowe with vpo vs, for the reward of some good deed or other; and in tymes past haue beene promised also to those few who observed the law: but it is dangerous I say, to loue such pleasures and delights, to follow them, and to imploy all our endeavours onely in attayning of them, since they are but base & meane, and do hinder the loue and desire of things eternall, & intagle the minde in many snares.

In like manner, though Matrimony of it selfe be good,
good, and ordained by God, yet it draws with it many cares and troubles, which through human frailty hinder the health of the soul, that it leads men secretly into many sins, and oftentimes unto eternal damnation. Thus much of the humane affection, out of which many men incline unto marriage.

The spiritual affection is, when parents desire to have children, to the end that they may instruct them in the fear of God, that they
they may teach them to reverence him, that they may increase the number of the faithful, that by them many deeds of devotion may be done, that God may be honored by them and the like; these affections rise not out of nature; but out of divine inspiration, and are worthy of a man, as he is a Christian.

Whence I confess that parents who wish this kind of affection desire to have their children brought up and made great before Almighty God; and
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& the wise also who with such a spirit desireth Marriage, shall be saued by the bearing of children. And in this manner the wordes of the Apostle are to be understood 1. Tim. 2. But yet it seemes to be more probable, that the Apostle in that place speaketh not of the merit, but of the estate and office of marriage; & that to be also the meaning of this saying, Salvabitur &c. She shall be saued, by doing the office of Marriage, and endeavouring to have children: for so the Grecian text doth
of Chastity. 147

do th import, as the learned
do teach.

So likewise to the Romans cap. 4. 5. & 11. Abraham
is sayd to be the Father of
those that believe, by hauing
the foreskin or Prepuce cut
off, that is to say, by those
which are in that Estate.

And in 2 Cor. cap. 6. Per
glomerum & ignorantiam &c. By
glory and ignobility, by in-
famy and good credit, that
is to say, in prosperity and
adversity. The same is con-
firmed by the words which
the Apostle addeth, Saluabi-
lur &c. She shal be saуд (faith
N 2 he)
The Treasure
he) by the bearing of children, if the perseverance in faith, in love, & in holiness, with sobriety: therefore he attributesthe cause of salvation to faith, & to love &c. not to the procreation of children: yet I confessally that this very deed is meritorious likewise, if it be done, as we have said, out of spiritual affection: but it is otherwise, if it be done out of humane only.

Moreover, if this estate and the offices thereof, be chosen & performed with a spiritual affection: nevertheless
of Chastity.

uertheles single life is much better and more meritorious; both because it removeth innumerable occasions of distractions, imperfections, and sinnes, by which the estate of Matrimony is hindered in the offices of devotion; and also because it affordeth commodity of conversing daily with God and of being attent to divine matters. Wherefore a Virgin oftentimes may merit more in one day, than a married woman in many monethes.

N 3 CHAP.
CHAP. VII.

Of certaine thinges to be observed in this Estate.

To the end that Virgins may the better preserve this treasure, & ob-}

tayne their scope and purpose more at larg, by which they have so straitly bound themselves vpon to God, and 

undertaken this estate; holy Fathers have prescribed certaine thinges to be observ'd. First in their apparell; 

secondly in their exercises; thirdly in the use of their riches and wealth; & lastly in
of Chastity. 152
in their conversation.
As for their apparell, it must not be costly, but decent and grave, without any kind of vanity or curiosity, without pride also, or any secular ornaments, such as may represent the state wherein they live, and the forsaking of the world; by which every man that sees them, may know that they are Virgins, and have an intent never to marry. For by this means they shall a-void all improprieties and troubles, which suiters are accustomed to use; and be-
The Treasure

These things shall prevent many other inducements to the breach of their intent.

S. Cyprian in his booke de disciplina & habitu Virginum, handleth this place more at large, and with great elegancy: Continency (quoth he) & Chastity consist not only in the integrity of the body, but also in the honor of the attire and apparel, being joined with modesty. She must not only be a Virgin really, but also she must be known, and be believed to be such a one: so that no man who seeth her
her who is a Virgin, may have any doubt whether she be so or no. For why should the go adorned, or arrayed as though she had, or would have a husband? Let her rather feare to please any, if she be a Virgin; neither let her seek her owne danger, since she prefers her selfe for a better & more devout purpose &c. Neither ought a Virgin to be delighted with the shew of her owne beauty, or to take a glory in her owne person or comlynes, since she hath no resiſtance or war against any
any thing, so much, as against the flesh, nor any more obdurate enemy to overcome the her own body.

Afterwards he alread-geth some, who excuse the-selves for their Riches and Nobility, for which respects they thinks that it is convenient for them to go more richly arrayed, whose excuse he refutes at large, shewing in what things they should imploy their wealth.

To their habit also belongeth a Veyle, with the which it is meete that a Virgin
of Chastity. 155
Virgin should be covered when she goeth abroad, least either she might see that which were not befitting, or her countenance should be perceived of others. For how many, I pray you, have there beene in the world, who only by fight have either perished themselves, or killed others? In so much that they must take principal heed of their eyes. And Tertullian hath written a particular Treatise upo this subject of virgins veiling and covering their heads, which he judged
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ged to be a thing so necessa-
ry, that he said: It was no
lesse then a passion of lust,
to a vertuous Virgin, every
tyme that she exposest her
selfe to publique view; to
wit, because that thereby
with her face open, casting
her eyes freely about to see,
& to be seen, is easily cor-
ruped in spirit; & that the
very gazing itselfe is a signe
of an unchaft mind.

And againe afterward:
The desire not to be veyled
or couered is not a chaft de-
sire, but admitethsomwhat
that belongeth not vnto a
Vir-
Virgin; as also the desire to delight others in beholding her; for true, entyre, and pure Virginity feareth nothing so much, as it owne selfe, yea it endureth not the eyes of other women that delight in gazing, since the eyes of it selfe are farre different from such; it flyeth to the yeyle of her head, as to a helmet, & as to a buckler which defendeth her; it is a protection against the blowes of temptation, against the darts of scandals, against suspitions, & whispering, and emulation, yea
and against Envy it selte. After this put on the armor of bashfullnes, entrench thy selfe within the bulwarke of modesty, build vp a wall for thy sex, which keepeth in thyne own eyes, and lettest not the eyes of others to enter. Thou hast married Christ and delivered thy body to him, thou hast espoused the maturity of thy yeares to him. Go according to his will and pleasure; it is Christ that biddeth those who are married to others, to veile themselves, much more those which
which are clpoused unto him.

For this purpose the women's attyres of Brahams are very fit, which are called by them Hueres, which the very noblest Matrons of that Country use, when they would not be known in any public assembly.

Let vs now come to the exercises which holy Fathers prescribe to be used by virgins. These are fasting, prayer, reading of spiritual books, and handy-works, in the daily use and variety wherof they may spend
The Treasure
spend all their tyme most profitably.

Fasting is as it were the foundation & ground of all other vertues; for by this the root of many temptations, and by consequence of many vices, is cured: the minde is made more fit to converse daily with Almighty God, with great comfort & fruit, from whom it conceiued all its good: from whence all Saints for the most part have derived the beginning of a spiritual life.

By fasting, I mean not such fasting, as should weaken or
of Chastity. 161
or impaire nature: but such
wherby the body becomes
more healthfull, the mind
more quicke, and the con-
cupitence more subject.
S. Aic:ome commendeth
greatly this exercise in his
S. Epistle to Demetriades, de
custodia virginis. After (lauh
he) diligent taking heed
of impure thoughts, you
must put on the ornament
of fasting, and sing with
David, I have humbled my
soule in fasting, &c. And
then afterwardes. Fasting
is not a perfecte tue of it
selfe, but the foundation of
03 others
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others, and is both sanctification & chastity, without which no man shall ever see God. It affordeth fatigues to such as will ascend to the top; & yet if it should be alone, it is not sufficient to crown a virgin &c.

In which words it is to be noted, that fasting is described by S. Hierome, sanctification, and chastity of other virtues. It is called sanctification, because it maketh other virtues flourish, and works their effects the better; and by this means it sanctifieth.

It
It is called Chastity, because it procureth cleanlinesse of body and hart, wherein consist all other vertues, without which no man shall see God.

And that this fasting must be moderate, & such as may not weaken the body, but refresh & quicken the mind. St. Jerome warning us in these words, when he saith: Neither do I prescribe to you immoderate fasting, or such abstinence, as would be altogether without meat, by which bodyes that are tender and delicate may be

O 4 quickly
quickly brought out of health, and grow sick, before they have layde the foundation of this holy conversation.

S. Ambrose in his first book of virgins faith, that the sparing of meate, and abstinence from drinkke, maketh a man to be ignorant of vice; for it maketh him to be ignorant of the causes thereof. Therefore let this be rather a fault of sobriety the affliction.

Prayer also, under which is conteyned the meditation of heavenly things, and the mysteries
of Chastity. 165
mysteries of our faith, is principally necessary. First, because by this we must observe dayly supply of Grace, whereby we may both resist temptations and fulfill God's divine Commandments, and persevere to the end: wherefore our Lord warneth us, that we always pray, to wit, as much as conveniently we may, and as far forth as the fragility, and necessary affairs of this world will permit us: for our perseverance and eternall safety dependeth on Prayer.

Secon-
Secondly by Prayer & Meditation we lift up our mynd to Almighty God, we place our selves in his sight and presence; wee consider his majesty, his Power, and his Wisedome, his Goodnes & his providence; his Mercy and his J ustice; we adore him, and praise him, we giue him thankes and blesse him; there we deale with him about the busines of our Salvation, and call to mynd all things which he hath both done and suffered for vs.

For this cause especially,
a Virgin must abandone
Marriage and secularity, &
imbrace the state of holy
Virginity, according to
the Apostle, to wit, that
she may thinke of these
things which belonge to
our Lord, that she may be
holy in body and spirit, that
she may behaue her selfe
worthily in the presence &
conuersation of Almighty
God, that she may stick to
close vnto him, that she
may never be drawn away:
and as our Interpreter tran-
slateth it, that she may have
free leave to beleue any
thing
thing of our Lord, without hinderance.

Here are delights and spiritual comforts; in this consisteth as it were the Paradise of our souls; by these things our conversation is in heaven, and we are made to enjoy the society of Angels; without these whatsoever we do, is dry & barren, for all comfort and spiritual joy proceedeth from the attentive consideration of divine matters.

From whence it cometh, that those who apply not themselves with great love
of Chastity. 169
loye and deliue, to Prayer and Meditation, they must needs remaine dry, or at leastwise they shall never tall the most excellent de-lights of the spirit. By Prayer & meditation the mind is exercised, and growth zealous in the function & habit of other virtues, because the gift of grace is more abundantly obtayned by it, whereby the labour of virtue is made more easy and delightfull.

