

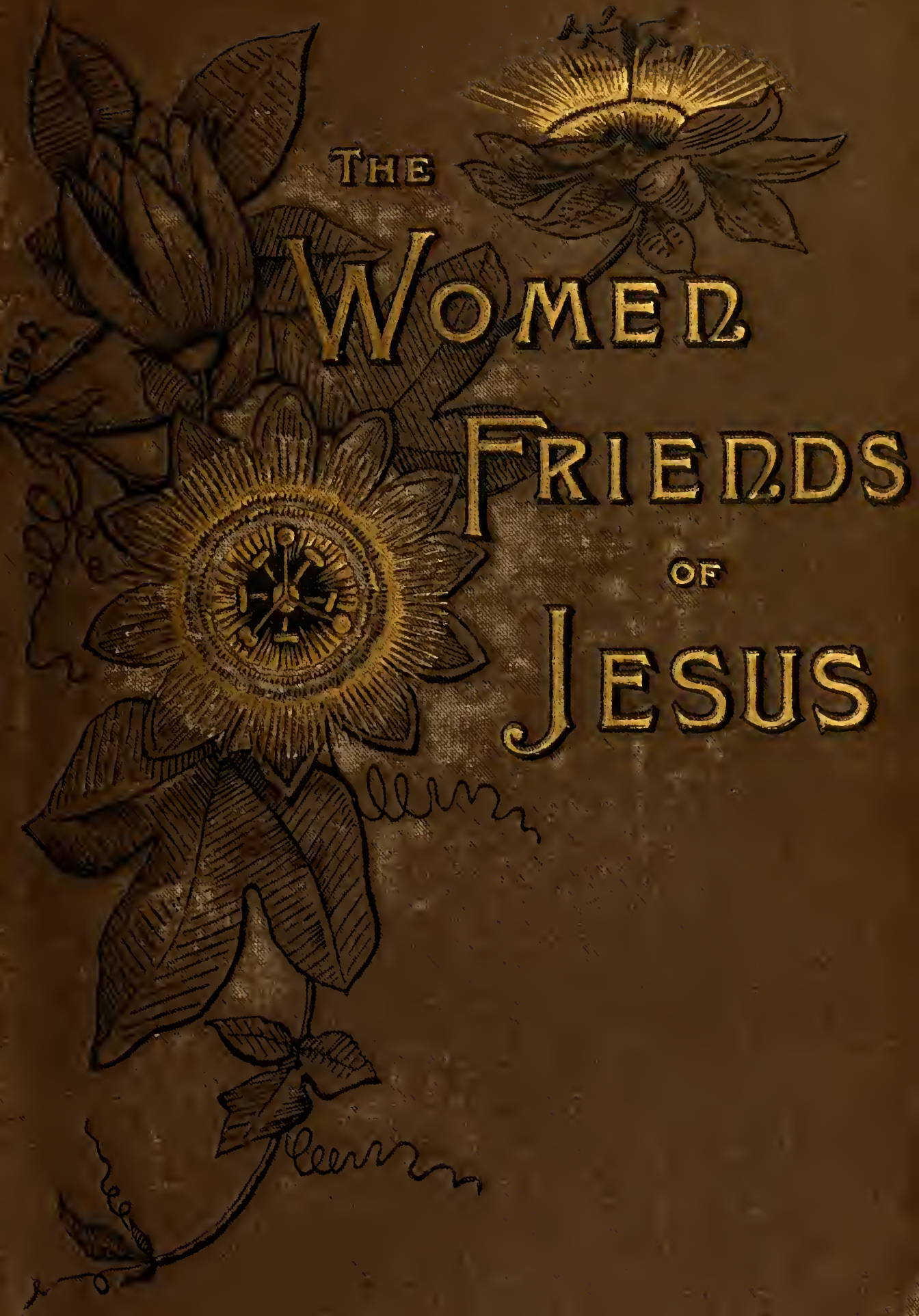
THE

WOMEN

FRIENDS

OF

JESUS



THE  
WOMEN FRIENDS OF JESUS

A COURSE OF  
POPULAR LECTURES

BASED UPON THE  
LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF THE HOLY WOMEN  
OF GOSPEL HISTORY

BY  
HENRY C. McCOOK, D.D.

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## PREFACE.

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THE following chapters were originally delivered in the form of Sunday Afternoon Lectures, and in the regular course of pastoral ministry. They were twice given in the old Church on Broad and Penn Square, and once in Institute Hall, West Philadelphia. On every occasion they were largely attended; which fact, together with the interest frequently expressed in them, and numerous pressing requests for their publication, have encouraged the author to give them to the public.

The purpose in preparing them was threefold; first, to bring more prominently into view those Holy Women whose faithful ministry did so much to second the work of their Divine Teacher, and whom He so signally honored.

Second, to quicken and deepen interest in the Gospels by presenting the life of Our Blessed Lord under the natural setting of the age and land wherein He lived, and surrounded by friends who should bear, as far as may be, the impress and coloring of their actual domestic and social environment. It is evident that good

must follow every devout endeavor thus to bring the Christ and His personal disciples nearer to the current thought and life of man by exhibiting Him and them in the light of their natural human living,—a light which, since human nature is ever one, covers under a common sympathy the Gospel era and all subsequent ages.

Third, it was intended to open the way for many practical, helpful truths by treating the Women Friends as types of womanly character. It will, of course, be understood that in this respect there is no attempt to fix an arbitrary standard or type upon any one person, but simply to emphasize, in every one of the Holy Women named, some one recorded trait or incident which might with propriety stand for that phase of life and duty that it seemed desirable to present.

The present century has witnessed no more remarkable social phenomenon than the revival and development of Woman's work and influence, especially in the Church. The author ventures to hope that these pages, which seek to bring into this strong, living current of present thought and activities the devout services of the earliest women disciples, may do somewhat to sanctify and sweeten the stream.

Two particulars bearing upon the external setting of the Lectures may be mentioned. First, the chapters are here presented precisely as they were delivered from

the pulpit, retaining in places even their local coloring. It was thought, at first, to eliminate these features and reduce somewhat the colloquial cast of certain portions. But, after mature consideration, it was concluded that more would be lost than gained by this course. The Lectures, therefore, appear in literary form as they came direct from the speaker to the living hearts of his auditors.

The other particular relates to the typographical form of the Lectures. The author has insisted upon making a book in the generous pica type. We have a great plenty of books made for young and strong eyes. But there are too few whose mechanical form invites *the aged, the invalid, and those whose eyes are dim*. For these pages there has been secured a typography that may open them to *all* the Women Friends of Jesus, even those who have gained the honors and years of "Mothers in Israel." From such, at least, the writer hopes for many a silent thank-utterance.

H. C. McC.

THE MANSE,  
TABERNACLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
Philadelphia, October, 1885.



# WOMEN FRIENDS OF JESUS.

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## LECTURE I.

### MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

[BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.]

THE first, most loving, and best loved friend of man is his mother. This is the order of nature, and it is a great calamity, or a great crime, which turns it aside. We follow, therefore, equally the laws of nature and society, the Revelation of Deity and the instincts of humanity, when we place first in a course of lectures upon the "Women Friends of Jesus" the name of her whom Elizabeth called "the Mother of our Lord," and whose name Luke enters upon the list of praying women, as "the Mother of Jesus."

Of the birth and parentage of Mary we know nothing certainly. The genealogies of our Lord are recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, after the manner of the Jews of that period, to

preserve scrupulously their ancestral lineage. From a comparison of these it would seem that the name of Mary's father was Heli or Eli. This Eli was probably a brother of that Jacob who was father of Joseph, Mary's husband. At least, the common parent of Jacob (Joseph's father) and Eli (Mary's father) seems to have been Matthan or Matthat. Mary and Joseph were, therefore, cousins.

Like her husband, Mary was of the tribe of Judah, and of the royal line of David. Thus, in the line of her ancestry, also, and, indeed, we may say, especially was her Divine Son Jesus the Christ "made," as says St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> "of the seed of David according to the flesh." It is not unimportant to remember this. The fulfillment of many promises and prophecies rests upon its authentication. Moreover, the influence of these predictions upon Mary's character,—for we shall see that she was thoroughly familiar with them,—must have been very great. Over and over again must they have been turned in her contemplative mind, have been absorbed into her very soul-life and have

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 3.

moulded her thoughtful and spiritual nature. We may, therefore, first of all, stop to look at one or two of these.

#### I. MARY'S ROYAL ANCESTRY.

In the hours of King David's greatest prosperity<sup>1</sup> his devout heart was troubled at the thought that he dwelt in a house of cedar, while the Ark of God dwelt within curtains. A palace for the creature's house, and a tent for the House of the Lord seemed to be a strange incongruity. He purposed, therefore, to build to Jehovah a fitting temple. It was not permitted him to execute his wish. But the forming of this devout purpose was made the occasion for that covenant—those "sure mercies of David,"—so often mentioned in Holy Scripture. "And thy house," said the Lord, through the prophet Nathan, "and thy kingdom shall be established before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."<sup>2</sup> The gratitude of the Psalmist-king for this promise one will find sounding throughout the inspired Psalms; and thence it is inwoven

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. ch. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* v. 16.

with many of those Christian songs in which the praises of Christian hearts ascend to the Throne.

The Evangelical prophet, Isaiah, takes up the refrain, and sings<sup>1</sup> of the "Rod that shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and the Branch that shall grow out of his roots." It is on Him that the Spirit of the Lord shall rest, and He it is who shall bring in that millennial day when the gentle, trusting, guileless spirit of a little child shall lead the hosts of God on earth, and subdue the nations under its sway. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."

One may see another and much older prophecy fulfilled in this ancestral record of Mary. Turn back to that touching scene at the death-bed of the last of the patriarchs. The sons of Jacob are "gathered together unto Israel their father."<sup>2</sup> The venerable man is about to end the days of his long pilgrimage, and pass into

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xi. 1. sq.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xlix. 2.

the eternal day of God. Around him stand his strong sons, grey-haired men themselves, most of them. Among them is the great Premier of Egypt, who, although second only to the Pharaoh, bends before that Jewish shepherd's couch. They all await a father's blessing. One by one, with prophetic insight and justice, blessing and bane, promise of good and prophecy of evil, the patriarchal seer unfolds for each the future of his posterity. Reuben, Simeon and Levi have, in accordance (it is possible) with the custom of the time, kneeled in succession before their father, have heard his words, and received the hands of blessing upon their bowed heads. Now Judah kneels. We may well believe that there is a light of triumph, hope and gladness in the old man's eyes as his prophetic vision penetrates the vista of the seventeen coming centuries,—aye, and of those that gather beyond the birth of Mary's Son,—and beholds the crowning glory of his race.

Judah, thou, thy brethren shall praise thee !

Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies ;

Thy father's children shall bow down before thee.  
A lion's whelp is Judah! From the prey  
Thou art gone up, my son.  
He stooped low down; he couched as the lion does,  
And as the lioness; who shall arouse him?  
From Judah shall a sceptre not depart,  
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,  
Until that Shiloh—Prince of Peace—be come!  
To Him shall be the obedience of the nations.  
    Binding his foal to the vine,  
    And his ass's colt to the choice vine;  
    He washed his garments in wine  
    And his clothes in the blood of grapes.  
    His eyes shall be red with wine  
    And his teeth shall be white with milk.<sup>1</sup>

From that time on, the escutcheon of Judah, whether for shield or banner, was the royal lion. In many a battle hour, and conflict for Israel's national life, rights and religion, that standard—Judah's lion!—was borne against the foe as the rallying point of God's elect. Judah became the leader of the chosen people; indeed, his very

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 8-12. The author is responsible for this and all other versions of poetical passages throughout the Lectures.

name, Jew, has passed into current history as the synonym of all the Sons of Israel. But, if we are to get the full and spiritual sense and fulfillment of this prophecy, we must turn to the kingdom of Mary's son.

Let us stand a moment with the prophet-apostle of Patmos, and look up into the open heaven.<sup>1</sup> We see the seven-sealed book in the right hand of Him upon the Throne. We hear the proclamation of the angel, "Who is worthy to open the book?" There is silence; for not heaven, nor earth, nor under-world, has any able or worthy to open, or even look upon the book. The silence is broken only by the sobs of the weeping prophet. Must the book remain unsealed? Not so! We take up the record: "And one of the elders saith unto me: Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root and offspring of David, hath prevailed to open the book!" Thus, in this triumphant scene, the descent of Mary from the tribe of Judah and the line of David is recognized in the title of Mary's Son and Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. ch. v.

