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D. M. ROGERS

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The Treasure of Vowed Chastity
in Secular Persons
1621

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THE
TREASVRE
OF VOWED
CHASTITY

Bis. in secular Persons.
Alto the
WIDDOWES
GLASSE.

Written by the RR. Fathers Leonard
Lessius, and Fulvius Andriolus,
both of the Society of Iesus.

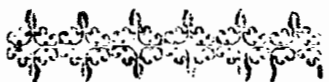
*Colligij
Anglic*



*Societas
Leody*

Translated into English by
I. W. P.

Permissa Superiorum, 1622.



TO THE
HONORABLE
AND RIGHT
Vertuous Gentlewoman,
Mrs. Anne Vaux.

HONORABLE,
AND RIGHT
VVORTHY,
The constant
report of your vertuous
+ 2 life,

THE EPISTLE

life, in the State where-
of this little Booke entre-
ateth, hath inuited me to
entitle the same vnto
your Name in particuler,
which was written for
the profit of all in gene-
rall, who haue a true de-
fire 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:

attentiuely read, & considered the feuerall passages therein, they will remaine abundantly satisfied . For it was no part of the Authors intention (who is knowne to be famous, both for learning and piety) thereby to derogate frō other Stats of life ; but rather, by shewing the good, & commodity, which may proceed by embracing of this ; those that be more per-

THE EPISTLE

fest in themselves, might
heerby, be the more ho-
noured, and reuerenced
of all.

Neither, indeed, is
there any thing at al pro-
posed in this ensewing
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 auncient Fathers of
those dayes: Howsoever
the

DEDICATORY.

the same may seeme not to haue 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

THE EPISTLE

as desire to practise this
state of vowed Chastity,
remaining in the world,
will neither be small, or
uncertaine, if the same
be embraced with that
sincerity of hart and ver-
tuous manner of life as it
ought: wherein I know
your selfe to haue made
good prooffe, these many
years, by reaping a plen-
tiful haruest of the fruits,
and heaping vp a masse
of Treasure, against the
com-

DEDICATORY.

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

To this little Trea-
tise, I haue adioyned the
WIDDOVVE'S 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 professiō
of

TH**E** **E**P**I**S**T**L**E**
of that noble, and wor-
thy state of chaste Wid-
dowhood, may seeme to
clayme a iust Title ther-
unto. But I deemed not
my labour in translating
it, worthy to be presen-
ted to so honourable Ma-
trons, in a Dedicatory a
part: not doubting but
the same wilbe more gra-
teful, comming through
your handes, who are so
neere a kin vnto them,
both by Nature & Grace;
seeing

DEDICATORY.

seeing Virginitie , and
Widdowhood, haue euer
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 som better gift, wher-
with I intend to present
you ere it be long. And
in the meane tyme, a-
mongst

T H E E P I S T L E
mong the many of your
pious and deuout exerci-
ses, forget him not, who
will euer remaine

*Your deuoted
seruant,*

I. W.

T H E



THE
GOOD AND
COMMODITY

*Of the State of life, which
some professe, living in
the world, and vowing
Chastity.*

THERE be not
wanting in these
our daies, a-
mongst secular
persons very ma-
ny, as well Widdowes, as
A Virgins

2 *The Treasure*

Virgins, who aspiring to perfection, haue a desire (as farre as they may conveniently) to sequester themselves from the troubles and incombrances of the world, thereby to imploy their mindes more freely and securely in the seruice of God.

For whome notwithstanding, to liue in Monasteries, either it is not so cōuenient. or els (grounded vpon sufficiēt reasons) they may be otherwise resolued. For the wayes & manners of seruing God are diuers, & those who cannot aspire

of Chastity. 3

to the highett & 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 apparell, and taking a plaine & simple habit, consecrate their Virginitie to Almighty God; and auoyding the conuersation of secular persons (as much as they may) do imploy themselves wholly in the offices of Charity and Deuotion.

Yet neuertheless, be-

A 2 cause

4 *The Treasure*
cause there be not wanting
som, who (I know not out
of what zeale) carpe at the
Institution of such manner
of life, I am for this respect
wonne, at the intreaty of a
special friend, to declare out
of holy Scripture, and an-
cient Fathers, in what de-
gree such kind of life in the
Catholike Church is to be
esteemed: for the satisfacti-
on of whom in a matter of
such impertance, and so
much perrayning to the
good of soules, I have pur-
posed 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 pious and laudable.

In the second, the same is proved by Examples out of holy Scripture, and Ecclesiasticall histories.

In the third, the same is convinced by the Authorities of holy Fathers.

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

In the fifth, the same is also confirmed out of the good & commodity which ensue of Chastity.