Hence the Royall Prophet saith, Piam nădaturū β. I have ranne the course and way
The Treasure

way of thy commandments, whilst thou dilatedst my hart with joy. And why? because the vanity of the world, & the worth of vertue, and the Charity of God, and the reward of life to come, are shewed therby vnto vs. The consideration of all which, must needs greatly stir vs vp to all offices of vertue, and to a diligent care of our owne salvation.

Reading of Spirituall bookes also is commended by the holy Fathers, and commeth very neere to the exercise
exercise of Prayer. For as by Prayer we obserue the conversation even of God himselfe; so do we it also by reading of spirituall books. Whereupon I'sidorus in his 3. booke of Sentences the 8. Chap. saith: Who always wil converse with God, must pray often, and read much; for when we pray, we speake familiarly vnto God, but when we read, he speaketh vnto vs.

And afterward he addeth, that Spirituall profit also proceedeth from praying and reading.
Lastly handy-worke is greatly commended, for this is an especiall and benefi-
ciall Exercit for three things. The first is, therby somewhat to release and
refresh our minde; for we cannot always attend to read or pray, but it is
needful to recreate our minde by intermixing of labours sometime between,
lest we should be over-
wearyed: and this is done
most conveniently by outward employments, in
which the mind is little or
nothing at all byssed.

Whence
of Chastity. 173

Whence it followeth, that this manner of variety becommeth most grateful to our weak and changeable Nature, and hath been used in all ages by men and women, such as were holy; and likewise it helpeth to ouoyd idlenes, which is especially to be taken heed of, by all such as endeavour to attain to the perfection of a devout and holy life. For as S. Jerome in his Epistle to Demetriades sayth, there is nothing more hurtful to any devout purpose then Idlenes, which doth not

P 3 onely
The Treasure only omit to get new perfection, but also wasteth that which was gotten before. And Blessed Ignatius saith, "Omnium omnium malorum &c. Idlenes is said to be the beginning of all mischief; for a minde that is not employed, is open to all suggestions and impressions of the diuell.

Wherby sometymes it commeth to passe, as Seneca witnesseth, that although the body be guiltlesse, yet the mind being idle, falleth into a thoulande sortes of lewdnesse. Wheresfore it is good
of Chastity. 175
good to be alwaies doing
doing of somewhat, and to im-
ploy our minds about one
good action or other, that
the diuell may alwaies find
us busy.

Lastly it is beneficall
for the health of our body,
and to give good example
also, and to relieve others.
For no Almes is so pleasing
to Almighty God, no guilt
so acceptable, as that which
is earned by our owne la-
bours. S.Hieron's discourseth
at large of this point in his
epistle to Demetriades, which
for breuitie sake I omit.

P 4

It
The Treasure

Itrečeth now to speake of the third, to wit of the use of their Riches. Holy Fathers set downe the manner at large, how amongst Virgins, those who are wealthy hold employ their meanes; to wit, not in superfluous apparell, not in banqueting and pleasures, not in adorning their bo- dyes, not in Jewels, pearsles, rings, bræcelets, not in rich & curious house-hould-stuff, not in riot and excess of brauney aboue their neighbours; but in the succour & releife of the poore, and of luck
of Chastity. 177

such as are servants of God.

S. Cyprian in his booke
De disciplina & habitu Vigenum,
discourseth at large upon
this thing: I will only al-
leadge one sentence for bre-
vities' sake: Locupletem te dicar
&c. Thou boastest (quoth
he) that thou art wealthy
and rich, and thou thinkest
that it behoueth thee to
use the riches which God
hath permitted thee to pos-
sesse. Do so, use them, but
let it be in such things as
may concern the health of
thy soul. Use them, but in
that which God hath com-
man-
The Treasure

maunded thee to use them; & in which he hath shewed thee & taught thee how to doe. Let the poor find thee to be rich, and those that are needy perceive thee to be wealthy. Put out thy Patrimony to use, into the hands of Almighty God. Give meate unto Christ, that it may be lawfull for thee to suitable the glory of thy Virginity. And to the end that it may be rewarded by our Lord, beg it of him by the prayers of many. Lay up thy treasures there, where no thiefe can dig
of Chastity. 179
dig them out, where no
wait-layer, or night-rob-
ber can breake through.
Purchase to thy selfe posses-
sions, but let them be of
heaven, where neither rust
shall eate, nor hayle fall v-
pon, nor Sunne burne, nor
rayne corrupt thy fruites,
they being continuall and
everlafting, free from the
touch of secular abuse &c.

And S. Hierome in his
Epistle to Demetriades sayth:
Consideramus &c. Let vs con-
sider how wisely Wildome
it self hath spoken: Sell what
thou hast. To whom is this
commanded
The Treasure

commanded? I o wit, to him to whome it is sayd:
If thou wilt be perfect, sell not a part of thy goods, but all. And when thou hast sold them, what followeth? Give them to the poor, not to the rich, not to thy Neighbors who are wealthy, not to maintain excess, but to suffice necessity. Whether he be a Priest, or thy cozen, or kinsman, thou shalt consider in him no other respect but his poverty. Let the bowels of those that are hungry, not the far banquets of those that suffer re-
Yet for all this it is not the meaning of S. Hierom, that if a Virgin entreath nor into Religion, she should deprive her life, or that which is needful for her self to live on in good life; but that she bestow thereon which she hath superfluous, for the use of the poor, & that after the manner which the judge th'st to be most to the honour of God. S. Cyprian before mentioned goeth yet forward, speaking to those who having vowed Virginity, and are very
very rich & wealthy, thus: But there be some rich women & very wealthy, who will set out, and shew their store, & say, that they must vie their owne goods. Let these first understand, that she is rich, who is rich in God; that she is wealthy who is wealthy in Christ; that those be goods indeed, which be spiritual, divine, and heavenly, which lead vs to God, which with stead-fast possession remaine to vs when we be with God. But whatsoever things are earthly, gotté in this world, and
of Chastity. 183
and here to remaine within the world, they must be
contemned as well as the
world it self, whose pomps
and pleasures we doe then
renounce, when with a
better pace, we come to-
wards God. S. John doth ex-
hort and stir vs vp, confe-
ting with his spirituall &
heavenly voice: Do not, saith
he, love the world, nor those things
which are in the world. If any
man love the world, the Charity
of the Father is not in him, be-
cause all that is in the world, is
the concupiscence of the flesh, and
the concupiscence of the eyes, and
the
The Treasure
the ambition of the world, which
is not of the Father, but of the
concupiscence of the world. And
the world shall passe, and the con-
cupiscence thereof, but he that doth
the will of God abideth for ever,
even as God abideth for ever.

Wherefore eternal &
divine things are to be
sought after, and all things
are to be done according to
God's will, that so we may
follow the footsteps of our
Lord, and his divine ex-
amples, who did warne
us and say: I descended not from
heaven to do my owne will but
the will of him that sent me.

Now
of Chastity. 185

Now if the servant be not greater then his Maister, & he that is made free oweth duty to his deliverer, we that desire to be Christians, must imitate that which Christ did. It is written, it is read, it is heard, and for our example celebrated by the Churches mouth. He that saith, he abideth in Christ, ought even as he walked, himselfe also to walke. We must therefore walke with equal steps, we must endeavour to follow his paces. Then doth the following of the Truth, an-

Q3 were
The Treasure

Iwore to the Faith of the
name, and reward is given
to him that believeth, whè
that which is believ'd is
also done.

Thou sayest, that thou
art wealthy and rich: but
S. Paul doth object against
thy riches, and prescribe
with his words, that thy
trimming and decking is
to be moderated by an up-
righteous end. Let women
say this, he, with shamsafnes
and modesty adorn them-
selves, not in plaited hayre,
nor gold, nor precious stones
nor gorgeous apparell, but
as
of Chastity. 187
as it becometh women promising chastity by good conversation. S. Peter likewise doth consent with these precepts and say: Let there be in a woman, not the outward dressing of faires, or of gold, or of goodly garments, but the trimming of the heart. Now if these men do admonish us, that even those women, who are wont to excuse the adorning of themselves for their husbands' sakes, are to be restrained, and moderated by religious observation, according to Ecclesiastical
disciplin: how much more expedient is it that a Virgin should obscure the same? Who deserueth no pardon of this her trimming, neither can she cast her fault upon another, but the her selfe must beare all the blame.

Thou dost say, that thou art wealthy and rich: but not all that may, ought also to be done. Neither must inordinate desires, and such as spring vp out of the ambition of the world, be extended beyond the honesty & shamefastnes of a Virgin, for
of Chastity. 189
for so much as it is written: All things are lawfull, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawfull, but all things do not edify. But if thou adorne thy selfe oversumptuously, and go abroad, so as all men may see thee, and draw the eyes of young men to regard thee, and make them sigh after thee, and nourish their unlawful appetite to desire thee, and kindle their fire so long after thee, in such sort, that albeit thou perish not thy selfe, yet thou art the ruine of others, and thew
The Treasure

Shew thyself as a word or poyslon to those that looke on thee; thou canst not be excused, as it thou were chaste and honest in mind. Thy wanton atteyr, and dishonest trimming doth reprehend thee; neither canst thou be numbered amongst the Damfeks & Virgins of Christ, who dost lye to, as if thou wouldest be loved.

Thou dost say that thou art wealthy and rich; but it becometh not a virgin to vaunt of her riches, because holy scripture saith: what
what good hath our pride donne vnto vs, or what profit hath the vaunting of riches brought vs? All those things are past away like a shadow. And againe the Apostle doth admonish vs and say: And they that buy, let them be as though they possessed not; and they that vse this world, as though they vse it not: for the figure of this world passeth away. S. Peter also vnto whome our Lord commended his sheepe to feed, and to defend them: and vpon whome he let and founded
his Church, did denie that he had either gold or silver, saying that he was rich in the grace of Christ, and wealthy in his faith and power; by which he could do strange and miraculous things, and by which he abounded in spiritual goods to attain the grace of glory. These goods and riches he cannot possess, who desireth to be esteemed rich, rather to the world than to Christ. Thus saith S. Cyprian.

The fourth is her conversation, wherein the holy Fathers prescribe to Virgins...
of Chastity. 193

... that they must avoid frequented of marriages publique banquettings, & the company and conuerfa-
tion of secular persons, especially of such are light in their behauiour, and are given unto the world; and that the should converse with modest and deuout women,

So saith S. Cyprian in the place above cyted, Quodam non pudet nubilibus interesse: &c. Some (quoth he) are not ashamed to be present at Mar-
riages, and in that liberty of licentious talke, to chatter

R with
with the reft, and mingle now and then, impure & dishonest speeches; to heare that which is not fittinge to be heard, nor lawfull to speake againe; yea and to be even present at lascivious conferences, and drunken banquets, by which the fuel of Lust is kindled. The Bride now accusto-med to the patience of hearing unchastenes, and the Bridegrome to be the more audacious, what place is it then to be at Marriages, for such a one whose minde is never to be married? And though
though she remaineth both in body & mind a virgin, yea by her cares, and eyes, she hath lost part of that which she had before.