## II. THE ANNUNCIATION OF GABRIEL.

Once more we find this royal lineage of Mary associated with the glory and dominion of her Son at the Annunciation. By this title the Church has designated the announcement of the conception and birth of Jesus according to the Ancient Prophecy:<sup>1</sup> "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

At this time Mary was dwelling at Nazareth in Galilee. She was betrothed to Joseph, and according to prevalent Jewish custom, was already regarded as his wife, but had not been removed to his home, and was living with her parents, or it may be, with her eldest sister, Mary of Cleophas. Nazareth, however ill in reputation and insignificant in importance, must always have been, as it is to-day, a beautifully situated town. The southern spurs of the Mt. Lebanon range roll away southward into the hills of Galilee, just as our Alleghenies drop down westward into the hills of Pittsburg and Eastern Ohio. On

<sup>1</sup> Isa. vii. 14.



the northern face of one of these hills, at the point where they terminate and make the boundary of the valley of Esdraelon, was Nazareth. The modern village lies along the lower edge of the hill. Above a large part of the town are several rocky ledges or precipices, one of which is almost perpendicular, and rises to the height of forty or fifty feet. This is probably the very "brow of the hill" from which the Nazarenes would have cast Jesus. From the summit of this hill, over which Mary, and afterward her son, must have often climbed and wandered, there is a wide and magnificent prospect of the surrounding country. Southward and on either hand stretches the vale of Esdraelon, with the branches of the River Kishon threading its green fields, and gleaming like silver all along the plain. Still further southward rise, peak on peak, and roll away toward Jerusalem, the mountains of Ephraim. On the left hand is seen the round top of Mt. Tabor, with portions of Gilboa. Facing westward, one sees the long line of the Carmel range running up into the Mediterranean Sea, whose shining waves may be seen across the foot of Mt.

Carmel to the left, and then again to the right, where they form the bay of Akka. Thence, far away north, the coast stretches toward Tyre and Sarepta. It would be hard to find a fairer prospect, or one embracing so many spots famous in the annals of history. That the beauty of these natural environments of her native place, and the historic events with which they are associated, were not without their influence upon Mary's character, we may perhaps see when we come to read her *Magnificat*. At all events, that sentiment which clothes one's own native place with so tender an affection, and which leads men to regard with peculiar interest the scenes which surrounded the childhood of eminent persons, must give to this mountain village of Galilee an undying charm.

It was to this Nazareth, probably in the summer of the fifth year before the Christian Era, that the Angel Gabriel was sent to the betrothed wife of Joseph. "And the virgin's name," says Luke,<sup>1</sup> in the language of the Authorized Version, "was Mary." Strictly speaking, her name was not

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 26.

“Mary”; her sister’s name was *Maria*—Mary, but her name was *Mariam*, always so given in the New Testament. Both names are forms of the Hebrew *Miriam*, that of the virgin Mary, however, conforming more closely to the original. The mission of Gabriel was to make annunciation to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. The opening words of his salutation are popularly known as the “Ave Maria”—Hail, Mary!—and have been made the vehicle, and, in a measure, the support of a mournful idolatry. Yet they are very simple, and for the most part familiar words of Oriental greeting: “Hail, highly favored, the Lord be with thee! Blessed art thou among women!”

“The Lord be with thee!” was the devout and ordinary greeting given by the angel to the father of Gideon.<sup>1</sup> The sentence, “Blessed art thou among women,” is rejected from the Greek text by the most critical authorities. But it, too, was a well-known form of Eastern salutation. When the beautiful widow of Judith stood before the Jewish leader, Ozias, after her return

<sup>1</sup> Judges xiii. 18.

from the Assyrian camp, and held up the head of the dreaded Holofernes, Ozias cried, "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth!"<sup>1</sup>

The only part of Gabriel's salutation which might possibly be considered exceptional to the then current forms of greeting is the single Greek word which has been well rendered in our English version, "highly favored,"—*κεχαριτωμενη*—*kecharitomenæ*. It means literally, *one upon whom is bestowed a free gift of grace*. The word is used but once again in the New Testament, at Ephesians 1 : 6, *εχαριτωσεν*, where it is rendered "made accepted,"—"Wherein He hath made us accepted." The Latin Vulgate, from which the Roman Catholic version is made, very well translates this, "*in qua gratificavit nos*,"—wherein he hath *graced us!*

Yet the familiar phrase in the *Ave Maria*, viz., "*gratiæ plena*," by which this same word has been translated, has been distorted to mean one who is of her own right an infinite possessor and dispenser of Divine grace! It is said of Mary's

<sup>1</sup> Apocrypha, Judith xiii, 18.

Son in Holy Scripture that He is "full of grace and truth." But this is quite a different sort of *fullness* and of *grace* from that which an idolatrous veneration gives to "*Maria gratiæ plena.*" There is not a word to confirm it.

We fall upon a suggestion of great interest and value for the interpretation of Mary's character in that portion of Gabriel's salutation which followed the greeting proper. At the saying of the angel, we are told that "Mary was troubled. And she cast in her mind what manner of salutation that should be." The quaint expression "cast in her mind" is one of the trifling, incidental evidences of the tranquil and reflective character of Mary. There was in her case no fear of "a spirit," as with the apostles when they saw the risen Jesus; no such troubling, fear and stupor, as when Zacharias saw the same angel Gabriel in the temple at the announcement of the approaching birth of John Baptist; no such perturbation as when the good parents of Gideon saw the angel of the Lord. She considered the matter with tranquil soul—"cast it in her mind."

Yet, Gabriel was quick to solve her doubts and

relieve such anxiety as she had. "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the Throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

There is one fact which must be considered in order to get the full significance of this annunciation as it would come to the heart of a devout Jewish woman. Among the maternal hopes of the matrons of the Holy People, there was one never lost sight of; it was the hope of being the mother of the Messiah! It must have burned with brightest lustre in the soul of one who, like Mary, was doubly linked, through her own and her husband's lineage, with that royal house of whom the Messiah was to be born. Moreover, the period was one which was filled with high expectations that the long-cherished hopes of Israel concerning the son of Promise were near to realization. There was a widespread faith that the

day of the Messiah was about to dawn. Expectation ran high, and the homes of Palestine were filled with the warmth and brightness of this hope in the ancient covenant promise of a Redeemer for Israel.

This maternal hope was very ancient indeed—older even than the covenant to David or Abraham. Eve cherished it in her heart, and when, in the earliest joys of motherhood, she looked upon her first-born son, she called his name *Cain*—*i. e.*, “Possession”; for, said she, “I have gotten a man from the Lord.” So reads our English Version. But Luther, and after him many others, have a different reading and a deeper insight of that saying: In their view Eve called her first born: “Possession”; for, said she, “I have gotten a man, even JEHOVAH!” Her thought was upon the promise made in Paradise after the fatal sin, that the woman’s seed should bruise the serpent’s head. It was the first Messianic promise,—the germ of all these that we have been considering, and which flowed forth in the bright hopes that animated the coming generations, and had its full fruition in the son of Mary.

In the birth of Cain, the Possession-son, Eve no doubt saw the beginning of that blessed consummation, and, in the full hope thereof, cried out: "I have gotten the Promised seed, the man Jehovah, the God-man": and sealed her faith in the name she gave her babe. You must think of all this,—of the deep hold which this hope had upon the people of those times, and the accumulated force of all the past ages with which it swept into the Virgin mother's heart in that hour of the annunciation—if you would understand her resignation, and the proud, grateful joy which afterward breathed through her *MAGNIFICAT*.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; Be it unto me according to Thy word!" It was no unmeaning submission this,—as is proven by the ordeal of suspicion—most trying that woman can bear—through which she was compelled to pass before her triumphant justification.

It would be impossible for this generation to even measure, much less share, these peculiar feelings of the daughters of Palestine. There is indeed now no possibility for such a maternal hope as this which Mary realized. Only once for



all time might woman be the mother of the MESSIAH. Yet the day of maternal hopes concerning their offspring never shall set while God's covenant endures and the race of man shall people the earth! To be the mother of a child who shall be worthy of her name and blood; a child who shall be a son of God, through the indwelling Spirit of the Christ of God; who shall personify all that is highest, best, noblest, worthiest among men; who shall stand valiantly for Righteousness and truth; who shall set himself against all impurity and oppression, and bruise with indignant holiness the head of the great Serpent; who shall be a light in the earth's darkness, and, it may be, carry her name and her renewed self (for a mother's second selfhood is in her son), among many nations,—has there ever been, will there ever be a time when motherhood shall not sit and dream such visions, and smile with inward sweetness of hope, and look outward into the future, expectant of a lofty and happy destiny for her children? No! The Star of Hope—the Eternal lustre of Bethlehem's Star—shines and shall forever shine upon the days of Motherhood.

## III. THE BLESSING OF ELIZABETH.

In the beautiful hill country of Juda, southward from Jerusalem, not far from Hebron, perhaps in the village of Jutta, dwelt Elizabeth, the aged wife of the priest Zacharias. She was a cousin of Mary, the future mother of John Baptist. "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth."<sup>1</sup> From Nazareth to Hebron is a long journey. Moreover, Jewish customs made it a breach of propriety for single or betrothed women to journey alone. We may therefore reject the opinion that the Virgin traveled on this occasion without escort. The "haste" with which the visit was planned requires no such inference, although it does imply that no great preparation nor ceremonious arrangements attended the trip. It seems a fair inference that Mary acted under an impulse higher than a sudden fancy, or natural wish to consult a trusted and beloved kinswoman. The Spirit of inspiration whose directing influence is

<sup>1</sup> Luke i. 39.

manifest in the events of that period, doubtless urged Mary forward. The same Just, Merciful and Omniscient Power who in due time by special heavenly vision vindicated her innocence to her betrothed husband, also made known to Elizabeth the truth concerning her cousin's holy estate and calling. "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." The spirit of prophecy, which afterward fell upon Mary, and still later upon Zacharias, fell upon her. "And she spake out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her of the Lord."

Thus the good priest's wife echoed the Angel's benediction. Thus came to the Virgin mother a heavenly confirmation of her faith, a divine consolation and spiritual strength greatly needed at that time. True, she had not been wanting in

trust. "Blessed is she that believed!" is one of the testimonies in Elizabeth's benediction as to Mary's confidence in the Lord. Yet the strongest believer finds added strength and certainly deeper joy in the promises of God and the experience of God's saints.

In turn, the prophetic Spirit stirred within Mary, and she answered her cousin's benediction with the words of that beautiful New Testament Psalm which is popularly known as the *Magnificat*. The name is derived from the initial word of the old Latin version of the Greek *Μεγαλόνει*—MAGNIFICAT *anima mea Dominum*.

The harp of Hebrew poetry, so long silent in the temple, halls and homes of Palestine, awakened under the spiritual rapture of those days when the prophecies of the Old Time were flowering forth in the perfect fulfillments of the New. Then revived, in the Blessing of Elizabeth, in this song of the Virgin, and in the Benedictus of Zacharias, that spirit of sacred poesy which has never since perished from the earth. Mary's *Magnificat* proves not only the harmony of poetry and religion, but the harmony of the psalmody of the

Hebrew ritual and the hymnology of the Christian Church. It cannot be doubted that the Messianic figure moves through the strophes of the ancient prophetic singers. But quite as certain is it that the perfect light of the New Dispensation is needed to bring that figure into full relief, and to set Him forth, shorn of every shadow of symbol and rite, as He is presented in the threefold hymns of praise which sprang up around the pre-natal days of Jesus.

The incense of these sweet strains swings forward to greet and enfold the coming Christ. It is not strange, therefore, that they should exhale so abundantly the perfume of the Hebrew lyric poetry, whose loftiest notes were reached in hymning the glories of the Messianic Kingdom.

#### IV. MARY'S MAGNIFICAT.

We may now turn to the Magnificat itself, and read it, especially in the light which it may throw upon Mary's character and early training. It may be divided into four stanzas, each of which contains three verses,<sup>1</sup> twelve lines in all.

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, *Die drei ersten Evangelien*.

## I.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
 And my spirit doth joy in my Saviour, God,  
 For He hath looked on His handmaid's low estate.

## II.

For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call  
 me blessed ;<sup>1</sup>  
 For The Mighty hath done great things to me, and  
 holy is His name !  
 And His mercy unto them that fear Him is from age  
 to age.

## III.

He hath wrought strength with His arm ;  
 He hath scattered the proud of heart and mind ;  
 He hath put down the princes from thrones,  
 And exalted them of low degree.  
 He hath filled the hungry with good,  
 And the rich hath sent empty away.

## IV.

He hath holpen His servant Israel  
 In remembrance of mercy for ever,  
 As unto our fathers He spake  
 To Abraham and his seed.

<sup>1</sup>μακαρίοῦσί makarioussi, a word used only here and James  
 v. 11, where it is translated *count them happy*.