6 *The Treasure*

The sixt, contayneth a solution to certaine objections made, concerning the merits of Marriage & Chastity.

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

The eight, sheweth that this manner of life, is truly and properly called an Estate.

CHAF.

of Chastity. 7

CHAP. I.

Wherin it is proued out of Scripture, that, that kind of life, wherein some, Men or VVome, living in the world, leauing of costly apparrell, & vsing plain and modest attire, doe vnder Chastity, is laudable and meritorious before God.

TH E R E be many in this age who vsing ouer much the liberty of their owne Iudgments, disallow of this kind of life: yet by what reasons, or vpon what grounds they are moued so to do, besides those

A 4 which

8 *The Treasure*

which *Iovinian* the ancient heretike (& these also of his coate euen in these tymes) hath allcaded, I cannot imagine. Neither do I think they haue any other, vnles perhaps they consider the difficulties which this manner of life is subiect vnto, & are terrifyed with more dangers of liuing chaste in this, then in the state of religion. For which cause they may thinke it more secure to vow Chastity in the one, then in the other. But neuerthelesse it is to be held as a point of faith, that this
State

of Chastity. 9

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 it selfe.

This is evidently convinced out of holy Scripture, wher our Lord himselfe (Matth. 19.) doth openly commend this Institution. For first when the Apostles hearing the speeches of our Blessed Saviour concerning Marriage, answered, *Si ista est &c.* If such be the condition of man, linked vnto a
wife

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 seruitude. To whom our Lord replied, approving that which they had sayd: *Non omnes capiunt &c.* al apprehēd not this speech but only such to whome it is giuen: for there be those who haue made themselves Eunuches for the kingdom of heauen &c. He who can vnderstand this, let him vnderstand it.

Hecce

of Chastity. 11

Heere our Lord spake of single life in generall, commending the same also in those who liue in the world; first, when approving the answer of his aforesayd Apostles (who then thought not of liuing in Monalteryes, or being Religious) he sayd: *Non omnes capiunt &c.* All apprehend not this word; as though he should haue sayd, you rightly infer, that it is not conuenient to marry, but few there be who vnderstand a thing of so great, & high a Mystery.

Second.

Secondly, when distinguishing three sorts of Eunuches, he sheweth, that those do greatly please him, who haue made themselues Eunuches, that is to say, who haue exempted themselves from Marriage, for the Kingdome 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 enioy it more safely and abundantly.

Thirdly when he saith, He that can vnderstand this mystery, let him vnderstand
it

it: as if he should haue said,
I cōstraine 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 cōmend this state
in generall, but also in particu-
lar according to which the apostles
vnderstood him, & which might
haue been practized at that
tyme; it followeth manife-

B stly

lity, that the same is commendable, and most acceptable vnto God, being practised also by those that liue in the world.

Neither can it be said, that our Lord spake not of the vow of Chastity, but onely of the simple purpose and vse therof: for to be made an Eunuch, is not onely to abtaine from Marriage, but also to bereaue ones selfe of al ability therof, and of all other carnall pleasure; which is done in effect also, by the vow of Chastity. For euen as the corporall

of Chastity. 15

corporali making one an Eunuch, cuts off all sufficiency or carnall act, or delight: So likewise the spirituall making one an Eunuch, which is effected by the vow of chastity, disables a morall faculty so farre, that we may not vsee 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 (iustly) impossible.

From whence it is, that
holy

holy Fathers vtuallly out of
this place of Scripture pro-
ue the vow of Chastity, be-
cause a spirituall making
one an Eunuch, cannot be
otherwise effected, then by
vow. See *S. Augustine* in his
booke of holy Virginitie .
cap. 30. *S. Hierom* in his book
against *Iovinian* , and vpon
this place of *S . Matthew*
cap. 19 . The same is cleerly
proued out of the Apostle *1.*
Corinth . 7. where he greatly
prayseth singlenes of life .
professed in diuers manners
of estate , and obserued also
in the world, and in priuat
howses

houses, for as then Monasteries were not yet begun. *Dico in nuptiis &c.* I speak both to the vnmarried, & to Widowes, that it is good for the to remain in that estate, as I haue also done. And againe: *I would haue skie as I my selfe*, that is, I desire that all should be continēt, as it wil appeare out of that which follows. *De Virginibus &c.* As for those that are virgins, I haue no expresse commission to them from our Lord, but I giue them Counsell (to wit, that they remain in their Virginitie) as hauing
B 3 obtayned

obteyned mercy of Almighty God, to be faithfull, & c. And againe, *Si nupserit virgo &c*: If a virgin marry, she sinneth not; but such notwithstanding shal haue the tribulation of the flesh, that is to say, many troubles cares, and afflictions &c. Again: *Igitur qui &c*. Therefore he which giueth a virgin in marriage, doth well, but he which doth it not, doth better. Also, *Beatior erit &c*. she shalbe more happy if she remaine so still (to wit vnmarried) according vnto my aduice, for I think
that

of Chastity. 19

that euen I my selfe, haue
the spirit of God. In al these
places the Apostle comends
the loue of Chastity, and
Virginity, eue in the world
and in priuate howses, as it
was obserued at that tyme.