8. Hierome likewise in his epistle to Demetriades. Decline and auoyd (faith he) the husbands of Matrons, such as serve the world, for feare lest thy mind be troubled, and thou hearest either what the husband saith to the wife, or the wife to the husband, for such Conferences are poison unto others. Choose women that are grave, and especially
Widdowes and Virgins to be thy companions, whose conversation is approved to be good, their speeches well governed; & their outward modesty prelages their sanctity within. Auyoyd the wantonnes and immodesty of yong Maydes, who attire their heads flangely, weare lockes at their ears, make their skynne smooth by art, paint, weare straite bodies, and sleeues, must not have a wrinkle in their cloathes, weare creaking shoes, and all this forsooth, that under the name of a Mayde,
Mayde, they may seeme the more falable. For the comportment and inclination of the Mistresse, is ofteymes judged and proportioned, by that of the wayting woman, and such as they keep company withal &c.

S. Hierome goeth on thus: And this likewise a Virgin must take specially heed of, that she never talke or cuerse at any tyme alone, with any man, whether he be secular or religious, no not so much as with her ghostly Father, without the company of others: but
let all things be done openly, where they may be beheld of others. Or if it be necessary at any tyme to talke with any man within doors, let it not be done, unless some other be present who may see al. For it is an unseemly thing for a man, thogh be her Confessarius, yea religious (& though his habit should make him seem to be euem of the sanctity of S. John Baptist) to be alone with a woman in a chamber, the doore being shut, and without any other present; whether it be
under pretence of Confession, or any spiritual instruction whatsoever. Let her remember that Thamar in private, for want of presence of others, was ravished by her own brother. Let her remember that for the most part all that have fallen in this kind, have done it through the neglect of this advice.

If there were no conference in private, there would hardly any dishonesty be ever committed. Therefore this especially is to be observed of a virgin, as a precept.
The Treasure
cept, That the keep herselde
vnderfiled, both before God
and men.

S. Ambrose also in his 2. bo-
vpon S. Lukses gholspell faith:
Trepidare virginum est &c. vir-
gins ought to tremble and
feare, as often as any man
comes into their presence,
and be affrayde to speake
unto any man &c. he spea-
keith of such a one when she
is alone (for in priuate they
are fīre and tow to one an-
other :) and the diuell neuer
more imployceth all his
strength and endeavouer,
then at such a tyme, for
feare
Of Chastity. 201

fear lest so fit an occasion should escape without benef\-fit v\-\-to him. See more concerning this matter in S. Hiero\-me in his 8. 9. 10. 11.
and 22. Epistle.

Of any vow of Obedi-
ence to be made to ones
ghostly Father, I finde no-
thing written in holy Fa-
thers, neither do I judg it
expedient (unlesse in some
few who are truly perfect,
\& are become eu\-\-en ma\-\-lers
as it were, in the way of
Perfection) by reason of
many discommodityes,
that may follow thereof.

Where-
202 The Treasure
Wherfore it is deseruedly forbidd in the rules of the Society of Iesu, that any such Vow should be admitt'd by any Father of that Order. To which also may be added the solemne decre of the Pro vinciall Council of Mechline which by chance I happened upon lately, where in the 5. tytle the 7. Chap. are these words. Namque aliquem ad perpetu ad. No Ghostly father shall bynde any one, never to confesse his sinnes to any other then to him &c. And this Synod declareth all such Obliga-
tion
of Chastity. 203
tion or promise, though confirmed by vow, to be unreasonable, indelicate, void, and of no effect; & therefore as far, as it shall be needfull, doth this present Decree ordyne it to be so. I omit also many other things which may be alleged for this purpose.

These prescriptions of holy Fathers, if a virgin keep, living in the world, she shall be happy, and her Estate and condition shall come neere to the perfection of a Religious life.

Chap.
CHAP. VIII.

Whether single life, confirmed by vow, may be properly called an Estate.

Some seeme to make doubt, Whether single life confirmed by vow, ought properly to be called an Estate, nor do I know upon what grounds. Nevertheless it may be easily gathered out of that which hath been laid before, that this manner of living, may be properly called an Estate, and
that such as proteste the sam
may be rightly sayd to have
cholen, and to be of an E-
flate.

For an *Eflate* is no-
thing els, but a manner of
life, in the which it is pur-
posed so to continue, that it
may not be lawful to goe
outtherof into another, as
S. Thom. 2. 2. quest. 183, and
other Doctours, doe every
where teach: but vowed
Chastity or Virginity is a
manner of life, wherein it
is firmly purposed to con-
tinue, so that it is not law-
full to forfake the same &
S. marry;
The Treasure
marry; therefore it is pro-
perly an Estate.

Henriques teacheth the
same in his 12. Quodlibet,
where he sayth, That the
estate of Virginity or wid-
dowhood is no lesse to be
accounted an Estate in the
Church of God, then the
Estate of Marriage. And
Caesari affirmeth, that this
doctrine of Henriques is true,
according to the Law, if
Virginity or Widowhood
be kept, or professed by o-
blication of vow.

And surely if there
be in the Church an Estate
of
of Chastity. 207
of Marriage, why should there not be also an Estate of Virginity or widowhood? If there be an Estate of those which are wedded, why should there not be the like of those that live continent, especially when S. Cyprian witnesseth; That this is the more beautifull part or portion of Christ. If marriage with a mortall man or woman, which can continue but a small tyme, let leath a man in an Estate, why should not also an eternall marriage with Christ himself, which is never to have an end,
end, effect the same? Those who at this present are in the state of wedlocke, continue not longe therein, but after a little time by death of the one party, must go out of it, into the estate of such as live single: but such as are now in the estate of those that live continent, shall never go out of it, but always remain therein. From whence it appears that this is rather, and more perfectly to be termed an Estate, then that of Wedlocke.

Neither doth it availe, that
that this vow of perpetual Virginity may be dispensed with all, and that therefore this Estate seemeth not to be firm & immovable. First, because such a dispensation may be only granted by the Pope himself, yea is very seldom granted, and that for matters of great importance: otherwise such release is not of force before Almighty God; but that which is only conceded under the power of the Pope may be lawfully thought impossible to us, and therefore it diminisheth.
The Treasure

Seth not the immobility or remouall of this estate: for it is sufficient, that by vs as much as is on our parts, it is firme and immouable, in so much that it cannot be altered by vs; otherwise Religion itselfe shou'd not be an Estate, since the Pope may upon just occasions of great importance, releas a Religious man from the obligation of his Order, dispense with his vowes, and permit him to marry.

Secondly also, because Marriage is an Estate, yet it may be many wayes dissol-
ued,
of Chastity. 21
ned, to wit before carnall
knowledge of one another,
by entering into Religion;
and also after the knowledg
of one another by death of
the wife, or husband. Also
by the Adultery of the hus-
band, the wife hath right
of a divorce, whereby the
Marriage itself is dissolved
even to every duty & con-
jugall act, as though it had
beene no marriage at all al-
though the habituall obli-
gation remaine.

Finally if it be con-
trasted in the Estate of in-
fidelicity, it may be dissolved,
S 4 although
although it were consummated, by copulation, if so be the one be converted to the Catholike fayth, and the other perseuer in Infidelity. Therefore Wedlocke is far more easily, & more ways dissolved, then the vow of Virginity: and yet that hindereth not, but that it is, and may be truly called an Estate; much lesse therefore that that power of releasing it, which consisteth only in the authority of the Prince of Spirituall matters, hinder the vow of Virginity, of being tarmedan Estate. Third-
of Chastity. 2 v. 3

Thirdly a Clergy-Estate is made a true Estate by meanes of the Vow of Chastity, added to holy Orders, and hath sufficient fir-menesse; and yet the Pope may eaily take it away, especially in a Deacon, and giue him leave to marry. Therefore it followeth &c.

Lastly, Scrutitude is a true Estate, according to al lawes, and yet at the Mai-sters pleasure, the Servants may be enfranchised, and made free: Therefore that extrinsical power of taking away any obligation, which
214 The Treasure consistseth not in our owne powers, doth by no means impair the assurednesse & certainty of an Estate. For it is enough, that it is firme and immutable on our part. And the reason is, because he is sufficiently said to be in an Estate, who maketh choice of a certaine kinde of life, and settleth himself firmly therein, so that he cannot take any other vpon him differing vnto this, but must continue therein, euen vnto death. But he who imbraceth single life, and byndeth himselfe by vow
of Chastity.

You will ask, perhaps, whether this Estate may be called an Estate of Perfection? I answer, that it is not a complete Estate of Perfection, but only in part, because it is a notable part of the Estate of perfection, for some Estates include more, & others less. An Estate of Perfection which is entire and
The Treasure and complete, includeth also the vow of Poverty and Obedience, both which a Virgin vowing Chastity in the world, may also after her manner, imitate and supply before God.

FINIS.
THE WIDOWES GLASSE.
ABRIDGED
Out of the Reverend Father
Fulvius Androtius of
the Society of Jesus,
and others.

Anno M. DC. XXI.
THE PREFACE
TO ALL
deuout Widdowes.

BECAUSE thou hast lived bastity & re-
mained a Wi-
dow after thy husbæd, ther-
fore
210 The Preface.

fore the hand of our Lord hath strengthened thee, & thou shalt be blessed for e-ter. These wordes were spoken to the holy, ver- tuous, and renowned Widow Judith, who for her chaft Widowhood, deserued to be so stree-nthened of our Lord, that she ouercame, and killed the great and cruel Holo-
fernes, delivered the peo-ple of Israell from tribu-
lation and death, and re-
duced
The Preface. 221
duced them to their former peace and tranquility.

And for this cause did she also deserve to be exalted to the Heavens, by Joachim the high Priest who with all the people, blessed her & sayd: Thou art the glory of Hierusalem, thou the joy of Israel, thou the honour of our people, because thou hast done manfully, and thy heart was strengthened from above &c.

T3 And
222 The Preface

And besides all this, for her chast Widdowhood did she merit an everla-
sting blessing from our Lord, to wit, aboundan-
ce of all graces in this world, and perfect felici-
ty in heaven.

In like manner, all ver-
tuous Widdows follow-
ing these her traces and
footsteps, shall deserve to
be comforted by our Lord
with spirituall graces,
vertues, and gifts of the
holy
The Preface. 223

holy Ghost, in such sort, that they shall be ever blessed and happy, if devoutly they persevere in their chast Widowhood, & shall also deserve to overcome & trample the devil under foot, signifyed by the aforesaid proud and cruel Captain Holofernes. And to the end, that they may thus constantly and devoutly persevere in the holy Estate of Continency in their widowhood,

T4 we
224 The Preface.
we will, with the help of the holy Ghost, say some-
thing to this purpose, as as wel out the holy Scrip-
tures, as ancient Fathers and Historyes.