If one will examine this hymn carefully, there shall be found evidence of several qualities and experiences which show Mary's fitness for the honor put upon her, and which suggest to us what are the highest qualifications in women in all time for the duties of motherhood.

1. The Magnificat indicates admirable qualities of mind. The thought and expression alike are worthy of the best examples of the Hebrew poetry. Let us not forget here that the authorship of some of these belongs to women. Miriam, the prophetess, on the thither shore of the Red Sea, after the miraculous deliverance of Israel, broke forth into song, which the Holy Spirit has preserved to us :<sup>1</sup>

Sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously,  
The horse and his rider, He hath cast into the sea !

Thus she sang, while her countrywomen accompanied her with their guitars, and joined in the chorus with united voices.

The only poetic fire that illumed the period of the Judges, burned upon the lips of Deborah.

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xv. 1-19.

Her song has justly been given a place by the most competent critics among the noblest lyrics of antiquity. "The songs of Deborah," says Heinrich Ewald,<sup>1</sup> "so artistic with all their antique simplicity, show to what refined art lyric poetry very early aspired, and what a delicate perception of beauty breathed already beneath its stiff and cumbrous soul."

Even more interesting to us in this connection is the beautiful eucharistic hymn of Hannah<sup>2</sup> which uttered her maternal joy for the promised gift of a son. More closely perhaps than any other Scripture character, the Virgin Mary's heart must have been united in sympathy with the wife of Elkanah. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that her Magnificat should show so many points of resemblance to Hannah's hymn.

Here then we have Mary in that goodly succession—a true prophetic even if it be not an "apostolic succession"—within which we trace such worthy examples as Miriam, Deborah, and Hannah. Let it not be said, let it not be felt, that woman has no part in the intellectual life, and

<sup>1</sup> History of Israel, Vol. I., p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.



culture and leadership of the Church of God. To her also has come, in the development of Human Salvation, the divine call to prophecy, and to lead the praises of the elect. May her harp ever be found to breathe forth notes that shall lift souls upward, that shall clarify the passions and thoughts of the heart by sounding for them the key-note of these holy hymns of the prophetic women of old!

2. Nor should we be wholly just to the dispensation under which Mary was trained were we to omit here to point out its helpful influence in forming her character. There is no sharper point of difference between the Hebrew religion and that of other Oriental systems, Mohammedanism, for example, than its attitude toward women. The freedom of action, the honorable place, the affectionate and reverent treatment which fell to the lot of Israel's daughters, are in pleasant contrast with the thralldom and inconsequence of the daughters of Islam. In such environment as Mohammedanism never could have been developed such characters as Deborah and Mary, those foster-children of the Hebrew faith.

What is true of Judaism is yet more eminently

true of Christianity. Well might the venerable Elizabeth and the youthful Mary strike their harps together in grateful and joyful song! They were indeed singing the deliverance of their race, the Redeemer of their people,—but in an especial sense they hymned the ransom of their own sex.

It is noticeable that no prophetic utterance of woman left us upon the inspired page is a Jeremiad! Not one is pitched upon the minor key; every one is a eucharist. Miriam's chant is a triumphant ode. Deborah's song is a psalm of victory. Hannah's lyric is a pure thanksgiving. Elizabeth's blessing is a note of praise. Mary's hymn is a Magnificat,—a doxology! Surely it would almost seem that the faith of these prophetic women had glanced far into the future and discerned the blessings with which a pure religion ever endows her sex,—discerned that liberty wherewith Christ hath made her free. Yes, the echo of Mary's Magnificat may find a true answer this day from every woman's spirit.

“He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid;  
For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call  
me blessed!”

One of the most pitiful objects which human eyes behold is the figure of a woman standing in the lofty seat to which the religion of Jesus has exalted her, and from thence hurling arrows and firebrands against the Faith that saves her!

3. A further analysis of the Magnificat shows a profound knowledge of the attributes of that God whom she trusted. She knew Him as a Gracious God, for He had looked upon His handmaid's low estate ; as the Omnipotent One, the Almighty who had "done great things for her;" as the Holy One, "and Holy is His name"; as the Merciful, the True, who keeps covenant "from generation to generation," in "remembrance of mercy" and of the word which "He spake to our fathers." She knew this God as One whose strong arm is manifest in Providence ; whose Omniscience searches the very imagination of the hearts of the wicked ; whose Justice unseats the oppressor, but exalts the lowly, and feeds the hungry—the God whose name is the Helper, for "He hath holpen his people Israel."

This age is in revolt against dogma—doctrinal teaching—or, at least, there are thinkers

who would fain so see it. The principles of physical and natural science may worthily be taught to our youth, we are told. But, then, are the principles—the fundamental doctrines of religion to be refused a place? And wherefore? Be not deceived; the world has never known nobler characters than those mothers of Israel, who, like Mary, learned in childhood the pure theology of their people; or those mothers of our own era and land, who learned at their mothers' knees what they in turn have taught their children, that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The theology which breathes through the Magnificat lives again in this answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

4. The thought follows closely that Mary must have been familiar with the sources of Hebrew theology—the Holy Scripture. She was a type of those Bible-loving Hebrew matrons of whom we have further examples in Eunice and Lois. They may have been more numerous in those days than we have been wont to think. A com-

parison of the two compositions will show a close resemblance between the Magnificat and Hannah's hymn.<sup>1</sup> The spirit and theme of the two are substantially the same. Some of the expressions are nearly identical. Mary's sentence, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," corresponds with Hannah's "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. . . . I rejoice in thy salvation." Mary says : "Holy is His name ;" Hannah, "There is none holy as the Lord ;" Mary, "He hath filled the hungry with good things ;" Hannah, "They that were hungry ceased ;" Mary, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree ;" Hannah, "He bringeth low and lifteth up ; He raiseth up the poor out of the dust."<sup>2</sup> It is needless to push the comparison further. One who will take pains to read the Magnificat with a good reference Bible shall discover that nearly every sentence has a parallel more or less close in the Old Testament. Mary's spirit was imbued with the sacred text ; her mind was stored with the pious and beautiful utterances of the prophets of her faith, so that

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Compare also Ps. cxiii. 7, 8.

when the Holy Spirit breathed upon her, the thoughts of her heart flowed out naturally in the style and language of Scripture.

Here, then, we touch a fact of highest practical significance in thinking upon the system of education which shall give to our race the best gifts of manhood. The mother of Jesus was not rich; on the contrary, it is manifest that she was very poor. Though the blood of kings flowed through her veins, she had no rank among the political, social, or ecclesiastical leaders of her nation. She was possessed of a vigorous natural intellect, which was well poised and disciplined, but could have had no opportunity for "higher education," as the term is now understood among women. Nevertheless, she possessed the very worthiest qualification to be custodian and educator of the infant Christ, in that she thoroughly knew the sacred Scriptures. No doubt she was not alone in this among the mothers of Israel. There may have been many a Eunice and Lois in that generation silently at work moulding the minds of those youth who were soon to take their places as the founders of a new era, the

framers of a civilization, the revolutionizers of the world of men for all coming centuries.

The Bible contains in it the germs of all those elements that go into the make up of an educated mind. Poetry, oratory, history that touches all the great nations of antiquity, jurisprudence, nature-lore, practical wisdom and profound philosophy, all are here. It is a matchless Book in its power to arouse, quicken and feed the intellect. No Bible-trained people can be an ignorant people. The keenest and strongest minds among men have been schooled by the word of God. Do you ask, Why is this? The answer is plain : simply because the Bible is the Book of God! In its infinite heights and fathomless depths it reflects the Nature of its Author. The eminent Kentucky divine, Dr. Robert J. Breckenridge, once said to a friend, "I suppose that there is no book written on any subject, or in any language, that I could not master in one year, if I should set myself about it. But I have made the Bible a special study for thirty-four years, and I never open it that I do not discover something new. It reminds me of the great firmament. Penetrate as far as you may, with the

aid of the most powerful glass that the ingenuity of man has produced, and still there is something beyond." True, most true! Let the Bible student press forward as far as human possibility allows, he never reaches his intellectual "pillars of Hercules," never is halted before bound or barrier.

But secular education alone leaves the character one-sided. He who has developed only his intellectual nature is, like Ephraim of old, "a cake not turned." The culture of the moral and religious faculties is necessary to a complete education. Vast learning and little conscience, polished manners and vitiated morals, the maximum of knowledge with the minimum of faith, an expanded mind with a shriveled soul—these are the tokens of an abnormal education, of a human monstrosity not of a truly balanced and rounded man. The perfect character cannot be without religion; and true religion is uncovered in the Holy Bible.

The eminent Philadelphia merchant, Stephen Girard, provided for founding a college for orphan boys which, by wise management on the part of trustees, now fosters and educates more than a thousand youth. In his will was the condition



that no clergyman should ever enter the school precincts, and no sectarian religion should be taught, but he required that the highest form of morality should be inculcated. In a suit at law which has passed into the number of famous cases, the question was argued as to what text-book was best fitted for such instruction, which issued in a memorable decision by the Supreme Court of the United States. That decision declared that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain the highest and best code of morals known to men, and on the grounds of that decision, the Bible became and continues to be a text-book in the school ; a beautiful chapel adorns the College grounds, and there every week devout laymen meet in worship with the great audience of young men and boys, and declare to them the doctrines and morality of our holy religion. The conscience and judgment of the best part of mankind are uttered in that decision of our Supreme Court. No education is complete without training in morals ; no morality is complete but that which the Bible gives.

The mother of Jesus was mighty in Scripture ;

therefore she was thoroughly furnished for the great duty to which Heaven appointed her. "What is wanting," asked Napoleon, "that the youth of France be well educated?" "*Good mothers!*" was the answer of a lady of the court. "Here," said the Emperor, "is a system in a word!" Good mothers! But how vain for us to hope for such without the formative influence of the religion of Christ! Remember this, you who would have your sons grow up to be good and great men. The godly divine and commentator, Dr. Philip Doddridge, traced his first impulse toward a noble life to the lessons which a pious mother taught him as she held him in her arms before an open fire-place and told him the Scripture stories which were illustrated by figures on the Dutch tiles that enclosed and ornamented the mantel-piece. Many another life has had like swing and impulse from like lessons taught in that heavenliest of earthly schools—a mother's arms, by that goodliest earthly teacher, a godly mother! Truly, if our sons are to grow up in the noble discipleship of Jesus, our mothers must follow in the worthy succession of "Mary, the Mother of Jesus."

## LECTURE II.

### MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

[AFTER THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.]

WHILE the age waited for the coming of the Messiah's kingdom, imperial Rome was reaching out her iron hand upon the earth to bind all nations in her fetters. An act which tightened her military cordon that already included Palestine, drew the footsteps of the Virgin Mary forward toward the fulfillment of prophecy. It was written that the Anointed of Israel must be a child of Bethlehem. Rarely men are conscious of the secret springs of power that urge them along the lines of the Divine purpose. Yet none the less is Heaven's will wrought out.

#### I. MARY AT BETHLEHEM—THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Some such decree as that which compels a census of the United States every ten years, had been announced by the Roman government. It was not a rare occurrence. We know that at

least three times Augustus had ordered a *census populi*, the chief purposes of which were doubtless to regulate the assessment of taxes and determine the military levies. This legal enrollment, in Palestine, was required to be by tribes and families, in harmony with the social organization of the country. As Joseph belonged to the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David, he came from his home at Nazareth to be enrolled personally at Bethlehem, the central city of his gens. Mary accompanied her husband. The khan or caravansary, the only sort of public place known in that day, was crowded:—"There was no room for them in the inn."

The Oriental khan bore no resemblance to our modern hotels. Hospitality was religiously practiced toward countrymen and kinsfolk,—open air lodging was pleasant and practicable for most travelers during the entire year; for such wayfarers as needed temporary shelter, lodgings were provided in buildings commonly erected at public expense or by private munificence. You may readily picture to yourselves one of these "inns." Imagine a series of barracks, more or

less substantial, built around a hollow square or court. There is a doorway or gate at one side, the common entrance for man and beast. In the open court, camels and pack-mules are unloaded, fed, watered, and often stabled, though sometimes shelters in the shape of stalls or cells were provided for them at one side of the quadrangle. The remainder of the barracks is given up to travelers, numbers of whom are bivouacked in single rooms, spreading their rugs or blanket-like over-garments upon the floor or a raised platform. Food for man and fodder for cattle are provided by each party for itself, although occasionally, purchases of raw material may be made from a keeper or the neighboring villagers.