For in Ancient tymes,
when the faithfull were
most deuout, many follow-
ed the aduice of our Sauti-
our, in such manner, as they
had then oportunity to do
it, as is manifest out of the
Acts of the Apostles; where
many hauing sold their
goods & bestowed the mo-
ney in common, imbraced

B 4 pouerty

pouerty. It is very probable therefore, that there were a greater nūber of those who imbraced Chastity, then others, both because that vertue was more noble and profitable, and also because there might be many poore folks which had not goods and possessions to sell, or if they had, yet perhaps could not sell them; all which notwithstanding might professe Chastity.

Neither is it to be doubted, but that many obliged themselves by vow thereunto, since they imbraced it
out

of Chastity. 21

out of a desire of perfection and zeale to please Almighty God. And it is more perfect a great deale to keep it with an entire resolutiō, then only with an vncertaine and mutable purpose.

Finally also, because they imbraced it out of the motive of our Sauours owne aduise and commendation therof; and that which our Sauour cōmended 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

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posse I. Tim. 5. *Adolescentiores viduas &c.* Take none of the younger sort of widowes, &c. which is meant that they should not be admitted into the function or ministry of *diaconesses*, or into the number of the *Alumnae* or *Pupils* of the Church. *Cum enim &c.* for that, saith *S. Paul*, after they have lived licentiously in Christ, at last also they will not sticke to marry, frustrating their former Faith: that is, they will breake the vow of Chastity which they had made before; for the word *Fayth*, is taken

of Chastity. 23

taken in this place for *Promise*, or obligation dew by promise: as for example, to give ones *Faith*, is to giue ones promise, to *keepe sayth*, is to keepe promise, to *frustrate sayth* giuen before, is to breake promise, and a promise made to God, is a **VOW.**

From hence it is manifest, that it was a custom in the primitiue Church, for Widdowes also to vow Chastity, so that without a mortall sin; & being guilty of damnation, they could not marry againe: besides
that

that, euey act of Concupiscence, yea and the very marriage it self was iniury against Christ; for so much is signified in these words, *After they haue liued licentiously in Christ*, that isto say, after they haue liued lasciuiously and luxuriously, wronging our Sauour Christ, to whome they had bound themselues by vow, and were become espoused to him, at length also they will not sticke to marry. After this manner the Councell of Carthage the 104. Canon, and S. Chrysostome vpon this
this

this place, and *S. Hierome* in his epistle to *Herontia de Monogamia*, and others do expound it.

This place is to be noted & pondered of all such as haue made vow to Almighty God of perpetuall Chastity, for that without being guilty of eternall cōnation, 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 interpret this place to be of promise made vnto

C God

26 *The Treasure*
Gods ~~the~~ vow of Chasti-
ty.

Finall~~y~~ wherefoeuer ho-
ly Scripture commendeth
Virginity, it speaketh in ge-
nerall; neither is it to be re-
strained vnto those alone,
who liue in Monasteryes.
And all rewards and priui-
ledges of Virginity there
rehearsed, belong vnto all
holy Virgins, as in the 3.
*chap. of the Booke of Wis-
dome: Felix est sterilis &c.* hap-
py is she that is barren and
vndefiled, which neuer
knew any impure bed, she
shall haue fruite in the be-
houi-

of Chastity. 27

holding of soules that are
blessed &c. *Apoc.* 14. It is
granted only vnto Virgins
(*sequi Agnum quocumq; ierit*) to
follow the Lambe where-
soeuer he goeth, and to sing
that new Hymne in *Isa* 56.
To Eunuches which keep
Gods diuine Commande-
ments, is promised an e-
uerlasting name, and a high
place, and a degree in the
City of Almighty God.

Some will obiekt that,
that place of the Apostle 1.
Tim. 5. saying : *Volo iuniores*
nubere &c. I would haue the
younger sort to marry, to

C 2 bring

bring forth Children and keep house &c. makes cleare against that which we haue sayd. To this I answer, that it is not to be vnderstood of all Widdowes that are young, but only of those which cannot liue continent, and are not otherwise obliged by any vow: for it is better that such should marry, then liue incontinent, and giue scandall to the vnfaythfull, as the Apostle insinuateth in the same place.