THE
THE WIDDOWES GLASSE.

CHAP. I.

Who are to be accounted truly Widowes.

There are said to be three kindes of Chastity, to wit, that of Marriage, that of Widowes, & that of Virgin: all three signi-
The Pseudowes glasse.

Signified by the good ground mentioned in the Holy Ghostvell, whereon the seed fell: The first whereof yielded fruit thirty fold, the second sixty fold, and the last an hundred. But they who cannot yeld the hundred fold fruit, let them at least offer up sixty, to shew themselves more liberall to wards our Saviour.

And for as much as all perfection of man consisteth in abandoning and forsaking carnall and worldly things, & drawing neer and joyning himselfe unto God
The VViddowes glasse. 227

God his Creatour, loving him, fearing him, seeking him, thinking on him, contemplating and honouring him in every thing and action; this can hardly be affected in the state of Marriage, especially by women, who hunting after, & daily following the delights and pleasures of the world, are hindered thereby, for the most part, from treading the true path which leadeth directly thereunto. But Widows who are free from such cares and troubles, and have a true desire, may with great
228 The Widdowes glasse.
great case and facility per-
forme the same to their
great comfort.

Now there be divers
sorts of Widdowes. Some,
as soone as their husbands
be dead, purpose so marry
againe, for some temporal
comfort and consolation,
not having any divine In-
spiration to serve God Al-
mighty in that Estate, and
are in danger to offend him.
Of this sort of widdowes
S. Paul speaketh when he
faith. I will, that the yong wids-
dowes do marry againe, & become
mothers of families, not to give oc-
casion
The Widdowes glass. 219
reason to the Diuell to tempt them.
And this is not ill but approved of all. But when
a widdow will marry a-gaine for any disordinate
appetit, or because she is very rich, or faire, or light
after by some one that is placed in a high degree of
Honour or State, or for any other vicious occasion, or ill
end, without doubt this her desire is naught, nor is she
to be reckoned, or worthily called a widdow, as long
as she remaines with this desire, although she do not
actually marry a-gaine.

V There
230 The Widdowes glasse.

There is another sort of widdowes, who though they do not purpose to marry againe at all, euyther for that they have no dowry, or for feare least they happen upon an ill husband, or for some other secret or manifest respect, yet is their manner of life and conversation, not like indeed unto widdowes: for that they will allways be gadding abroad, ratling, & gollipping, even with those who be not reputed of the best edification. And these, forsooth, will be finely apparelled
The Widdowes glasse. 231
parcell'd: and though they have veyles, yet will they scarcely cover their heads with them; their eyes must be rolling vp and downe, they must go to banquets weddings and playes, they must tell tales, heare & tell newes, & carry themselves even as mere secular, ordinary, and the worst sort of people. These are to be auoyded and shunned by all true widdowes: and these be those of whom S. Paul speaketh in another place, say'ing: Take heed of such yonge widdowes, for after that they have V 2
lined
232 The Widdowes glasse, lived riotously, and licenciously in Christ, they will marry, carrying with them their damnation, for that they have broken and made void their first faith. &c. And for these it were better that they did marry againe, then liue as they do.

Another sort there is, who never intend, nor do indeed marry againe, but liue chastely & vertuously, both in act and decyce. But yet they do it not for the loue of God, but rather for some humaine respect, as for the loue of their children, their goods, or the like. And although
The Widowes glase. 233
although according to the
esteeeme of the world, they
live honestly, and are re-
puted for Venerable Mo-
thers and Matrones; yet
are they wholly dedicated to
the service of the world, 
&
have little feeling or gust
of spiritual things; and do
but seldom frequent the
Sacraments or sermons, saft
only but when the church
commandeth them, or doe
employ themselves in any
other spiritual Exercises.
These I do intreat, by the
bowels of Christ Iesus, that
they will no longer employ
The Widdowes glasse.

the gifts and graces which they have receaued frō our Lord, to the honour and service of the world, to the end they may haue their reward in heaven, and not on earth.

There is another sort of widdowes also, who make a firme purpose and deliberation, to conserve and keep their chastity & serve God with all their hart: & of these there are twokinds. One who cannot separate themselves from their children, or other parents, either for the charge they have
The Vviddowes glasse. 235
have of the, or because they
cannot so wel live alone, or
for some necessity, or chari-
ty in gouerning their fami-
ly: and these although they
be not wholly free from the
world, nor are dedicated to
the service of God: not-
withstanding all the paynes
and labours they take, they
doe it principally for the
love of God, of whom they
shalbe rewarded with life
euerlastering. These Widd-
dowes are not any to be re-
moved, or drawn away
from this kind of life, but
are, according to S. Paul,

V 4       greatly
greatly to be honoured and esteemed.

The other kind, are those Widdowes, who desirous to serve God, & may commodiously separate themselves from their parents, friends, or family, and be more free to attend to prayer and other devout exercises; yet they will not, thorough a kind of pusillanimity, or little courage, or else for compassion to their friends, or for some other reason. Neither are these to be condemned, but esteemed in a second, or third degree.
The Widowes glass. 237
degree from the torner.

The last sort of widow-
es, are the true, & worthily
so called, Widowes, who
dispatching themselves of
all worldly impediments, do
attend only to the service
of God, contemplating him,
and meditating on him day
and night. And these are
placed in a more quiet and
peaceable Estate, then any
of the others above named,
and are entered into the
right, and direct way of
perfection.

In this Estate lived that
Holy Widow Anne the
Propheteile,
238 The Widdowes glass.
Prophetic, recorded by S. Luke; who is sayd to have served God in fasting & prayer, remaining night and day in the Temple. And if such Widdowes, who have a desire to live vertuously cannot match or come nearer to S. Anne; yet let the come as nere vnto her as they can.

So as I conclude, that the true Widdow, is she, who not only conserves her Chastity in the world, but also whatsoever she doth, she doth it purely for the honour and service of Al-mighty.
The Widowes glass. 239
mighty God. And for that
every widdow doth not
know how to exercise her
selfe in the truly serving of
God, vnlesse she know the
scope and end therof, I pur-
pose here to set downe
briefly in what manner she
is to do the same.

CHAP. II.
Of the Intention, and Exercise
of a true Widdow.

WHEN a Widdow
hath well consi-
dered of her Estate &
firme
purpose to serve God, it is
necessary, that first she un-
derstand
240 The VViddowes glasse.
derstand what is the end & scope of this kind of life, that conformably thereto, she may address all her workes and actions.
The first and principal end then is, that not onely Widdowes but every Christian also ought to live well and in the fear of God, whom she must love more than her owne soule: and therefore she must labour, that by all her endeavours & actions the name of God may be ever blessed & prai-sed, Christian faith and religion advanced, and bo-
non-
The Widdowes glasse. 24r

This belongeth more to Widdowes then to many others, who consequently must be mortifyed, and of a chast and pure life. For that they having lost their carnall Spoues, they ought to seeke for no other but their Spouse Christ Iesus. So as a truely devout Widdow ought so to inflame her hart with the zeale of Gods honour, that shee should choose rather to dye, then that by her means, her Spouse should be any way dishonoured.

Secondly she ought with X as
242 The Widow's Plea. as great zeal to seek and procure her own salvation, considering that she is not always to remain in this world, because it is ordained for all men once to die, and then of necessity, to go either to heaven or to intolerable torments in Hell, or Purgatory. And therefore having as it were, lost and forgone all the Consolations of this transitory world, she must force herself to get & confer those that be celestial, and everlasting.

Chap.
The VViddowes glasse. 243

CHAP. III.

Documents for VViddowes out of S. Paul.

Saint Paul wryting to Timothy sayth: Honour VViddowes. He meaneth such Vwiddowes who live vertuously according to the rule of Vwiddow-hood, that is to say, to governe wel their families, not only their children, or their kinffolkes, but also their subiects, instructing them in good life, manners and vertue, and when it is needfull to reprehend and correct them.

X 2    Secondly
Secondly he sayeth, That Widdowes ought to hope in God, to trufl in his mercy; in him alone to seeke for Comfort and consolation, having dayly their mind elevated in God in all humility, praying often, and imploring his divine ayde to preserue them from all guilt, to forgive them, (and all fancies) their sins, to replenish them with his gifts and graces, and lastly to guide them to eternall felicity.

Thirdly he sayth, That a Widdow enterlayning world-
The VViddowes glasse 245
worldly & carnall consolations, & passing her dayes in mirth, ioylity, & vanity is accompl'd for dead. For although the live according to the body, yet is the dead according to the spirit; nor can the once do any good or meritorious work, worthy of heauen.

Fourthly, he commandeth widdowes, That they should be reprehensible in all their words and deeds; that is to say, that in all their actions they give good example, & that they keep themselves, not only from 
246 The Widdowes glasse.

Deeming of morta...ms, but euene from the leaft ve-
niall finnes that may be. Whence it followes, that
if they live vertuously, hub-
bly, in feare and vigilancy,
it may be laid of them, as
it was laid of Judith, that
most noble and devout wid-
dow. That never was there soild
any man who spake euill of her.

Fifthly he sayth, That
the Widow ought to think
upon those things that be-
long into God, to the end
she may be holy & sanctify-
ed in body and spirit &c.

CHAP.
CHAP. III.

The prys of VViddowhood, out of S. Hierome.

Saint Hierome, amongst the rest of Ancient Fathers, is not the last, nor least that hath praised Widdowhood; nay I may say, he hath exalted the same above many, if not above all the rest. And to begin first with an Epistle of his to Furia, a Noble yong Lady and widdow of Rome, thus he wrytheth unto her in commendation of the crown of Widdowhood.
248 The Widdowes glasse.

You desire in your letter, and humbly intreat me, that I will answere you, or rather write vnto you in what manner you may live, & conforme the crowne of widdowhood, without any blemish of the honour of your good Name. My mind rejoiceth, my bowells do daunce, my affection doth leape, because you desire to be such after your husbands death, as your mother Thelma of holy memory was a long time her husband living. Her prayers and devotiones are heard. She hath obtai-
The Widow's glass. 249
obtained in her only daughter, that which she possessed whilst she lived.

You have moreover a very great Privilege of your Ancestours, that even from Camillus, either none at all, or very few women of your flocke was married the second time: so that you are not so much to be praised, if you remain a widow, as to be detested, if being a Christian, you performe not that, which heathen women for so many ages have observed. Nay nothing of Paula & Eustochiá, Flowers
250 The Widdowes glasse.

of your family, lest I may seeme to take occasion by
the exhorting of you, to praise them. I let passe Blesilla
which following her hus-
bad your brother, in a short
space of life, fulfilled many
yeares of vertue.