During a trip from Pike's Peak in Colorado, through South Park to Leadville, made in the summer of 1879, I fell upon a near approach to the type of these ancient khans. We managed to make our evening halts at certain "ranches" along the trail which make it a point to entertain guests. Hard by the ranchman's house is a cabin for the free use of the public. To this we were directed. There were a single room, an open fire-

place, a table, a rude bench or two, sometimes a bunk. That was all! Here travelers, few or many, as the chances of the road might be, spent the night. A fire was kindled in the chimney-place; coffee, potatoes and bacon were cooked, blankets were spread on the floor, and if the raids of mice, chip-munks, and mountain-rats permitted, thereon the wayfarer slept. But what was the ranchman's equivalent for this hospitality? This: he had hay and oats to sell for horses, milk and perhaps some other substantial to sell for hungry men, to say nothing of such more profitable and often more popular rations as whiskey, tobacco and cigars. Such is (or was) the Rocky Mountain khan, which went quite indiscriminately by the name of "camp house," "cook house," or "cook 'em yourself." It is not unlike, in its general management,—and alas, also in its mal-odorousness,—the Oriental inn. If instead of our far Western ranchman, you substitute the host or innkeeper (*πανδοξέβης*<sup>1</sup>) whom we find in the parable of the Good Samaritan, or the "hostess" of whom Rahab<sup>2</sup> and Jephthah's mother<sup>3</sup> were ex-

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 35.<sup>2</sup> Josh. ii. 1.<sup>3</sup> Judges xi. 1.

amples, we shall have a tolerably correct idea of the sort of "inn" at which Joseph and Mary sought shelter.

It was certainly inconvenient and humiliating that the department of the khan commonly occupied by travelers, was full, so that they were obliged to find quarters in one of the vacant stalls or shelters, "mangers" as our version reads, reserved for beasts. Yet the grade of discomfort was by no means so low, as would be implied by passing from an "inn" to a "stable," according to our use of those words. Still it must have been a sore trial to Mary that the supreme hour of her life came upon her amid such humble surroundings.

This, also, was not without the over-ruling Hand of God. The manger-cradle of the Christ has ever pointed the lesson of Divine Grace in his humiliation, has opened the fountains of human sympathy toward the Holy Child, and marked more clearly the essential and final glory of the Immanuel, by the contrasted lowliness of his natal hour. How well has this been expressed in Bishop Heber's familiar hymn :

“ Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,  
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall;  
Yet angels adore Him in slumber reclining  
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all!”

For this humiliation, even amidst it, Heaven sends to Mary a rich compensation. Night closes around the inn; and the silence of sleep falls upon the rooms crowded with tired wayfarers. The stars look down into the open court, where the camels crouch and their dusky drivers sleep. Suddenly a group of men appear at the gate; they are in haste; they are stirred with a great wonder and emotion which—if we read the record aright<sup>1</sup>—were communicated to those who heard the strange incidents which had brought them thither. These were the Bethlehem shepherds, whose story is inwoven with the earliest and happiest recollections of childhood, and some of the sweetest hours of motherhood—those which hinge upon the Christmas-tide.

It is surely no unwarranted play of imagination which calls up the picture of that public house, at that hour, stirred with an excitement

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 17, 18.



which bordered upon awe ; of a profound interest centreing upon and circling around that little family heretofore so unknown or insignificant as to be unceremoniously left to a lodging in the camel-stalls ; of courteous words and kindly attentions now freely given the young mother and perplexed husband ; of eager and reverent attention focused upon that Babe whose advent had been hymned by an angel-choir and announced by the angel of the Lord. We may venture to indulge yet further our imagination. The morning has dawned. The Kahn is sounding with preparations for that early exodus which distinguishes travel in the East, where one must take advantage of the first cool hours of the day. The bulky camels sulkily chew the cud ; the diminutive pack-mules munch their fodder ; animated groups of men, women and children dressed in the varied and picturesque costumes of the Orient, move through the court, or stand in knots here and there, or sit among the bales of merchandise, taking the morning meal. They are discussing and repeating and wondering over the incidents of the night. We might even picture

here and there in chamber or court a curious company surrounding one of the shepherds, listening to his already oft repeated narrative. Might we not safely add that among these were some who in their hearts joined with the angels in that Bethlehem hymn *Gloria in Excelsis*—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men!”

Day advances, the caravans have moved on; travelers have dispersed toward the ends of the earth; the Holy family has found more seemly lodging in one of the village houses—that house<sup>1</sup> over which soon afterward the Star of Bethlehem stood, and which guided the Magi to the place where the young child lay.

And Mary?—what must have been the effect of these marvels upon her? The record is that she “kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”<sup>2</sup> That she was greatly comforted by them, that her faith in God and confidence in His promises were strengthened, we do not doubt. This is characteristic of her thoughtful nature, however, that she “pondered them.” May we

<sup>1</sup> τὴν οἰκίαν, Matt. ii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 19.

not well imitate her example? Let us once more cast these events of the Nativity within the crucible of devout meditation, and thereby may our inner nature be wealthier in faith, and hope and holiness!

## II. MARY'S DEDICATION OF HER SON.

On the eighth day after his birth the Holy Child received his name JESUS with the usual Jewish ceremony of circumcision. Thus the Saviour's obedience to the law began with very infancy. Another rite, indeed a two-fold one, remained. Israel's law required that every first-born male child should be dedicated to God's service. This was the outgrowth and commemoration of that night in Goshen when the angel of Death destroyed every first-born of Egypt, but spared the first-born of the Hebrews. Thenceforth, Jehovah claimed the spared first-born as his own. In honor of the faithfulness of Levi before Mt. Sinai, after the sin of Israel with the Golden calf, this whole tribe was taken for the special service of God, instead of the first-born of every tribe.<sup>1</sup> The law of redemption,

<sup>1</sup>Numb. iii. 45-47.

however, still applied to the excess of first-born children over the number of Levites. Later,<sup>1</sup> this provision gave way to a general law to redeem *all* the first-born with five shekels of the sanctuary, about five half-dollars (\$2.65) of our money. The law also required that the mother should offer at the door of the temple what was known as the offering of purification, which was a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or turtle dove for a sin-offering. There was an alternative offering for the very poor of two doves or two pigeons.<sup>2</sup> This ceremony was required on the thirty-third day after the child's circumcision.

In obedience to this law, Joseph and Mary were present in the temple at Jerusalem. The intervening forty days had been spent at Bethlehem, which is but six miles distant from Jerusalem. The Evangelist Luke seems to imply that Mary did not claim the right of redemption, but rather dedicated her Son to the service of God, as already wholly His. This behavior is profoundly significant of her early apprehension of the exalted destiny of her Son.

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xviii. 15, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xii. 8.

The offering, too, which was then made in her own behalf, gives us a clue to Mary's worldly estate. The sacrifice of the poor, a pair of turtle-doves, was that which the priest was asked to make on that day.

We are accustomed to associate the Jerusalem of that era with tumult, hypocrisy and injustice. But there were good men dwelling therein and godly women. Among the former was Simeon, "just and devout," says Scripture. It is not beyond the bounds of probability that he may have been (as has been conjectured) the son of the distinguished Rabbi Hillel, and father of the learned Sanhedrist Gamaliel referred to in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> He affords another example of that expectation of a coming Messiah so deeply inlaid with the religious hopes of that period, for he was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." He had not only strong faith in the coming of Messiah, but fellowship also with the Holy Spirit. "It was revealed unto him that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ."

Led by the Spirit he entered the temple on the

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 34 ; xxii. 3.

day fixed for the dedication of Jesus. He saw Joseph and Mary enter bearing the Holy Child ; he took the infant into his own arms—he blessed the God of the covenant and the promise. “Now, Lord,” he cried, “now thou dost indeed let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for my eyes have seen thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the nations, and the glory of thy people Israel !”

We have usually pictured this Simeon as a venerable man. If it were so we have seen in this touching tableau the old dispensation bending over the new in blessing ; the wisdom, piety, experience of the age holding up to the faith of new eras the incoming kingdom of Christ. Yet, there is really nothing in the record to indicate that Simeon was an old man. His famous prayer—the “*nunc dimittis*,” as it is called, is scarcely a prayer at all, but a declaration of a fulfilled prophecy. Still, it may be that Simeon was a man of years ; at least, his character and standing were so well approved to the parents of Jesus that they could give just weight to the

words spoken. These added another link to the chain of wonders which was uniting their Babe with the future glory of the Messiah. We read that "Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him."

Since that day there has been a succession of parents reaching in numberless descent through the centuries, who have stood in the temples of God to dedicate their children to the Most High. And evermore the wonder rises in the heart and grows upon the mind at the grace and salvation of God revealed to the world through Mary's Son. Blessed be God who still spans the cradle with the rainbow sign of the covenant of His redemption!

Mothers, are the children of your love, children also of God's covenant? Is it true of your son, as of Mary's, that you have brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord? How many there are who neglect the beautiful dedicatory rite which in the Christian Church takes the place of these Jewish acts of consecrating the children to God! Think of it! Hasten in the spirit of Mary's faith and piety to lay your offspring upon

the altar as sacred to Heaven, and seek for them the seal of Christ's Church and covenant.

But, be warned that the true and efficient dedication must first be within the temple of your own soul. Infant baptism may be, doubtless often has been made an empty ceremony, a superstition, a fetisch. It will always be so when the parent fails to present her own soul, in sacramental devotion, to the Saviour whose covenant blessing and seal she seeks for her child. First give thyself to God; then give thy child to Him with unswerving faith in His truth. That confidence shall not be misplaced. That faith shall move the Hand that sheds the saving grace of the Holy Ghost upon the infant's soul, even as the sprinkled water-drops fall upon its brow. It is the earthly parent's faith meeting the Heavenly Father's covenant that makes infant baptism, or any other form of dedication, a true sacrament. Were this reverent and trusting spirit which marks the Virgin Mary's presentation of her Son to God more frequent, there would be more veritable "sons and daughters of the Almighty" in this generation. The Divine Spirit has not



lost His potency. The covenant God is "infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His . . . Truth." One might cull many illustrations of this from the history of men and women of our own times. Here is one which I have preserved, from the venerable Dr. Charles C. Beatty, a beloved friend of my sainted parents, an honored and valued friend of my own youth and manhood years. Shortly before his death he thus wrote to the editor of one of our leading religious journals concerning an item which he had read in a late number :

"I notice that you ascribe the conversion of Dr. Charles Hodge to the period of his profession of religion. In this I think you are mistaken. If it is so stated in his life I have nothing to say to the contrary. I knew him his life long, from the time of his mother's removing to Princeton. We were boys at school together, and he was then a Christian. Some years ago we were consulting together in regard to a similar notice in some paper, and he said:—'I cannot remember as far back as I believe my Christian life began. So long as I can remember I loved to pray to God, and to do what I thought He wished. At the time that I made a profession there came to me a quickening and impulse

which led me to take that step then; but from my earliest years my mother's prayers, example and instruction was the influence to which I attribute my Christian life.' "

Alas! the rose is not without its thorn. As Mary pressed to her wondering heart the bud of promise whose unfolding gave the world the Rose of Sharon, the sting of the thorn was felt. "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign that He shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also!—that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed."<sup>1</sup> It is this prophecy of coming sorrow that especially links this temple scene with the life of the Virgin Mother. Not until the bitter passion of Golgotha, whose pangs were witnessed by that loving friend, did the full smart of the sword enter her breast. Such, at least, is the popular view of this text. But we must not so limit its meaning. There is a "godly sorrow" which every child of grace must know—the sorrow of repentance for sin!

<sup>1</sup> 1 Luke ii. 34, 35.

Shall Mary be exempt from this? Shall the "Mother of our Lord" permit herself to feel that *she* may be free from the pangs of repentance? Nay! the sword of grief for sin must pierce her heart also! One might almost believe that Simeon had glanced down the vista of eighteen centuries, had seen the Virgin mother exalted to a heavenly throne, declared "immaculate"—of sinless birth and nature,—amid the idolatrous adoration of multitudes, and had set and sealed upon the record of that day the answer and condemnation of such sin. Yes, Mary,—gentle, thoughtful, prayerful, faithful, devout, obedient to and possessed of the Heavenly Word,—thou art all this; but sin that lurks in every bosom has refuge also in thine; therefore, and that thou too mayest pass through repentance unto Life into the Presence of the Holiest, the sword of true contrition "shall pierce through thine own soul also!" It is permitted us thus to read the Blessing of Simeon.

Simeon's testimony to the Messiahship of the Holy Child is followed by that of another witness. In the circle of saintly people then in Jerusalem was a prophetess, who bore the familiar name

of Samuel's mother, Hannah or Anna. Her maidenhood had been followed by seven years of wedded life, and this by eighty-four years of widowhood. A century and more had she lived and served God, often with fastings and prayers, day and night. Even while Simeon was pronouncing his *nunc dimittis*, this venerable woman entered the temple and joined the holy company. Her prophetic spirit caught the inspiration which had moved the soul and opened the lips of Simeon. She took up his song, and as though chanting one of the responsive psalms, echoed the doxology. Thus it was a woman's praise—the Blessing of Elizabeth—that first cheered the Virgin mother's faith; it was woman's praise, Hannah's antiphonal response, which last fell upon her ear, as she passed from the joyful scenes of the Nativity into the shadows of trial which already were closing around her.