Also the holy Father S. *Chrysofome* in his 15. *Homily*
vpon

vpon the 1. to *Timothy*, affirmeth, that the Apostle speaketh there of such widows, who being freed from the yoake and gouernement of their husbands, liue dissolutely, become idle, praters, wanton, curious, running vp and down to their neighbours houses, & the like. And it is manifest out of the text it selfe that the Apostle speaketh of such, when he sayth: *Volo &c.* I would haue the younger sort to marry. *S. Ambrose* also in his booke of *Uiddowes* explicareth *S. Paul. Pro remedio suscit nuptias*

&c. he perswaded Marriage as a remedy, but not prescribed it as a choice. S. Hierome in his 8. Epistle to *Saluina*, asking: *Cur nuptias Paulus indulserit &c.* Why did S. Paul fauour Marriage? Presently he addeth: *Iam quædam &c.* Some haue already declined after *Sathã*: whereby we may vnderstand, sayth S. Hierome, that these speeches rather signify a helping hand to be lent to those that are fallen, then the reward of a crowne to those which stand firme: See then (sayth 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 Sathan; therefore a young Widdow which cannot, or will not containe her selfe, let her rather take a husband then the diuel. So *S. Hierome* Out of which it appears that it is not conuenient for all young Widdowes to marry, but onely such who are subiect to the vices aboue named, to wit, in whome there is manifest danger of Incontinency, or

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which cannot live chaste,
or will not vs^e meanes to
do it.

CHAP. II.

*The same is proued by examples
out of holy Scripture, and the
custome of the Church, most
frequently practised from the
first beginning of Religion, euen
vnto these dayes.*

FIRST of all, doth here
present her selfe our
blessed Lady, as guide and
Author of this Institution,
who liuing in the world at
her owne command, and
free from being subiect to
any

any other, reseruing also her proper goods, vowed vnto God perpetuall virginity, & this either before, or immediatly 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 moued thereunto by diuine Reuelatiō, by which also she was assured that there should be no danger
to

34 *The Treasure*
to loose her virginity, and
that her husband also should
binde himselfe by the like
vow of Chastity; wherefore
she neuer consented neither
expressly, nor in effect to any
matrimoniall 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
she for her part had chosen
to prevent it, so likewise
her husband should prelet-
ly do the like.

But

of Chastity. 35

But if she made her vow after Marriage; it is to be sayd 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 vpon his diuin will and pleasure. Moreover it is most manifestly probable that our Blessed Lady had vowed Chastity, out of these wordes of S. Luke: *Quomodo scied istui &c.* How that this com to passe, since I know not man that

is to say, how shall I conceiue a Sonne, that cannot know Man, because I am bound by my vow of Virginitie? for so the holy Fathers *Athanasius, serm. de sanctissima Deipara, Gregory Nissen* in his Oration on the birth of our Sauiour, *S. Augustine* in his booke of holy *Virginitie cap. 4. S. Bernard* in his fourth sermon *super missus est &c.* do teach; and reason it selfe doth likewise manifestly conuince. For otherwise her objection to the Angell had beene to no purpose, since it might haue beene
answe.

answered vnto her, Now thou shalt know man, and conceaue. Therefore her obiection, *I know not man*, is the same, *that I cannot know man*: euen as he who hath vowed to abstaine from flesh or wine, being invited sayth: *I eate not flesh, I drinke not wine, I frequents not banquets &c.*

An innumerable multitude of Virgins presently followed the example of our B. Lady, in so much that one howse, to wit of Philip the deacō, had 4. daughters remayning virgins, as

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 vp three daughters also, wherof two remayned virgins till they were very old as *Felicitas* in *S. Hierome* reporteth *De Scrip. Ecclesiast.* in *Polycrate*.

S. Petronilla daughter *S. Peter*
vowed

vowed virginity, and for feare of loosing it, obteyned soden death from Almighty God.

S. Tecla at the perswasion 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. Mathew*, as *Abdias* writeth in her life.

Flavia Domitilla daughter to *Clemens* the Confull, & *S. Peters* host at Rome, at the perswasion of *S. Clemēt*, as *S. Bede* witnesseth in his

40 *The Treasure*
Martyrologe the 7. of May,
or as it is set downe in his
life, at the perswasion of
Nereus and Achilleus.