And I would to God
that men would imitate the
praisles of women, & wrin-
cckled ould age would per-
forme that which volun-
tary youth doth offer. Wi-
tingly & willingly I thrust
my hand into the fire. Many
countenances wil frowne,
many armes will be spread
abroad,
abroad, and angry Chremes will rage with his foaming mouth. Many great
personages will be incensed against my Epistles: the whole company of Nobles
will thunder out, and say I am a witch, that I am a seducer, worthy to be ban-
nished from all civil common wealthes. Let them add, if they will, a Sama-
ritan also, that I may acknowledge my Lord's side.

Surely, I do not deceive the daughter from her father. Neither do I say that of the gospel, Suffer the
dead.
252 The Widdowes glasse.

to bury the dead. For who-
socuer belecueth in Christ
lyneth, and whofocuer be-
lecueth in him, ought surely
to walke, cuen as he wal-
ked. Honour your father,
but so, as he seuere you not
from your true father. So
long acknowledg the linek
of your bloud, how long he
acknowledgeth his Crea-
tour. For otherwise David
will presently sing unto
you: Hearn O daughter, &
see, and incline thine eare,
and forget thy people, and
the houseof thy father: and
the King will desire thy
beauty
The "Fiddoesglafe. 253
beauty, because he is thy
Lord, thy God, and thy
King.

O great reward of for-
getting ones Father! The
King will desire thy beauty:
because thou hast heard, be-
cause thou hast seen, be-
cause thou hast inclined thy
care, & forgot thy people
and the house of thy father;
therefore will the King de-
sire thy beauty, and will say
unto thee: Thou art al faire,
O my Deare, and there is
no spotte in thee. What
thing more faire then the
foule, which is called the
Y daughter
254 The Widdowes glasse.

daughter of God, and see-
keeth no foforaine ornamens;
the beleeueth in Christ, and
with this ambition the
goeth to her spouse, having
the same to her Lord, and
to her spouse.

What miseries mariage
have, you have learned in
marriage it selfe: and you
have bene filled with that
which you longed for, even
unto loathsomeenes. Your
iawes have tryed most bit-
ter choicer, you have cast out
those slower & vnwholsom
meates, you have eased your
boyling flomake. Why wil
you
The Widdowes glasse. 

You yet throwe in againe
that which once was hurt-
full vno you? The dogge
returneth to his vomit, and
the bow againe to her wal-
lowing in the mire. The
very brute beastes, & relitles
birdes, do nor fall the secon
time into the same shares &
basses.

Do you feare least the
family of the Fanij be extin-
guished, and leat your fa-
ther haue not a bake by
you, which may creep in
his bosome, and behaue his
necke? What, I pray you?
haue all which are marie,

Y 2 childrè?
256 The Widdowes glasse.

children? And those children which they haue, do they alwaies answer to their kinred? Yea surely Cicerones (onne did resemble his fathers eloquence: and Cornelia your Auncell; elle, an example of honesty and secundity, had much joy of the Gracchi her sonnes. It is ridiculous to hope of a certainty for that, which both many haue not had, & have lost when once they had it.

To whom wil you leave so great riches? To Christ who cannot dye. Who shall be your heire? he which is also
The Widdowes glasse. 257
also my Lord. Your father
will mourne, but Christ
will rejoice; your family
will be sorrowful, but the
Angels will be joyfull. Let
your father do what he will
with his substance: you are
nothys, by whom you were
borne, but his by whom
you were borne againe, and
who redeemed you with an
exceeding great price, even
with his bloud.
So far, oould good S.
Hierom. Where you see what
esteeme he maketh of Widd-
dowhood, yea in a young,
noble, and beautifull Lady.

Y 3  And
258 The Widdowes glasse.
And no lees doth he in another Epistle of his to Marcella, commending the courage and resolution of Blefilla a young & Noble widow also. Thus then he writeth to Marcella of Blefilla her sickness.

Abraham is tempted in his soule, & is found more faithfull. Ioseph is sold into Egypt, that so he may feed his father & brethren. Ezechias is terrified with his death at hand, and dissolved into tears, hath his life prolonged for fifteene yeares. Peter the Apostle is afflicted,
The Widdowes glasse 259
afflicted, with our Lords
passion, and weeping bi-
terly, he heareth; Feed my
theepe. Paul a raving
woolf, and another young
Benjamin is froken blind
in a traunce, that he may
receive his sight; and being
compassed with a suddaine
honour of darkness, calleth
him Lord, whom before he
persecuted as man.

Euen so now, O Marcella,
we have seen our loving
Blifes thirty daies continu-
ally to have bene tormented
with the burning of an
ague, that she might learne
4 to
to reject the delights of that body which shortly after is to be consumed with worms. To her also came our Lord Jesus, and touched her hand, and beheld the ailing, now stroke him. She savoured somewhat of negligence: and being tied with the bandes of riches, she lay in the sepulcher of the world. But Jesus groaned, and being troubled in spirit, cried out: Blestias, come forth. Who arose when she was called, and being come forth, whirled at the table with our Lord.
The Widdowes glass. 265

Let the lewes threaten and swell, let them seke
to murder her who hath
been tailes vp againe; and
let the sly apostles reioyce.
She knoweth, that she
oweth her life vnto him,
who did restore it. She
knoweth that she embraceth
his seere, whose judgment
lately she feared. Her body
lay almost dead: and death
approaching did make her
gasping members. Where
were then the helpe of her
kinred? where were then
the wordes full of vanity?
She oweth nothing unto
thee
262 The Widdowes giaffe.
thee O vngratefull kinred, 
which dying to the world
is reunied vnto Christ.
Who is a Christian, let him
rejoyce: he that is angry,
sheweth that he is no Chris-
tian.

A widdow loosed from
the bond of marriage, need-
deth nothing but perseve-
rance: But doth the coarse
garment offend any person?
let John offend him, then
whom, amongst the sonnes
of women there was none
greater: who being called
an Angell, baptized our
Lord himselfe, for he also

Was
The Widdowes glasse. 263
was clad with a Camellis
skynne, and girded with a
girdle of hayre. Do grosse
meates displease them? no-
thing is more grosse then
loculits. Let those women
rather offend Christian eies
who with vernish and co-
lours paint their eies, and
cheekes: whose plaistered
contenance deformed with
ouermuch shining, doth re-
semble idols. Who if they
happen for want of heed to
let fall a teare, it trickleth
downe in a furrow: whom
not so much as the very
number of their yeares can
perswade
264 The Widdowes glasse.
perswade that they are old: who with other folkes hair
set forth their head: and paint out in aged wrinkle:
their youth forspent: who finally in presence of many
nephews are trimmed like
trembling girls.

Let the Christian wo-
man blush, if shee force the
comeliness of nature, if
shee make provision for the
flesh, unto concupiscence, in
which according to the A-
postle, whosoever are deli-
ghted, cannot please God.
Our widow before was ve-
ry carefully dressed: and all
the
The vviddowes glasse. 265
the day at the glasse the stud-
died what might be amisse.
Now the confidently faith: but we beholding the glory
of our lord with face reca-
led, are transformed into
the same image, from glory
unto glory, as of our Lords
spirit. Then the maides did
plaste her hayte, and the
harnies head was wrin-
ged with frizzled tops: but
now the untrimmed head
knoweth this to suffice, that
it is couered.

Then did the very soft-
nes of feathers seeme hard,
and she could scarce lay in
the
The Widdowes glasse.
the rayled bedds: now she riseth betimes for to pray, and with her shrill voice preventing the others, in singing Alleluia, she is the first which beginneth to praye her Lord. She kneeleth upon the bare ground, and with often teares that face is purged, which before was defiled with painting. After prayer, there are long psalmes; & the seable neck, and wearyd knees, & sleepy eyes, for the earnest sorrow of the mind, can scant obtain any rest. The mourning gowne isleast fouled, when
The Widdowes glass. 267
when she dyeth on the ground. The courte pan-
tetle alfoardeth the price of gilt shoes unto the poore:
the girdle is not bellet with gold & preious stones, but
of woven, and most pure, because of the simplicity,
& lucas may rather trai-
ten the garments, then ad-
dorne them.

If the Scorpion enuy-
eth so good a purpofe, and
with flattering [peach per-
erved against to eate of the
forbidden tree; instead of
a fohe, let him be cruished
with a curfe; & whilst he

Z 2 dyeth
268 The Widdowes glasse.
dyeth in his poyson let him
haue this answere: Go after
me Satan: which is as much
to say, as Aduerlary: for he
is the Aduerlary of Christ,
and an Antichrist, whosoe-
er is displeased with the
precepts of Christ.

I pray you, what have
we done like unto the Apo-
files, that they are so offen-
ded? They for sake their a-
ged Father with their ship
and nets: the Publican ri-
feth from the custom-house
& followeth our Saviour:
The disciple which desired
to returne home, and bidd
his
The Widdowes glasse. 269
friends too well, is forbi-
den by your Matiers voice.
The burial of a Father is
not allowed, & it is a kind
of piety, for our Lord to be
voyd of pitty. We, because
we goe not in siilkes, are e-
steemed Monks, because we
are not oranke, neither o-
pen our mouthes vnto di-
folous laughter, we are cal-
called graue and melancho-
ly. If our coate be not gor-
geous, we straight heare
that common Proverb: He
is an hypocrite, and decea-
ting Grecian.

Let them vse euern yet

3 3  more
The Widdowes glasse.
more rude (coffes;) and carry
about with them men flui-
ted with fat paunches. Our
Blesilla will laugh, and not
duldaire to hear the reproa-
ches of croking frogges ;
wheras her Lord & Mai-
ster was called Beelzebub.

Hitherto S. Hierome.
And there might be heer let
downe many of his Epistles
of the same subiect in praise
and commendacion of the
Crowne and Merit of Wid-
dowhood, if this little trea-
sile were capable therof, or
that it were our intention
to make heereof a great vo-
lume.
The Widdowes glass. 271
sume. And therefore we will
content our selves at this
tyme with some briefe Ad-
vertisementes of his, con-
cerning the same subject.

CHAP. V.

Advertisementes to Widdowes,
out of the same S. Hierome

Many are the Instruc-
tions & documents,
which the ancient Fathers,
have set down for veruous
& devout Widdowes. And
first of all we will produce
what we find written by S.
Hierome aforesaid in divers
places of his works, in the
briefest manner we can, not to overwary the Widdow-
Reader.

As those Widdowes (sayth S. Hierome) who when they were married, did on-
ly study to please their husband; so let those, who are now freed from carnal mar-
riage, seek and study only to please God, whom they have chosen for their spouse
in place of their former husbands.

As Widdowes whilst they were ioyned to the world, did vue the vanity of
the world: so let them now
being
The Widdowes glasse. 273
being joined to God, banish from their harts all vanities.

As Widdowes, whilst they were married in the world, studied how to nourish and pamper their bodies, for the bearing of children, & supporting the burden of Marriage; so now let them keep sobriety, and bring their body into temperance, and subject the same to the spirit, thereby to be able to serve their second Spoule Christ Jesus, in their sacred and spiritual Marriage.

Lee
274. The Widdoares glasse.