### III. THE PERILS OF INFANCY.

Some time during the forty days' sojourn at Bethlehem the visit of the wise men may have occurred. In the interval between their visit and

Herod's discovery of their departure, the dedication service at the temple could have been held. During this period the elements of evil were fomenting for the destruction of the Child of promise.

In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, St. John records a great wonder seen in heaven. A woman appears clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, upon her head a crown of twelve stars. She gives birth to a son. Another and opposing wonder appears. The great red dragon, whose folds enlap the third part of the stars and cast them down to earth, stands to devour the child as soon as it shall be born. But Heaven has ordered otherwise. The infant at his birth is caught up unto God and His throne; the woman flees into the wilderness to a place prepared of God; the dragon, who is that old Serpent the Devil, is assaulted by Michael and the heavenly host, and is cast out with all his angels.

This is a true type and prophecy of what has always been and shall be. Every great truth and good cause is assaulted in its infancy. Satan is wiser than men, and directs his fiercest onset

against the truth and Church when they are weakest. The redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage was threatened by peril to the infant Moses, and the hopes of God's people were preserved by the Providence which rescued his ark of papyrus rushes from the treacherous Nile. This history was repeated at the infancy of Messiah. The great dragon sought to devour the Child as soon as He was born.

While Mary was fondling her babe, conning in mind the wonders of His advent, and dreaming bright dreams of His great future, King Herod Agrippa was gathering in his heart a storm of jealousy and hatred which portended death to Jesus. The sword of Simeon's prophecy was already being unsheathed! It should soon leap from its scabbard and send through Mary's soul the first sharp pang of motherhood.

"Arise," said the angel of the Lord to Joseph in a dream, "take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I send thee word. For Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ii. 13.

It would seem from the language of Matthew's gospel that the anxious parents lost not a moment. Joseph did not wait for dawn. That very night he arose and took the young child and his mother and departed into Egypt. You have often seen the pictorial representations of that hasty flight. The mother and Babe mounted upon the patient mule, then and still the common means of transportation in Palestine;—the good and just Joseph accompanying them on foot;—the crescent moon hanging in the horizon spreading a dim halo on the desert landscape. Yes, the sorrows of motherhood had begun! Mary was fleeing through the night air,—fleeing in the early dews of morning, fleeing to save the life of her child! Is it not a type of that anxiety which still must fall so often on a mother's heart? Many of you, when the heats of our parching summers have gathered their intensest power, have caught up your dear babes and fled like Mary from the city of peril. Mothers of little ones who dwell in great towns are yearly exiles from their homes, churches and friends for the sake of their children's health and life. There may be elements of pleasure and gain

in this annual flight, but there are also loss and sacrifice which often fall heavily upon parents. Many a personal comfort and ornament, many a pleasure in the restfulness of one's own home, year by year is cheerfully yielded that the children may have the health-giving air and food of the countryside.

Aye, everywhere in city and country, motherhood must feel this pang of anxiety. The mortality of little children is one of the sad phases of our earth-life, though it must add to Heaven one of its chiefest charms. What perils lurk around the very gates of life! The dragon, with his many fangs of disease, teething, measles, whooping-cough, diphtheria, scarlet fever, cholera infantum—oh, what a dreadful array!—waits to devour the infants, almost as soon as they be born! It is the old sorrow of Mary's heart forever repeated. Alas! flight into some friendly haven will not always save the child. But, thank God! Since Mary's rescued Babe is now the enthroned Saviour, our dead babies are gathered with His arm and laid upon His bosom; and we, fleeing to the same sheltering bosom, may find comfort in



our grief! Afflicted, mourning mother, will you seek that Refuge to-day?

We need not be at much loss to conjecture the general route over which Mary was carried in that journey. Nature has made a broad and easy roadway, along the Mediterranean shore into the valley of the Nile. There was constant intercourse between Egypt and Palestine then as now. The great road probably ran over the hills and through Hebron, thence down the mountain sides to Gaza. It was on this road that the Ethiopian eunuch traveled on his return from Jerusalem, and here in the plain of Philistia where Gaza is situated—in a way which is desert—Philip met this high official of the Ethiopian queen, and baptized him. Here was the field of some of Samson's exploits, and it was the gate of Gaza that he bore away upon his shoulders. As the little company pressed on southward, and passed one after another these scenes, no doubt a mind so well-stored with Scripture facts as was Mary's would recall the sacred records that are associated with the spots, just as travelers into these lands do to-day. It is a ten days' journey into Egypt, most of the way across

the desert. It is not unlikely companions were found bound to the same destination, or that the holy family may have waited (as is the custom still) at some convenient point for the forming of a caravan, in whose protection they completed the journey.

A large colony of Jews—driven out by troublous times, and by the love of trade—would readily be found dwelling in peace under the protection of the Egyptian government. Tradition assigns the place of their abode to Matarea in the vicinity of Leontopolis, where, at a later period, the Jewish temple of Onias stood. Heliopolis or On, the city of the sun, where the patriarch Joseph obtained his Egyptian wife, is twelve miles south of this and is the place to which it is said the holy family first came. The site of Heliopolis is marked by low mounds, ruins of the ancient city and temple of the sun. The area—during the visit of Dr. Robinson<sup>1</sup> the great American geographer—was a ploughed field, a garden of herbs. A solitary obelisk, inscribed from top to base with Egyptian hieroglyphics, rises in the midst,

<sup>1</sup> *Researches*, i. p. 25.

the sole remnant of former splendors. Near an ancient well in the vicinity was (and probably still is) a very old sycamore tree, its trunk straggling and gnarled, under which legendary tradition relates that the holy family once rested. In some pictorial descriptions of this episode in Mary's life—the exile in Egypt—you may see the Oriental tent pitched under the sycamore boughs, the infant Jesus rolling baby-fashion upon a rug beside his mother, who sits at work with her distaff. Beyond is Joseph with his compass and rule in hand, working out upon a papyrus scroll some details of building work. In the distance rises the obelisk—doubtless the one true feature of the scene, for it was standing at the time, and must have often attracted the Virgin mother's eye. A mechanic carries his income in his "kit" or bundle of tools, and we may suppose that in the busy, prosperous and growing Jewish colony the carpenter Joseph had no difficulty in winning bread for his household.

The infant Christ was safe! But, alas! for the little innocents who could not flee! Close by Bethlehem, Jacob had buried his beloved Rachel,

the mother of the tribe of Benjamin. From her tomb, by a beautiful poetical figure, this ancestress of the holy people is represented as witnessing the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem by the soldiers of cruel Herod, and piteously bewailing them. "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, bitter weeping,—Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not!"<sup>1</sup> They are not, they are not! It is the voice of Bethlehem's mothers lamenting the martyred innocents, whose sad death has awakened equally the pity and indignation of men. Did Mary forget these little victims of a jealousy which burned against her child? We could not think so. Sooner or later the terrible news must have come to her over the caravan route, and as she clasped her own babe more closely to her heart, there must have mingled with her thanksgiving for his preservation, tears of sympathy for mothers bereaved and babes slain because of Him.

I have stood upon the sea beach at Atlantic City and watched the wan, pale, pain-marked faces of

<sup>1</sup>Jer. xxxi. 15.

the children of our city poor brighten and smile and flush under the pure sea breeze, while their mothers beside them relaxed their worn faces in sympathy with their little ones' pleasure. There they sat under the arbor and by the little cottage doors of the "Children's Sea-side Home,"—and why? Because in this great city of many homes there are mothers who can flee into Egypt from the death angel who threatens their darlings, who have hearts of compassion for mothers who cannot. The yearly slaughter of the Innocents under the poisoned air of an ill-governed city has stirred the mother love of many hearts. The angel of mercy has said, not indeed in prophetic dream, like Joseph's, forecasting the coming calamity, but in the very face of the pitiful facts: Arise, take up the young children and their mothers! Flee with them to the healthful sea winds! Bear them to the pure and sweet surroundings of "the Country Week!"

Blessed are they who have been obedient unto this heavenly vision! Holy charity, that shelters the fading baby life from the hot and poisonous breath of the sewer-demon panting close upon its path!

Men have said that such cruelty as that written of Herod cannot be credited. On the contrary, it is quite in accord with his character, which, as shown by authentic history, was one of atrocious cruelty. "Assuredly," says De Pressensè, "he who had immolated a cherished wife, a brother and three sons to his jealous suspicions, and who ordered a general massacre for the day of his funeral, so that his body should not be borne to the earth in the midst of universal rejoicing, such a monster would not recoil from a measure so insignificant in his eyes<sup>1</sup> as the massacre of a few babes in a Jewish inland town. "What recks he of the weeping of mothers? a little earth soon stifles that!" What cares he for the cries of suffering infants? Ah! but the cry goes up—a terrible cry!—to Heaven. "In Ramah is a voice heard"—weeping of mothers! In Bethlehem is a voice heard—the dying cries of babes!

It is heard, it is heard, in Heaven! The death-cry of Herod followed, almost like an echo, close upon the mortal wail of the Bethlehem Innocents. Alas, that wail is heard in our very midst to-day.

<sup>1</sup> Life of Christ, p. 204.

The cruelties perpetrated upon helpless children in this and other cities, has compelled the organization of societies to protect children from cruelty. As one of the founders and vice-presidents of the Society in Philadelphia, it has been my duty to take personal notice of many of the cases which have been uncovered. It would needlessly shock your feelings, it would surely arouse your keenest indignation and pity, were I to relate the details of the cruelties wrought in your very midst upon helpless children. No! the satanic succession of Herods is not broken! The race of cruel child-torturers is not extinct!

O Marys! happy mothers of safe, sheltered, happy children, help—help those who would take the suffering victims of cruelty in their arms and flee with them beyond the reach of tyranny! Thank God that the friends of Jesus and of humanity have interposed a shield between “the hard hand and its helpless victim.” But fail not to give your thanksgiving expression in bountiful aid of all such agents of mercy,—an aid which will add glow and warmth to the joy of mother-love over your own fondly cherished children.

## IV. THE FIRST COMMUNION—THE LOST CHILD.

Mary's residence in Egypt was brief. Within a year, perhaps, the holy family were once more settled at Nazareth, where, amid the beautiful and retired scenery already described, the boyhood of Jesus was spent, and his character ripened. The only record of Mary's life for the next ten or eleven years is one which shows the steadfastness of her piety. Every year she went up to the Passover, the great annual religious festival of the Jews. That passover which marked our Lord's twelfth year must have been one of especial interest. At twelve the Jewish lad became a "son of the law," and as such was permitted to take part for the first time in the passover. Thus, we find the son of Mary, still following in every point the path of legal obedience, present at the Paschal feast, to take what we might aptly call his "first communion." The ritual for this service was prescribed. "What mean ye by this service?" the child asked. "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover," the parents answered, "who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt,



when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." . . . "Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the first-born being males, but all the first-born of my children I redeem."<sup>1</sup> This beautiful service, by which the children were brought into communion both with the living Church and the Church of history, must have marked the first passover of Jesus. It is a question which has often been asked, Did Mary take this occasion to explain to her son why he had not been redeemed, as other children? Did this lead her on to unfold the miracles and prophecies connected with his birth? It would seem an appropriate time to inform the boy of his special dedication to God, and supernatural call to a holy service. But, we may well believe that the prudent and thoughtful mother would have hesitated to fully make known so early the things hidden in her heart.

The Pasch was over, and the throngs of pilgrims poured out of the city homeward, among them the Galilean bands with whom Joseph and Mary journeyed. At first thought it seems strange that a mother should have gone a day's

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xii. 27; xiii. 14, 15.

journey without noting the absence of her son. Yet, we can readily think that in a company of kindred and neighbors ordinary anxiety might have been relaxed ; that the lad might have been entrusted to relatives in whose care he was supposed to be ; that perhaps there was less anxiety concerning such a child as Jesus, so ripe, so manly for one of his years, as the sequel showed.

However that may be, when the caravan made the evening halt, and the tents were being pitched, and the camp fires lit, the exciting news that Mary's *child was lost* spread through the encampment. With trembling hearts the parents turned back to Jerusalem.

It is an old calamity, an old sorrow, often renewed. In our own days we speak the name of CHARLIE ROSS with silent sorrow. Yet, his is not an exceptional case. One of the touching results of the search for this boy, was the number of waifs uncovered in every part of the land. Lost boys were continually being found and reported as the true Charlie Ross. Alas ! the bereaved parents were doomed to disappointment in every case, but the fact remains that

*somebody's* lost boys are wanderers in great numbers in the land.