S. Valeria at the perswasion
of *S. Marcialis*, as appeareth
out of his Epistle *ad Tholo-*
sanos, Chap. 8.

S. Pudentiana & her sister
Praxedes, by the Counsell
of the Apostles, or Aposto-
licall men.

Finally *S. Anatolia*, *Apollo-*
nia, *Ballina*, *Barbara*, *Pelagia*,
Catherina, *Cecilia*, *Agatha*,
Agnes, *Lucia*, *Basilla*, *Christina*,
Dorothea, *Emerentiana*, *Prisca*,
Euphemia, *Saturinina*, *Susanna*,
Victo-

of Chastity. 41

Victoria, Theodora, and innumerable others continued virgins, in the world, euen to their death, and honoured their virginity with the crowne of Martyrdome.

Moreouer it is manifest out of *S. Cyprian, S. Ambrose & S. Hierome* with other holy Fathers, that there were in those ages infinite who cōsecrated their virginity to Almighty God, although they entred not into Monasteries, but dwelt either in their Parents houses, or in their owne, retayning the vse of their proper
D3 goods

42 *The Treasure*
goods, or els liued many
together in comon.

The same appeareth also
out of the testimony of *Fau-*
stus Manicheus in *S. Augustine*,
in his 30. booke against *Fau-*
stus the 4. Chap. where *Fau-*
stus thus objecteth. *Nec videtis*
hinc &c. Neither do you see
heere, both your virgins to
be noted of being deceaued
by the doctrine of the Di-
uell, and your felues to be-
come his Prelats, who con-
tentiously alwayes incite
them to this profession, by
your perswasions, that there
is almost now in your
Chur-

Churches a greater number of Virgins, then of marryed women.

By which speach two things are to be noted, that Bishops & Prelates, euery where through the whole world, did earnestly incite those that were vnder their charge to the profession of Virginitie, and that the number of those who did publicly professe Virginitie, was as great as those that were marryed. See *S. Ambrose* in his 30. booke of Virgins, where he sheweth the same most evidently.

D 4 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 appears out of *S. Hierome* in his 8. Epistle to *Demetriades*, where he also warneth such Mistresses, that, as they themselves go modestly in their apparell, so they should cause their women of attendāce also to avoyd vanity in their attyres, & see that their habits were modest and grave.

Be-

Besides many Fathers
have written of the attyre,
and discipline of Virgins,
as *Tertulian*, *S. Cyprian*, *S. Am-
brose*, *S. Hierome*, in diuers
places of their workes. All
which they directed spe-
cially vnto such, as living
out of Monasteryes at their
owne gouernment, imbra-
ced virginity. And the said
holy Fathers do warne the
that they should not be seen
in publique without veils,
and ciuilly accompanied;
that they should not vse se-
cular ornaments; that they
should abstaine from pain-
ting

ting, and vanity in their cloathes; that they should auoyde vnprofitable meetings, marryages and banquets; that they should giue their almes with a pure intention to the reliefe of orphans, 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 haue we onlv examples of Chastity in single or vnmarryed folkes, but also euen in those theselues which are marryed,
which

of Chastity. 47

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
institution of imbracing &
professing Chastity, in the
world, hath beene most
frequent and vsuall, euer
since the beginning of the
Church, and therefore ve-
ry commendable and meri-
torious.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The same is witnessed by the testimonies of holy Fathers.

MERVAILOUS are the commendations which holy Fathers give to this state of life, which are no lesse referred to such as obserue it in the world, then to those which professe it in Monasteries. S. Ignatius in his epistle ad Tharsenses calleth *Virgins* (so vowed vnto God) *the Priests of Christ*, because they offer their bodies to God as a sacrifice, *Eas qua in virginitate degunt*

degunst &c. Account, saith he,
those, who liue in the state
of Virginitie, as Priests of
Christ.

S. Athanasius in his little
worke of virginitie, about
the end, sayth: *Magna virtus
continentia &c.* Continency
is a great vertue, purity is a
thing worthy to be boasted
of, great are the prayles
of Virgins. O Virginitie,
treasure inconsumable, gar-
land neuer to be withered,
temple of Almighty God,
house of the holy Ghost,
Margarite most pretious,
conquerour of death & hell,
E life

50 *The Treasure*

life of Angels, crowne of
Saints &c. S. Cyprian in his
booke of the *habie and disci-
pline of Virgins*: *Nunc nobis ad
Virgines sermo est &c.* Now
speake we of Virgins, sayth
he, of whom by how much
their glory is the more emi-
nent, by so much their care
is the greater. This is the
flower of ecclesiastical bud,
the ornament and grace of
spirituall grace it selfe, the
hopeful towardnes of prai-
se and honour, a worke en-
tire and vncorrupted, the i-
mage of God correspondēt
to the sanctimony of our
Lord

Lord, the more beautifull
part of Christ his flock &c.
And afterwards: *si premium
pollicitationis &c.* If thou ex-
pect the reward of promise,
thou wilt count thy labour
little: Immortality shall be
giuen to him, that perse-
uereth; perpetuall life is
propoid a reward; our
Lord promiseth a king-
dome: preferue yee Virgins,
preferue that which you
haue begun to be, preferue
that which yee shall be, for
great is the reward proui-
ded for you &c.