Let a Widdow be so much the more a lover of Chastity, by how much all her actions, wordes, and workes, may fawour of pusi-

ty.

Let her never be alone, as neere as possible, with any man, that she need not be ashamed, whensoever she is seen to converse with another.

Let her always avoid the company of vaine, idle, and sensuall persons; especially of Widdows that should be so giuen: nor so much as permit any such to come
The Widdoires glasse. 275
come neere vnto her.

Let her take great heed
ever to detract, or murmure, or speake cuill of any
man. Let her also auoyd
those who vse to murmure,
and pernit them not vpon
any occasion to speake cuill
of any person in her presen-
ce, to the end that those
who visit her, may be edifi-
yed by her vertuous com-
portment.

She must also have a
great care of her honesty
and reputation, of which
she ought to be alwayes so
jealous, and fearful, that
her
276 The Widdowes glasse. 
her speach, her face, and 
all the actions of her body, 
yea her very garments may 
demonstrate the same; to 
the end that no occasion be 
given to others, nor to much 
as to thinke the contrary of 
her.

By how much more 
younge she is; by so much 
the more ought she to be 
grane, and venerable in all 
her actions.

Let her not take too 
much pleasure, or delight in 
singing, especially of songs; 
but let her recreate her selfe 
honestly with those of her 
owne
The Widow's glass. 277.

owne house and family.

Let her alwaies haue at hand, some book of devotion; & let her haue often recourse vnto prayer, which is the readiell way to drive away all vayne and enuill thoughts, which the Enemy may put into her mind.

And for that, the flesh hath continually combat with the spirit, let her vs abstinence, and other mortifications, to subdue the same, according to the cou.

sell of her prudent Ghostly Father.

As Anger and Choleris
278 The Widdowes gliffe.
naturall oftentimes to a man: so neuer to be over-
comen therwith is most pro-
per to a Christian. Let the
widdow therefore take great
heed thereof.

Let her alwayes have be-
fore her eyes the examples
of Indub, and Anne the Pro-
phetele, widdowes, who
continually night and day
imployed their time in
prayer, fasting, and virtu-
ous exercises. For which
God gave to one of them so
much grace and valour, as
to overcome and cut off the
Diuels head, figured in that
The Viuowes glisse. 279
of Halofernes; and to the o-
ther, to be the first widow
who should embrace, and
receive the Saviour of the
world in her arms, and
thereby made partaker of
divers divine secrets.

Let her consider that her
soul is the daughter of
God, and therefore she ought
not to use any strange or fant-
istical ornaments to adorn
her body; but let all her
study and care be to adorn
her soul, as it becometh
the daughter of God.

She must not content
herself to have begun any
A a 2 thing
The widows glass.

thing well, but the must study how to end it well: although St. Paul began to do evil, and ended with good; and Jude contrariwise began to do well, but ended in evil.

To what purpose should there be colours & varnishes, to paint the face of a Christian? Such an ornament of the body becomes not one, that serves Christ, but rather one who serves Antichrist. And if any look towards heaven with such a face, Christ will not know them, since they have
The Widdowes glaffe 281 have changed that shape which hegan them.

Why do we promise onething, and do another? And why doth the tongue prayse Charity, & the body exercise Impurity?

It is a very great vertue, & worthy to be sought after with great diligence, care, and watchfullnes, to wit, to be born in the flesh, & not to live according to the flesh.

I: S. Paul feared, sayning: I doe not the good that I would, and therefore I do bring my body into servitude. Which A a 3
of vs is there, who can be assur'd in this case?

If David and Sal.mn, the familiar friends of God, have beene ouercome, by the temptations of their flesh: who is he, that will not fear to fall, walking upon so slippery an yce?

Let a widdow continuallly thinke of doing serioulsy the will of God, that she may be worthy often to heare that sayling of our Saviour in the Ghospel: Not those who say lord, lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who shall doe the will of my Father.
The Widdowes glasse. 283
Father which art in heauen. And
that also which he saith in
another place: Why do ye call
me Lord and Master, and do not
the thinges I command you to do?
And againe: He that dath the
will of my Father, is my brother,
my sister, and my Mother.

Moreover God saith by his Prophet: The Sonne
honours the Father, and the Ser-
vant the Master: But I am your
Father, and where is my honour?
I am your Master, and where is
my service? Wherby it is ma-
nifest that whosoever doth
not the will of God, nor
loves him as a Father, nor
A 4

true
284. The Widowere's glass.

Serves and feares him as a Lord and Master, is (as ho.
ly David sayth) for that he is a sinner, & hath done evil.

Labour, that thou mayst be rich; but so, as the poore may gainc thereby. And it wilbe most pleasing to God, if thou gie what thou canst possibly spar: to the poore.

Wheneuer a widde.
ow takes her repast, let her thinke on the poore, if the be of ability; at least let her gie what she can, according to her riches, or po-

erty. And let her also think
The Widdowes glasse. 285
at this tyme, that by and by after she must fall to her prayers, or read some good spiritual lesson, or exercise her selfe about some other devout and pious worke.

Whilest a Widdow hath meanes, let her make vs to her selfe friendes by Almes; that when the same is wanting, and all spent, they may receive her into the everlasting tabernacles.

Give vs to all those that shall demand of you, if you be able, and specially to those who be good. Cloath the naked, feed the hun-

gry
236 The widdowes gaffe.

gry, and visite the fiche.

Every tyme that you stretch forth your hand, to give to the poore, remem-
ber that it is Jesus Christ to whom you give: and behold, how your sweet lord,
and Saviour beggeth, to lay vp riches for you, against you have need.

Think often that within a short tyme, you are to dye, and leave this world;
and so, you shall have little lift to thinke of a second worldly marriage.

Carry your selfe so, in the gouernement of your house
The VViddowes glassfe. 287
houle and family, that all
may acknowledge you for
their Mistresse; and also re-
uerence you for your holy
and vertuous life.

Fly all sorts of persons,
that haue any fuppiration of an
evil name; it is not inough
to say, My Conscience is clear I
care not what others say of me;
but take you away all occa-
sion from others of thin-
king ill, wherby God may
be in any sorte offended.

Seeke first of all the
Kingdome of heaué purely,
and all other things neces-
sary shall be giuen vnto you
aboun-
288 The Widdowes glasse abundantly.

A Widdow ought to flye all inordinate delights of the sense of falling, and for this cause, God would not have hony to be burnt in his honor in the church, but oyle, which cometh from the bitter Olive-tree, and is of an unpleasant taste.

S. Paul did chastise and afflict his body directly, that he might not become reprobate. And who will warrant a young widow for her Chastity, if she continually fill her belly with variety of delicate viands?
The Widdowes glasse. 289

It is not possible, that any one now adayes should be exempted from the obliquy of mens tongnes, since it is become, as it were, a kind of pastime among the bad, to speake eull of the good: but a false bruite is soone past; and this present life of ours, doth giue vs wittnesse of our life past. If any speake ill of thee, amend thy fault, and the rumour will quickly cease.

Nobility, Beauty, yong Age and Riches, make widdowes amiable vnto every one; And how many more
290 The Widdowes gisfe.
They have to fight against, for the conservati-
on of their Chastity; so much more great shall be
their reward and recompence, if they manfully resist
and over come.

Fly the company of
those widdowes, who are
widdowes not in will, but
of a kind of necessity; as also
those who live in such sort,
that they may seem not to
have lost their husbands.

God did not lend a widdy
dow riches to be idle, or to
spend the same unthriftile,
but rather to the end the
migh
The Widow's Glass. 297
might labour the more, especi-
ally with her owne hands, and to have dayly
somthing to give thereof to
the poore.

Have continually before
your eyes, and in your me-
mory, this sentence: That
which you would have to be done
unto your selves, do you the same
unto another.

Do not easily believe
euill of another, for this
is the property of a light &
giddy mind, which for this
reason is seldom in quiet.

Do not regard that which
another prayseth in thee;
292. The Widdowes glasse.
but weigh and ponder the
same well with thy selfe &
in thy owne conscience.

Speake little, and not
without necessity, & thou
shalt auoyde a number of
sinnes and imperfections.

Esteeme nothing more
amiable, or precious, than
Humility which is the kee-
per & guardian of all other
virtues. And know, that
ther is nothing which ma-
keth thee more regarded of
God and men, then Humi-
licity, our sweet Saviour say-
ing: In whom shall I repose or
rest, but in the humble?

This
This Humility must not be exteriorly taygnet, nor in wordes only; but truly perfect, and in the hart: for the Pride, which is turned into Humility, is extreme deformed: and the vices with are covered ouer with the veyle of Vertue, are insupportable, & odious in the sight of God.

Do not preferre thy self, before another, either for that thou art Noble, Rich, or Fayre, or for any other exterior ornament of thy body: but rather esteeme thy selfe the more base and abject.
294 The Widdowes glaft.
abject, therby to be truly
greater in the sight of God.
For we are all borne of the
same parents Adam & Eve,
and all redeemed with the
selfe same bloud of Iesus
Christ.

Do not regard the con-
ditions of persons, but their
affections: for their maners
and carriage make them as
well base, as noble. It is true
liberty, and noblenes indee,
according to God, not
to be a slave to sinne. Who
hath byn more famous or
illustrious then S. Peter, who
was euë but a poore Fish-
man?
The Widdowes Glaffe 295

man? Who among women hath been more noble than the B. Virgin, who was ne-
nerthelesse espoused but to a poore Carpenter? To this Fisherman, God notwith-
standing gave the keyes of Heauen: and this humble Virgin was made worthy to be the Mother of God himselfe, and her spouse S. Ihesu his Foller-Father.

Have some convenient & retyred place in thy house whither thou maist repayre ofte to talke & trait with God alone, as well about that which belongeth to thy
296 The Widdowes glasse.

Thy selte, as to thy family.

Content thy selfe to have lost the first degree of Virginity; & that by the third, thou art come to the second: to wit, that by the endeav'our of marriage, thou art come to the continency of Widdow-hood.

Many women whilst their husbands are alive, make vows of Chastity & are continent. And shall not others who are freed from their husbands, and are become widowe, much sooner performe the same?

God gave thee a husband, and
The Widdowes glasse. 297
and God hath taken him from thee againe, & therby
made thee free from the servitude of men. Do thou
therefore tender him due thankes by thy chaste and virtuous living in widdowhood.

Let the yong widdow, who cannot (or rather will not) live chaste, rather take a husband, then the diuell.

You know by experience how many troubles cares & anguishes of mynd marryage drawes with it: Now that you have vomited up all the bitterness thereof, wherefore will you be againe caught
298 The Widdowes glasse.
cought with the same: The byrd, that hath once had her foot in the limetwigs,
wiltake heed for comming there againe, I trow.

Make a Vertue of Necessity: and leaue not a thing certaine, for an uncertayne if you be wise.

Take heed of the counsell of your Nurse, and others of your house and family, for that they do always set before your eyes something that may please yow, and that may turne to their owne profit & commoditie.