Our pioneer fathers felt the bitterness of the same grief. Frontier life abounds in examples of children dragged by Indian war parties from the white man's cabin, to spend years, and even lives of captivity in the wigwam of the savage. It is strange at how many points the life of Jesus touches the ever-recurring sorrows of human life!

By what maternal insight were the Virgin mother's steps turned toward the temple? Happy the son whose habits lead him to haunts like that holy spot! Happy the mother whose sons, separated from them in the great city's busy and sinful whirl, turn their footsteps to such hallowed places! The Jewish temple was a succession of courts, increasing in sanctity from the outer gate to the innermost shrine of all, the Most Holy Place. First came the court of the Gentiles, then the court of the Women. In one of the porches of this court the schools of the Rabbins were held, and therein the law was regularly expounded. To one of these schools Mary's anxious search was directed. Behold, her lost boy! He sat in

the midst of doctors, or *teachers*, as the word should be, "both hearing them and asking them questions." He was not there as a *teacher* himself, but as a scholar. His understanding and eagerness to learn were manifest in his questions, and his thorough home training by his Scripture-knowing mother, in his answers to the teachers' catechising. A mother's love, when stirred with such great anxiety as that in Mary's soul, does not stand much on ceremony. Breaking into the midst of the academy of learned men, Mary thus greeted the young truant: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

These words and the reply which they evoked seem to indicate that Mary had not yet told Jesus all the facts as to his origin. If so, here was a surprise for her—the Son knows his high destiny, aye, and his divine origin! "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be on my FATHER'S business?" "Thy father and I," the Virgin mother had said. "My FATHER," was the delicate but unmistakable intimation that the boy knew that his true Father was the King of

Heaven! If, on the other hand, we take the view that Mary had availed herself of the Passover rites to inform Jesus of some of the facts concerning his early life, then we shall see in his words a deeper meaning. "Did you not, but now, tell me that I am the Son of God? Could you not, then, have trusted me in God's care? and why should it seem strange to you that I should linger in my Father's temple and seek to fit myself for my Father's work?" Nevertheless, he left the teachers, the school and the temple, returned with Mary to Nazareth, and submitted as before to her maternal care.

The words of Mary's son have a very far reach, indeed. Mothers find it hard to learn as sons grow up, that they have a heavenly Father's work to do in the great world. How soon the cord of separation begins to strain under the pressure of daily needs! There are mothers who must give up sons at a very early age—too early!—to the pressing duties of the world's work and conflict. They see their boys separate from home,—go into the midst of the world, without the world's experience, wisdom, endurance, to put their tender

years against the world's hardness, cunning and selfishness, to struggle on and up, or fall out and perish by the way! Is it not hard? Is it a wonder that mothers shrink from, protest against this destiny? Yet so it must be! The world's work must be done. The soul's destiny must be wrought out. The fledglings must leave the parent nest, and spread their own wings upon the air. Blessed be that God who spreads His Divine wings beneath them, "beareth them on wings," and teaches them the mystery of flight. The covenant-keeping God is always with your children in the path of duty.

#### V. THE SON'S ENTRANCE UPON MANHOOD.

A period of eighteen years intervenes before we again hear of Mary. In that interval the sorrow of widowhood had fallen upon her. Her own home appears to have been broken up, and her residence established in the house of her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas, first at Nazareth, and afterward at Capernaum. When the veil again lifts, it shows us Mary at the marriage of Cana in Galilee.

Great events had transpired, and yet greater were thickening and yeasting in the air. Her son's thirty years has been fulfilled—He had entered upon manhood; He had entered upon public life. The baptism, the recognition by John Baptist, the temptation, the gathering of the first disciples, all these events had occurred. Mary was not ignorant of these things, and to her mind they had a deeper significance than to any other. To all the mother's partial interest in the rising fame of her son she could add the interpretation of the angels, Elizabeth and Zacharias, the Magi, the venerable Simeon and Hannah. How fondly, how anxiously, how wonderingly must she have watched every step of his early career, and waited for the hour of his Messiahship.

It is pleasant to greet the widowed Mary after her long obscurity, on so delightful an occasion as a wedding. She was neither more nor less than woman, and where was ever woman's heart that did not beat more quickly at sound of wedding bells? Welcome, Mary, holy mother, patron of so many communities of nuns, celibate

women—welcome to the marriage! Surely, there is little in this or any other act of Mary's to countenance any disparagement of the sanctity of wedlock for women.

Jesus had not yet made full exhibition of His divine power—He had wrought no miracle. When the failure of the wine at the wedding banquet opened a way for such a manifestation, it was Mary who raised the suggestion, and urged upon her son the use of his miracle-working power. That her motives had some savor of pride or self-interest, or in some way belittled the holy and lofty end of all Christ's miracles, is manifest from the words of Jesus. There is indeed no trace of reproof in the word "woman," which was a respectful term, thenceforth and continually used by our Lord, even on the cross. It is noticeable that He never addressed her as "Mother!" But beyond question the answer of Jesus was one of mild, respectful reproof. "What is that to thee and to me?" Higher motives than the mere supplying of festival meats and drink should underlie the prayer for and the use of my hidden power! Moreover,



“my hour has not yet come.” Forestall not the Father’s appointed time and my own sovereign will!

Roman Catholic expositors endeavor to strip this answer of any semblance of rebuke, in their eagerness to defend Mary’s claim to veneration and the potency of her intercession. But not so do the Church fathers. IRENÆUS sees in the act the Lord “repelling Mary’s unreasonable urgency.” CHRYSOSTOM reads, “she thought that after the manner of other mothers she might in all things command Him whom she ought to have worshiped as her God.” AUGUSTINE interprets,<sup>1</sup> “But He, as it were, does not acknowledge a human womb, when about to work Divine works: saying, as it were, ‘Thou gavest not birth to that part of Me which works a miracle, thou gavest not birth to My Divine Nature.’”

Mary yielded to the gentle rebuke, but nevertheless held to her purpose, waiting our Lord’s own time. Her directions to the servants indicate a position of authority, or at least familiarity in the family. “Whatsoever he saith unto thee, do

<sup>1</sup> Homily VIII., Jn. ii. 4.

it," was her instruction to the attendants. Her faith was in due time rewarded; the first miracle of her divine Son was thus wrought under her directions and her eye. The firkins of water yielded forth choice wine.

"The conscious water saw its God, and blushed."

We next hear of Mary at Capernaum, about a year and a half after this time. The fame of Jesus had spread far and near; his mighty sermons and mighty works had stirred and attracted multitudes, and awakened the attention of the Sanhedrist authorities at Jerusalem. The elements of official opposition and hostility had already begun to foment. The twelve apostles had been chosen, and had entered with the Master upon His holy labors. How vast and exacting those labors were St. Mark indicates.<sup>1</sup> "The multitude cometh together again so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, he is beside himself." Mary certainly was not in sympathy with the view of our Saviour's mental condition which his breth-

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 20, 21.

ren entertained. She knew too well the secret of the work of Jesus. But she evidently allowed herself to be carried away by her tenderness and concern for her Son's health and safety. From the duties of that public life into which she had been so eager to thrust Him at Cana, she would fain have withdrawn Him at Capernaum. When hunger, exhaustion, peril to reputation, to health, and even life, rose up around the path of Jesus, the lustre of His honors waned before her motherly heart. We find her therefore joining her sister's sons and kindred in an effort to check our Lord at least for a season in His public career. How mother-like it was! How often is the incident repeated, in substance, among the mothers and wives of our day! Doubtless there are many men who would be all the better could womanly anxiety persuade them for a while to intermit the labors that are consuming them too rapidly. But after all the lesson has to be learned that the demands of the lost and heart-broken multitude, the claims of God and humanity, must prevail above the personal feelings and claims of the individual. It is sometimes a hard fact to accept, but woman's

heart should learn the sacrifice of submission as man must learn the sacrifice of heart-ache, and brain-weariness and bodily exhaustion amid the toils, exactions, and oppositions of life.

Intent upon their purpose, Mary and her nephews sought the place of Christ's ministry. The crowd surrounding Him was so great that they could not make way through it. They sent their message to Him, which passed from mouth to mouth until it reached the Master's ear. His thought cut at once through the purpose and motive of His friends, and He met them with a reproof whose fine courtesy and point are only excelled by the blessedness and hope which His words hold up before all the sons and daughters of Adam. "But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother."<sup>1</sup> We may well close this incident with the reflection of Dean

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 48-50.

Alford: "All these characteristics of the mother of our Lord are deeply interesting, both in themselves, and as building up, when put together, the most decisive testimony against the fearful superstition which has assigned to her a place in the Romish mythology. Great and inconceivable as the honor of that meek and holy woman was, we find her repeatedly the object of rebuke from her divine Son, and hear Him here declaring that it is one which the humblest believer in Him has in common with her."<sup>1</sup>

Our next view of Mary is on the summit of Golgotha, near the cross of Jesus. The incident has been perpetuated in the Latin Church associated with the words of the ancient hymn :

Stabat mater juxta crucem  
Dum pendebat filius.

*Stabat mater dolorosa!* The sorrowful mother stands in that awful shadow where mothers so often have stood, that falls upon life when bright, young spirits of beloved sons are quenched from earth upon the altar of country and truth.

<sup>1</sup> Greek Testament, on Matt. xii. 46.

Woman's part in the incidents of that great Atonement Day will be the subject of another lecture. We may only pause now to mark the influence which they had upon Mary's future destiny. As the widowed, and soon to be childless, mother leaned upon the Apostle of love, the beloved John, surrounded by other friends, the group attracted the dying thoughts of Jesus. There must have been in his glance a wealth of tenderness which even the inspired page could not transmit to us. But His words remain: "He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!" This was His only legacy, the care of a widowed mother to the disciple whom He loved. This was his only provision for that bereaved woman. But it was enough. "From that hour that disciple took her to his own home." Thenceforth the life of Mary was blended with that of John. Her home was probably in Jerusalem, and it is in that city that we have our last view of her.

It seems strange that in the record of those startling events which followed the Resurrection no mention is made of the Mother of Jesus. The

subsequent days of his tarrying on earth pass in the same silence; even the story of the Ascension is told without allusion to Mary. She sinks away into obscurity, as though the Spirit of inspiration would emphasize the fact that the alchemy of death had dissolved forever the bonds that united her for a time to the Divine Son in a nearer relation than others of the race. In close accord with this thought is the last recorded incident in her life.

From the Ascension on Mount Olivet the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and "went up into an upper room," evidently a well-known resort, for worship. The eleven apostles were there, and "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."<sup>1</sup> So the Holy Ghost leaves her in the new annals of the Coming Church, bowed before God in prayer and supplication! We see her only as one among the other disciples, a woman among other women, a needy soul among other needy souls, bending on her knees before Heaven and joining her pleas

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 14.

thereto with those of other redeemed sinners, her brethren and sisters, the saints of God by a common salvation through the blood of Jesus. She is neither more nor less than one of the disciples, and whatever part she may have taken in subsequent events has not been deemed worthy of notice. Surely, it reads like a prophetic warning and rebuke,—this closing chapter in Mary's life,—of that mournful heresy which in future ages dared to pluck the Virgin Mother from that place where the Holy Spirit left her among other worshiping disciples, and exalt her to the throne of her Son as sharer with Him in the worship of the saints.

Alas, that so it should be! Let us, at least, learn what is the true meed of honor which the Church owes the mother of her Lord. Yielding gladly to her memory all of womanly beauty, wisdom, piety and strength which Heaven bestowed, nevertheless we bow not before her, but *with her*, and with the women, and with the Lord's brethren, and with the holy apostles, and with the Church on earth and in Heaven, in lowly and adoring worship before the Son of God, now glorified and enthroned, though once incarnate as the Son of Mary.



### LECTURE III.

#### SALOME: AMBITION IN WOMEN.

SALOME was the wife of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman. It is not expressly declared that the home of this family was at Bethsaida, but the inference is very strong that it was there or in that vicinity. St. John tells us that Bethsaida was the home of Andrew, Peter and Philip.<sup>1</sup> St. Mark describes the call of these disciples while they were casting a net for fish, as the Christ "walked by the Sea of Galilee." "And when He had gone a little further," we read, "He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were also in the ship mending their nets."<sup>2</sup> St. Luke tells us<sup>3</sup> that John and James were "partners with Simon." Again, in the closing scene of Christ's ministry, when He appeared, after the resurrection, on the shore of Lake Tiberias, the sons of Zebedee and Salome were partners in the ship with Simon the Bethsaidan.

<sup>1</sup> John i. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 16-20.

<sup>3</sup> Luke v. 10.