That which wee must

E 2 be

be hereafter, you have begun to be already; yee possesse in present the glory of the Resurrection in the age to come; yee passe through the tymes without taking infectiō from them as long as yee perseuere in Chastity and Virginitie; yee are equall euen to the Angells of God, solide and vntoucht; Virginitie only endures, onely lasteth for euer.

The first Precept (*S. Cypriā* goeth still on) of Almighty God, commaunded to increase and generate; the second perswaded Contynency

of Chastity. 53

nency . Whilst the world was rude & vnpeopled, by our fertility , by generation we were multiplied, & grewe 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 vsclesse to the Sex, for the kingdome of God .
Hitherto *S . Cyprian .*

S Basill in his booke of true Virginitie saith: Virginitie is certainly a great and excellent thing, which ma-

E 3 keth

54 *The Treasure*

keeth a man incorruptible
like vnto God himselfe; but
it passeth not from our bo-
dies into our soules; yet
being the propriety of an
incorporeall nature, keeps
allo our bodies incorrupt
with a pretious integrity
&c. Virgins haue before
hand indewed themselues
with that which by diuine
vertue, must be perfected in
vs at the Resurrection; for
living heere like vnto An-
gells, they neither marry,
nor are marryed, but are
both in vertue of minde, &
integrity of body, equall
vnto

vnto Angells. The same Father explicating also the words of the Prophet *Esay* 56. of Eunuches, he writeth in this manner. *Pro humano nomine &c.* Instead of a humane name, sayth our Lord, I will giue them a name of Angells which are immortall, that they may haue heauen and the fairest part thereof to remaine in, and that dwelling in the most beautiful seate of heauen, that is to say, in my house, within the inclosures thereof, they may receaue

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 euerlasting; but also that they may haue a principall place amongst Angells, and a name indeleble, which for the great splendour in their beauty shall neuer decay &c.

S. Gregory Nazianzen in his Verses in the prayse of Virginitie singeth thus: *Salue Virginitas &c.*

*Haile Chastity the guift of
only Heauen,*

Parent

of Chastity. 57

Parent of a pure life, by whom
are giuen

Our greatest goods, part euen
of Christ, and one

That to celestiall spirits com-
panion:

Nor euer knew of vnchast bed
the touch,

For God himselfe and his faire
Quire are such.

S. Iohn Chrysostome in his
booke of Virginitie the cap.
2. sayth: Virginitie so much
excells marriage, by how
much heauen doth earth,
and Angells mortall men.
And againe in the 12. chap.
Humanity since it is infe-
riour

58 *The Treasure*
rior to thole happy spirits
the Angells, as farre as it is
able, strueth to attaine vnto
their perfection . And
how? Angells marry not,
nor take to them wiues, no
more doth a Virgin. Angels
wayting alwayes about the
throne of Almighty God,
do serue him : so doth a
Virgin . Wherefore *S. Paul*
calls them away from all
cares, that they may con-
tinually imploy themselves
in the seruice of God, with-
out hauing wherewithall
to be distract: d. Againc,
chap. 37. Dare any one after
ali

all this compare marriage with virginity, or but once bring the one in presence of the other? *S. Paul* suffe-
reth not this, who interpo-
seth a great distance betw-
eene these two, where he
sayth: the one thinketh on
matters belonging vnto
God, the other on matters
belonging to the world.

S. Ambrose in his first booke
of virgins saith *Nec immerito*
&c. deservedly hath virgini-
ty deriued from heauen the
manner of her life, since it
is in heauē that her Spoule
hath his dwelling place.

This

60 *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 therewith. For who is it, that hauing found so great a good, will leaue it? For thy Name is an oyntment powred out, wherfore yong virgins, and maides haue loued thee, and taken thee vnto them. Finally, that is not my saying, Because those which neither are nor wilbe marryed, shall
be

of Chastity. 61

be as the Angells of God in
heauen .

Let none therefore mer-
uaile (saith S. *Ambrose* fur-
ther) that they are cōpared
to the Angells of God who
are lincked and vnited in
the God of Angells &c. Let
vs compare therefore the cō-
tents of marryed women,
with the lowest and least
happines of Virgins.

Admit (saith 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

she hath bene delineted of,
by so much the greater haue
bene the panges & paynes
which she endured. Let her
reckon the iey which she
hath of her children, and
withall the may count: li-
kewise the troubles which
they haue caused her. She
marryeth and weepeth: &
what wise vowes are these,
which so sodenly must be
repented &c.