If
The Widdowes glasse. 299

If in doing well your Father, or carnal friends be heauy and grieued, your Spoufe Christ Iesus will reioyce: And if your fami- ly weepe, the Angells will finge.

You do not so much be- long to those of whom you were borne, as to him of whome yow were regene- rat, & borne a new; redee- med by his pretious bloud and death.

Let the yong Widdow, if her flomacke be weake, vse a little wyne; but let her take heed of meates that be hoate
300 The Widdowes glasse.
hoat of nature.

A Heathen women once said, He that had my first love, was my husband: and he that hath take it away, let him keep it with him still in his grave. If an In-
fidell did so much dispraise and dislike a second mar-
riage: what shall be expec-
ted that a Christian widd-
dow should do?

All these sayings are of good old S. Hierome: in ga-
thering wherof I haue byn
the longer, for that I hope they wilbe pleasing & co-
fortable to widdows. Now let vs see a little what S. Au-
gustine
The VViddowes glasse. 301
Augustine will say vnto vs, concerning the same subject.

C H A P. VI.

Documents for VViddowes, out of S. Augustine.

The widow that hath Children, ought to bring them vp, and instruct them in the feare of God. And this must be her principall care. Neither ought she to much to glory that she hath children, as that she hath indeed good and vertuous children.

If she resolue to keep her
302 The VViddowes glasse.
dowhood, let her giue
thankes to good, who hath
by his holy inspiration,
put this resolution into her
hart, & let her in all things
praise his holy Name.

Let her not despite those
who have not the intentiō
toremayne widdowes: but
let her know, that it is a
speciall gift of God; and
that he giues it to whome
he pleaseth, and in divers
manners.

Let her imploy as
much tyme to please and
serve God, as she hath done
to please and serve her hus-
band:
The Widdowes glasse. 303
banc: and by how much
the more she shall please
him, by so much more shall
she be happy.

Let her seek to please
God with the beauty of her
soul, as she hath done be-
tore to please the world
with the beauty of her bod-
ny: to wit, with her humi-
llity, chastity, wildeome,
love &c.

In place of carnall &
worldly pleasures, let there
succeed spiritual, to wit,
prayer, reading, good
thoughts, good works,
requenting the Sacraments,

C. c. 2  hope
The Widdowes glasse.

hope of eternall life, elevation of the mind to God, & continual giving of thanks to his divine Majesty. These and the like are the true delights and pleasures of a true and virtuous Widdow.

Let her have a special care, that the love of riches, and Honours succeed not in place of the love of her husband. For many have there beene who have vanquished and overcome the lascivious wantonnes of the flesh, and yet have been themselves overcome with coquetousnes: and have loyed
The Widdowes glasse. 305
ued riches so much the more disordinatly, by how much they haue repressed the concupiscence, & desires of the flesh.

Let her exercise her selfe in all true vertue, as well in her young age as in her old; & as much as her health and ableness of body will permit.

When she loues God with her whole hart, all kind of labour and toyle seems sweet and light. And if it seeme pleasant vn. to a huter, to follow a wild and sauage beast, with so great
Widdowes glass.

great labour, toyle, yea and
danger of his life, to take
him: what should it seeme
unto a soule inflamed with
love, to take paynes for the
getting of God himselfe?

Let not a Widdow,
though never so rich, noble,
faire, yea and though she
have never so faire an issue
of children, for this cause
rejoyce; but accompt her
selfe as one desolate in this
world; not relying upon
any other consolation, but
wholly upon God; esteem-
ing her selfe but as a pil-
grime upon earth, banished
into
The Widdowes glasse. 507
into this world from her heavenly Countrey, & subject to many perils, and misteryes, a great way distant from eternall happynes, & most unceraine ever to attaine therunto: And therefore let her lament with King David, & S. Paul, who had the like thoughts and cogitations.

If she do abound in riches, yet let her not set her affection thereon. And above all things, let her condemn countoulines and anarie, the holy Scripture saying: There is nothing more
pervious then courteousnes, nothing more wicke then the love of money; since that for money the Courteous man will sell his own soule. And the Apostile sayth: That courteousnes is the root of all evil. Our Saviour also in the Ghorespell teelleth vs. How hard a thing it is for those that be rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven: And that a Camell shall ever more easilie through an needle, then a rich man into the Kingdom of heaven. By riches are understood all earthly things, and goods, disordinatly affected, or sought after.

When
The Widdowes glass. 309

When a widdow hath done her devotions, let her never be idle; let her take in her hand either wooll, or flaxe, let her card, let her spinne, let her wind the yarn that others have spun, let her twist it, let her see there be no fault in the worke, and if there be any let her mend it, & do what is necessary. Being thus continually occupyed, the longest dayes will seem very short & pleasant: For the saule that is idle is full of bad desires, as the holy Scripture intimuateth. And nothing can
The Widow's glass.

can be so precious in the sight of God, as to give to the poor the labour of her own handes.

Let a Widow take heed of adorning or attireing her head with pearsles, Jewells, or precious carcanets, nor use frizeled hayse; for these be the true signs of hell-fire; but let her seek another sorte of precious stones, and weare them, to wit, Humility, Fear of God, and other virtues; to the end, she may buy therewith that inestimable pearle & margarite, Christ Jesus.
The Widdowes glass. 311

Jesus the spouse of the soule.

Finally let a Widdow use discretion, maturity, & prudence in all her actions: let her consider who she is, & who he is to whom she hath consecrated her Wid- dowhood; to the end she may obtain his earthly benediction for her selfe, and her children in this world, & life eternall in the next.

CHAP. VII.

Divers memorable Examples of true Widdowhood.

We have spoken already of the Fa-
mous and glorious Widdowes Iudith, and Anne the Prophetesse, before the co-
mimg of Christ. Let vs now set downe some other ex-
amples. And first of all occu-
curs that most noble and illustrious Roman Widdow 
Paula, of whom S. Hier-
tome writh, That so loone 
as her husband was dead, 
comenning the pompes & 
pleasures of the world, even in the middest of so gree 
wealth and abundance of 
riches, chose the state of per-
petuall Continency in widdowhood.

Bleska
The VViddowes glasse. 313

Blesills likewise renowned for her beauty, wealth, and honour, her husband deceased, & the being left a young and noble Lady, chose the holy State of widowhood, by which she became renowned to all posterity.

Melania was no lesse praiseworthy, who when her husband being dead, & not as yet buryed, she caused the bodies of two of her loneliness (of very great hope and expectation, a little before also deceased) to be brought unto her husbands body
body, where after extreme weeping, sighing, & drow-ninge of her selfe almost in teares, and euen loathing as it were marriage for the cares, troubles, & torments that it brings, without any longer deliberation, consecrated her selfe unto God, by vows of perpetuall Wid-dowhood.

Eustafia likewise a Ro-man Lady is not inferior to the aboue named, whose husband dying, she being in her young & flourishing age, fayre, noble, rich, con-tinned a second marriage, wher-
The Widdowes glasse. 315
whereunto she was solicited by the Emperor himselfe.
And so dismissing her servants and retinue, retired her selfe into Thebaus, where she lived most Saintly in perpetual widowhood.

The same did Elizabeth daughter to the King of Hungary, who being deprived of her Lord and Husband, presently contemned the pleasures of the Court, and vanities of the world, giving her selfe wholly to the service of poore, sicke, & needy people; not enduring that any man besides Iesus Christ,
The Widow's glass.

Christ, should be called her Spouse, which she truly acknowledged in the poor.

The noble and most worthy example of Constantia, daughter to Constantine the Great, Emperor, is admirable: who while her husband was yet living, determined to receive the crown and merit of Continency. For that her Father the Emperor marrying her to Halicarnus Captain of the Roman Army, the first persuaded him to be a Christian, afterward to give over the warres, to lay aside his purple,
The Widdowes glasse 317 purple, and finally for the loue of Jesus Christ, to vow perpetuall Chastity.

The same did Chunegundis wife to Henry the Emperour, who persuaded him also to live in perpetuall Chastity, as she had vowed to do; whereby they both became Saintes of Gods Church, renowned to all posterity.

Neither must we passe over in silence the most worthy and noble example of Galla daughter to Simmacathua Consul of Rome, whose husband deceasing, and the...
The Widow's glass.
left a young and beautiful
widow, was so assailed
with infirmities, that her
body became full of botches
and sores. She consulted
with her Doctors, who
all agreed, that if she would
be cured, she must marry a-
gaime. Whose counsell she
so much disliked, that she
said, She would rather en-
dure the same all the days
of her life, yea death itself,
then marry againe: which
purpose she truly observed
most Saintly in holy Wid-
dowhood to her dying-
day.

Ania
The Widdowes glasse. 319

Ania also another Roman Lady, and widdow of great worth and nobility, yong, & fayre, her husband being dead, which he had enjoyed but a small while, was earnestly solicited by her friends to a second marriage, which she verily refused. Being by them demanded the cause why, she said. If (quoth she) I should marry again, & find a good husband like to my former, I should live continually in fear to loose him by death: and least I should chance to light upon a bad husband, I will

D d 4 not
The Widdowes glasse.
not aduenture upon such a disgrace. An act and pur-
pole surely wise, and graue, worthy to be considered attentiuely by widdowes;
that defyre to live out of danger.

As nobly and prudently did Olimpia of Constantinople, disciplic of S. John ChrysoStome, and the widdow of Nebridi-
us Prefect of the Army, a man of most noble Re-
nowne, who hauing byn married but twenty mo-
neths only, was exhorted by Theodosius the Emperor
to marry againe, since the was
The VViddowes glasse. 321
was both yong, fayre, no-
ble, rich, learned, and held
of euere one for a virgin. She
made this Answere. If my
Lord the Emperour (quoth
she) would have me to mar-
ry agayne, why did he so
soone deprive me of my
husband (for he was slayne
in the Emperours warres)
who was so agreeable to my
nature, and myne to his?
But because his Highnesse
knowes me to be vnhit for a
married Estate, it seemes he
hath quickly deluere me
from that servitude: and
made me print in my hart
the
322 The Widow's grace.
the delight of Continency in widdowhood.

And let no man impute that the continency of widdowhood is so much recommended to Christian women, feigning that among the Gentiles, specially the old Romans, the same was so greatly honoured, that when a widdow died, her head was adorned with a Crowne of Continency, and to carryed in solemn triumph to her grave.

The said Romans did also attribute another honour to the Continency of widdo-
Widowhood, which was, that on the wedding day, there were no women suffered to come neere, much lesse to touch the Bride, but only such as had beene the wives of one husband, to wit, such as had beene but once married; commanding all that had beene twice married (yea though they were Widdowes) to keep a loose of, as prophan, impure, and for telling of an euill fortune to the happines of marriage.