This argument is not absolutely conclusive as to the exact point, but there is no room to doubt that the home of Salome was on the shore of the famous lake, in or close by this village, whose name, "the place of fishes,"—or, as we might say, "Fishkill," or "Fishville,"—clearly shows the chief business of the inhabitants. Indeed, the fishing interests were at that day among the most important of the populous plain of Genesareth, at whose head Bethsaida was located. Thus we shall not be much at a loss to picture to ourselves the home and surroundings of Salome, and so can grasp many of those details which entered into the current of her daily life. Something like this picture we may therefore call up before us :

Along the edge of the lake (or sea) runs the whole way round from north to south a level beach. At the southern end it is roughly strewn with black and white stones of volcanic origin, but the central or more northern part is formed of smooth sand, or a mixture of shells and pebbles so minute as to resemble sand. This sparkling, pebbly beach is an admirable ground on which to

land the nets in fishing, and upon which to spread them out to dry or mend.

Just back of and fringing this belt are the fishermen's houses. There was as much difference then as now in human homes. We may conclude that Salome's house was not a sumptuous one; yet it may have been something better than the ordinary surrounding huts. While her husband and sons were not beyond the necessity to labor, we have some glimpses of superior temporal estate. For example, Zebedee had in his ship or fishing boat not only his sons, but "hired servants," doubtless to man the boat and aid in the capture, cure and marketing of the fish. Again, Salome was among the women who ministered to Christ of their "substance,"<sup>1</sup> and therefore must have had somewhat to spare for such ministry. Another hint we have of higher fellowship and friendship than such as one would naturally associate with a fisherman's family is the record of that awful night of our Lord's trial, from the statement that John, Salome's son, was acquainted with the High Priest, and further, that he had "his own home"<sup>2</sup> in Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Luke viii. 3, compare with Mark xv. 41.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 27.

Let us therefore select one of the best of those houses along the beach as Salome's. It is of the ordinary square Syrian pattern, perhaps with two stories, having a bay window, or rather the upper story jutting over the street. There is a central court, in one corner of which is a stairway leading to the upper apartments. There is a flat roof, with a tent or booth, it may be, under which the boys or the boatmen may sleep. Here, no doubt, in the evenings the family often gathered for friendly chat with neighbors on the adjoining roof-tops, and to enjoy the cool breeze off the lake. By day it was a stirring scene, that Salome could look out upon from that elevated spot. A large portion of the little sea would be under her vision. It is an oval sheet of water, thirteen miles in length by sixteen in width, set deeply in among the hills of Galilee. On the eastern shore, the hills rise to the height of from one to two thousand feet, deeply furrowed by ravines, and quite flat along the summit. Down one of these ravines the Gadarene swine were driven by the castout devils into the sea. Down these, too, suddenly rush, with great violence, those winds, one of which lashed the

waves into fury when our Lord and his disciples were caught in the tempest and threatened with shipwreck. Often enough, we may believe, when one of these sudden storms arose, Salome climbed to the roof-top and looked out, with throbbing heart, over the seething lake to watch the fate of the well-known vessel that held lives so precious to her.

Northward the river Jordan is seen to enter the lake, and far to the south flows out again and away toward its grave in the Dead Sea. From this point, too, the whole plain of Genesareth would be in sight, stretching southward for three miles along the shore, covered with waving crops of wheat and millet, with vineyards of melons and grapes, groves of olives, palm and figs. Capernaum is just beyond—the metropolis of the plain. There is Chorazin; yonder, under the limestone cliffs that mark the southern boundary of the plain, is Magdala, the home of Mary, the Magdalene. Still beyond rise the hills over which are the palaces and houses of Tiberias, the capital city of king Herod. Surely, it was not an unpleasing prospect upon which the fisherman's wife could gaze.

All over the surface of the lake might be seen, at certain hours, the fishing boats and pleasure craft which then made up the fleets of its various ports. At other hours they were seen anchored along the shore. Dr. Robinson, during his visit, saw one lone crazy shell, laboriously beating under its white sail along the lake, the sole remains of that commercial industry which thronged the waters of Tiberias in Salome's day. Josephus, in the account of his expedition from Tarichaea for the capture of Tiberias, says that he collected all the boats of the lake, amounting to two hundred and thirty in number, with four men in every one, every boat having a pilot and an anchor. In another passage this historian describes the operations of Vespasian at a later period, in the same neighborhood, which amounted to a regular Roman sea fight, large rafts being brought into action as well as the boats of various sizes.

We can understand why Capernaum and vicinity would be a natural home for a carpenter and a carpenter's son, when boat-building must have been such an important industry throughout all that section. I do not know that poets, painters,

or even commentators have ever called attention to the fact, but it is almost certain that the Divine Lord, whose home was at Capernaum, and whose early life was passed in the vicinity, must often have wrought in the ship-yards along that pebbly beach, in shaping and forming the graceful barks that skimmed the Galilean lake. A ship-builder! Perhaps those who are so deeply interested in that industry which is linked with the waters of the great seas may find in this view a new point of union in their daily lives with the life of the Holy Son of Man.

The current daily thoughts of Salome must, of course, have run very much in the channel of her husband's daily occupation. That strong affection and deep sympathy and interest in the welfare and position of her sons, which we shall see to have characterized her, would lead her to identify herself very largely with the common duties of her family. The making and mending of the nets; the care of the vessel; the daily outgoing and incoming of the boat; the number, size and value of the fish taken; the caring for and marketing of the captures—all these were

points which Salome was doubtless too wise to think beyond her notice and sympathy. Certainly, at least, she is an unwise woman who is bound by no sympathetic ties with the daily thoughts, duties and avocations of her own family circle.

The lake of Tiberias, probably from the numerous streams including the Jordan, which discharge their produce into its waters, abounds in fish of all kinds, which there increase immensely. Canon Tristram, in his *Land of Israel*, speaks of shoals of these fishes—"marvelous black masses many hundred yards long, with the black fins projecting out of the water as thick as they could pack." No wonder that any net should break, as did that of the disciples when they cast their net on the right side of the ship, at the Master's command! These fish are some of them of goodly size and are delicate and well flavored.

Were one to have entered Salome's house, and been curious enough to have asked her as to the manner of fishing in those days, he might have been led to some area or quarter on the court or ground-floor, where the implements of her fisherman husband's trade were stored away. Here he



might have seen rods with hooks and lines, suitable for fishing with ground-bait ; for in those days the mysteries of fly-fishing with the painted and feathered deceits by which the poor trout are now lured to their doom were quite unknown. It was with rod and tackle like this that Peter took the fish which furnished the swallowed coin that was to pay the temple tax for his Lord and himself. Here, again, is a throw-net or cast-net, with which the fishermen wade into the water and dexterously throw it around the fish. The lead line spreads out in a circle, as it falls with a *plash* upon the water, sinks rapidly around the floating fishes, and, as the draw-string is quickly tightened the captives are dragged in and bagged.

There, again, our supposed inquiring visitor might see fishing spears, long poles, with barbed prongs, lying in brackets or leaning against the wall. What are these for? For night fishing, just such as some of us have practiced in the lakes of the West or Adirondacks, or among the mountain streams of Pennsylvania. With blazing torch the boat glides over the flashing sea, and the men stand gazing keenly into the water

until their prey is sighted, when, quick as thought, they fling their net or fly their spear. "Often," says Thomson, in his *Land and Book*, "you see the tired fishermen come sullenly into harbor in the morning, having toiled all night in vain." These and the seine or drag-net, were the common implements and modes of fishing in Salome's day. The latter was about the same as in use among us. The long reach of net-work, sunk by lead-line and supported by cork-line, standing thus a mesh-work wall in the waters, was stretched out between two boats, a circle was swiftly formed by the boats rowing rapidly toward each other or toward the shore. The ensnaring ring completed, the net was pulled up or brought to land with its game, or perchance without it.

Do these seem to you very common things? They were such as entered into the daily life of Salome, and the God of Providence who environed His handmaid with such humble incidents and duties did not despise them. Neither did she, nor shall we! Salome was the wife of a fisherman, the mother of fishermen, and as such spent the greater part of her days. It is the life of a

fisherman that I have tried thus pictorially, but from authentic details, gathered from various sources, to set before you.

A fisherman's wife! She is not unworthy of honor among us to-day because of that, is she? Will you stop to ask, *why not?*

When the earthly spiritual headship of two hundred millions of souls is to be conferred upon a Roman prelate, the badge of his high position is "the fisherman's ring." It is associated with what is held to be the highest earthly honor by multitudes of our fellow beings; emperors, kings, princes, lords and ladies send their congratulations to the cardinal who has had conferred upon him this emblem of power. A fisherman's ring! We may not, indeed, respect the fable that links a Roman Pontiff with that bauble, but the historic fact has within it a lesson worth noting. If we look from the lower stand-point of human greatness we learn the truth that

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,  
Act well your part!—there all the honor lies."

But we take our view from a higher stand-point. What is it that has elevated these lowly names

and offices to honor? What has made a world bow down in grateful love at remembrance of the fishermen of Galilee? It was their espousal of truth; their devotion to the world's weal; their love of the Son of God; that inherent beauty, purity, and dignity of character which showed the Jewel of true womanhood and manhood, even amid the rugged matrix of a lowly life!

Some part of the opposition of the ancient heathen world to the religion of Jesus was based upon such arguments as the following: Its founder was a carpenter. Its apostles were fishermen. This is no religion for the noble, great and wise. It smells of the shop and fish market! It is not for kings, lords and gentlemen to accept or encourage this, for it exalts them of low degree; it disquiets, with higher aims, ambitions and hopes the tools of tyranny and power!

That was a true charge. Those heathen gainsayers saw with clear insight. Christianity when genuine and pure does do all that. It is a leveler; but it levels upward! It starts with the fundamental truth that *the soul* is the true man, the true woman, and its external estate is but the

outer garments thereof. It asserts that all souls are God's, and that God is no respecter of persons. Are we still to have and to hold these tenets of our holy religion as axioms of our Republic? It is a question well worth and which much needs the asking.

At the distance of eighteen hundred years Salome of Bethsaida is honored among you. But what are your feelings toward the Salomes of to-day? I have seen it related that a certain literary club in an adjoining State once expelled from its number two young women, who were intelligent, of good character, and ladylike demeanor, upon the discovery that they were working girls! It is to be hoped for the credit of our countrywomen that there has been some error here. The dignity of labor has been one of our worthiest themes ever since our country has had an honorable place among men. That a life of honest toil may be found in union with all virtue, godliness, usefulness, courtesy, and gentleness, must be believed at least by those who are followers of the Master Carpenter of Nazareth and His fishermen apostles. Go back a few

years or generations along the branches of the genealogical trees of many of our very noblest American women. You will strike, it may be, a fisherman's hut, or something of that sort! But you will also lay your hand upon one of those godly mothers in Israel who have by their prayers and labors made this land rich in its true wealth of soul-culture and endowment.

We thus approach the question, Is there room for a great ambition in such an humble life as Salome's? If one have the ambition to be useful—if she long to win the approval of her own heart, the esteem of her fellows, the approbation of God—is there room for growth and labor within the field of a carpenter's or fisherman's home? The records of Christianity and the history of your own ancestry have already given answer. If holy longings and high resolves stir within your heart, do not hesitate, with faith in God, and confidence in the dignity and power of a life that is wedded to God and His cause, to lay your hand to whatever work calls you. How great that work may be, Heaven only can foresee.

Possibly it might cause a flutter among the lady

managers of some of our charitable institutions were the suffrages of the Societies which they represent to send in to them as co-laborers the wives of our carpenter Josephs and fishermen Zebedees. But those would be the fewest and the least worthy, you may depend on it! The great company of just, philanthropic, God-loving ladies who now govern our charities would at once or in the near future reach out the cordial hand and open the heart in welcome. The perils of city society are thickening everywhere; the demands upon time, sympathy and purse grow therewith; the work is now too great to be overtaken by the laborers in the field. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers into the harvest!" Whence are the laborers to come? From the ranks of our Salomes! Society is also, perhaps chiefly, to be reformed from the bottom upward. The mass of mankind belong to the hand-workers. The saviours of mankind must come in great portion from the same. The prophets and apostles of our race shall issue from the carpenter's shop, the fisherman's net and fireside, in far greater

proportion than now if the Church is to do God's work in the world. Have we not fallen into error just here? Are we not drawing too many of the managers of our great charitable and evangelistic works from those who have command of wealth and high social position? Or, rather, have we not called too few from the teeming ranks among whom the chief duties are to be wrought out?

It seems to me that we need to encourage every noble ambition to usefulness that shows itself among our working sisters. If these words reach any such, may God bless them to awaken the ambition and incite the effort to do good. Begin with those who are around you. Do not push at doors that are now shut against you, but enter at once the wide and effectual door swinging in your very face. Let your plans grow as Providence opens the way. But do not fear to devise liberal things. The regeneration of society, the redemption of the world, must be, will be, accomplished chiefly by our Salomes!