Againe. Yow haue heard
all yee that are mothers;
in what vertues, in what
order, and discipline, yee
ought to bring vp your
chil-

childrē, that you may haue
some of your owne, by
whose merites your owne
sins & offences may be for-
giuen . A Virgin is one to
whom God hath giuen her
to be so, and therefore she is
his gift, she is the reward
of her Parents &c. A virgin
is the oblation of her Mo-
ther, by whose dayly sacri-
fice Gods diuine power is
appealed .

S . Hierome in his first
book against Iovinian cap . 1.
Ideoplus amat &c. Therefore
our Sauour Christ loueth
Virgins the more, because

64 *The Treasure*

of their owne accord they giue 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 giue that which they are compelled vnto.

And afterward : *Grandis fidei est &c* It is a worke of great fayth, and much vertue, when the Temple of God is most pure to offer it entierly as a burnt-sacrifice vnto our Lord, and according to the Apostle to be holy, aswell in body as in spirit.

S. Au.

of Chastity. 65

S. Augustine in his booke
of holy Virginitie *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 giue place
vnto this, and all conti-
nency of married persons
yeild vnto it; for the for-
mer is not in our owne
power, the later liueth not
in eternity. The liberty of
our will extendeth not
vnto bodily fruitfulnessse,
Matrimoniall Chastity is
not found in Heauen.

F 3 They

They certainly shall have some reward aboue all others in that generall immortality, who haue already growne in their flesh somewhat that is not fleshly. Wherefore they are much out of scene, who thinke the good & commodity of this continency not to be necessary, for the kingdome of heauen, but onely for the present world wherein we liue.

In which last wordes he conuinceth *Iouiniã* & the heretiks of our tymes, who with him teach, that Vir-
ginity

ginity is only conuenient
to auoyd worldly troubles.

S. *Fulgentius* in his 7. E-
pistle to *Proba* cap. 9. *Di-*
cimus à sanctis nuptijs &c. We
affirme (whereas those mar-
ry who cannot liue conti-
nent) that holy Virginitie
as farre excelleth holy Ma-
trimony, as that which is
better excelleth that which
is good, that which is high
excell-th that which is
low, that which is heauen-
ly excelleth earthly, that
which is holy, more holy,
mortall marriage, marriage
immortall, the flesh the spi-

68 *The Treasure*

rit, weakenes strength, the fruit of a tráitory issue the fruite of a brautich euerlasting, tribulation security, vnsetlednes of mind tranquillity, a good which is momentary and ful of troubles excelleth that which is better, and accompanied with ioy euerlasting.

These & many other things, holy Fathers haue written in the cōmendatiō of virginity, by which the excellency & worth therof may be better knōwen and esteemed, no one vertue or estate of life being commēded

ded with so great affection,
& consent of holy Fathers,
as this.

Heereupon, especially
in former ages, an infinite
multitude haue imbraced
it, in so much that *S. Ambrose*
in his 3. booke of Virgins
affirmeth, That in the Ea-
sterne & Africā Churches,
there were more virgins
consecrated to Almighty
God, then wee haue men
borne in our parts heere.
And yet notwithstanding
mākind is not therby dimi-
nished, but increased. If
any one (quoth he) imagi-
neth

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*, & all the Easterne parts, with the Churches also of *Affrica*, was wont every yeare to consecrate: fewer men are heere begotten then there virgins consecra-

of Chastity. 71

secrated; the reason whereof
is, that God will not be o-
uercome with liberality :
but if the Parents offer him
a Child or two, he renders
them eight or ten, graua-
ting fruitfullnes, and for-
tunate Childe-bearing to
such as are mothers, and
filling their howses with
his blessing. Therefore euen
as faithfull paying of Ty-
thes, & liberality towards
the poore, bringeth not
pouerty, since God by his
providence prospereth and
increaseth our substance, &
maketh our fields the more
fruit-

72 *The Treasure*
fruitfull, as *S. Hierome* teacheth *Serm. 219. de tempore*; so the loue and affection to virginity hindreth not the world, nor wasteth the number of secular Persons, but obteyneth it a longer benediction.

C H A P. III.

The same is proued also, by reason.

THE error of *Iouinian* was, that Virginity did not excell Marriage, which he meant by virginity, taken absolutely and generally, whether it were
pro-

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 embraced in the world, is at least halfe a Iouinianist, because he is halfe of his opinion; nay rather he seemes to be altogether of the same minde, and really a Iouinianist, because he denieth, that Virginity is of it own nature better the Marriage, wherein the whole Errour of Iouinian

74 *The Treasure*
about this matter consisted.
For if of it owne proper nature it were better, it would followe, that the same being 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, liuing in the world, either it should be for the great difficulty and morall impossibility of keeping their vow in that estate, or els because Chastity

ty is not better then marriage; for no other reason can be imagined . Not the former, for it is an heresy of the heretikes of these our daies, who for the difficulty therof, affirme, that such a vow is not to be made, vnlesse the person know that he is peculiarly inspired with the gift of continency. Not the latter, for it is the error of *Iovinian* aforesaid. 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 resolue to

liue chaste, if he do as much
as lyeth in him to obtaine
the same of Almighty God.