They did moreover account it a signe of great in-
324 The Widdowes glasse. temperance in any woman, to marry more then once. And for this cause one Portia a Noble Lady being in company of other Matrons and Dames upon a tyme; & understanding that one of the had beene twice married, sayd vnto her: Madame, The happy, and chaste woman never marries but once. A saying worthy of a most prudent and wise Lady. And conforme to this was that most laudable fact of Cornelia, daughter to Africanus & wife to Tyberius Gracchus, who when her husband was dea...
The Widdowes grisse. 325
sealed, refused a second Marriage with King Ptolomey,
accepting it an act of too great Intemperance so to
do.

And of no lesse praise & commendation was Continency in Widdow-hood,
held amongst the ancient Jews, in the old Testament
whereof before we have set downe the Examples of Judi-
th & Anne the Prophetesse,
and so needless to be here againe repeated.

The chaste Continency also of that holy and vertuous Widdow of Sarepta, is
not
326 The Widdowes glasse.
not vnknowne, to whome Meale & Oyle never wanted
during the tyme of that
great famine, till by gods
commandement it rayned
againe vpon the dry and
withered earth, whereby the
same became so moist and
fertile, as it filled the Coun-
treys round about with all
aboundance.
The Widowes glass. 327

CHAP. VIII.

Of the works of Mercy, Deuotion, Courage, and Constancy of
widowes. And of the Mantle, and the Ring.

Amongst many,
this is not the least,
most pious Consideration,
that in all Countreys
of Christendome, the no-
bile workees and monumets
of widowes are yet extant.
Nor shall we need at this
tyme to travaile out of our
owne Iland of England, to
view the same.

For it is well knowne,
that
328 The Widdowes glasse, that ther is scarce any City, Towne, yea or Borrough throughout all England, without some monument or other of pious widdowes.

For how many goodly Hospitalls, Almshouses Free-Schooles, yea some famous Churches also have you seene built, and endow'd with sufficient rents, & revenue by widows? How many High-wayes, Bridges, Wels, Crosses, haue byn made, and excuted by pious Widdowes, for the increase of devotion in the people
The Widdowes glasse. 229
people, and for the good of
their owne soules?
What Prayers, I pray
you, what Mortifications,
'Espérance, Night-watch-
inges giuing of almes, ha-
ue the devour Widdowes of
our Countrey in former ty-
mes (and now a dayes very
many also, but yet not com-
parable to the former) exer-
cised, for the loue of God;
taking a true delightherin
in their most Chast Widow-
hood, to serve their
spoule Christ Iesus, whome
they had chosen instead of
their deceased husbands?
Ec 5 How
330 The Widdowes glasse.

How many of prime Nobility have we had, in our Country, that have contented second marriages? And if we should recount all, we should perhaps surpass the greatest part of Christendom's basides, in that kind: some entering into Religion and becoming Nunnes, yea great Saints also; & others exercising works of mercy at home among the poor, to the great comfort of the distressed.

And to begin with Queens, how many I pray you
The Widowes glass. 331
you, haue we had in our little landle, that after the
death of their Lords, haue
set aside all pompe and va-
nity of the world, utterly
refusing a second marriage,
and haue either voluntari-
ly shut themselves vp in
Cloisters, there to spend
their dayes in prayer and
contemplation with God;
or els haue retyr'd to some
private place, continually
exercising themselves in de-
uotion and meditation of
heavenly things.

Before the Conquest our
land was more fertile in

Ec 4 4 this
The Widdowes glass.

This kind, as being nearer to their primitive servour, & that in few ages, the hath by newer since. For within the compass of 500 years, there have been about thirty Queens, that our Historics do make mention of, to have made themselves either Nuns in Monasteries as is above said, or else have lived privately at home, continuing in their Chaste widdowhood to their dying day.

Of the blood Royal, and other Noble families, the number is far greater; neyther
The Widdowes glasse. 333
neyther will it be to our
purpose in this place to re-
count them all. Only this I
note, that the greatest part
of the forlaid Queens (be-
sides others of noble fami-
lies) were many ages ago
acquited Saints, & for such
acknowledged throughout
Christendome; and many
Churches, Altars, and Mo-
numents of sanctity erected
in their honour, and their
very Names famous to all
Posterity. For to omit S. He-
len the Empresse, a Britisht
Widdow, and Mother to
Constantine the great the first
Christian
The Widdowes glasse.

Christian Emperour, we haue S. Ermenild & S. Ermenburge Queenes of Mercia, or middle Englishme, S. Algina mother, and S. Wilsfride wife to king Edgar the first Monarch of England; S. Edilburge, & S. Ethelwide Queenes of the Wessexons; S. Eadgith, S. Ethelburge, S. Chineburge, S. Easlede, S. Audrey Queenes of Northumberland; S. Osith Queene of the Eastsaxons; S. Sexburg Queene of Kent; S. Hereswide Q. of the Eastangles; S. Agatha, widdow of Prince Edward surnamed the Outlaw; S. Margaret Queene of Scotland.
The Widdowes glasse. 335
land, Maude the Empresse &c.
All these, and very many others, were most eminent in piety & devotion, both in their widowhood, and continency: yea some of the vowed chastity their Lords and Husbands yet living, as S. Edelburge Queen of the West Saxons, & S. Audrey Queen of Northumberland; at whose bodies and relics it hath pleased God to shew wondrous signes, and work many miracles to testify the same; whereby they have byneuer since, and still are honoured
The Widdowes glasse, honoured for Saints through throughout the world.

It was an ancient custome in our Iland (and the same continueth in some parts of Germany vntill this day) that in tyme of warre, plagues, famyne, or of any publicke necessity, there were in many Citties and Townes a certaine number of widdowes ordained to watch & pray continually, night and day, in the Churches, by their turns or courses, one or more to-gethers; because it was held, that their prayers were of more
The Widowes glass. 337
more efficacy, and power with Almighty God, to af-
swage his wrath, then the prayers of other common
people, as persons dedicated wholly to his service, by the
observation of Continency, in their Chaste, and Holy
widdowhood.

Neither is the true Valor and Constancy of de-
mure Widowes, in our Country, left to be praised
and admired; since in that
kind also we have gone be-
yond many other Nations,
especially in these latter days,
when as their noble and
F heroicall
heriocal Examples heerof haue made them famous to posterity; whether we respect their courage & constancy in suffering both loss of goods & imprisonment for their faith and religion, as glorious Confessours; yet the shedding of their blood in testimony of the same, as triumphant Martyrs. For upon some of these widdowes hath God bestowed an invincible courage and fortitude, joyned with an admirable patience in suffering for the Catho-like Cause, not only imprisonment.
prisonmet of their bodys, but losse all of goodes and fortunes, to their wholly
undoing in their temporall estates in this world, that they might receive a more
plentifull reward and me-xir in the world to come. And what Catholike in
England is there, that cannot witnesse the same suffi-
ciently?

Upon others, hath sweet Iesus, of his infinite love, and superabundant Cha-
rity bestowed a more high and supereminent gift, not
only in suffring, as is afor.
said, losse of goods & liberty in this life; but also to scale the same with their dearest bloud, for his Namesake, Honour, Faith, and Religion. And this not upon the meanest fort, but even upon some of the Bloud Royall of England; as is well knowne in the Lady Margaret Plantagenet widdow, Countesse of Salisbury, and daughter to the Duke of Clarence, in time of K. Henry the 8. & in the Soueraigne Lady Q. Marry of Scotland, Widdow, and mother to our Soueraigne that now reigneth; upon the
The Widdowesglaffe 34r
the deuout widdowes also
Ms. Marg. Clitherow at Yorke,
Ms. Anne Lyne at London, &e o-
thers, in the late raigne of
Q. Elizabeth: All guing
their liues for the constant
profection & defence of the
Catholike Faith, &e therby
made worthy of a crown of
a Martyrdom, in their holy
widowhood.

Of the Mantle, &e the King.

It was also an ancient
custome in England,
(which I have not read to
have byn practifed in other
Courtesyes) for widdowes
The Widdowes glasse.

to weare a proper, and peculiar upper garment, called a Mantle, by which they were knowne, and distinguished from other people.

This Mantle was a long, loose Garment, which covered them all over, & did touch the ground, made of blacke cloth ordinarilie, though others, who were more noble, vsed them of stuff, yet always black; signifying thereby that they were accounted as dead to the world, & to sped the rest of their days in mourning for their own sins, & the sinner of
The VVidowes glasse. 343
of others, for who of their
Charity they did pray.
It seemes that this custo-
me was in use in our Iland
long before the Conquest,
about 900. yeares ago. And
the first that I read of, to
have brought in the same,
was S. Theodore Archb. of
Canterbury, sent into England
by Pope Vitalian, about the
yeare 660. And a little after
him againe, by S. Adhelm, Bish-
op of Sherborne amogst the
West Saxons, who liued in the
yeare of Christ 709. of who
it is recorded, that he gave
hallowed Mantles to divers,
F f 4    both
both Virgins & Widdowes who had vowed Virginity & Continency: after the taking whereof, it was not lawful for them to marry, under paine of grievous sinne.

Afterwards, the same became more frequent, & was ordinarily vted throughout England, even until this last age of Schisme & Heresy in the same. At the receiving whereof, were vted divers pious and godly Cerimo-
nyes: to wit, that such widdowes, as had for a certaine number of yeares, li-
ued
The Widowes glass. 245

ued in Continency & wid-
dowhood (after the death
of their first husb'ads only)
& well proued themselves
therein, receaued from the
Bishop, a hallowed Mantle,
kneeling before the high al-
tar, in the Church, in tyme
of Solemine Masle; as also a
Ring of Gold, or Silver,
made plaine and round, like
to a wedding-Ring, which
was also hallowed. And
this Mantle was put about
their neckes, by the Bishop
himselfe, he pronouncing in
the meane while, a short
prayer; as also the ring vp o
the
their fourth finger, with a prayer likewise pronounced by the bishop. After which receiving the Bishops blessing, was sronge Te Deum laudamus, in thanksgiving; & the widow thus adorned (with a veyle also over her head) was led home to her house by two grave matros, and afterward held and reputed for a sacred person, all the days of her life.

Nor after this, was it lawfull for her ever to marry, or to fall from this her pious purpose, without a most grieuous syn, & other Ecclesiasticall
The Widdowes glasse. 347
Ecclesiastical punishments ordained for the same, having once receau'd that hallow'd Robe, & Ring, as a pledge of her faith made to her Celestiall Spouse Christ Jesus, by so publike and solemn a Ceremony of his Church.

And we read, that about the tyme of K. Henry the first, a widdow was severely punished by the Bishop, for marrying, after she had receau'd the Matle & the Ring, in the manner above said. Wherby it seemeth, that the custome was to make some vow.
348 The Widow's glasse.

vow of perpetuall Continency to the Bishop, at the receauing thereof; and thereby became subject to Ecclesiastial power, & punishment also, if she trespassed, or sacrilegiously violated the same.

FINIS.