If there be so great diffi-
culty to liue chaste in the
world, in so much that it
is not meritorious for a
man to bind himself therto
by vow; then such a vow is
of it owne nature wayne, &
of no effect to him that ma-
kes it, and so he may freely
breake that which is of
such difficulty, as seemes
morally impossible. But
this kind of reasoning may
by no meanes 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 grieuous sin. See the aboue métioned testimony of the Apostle 1. *Tim.* 5.

It is very commendable & meritorious for yong men also remayning in the world to vow chastity, yea the Church bindethal such as haue taken holy Orders therunto. Therefore if men do it, & that it be commendable in them to do so; why should it not be the like for women, such as are yonge, both Maydes, & Widdows

78, *The Treasure*
especially, since men live in
far greater danger by means
of their greater freedom
of conuerlation, and their
lesse bashfullnes, together
with more frequent occasi-
ons of temptation. From
whence we see, it pro-
ceeds, that more men which
vow Chastity in the world
do offend against their vow
then women: yea there are
very few of that sexe who
vowing Chastity in the
world do violat their vow:
in so much that oftentimes
in a great citty, for the space
of many yeares, you shall
not

not hear of any such: 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 vpon them such voves: neither can they by any meanes be excused frō the, being once vndertaken.

If it be meritorious to keep Virginitie in Religion, why is it not also in the World? For the circumstance of the place alters not the merit of the worke, but the excellency it selfe thereof, and a deuout will vnto it: and this pious inclination

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 serue him the more perfectly, that she may follow the counsell of our Sauiour Christ, that she may imitate our Lord, and his most blessed Mother, that she may apply all her thoughts and affections to heauenly things, and to the health of her soule; for the excellency of the worke is equall on both sides. Therefore

of Chastity. 81

fore 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 Monasteries, but also in the world, to do other good workes, as to pray, to fast, to give corporall and spirituall almes, to chastice our body, and to bind our selues by vow thereunto. Then if other good works looke not their worth & esteem, nor their merit before God by being done in the world; why should

82 *The Treasures*
should Virginity, and single
life? Yea, as it is the more
praise-worthy to be tempe-
rate, and to abstaine sitting
at a banquet, and to be able
to bridle our appetite, euen
in the very middelt of pro-
uocations; so likewise may
it be a deed of greater merit
to liue chastly in the world,
where occasions of falling
are more frequent: As for
example, when there are
lawfull reasons why such
occasions might not be cō-
ueniently shunned, which
otherwise they would haue
willingly auoyded.

The

of Chastity. 83

The state of being Religious, and to be shut vp in Monasteryes, is not agreeable with the complexion of euery one: yea a great many, either are not apt for this state, by reason of the weakenes of their body, or for other causes, or oftentimes their mindes are not easely wonne to it, and that most commonly for diuers sufficient reasons, which it is not necessary to reueale: and who now should cōstraine such to marry, or to enter into Monasteryes? Why should it not be lawfull

full for them to keepe their virginity in the world, & to vow themselues vnto it? Is it either because they wil not, nor cannot ascend to the highest degree, that they must be therfore constryained to stay in the lowest, & may not keep a meane betwixt both? No man will thinke so, except he be indued with the spirit of *Iouinian*. The counsells and aduices of our Sauour Christ are not so necessarily vnited one to the other, but that one may be followed without another, and by them-

of Chastity. 85

themselves, in diuers degrees. Wherefore as those who desire to obserue the state of Pouertry, are not bound vnto Chastity; so also those which imbrace Chastity, must not therefore of necessity keep Pouertry, or Obedience, or shut themselves vp in Monasteries.

C H A P. V.

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

TH E Cause why this state of life is so commended

86 *The Treasure*

mended by holy Fathers,
as well in the one as the
other, are the manifold
cōmodities which it bring-
geth therwjt̄h. For in both,
it is an imitation of An-
gelicall life; in both it is the
making of our body as it
were a burnt-offering to
Almighty God; in both it
is a spirituall Marriage, in
which Christ is the spouse;
in both it freeth from the
irksome slavery of Marri-
age, and from the troubles
which belonge vnto it;
in both it deliuereth the
minde from infinite cares
&