To hasten that good end let all women unite to remove every barrier—every unreasonable prejudice, every sinful pride, every unworthy considera-



tion. Rome has long utilized the religious ambition and zeal of working women. She has covered all distinctions therein under the uniform of nuns. The convent becomes a "sisterhood"—the daughters of princes and the daughters of fishermen are sisters. In so far, at least, Rome is not only wise, but is right. Do Protestant women need to fly to convent walls to find a burial place for the pride of rank and wealth? God forbid! Welcome, welcome to the sisterhood of Christian work every Salome whose holy ambition for herself and family is to serve her Lord—if so be—in the very highest seats!

It would certainly be a satisfaction to us, and would add no little to our knowledge of Salome's history, if we knew something of her husband and his character. We have, however, but one glimpse of him, as he sits in his boat, which is anchored by the shore of the Lake, probably opposite his own house. He is engaged with his sons and "hired servants" in mending nets. That task is associated with an incident that had a wide-reaching influence upon Salome's life.

A form—not unknown—approaches, walking

toward them on the beach. It is the new prophet of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth. His glory had begun to dawn upon Galilee and Judea. Already John the Baptist had acknowledged Him to be the Messiah. Already their neighbors and partners, Simon and Andrew, and probably also their son John, had declared themselves His disciples. Already the people had begun to crowd upon Him and to hear His gospel. Already He had given proof of His authority and power by miracles.

Yes, that very day he had wrought a miracle which had filled the hearts of the fisherman's family with deep emotions. And that is why Zebedee and his sons had occasion for mending their nets. Turn to the account of the miraculous draught of fishes in the fifth chapter of Luke. How vividly the whole scene comes before us just as it must have passed before Salome's eyes; for it is not likely that such stirring events could have occurred so near her, and she not have been a witness. She has seen the multitude stand on the beach, covering the sand-belt, and crowding back to the houses on the water-front. She has seen the Master step into Peter's boat, which is shoved out from the

shore, that from such an odd pulpit He may declare the words of salvation. From the house-top, or windows, Salome could have heard every word; and how eagerly she must have listened and drunk in the precious tidings!

The sermon is over, the crowd slowly melts away. Jesus bids Peter push out into the lake for fish. "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing," is the response; "nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." The net fell. It had struck a school of fish! It began to break! The fishermen call to their partners in Zebedee's ship, and both boats are soon so loaded with the marvelous catch that they take in water. Impulsive Peter at once abandons ship, net, fish and friends, and flinging himself at Christ's feet goes forth with Him to the apostleship. Zebedee's boat casts anchor. The broken net is overhauled and at once the fishermen begin to mend it. It was at this point that Jesus approached Salome's sons, and called James and John, as He had called Peter and Andrew, to the work and office of apostles. They left their father Zebedee in the ship with the crew, and went after Him.

The father made no remonstrance. He will miss those helpful hands—but the Master calls! The Lord has need of them! Let them go!

It speaks no little for Zebedee that this separation was permitted apparently without remonstrance. We must believe, certainly in the case of the mother, at least, that this act of the sons had hearty consent and applause. Salome's future conduct shows this. Doubtless she was already a disciple of Jesus.

Happy mother, who, in this holy ambition to see her sons followers of Jesus the Christ, had no opposition from her husband! It is a common opinion that the active religious influences of the family belong chiefly to the mother. But why is the "head" of the household to be omitted in this consideration? Surely, if there be one thing in which the husband should feel duty bound to take the lead within his home, it is in the exercise of the family priesthood. It becomes him, like the patriarch Job, not only to offer daily for his children the sacrifice of prayer, but to earnestly labor to win all his household to active following of Christ. Woman may indeed here be most potent for good,

because her influence is wielded continuously from the tenderest years. But surely she should not need to *ask* her husband's consent and co-operation in her pious labors. In this the father should be the leader; never, certainly, the antagonist.

The incidents which have thus far been described have been arranged from suggestions of facts, and inferences. We reach the first direct reference to Salome far on toward the very close of Christ's ministry. During this period, as we learn from an incidental allusion in St. Mark's description of the crucifixion scene,<sup>1</sup> she had been among the number of those women who followed Jesus when he was in Galilee and ministered unto Him. It has been conjectured that in this interval her husband had died, and thus it became possible and proper for her to be separate from her home to attend upon her sons and their beloved Master. The sorrows of widowhood had only strengthened her love for the Christ of God, and she found alleviation from grief in the active duties of religion, and in the presence and service of her Divine Lord. Here is a suggestion for all

<sup>1</sup> Mark xv. 40, 41.

sorrowing hearts. Look away from self! Cease to brood upon your own great loss, and go forth to the Master's work! There are other breaking hearts, go bind them up; other souls are bruised, go pour into them the balm of Gilead! In this ministry of love your woes shall be sanctified, and peace shall come again to your bosom. She who will turn from the grave of her beloved dead, from the solitude of the empty rooms, from the memorials that fill the vacant home with tender and painful thoughts of her great loss, and follow the Son of Man in a holy service of Christianity, will not fail to hear His voice at last speaking within her inmost soul the soothing words, "Daughter, be of good comfort!"

The incident which brings Salôme most prominently before us is given most fully in the 20th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus had fled away from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem into the jurisdiction of Herod, in Perea, and thence into the retired village of Ephraim. For the time of his offering was now come. The Passover feast approached. Already the pilgrims were thronging the roads to Jerusalem, among them large

caravans from Galilee, who had crossed the Jordan, below Lake Tiberias, traversed the hills of Perea, to the fords opposite Jericho. Thence they would re-cross the Jordan, and climb the pass of the Good Samaritan to Mt. Olivet, Bethany and the Holy City. Our Lord assembled his disciples, and led them from His retreat to join one of these northern caravans, which was made up of many of his early friends and neighbors, including Salome. The party met probably near the celebrated ford of Jordan at Bethabara. Here, we may suppose, the evening encampment was made. Above them rose the mountains of Gilead and Moab, among whose swelling summits Moses had been buried without hands, Elijah had gone up to God in a flaming chariot, and the martyred spirit of John Baptist from the near castle of Machærus, had fled before the sword-stroke of Herod's executioner. Before them rolled the Jordan's muddy tide, beyond which rose its palm-embowered banks, swelling sharply upward into that mountain range whose peaks are "round about Jerusalem," whose sacred gates should receive them on the morrow. Great his-

toric events were associated with all the surrounding scenery. They stood upon the very spot where Joshua had marshalled the hosts of Israel to dare the conquest of yonder walled city of Jericho and yonder fortified heights of Ai. Here, where the dust-stained pilgrims bathed, the priests had stood with the Ark of God, the walled waters of Jordan massed beside them, while the invading host marched over dry-shod.

Another Joshua, JESUS—the names are one—was now in their midst. He had inspired his countrymen with hopes of a new conquest. Again, the throne of David should be reared at Jerusalem, and David's Son should be seated thereon amid the nation's acclamations. The bright hopes of an enthroned, victorious and all-sovereign Messiah seemed to them just within their grasp. A few days, one day only, it might be, lay between them and their loftiest aspirations, their brightest dreams. Forward to Jerusalem! Haste the morning light—the welcome dayspring from on high, which shall greet Jesus the Christ as Israel's King, the Messiah of the Lord! In this high frame, mingling with the usual holiday



spirit of the pilgrimage to the great Paschal festival, the Galilean disciples of Jesus paused on the Jordan's bank.

As the Master had approached the place He had discoursed with His disciples. One sentence had deeply impressed at least two of them, James and John the sons of Salome. "Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>1</sup> Other words had been spoken which served to qualify these, and which might have given the true bent to the apostles' minds. "Behold," the Master said, "we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge, and to crucify; and the third day He will be raised again."<sup>2</sup> Evidently this discourse had been communicated by James and John to their mother. When the first ripples of excitement, following the meeting and greetings

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xx. 17-19.

of the parties, had died out, Salome entered the presence of the Master, attended by her two sons. She prostrated herself before Him, an act of homage in which John and James may have shared. Kneeling thus between her sons, she preferred her request. According to a frequent custom in Oriental courts, she asked the Lord's assent before her wish should be made known. Kings there have been who scrupled nothing to grant such petitions. The prayer of Esther was granted before she had made it known to her husband Xerxes. On yonder castled heights of Moab, where Herod's banquet hall echoed with bacchanalian revelry, another Salome—alas! how short a time since—had received an unconditional promise to grant an unheard wish. The headless trunk of John the Baptist lay in the dungeon-keep because of that rash vow. The custom is more honored in the breach than the observance. So the Master honored it. "What wilt thou?" was his answer to the mother of Zebedee's children.

"Command that these my two sons shall sit the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left in Thy Kingdom!"

“Jesus answered and said,” addressing the sons instead of the mother,—for Salome had been but the mouth-piece of her boys,—“Ye know not what ye ask! Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They say unto Him: “We are able!”

And He saith unto them: “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared by my Father.”

“And when the ten heard it they were much displeased at the two brothers.”

Shall we join with the ten in this displeasure? Shall we visit the same upon Salome as well as her sons? Or shall we seek to justify her for her part of that action? At least we must try to enter into the true spirit and facts of the incident.

1. First, then, we observe that Salome received no rebuke from Jesus. Doubtless she had erred through partial knowledge of the Lord's teachings. But her ambition was neither unnatural nor unworthy. It was delivered from degrading features

by its source—a mother's pure, deep affection for her sons. Man loves power for itself. The sense of dominion stirs strongly within him. He grasps at the sceptre because kingship is sweet to his nature. Woman loves power as secondary to some great passion, affection. Even a Jezebel and Athaliah coveted and seized the reins of power not for its own sake, not even (perhaps we may justly say) for their own sakes, but for the sake of the religion of Baal, which with all their woman's fervency of devotion they had espoused.

For that very reason power in woman's hand has often been abused, pushed to dire extremities whither men would not have gone. Thinking little of herself, little of other interests than those which her own love has enshrined, sighting only the one object of her ambition, she has pushed on, and left the world the legacy of such names as Bloody Mary of England, and Catherine Medici. But, for the most part, let it be said to her credit, her motives are unselfish. A mother's ambition is for her sons, not for herself. A wife's ambition compasses her husband's glory, not her own.

The great matter should be, is that ambition fixed upon worthy ends? An unselfish motive may urge toward an unworthy object. But the object of Salome's ambition, just allowance being had for her partial information, was as lofty and good as her motive was unselfish. Judged even from the lowest standpoint of the Lord's kingdom as a material sovereignty, the ambition was not unworthy. To sit on thrones of influence at the side of Jesus the Messiah, was an aim that the noblest Israelite might well cherish. The possession of power is not unlawful; to seek for power is not denied the Christian. It is the struggle for power for low, ignoble uses; the achievement of place by false and unmanly methods, that deserves and has the contempt of the noble army of the just and the anathema of the Supreme Potentate. But there is not sufficient evidence that Salome was moved by a worldly ambition alone. Mixed with that and over-riding that, was the desire to serve Christ and serve with Him; to have her sons partners with Him in His divine work of redeeming their nation and race, and sharers with Him, too, in the perils of His kingdom. We leave this

thought for a moment to glean now a needed lesson from this mother's attitude toward her sons.

2. Salome was in full sympathy with the aspirations of James and John, and cordially co-operated with them in furthering the same. Those aspirations, as we have seen, were misguided, but they were not low; were neither unworthy the men to cherish nor the mother to forward. Certainly, you will not refuse the lesson that she is a wise woman who shows sympathy with the lawful and lofty ambitions of husbands, sons, brothers. Many a breach has been made between hearts that should have been as one, by failure or error in this regard. Many a golden cord of influence for good has slipped away from woman's hand by unwisdom here.

While it is to be confessed that men do love power and place for their own sake, it must also be allowed that they love to lay their honors at the feet of the women whom they love. In the days of chivalry, the victor in the tournament found the reward of his perilous feats-at-arms in the simple privilege of crowning with chaplet the "Queen of Love and Beauty," the woman of his own choice.

He thus expressed a universal sentiment of his sex. The age of knight-errantry has running through it everywhere this silken thread and pattern of manhood's courage and strength claiming the coronation of manhood's love. Valor was the servant of Tenderness, and together they brought their laurels to woman's brow.

The ancient forms of chivalry have passed away, but the far older spirit thereof survives. This incident was told to me when a pastor in an Illinois town, twenty-three years ago, by a friend of Abraham Lincoln. The nominating convention was in session at Chicago, before which Mr. Lincoln was a prominent candidate. He waited the news at a telegraph office in Springfield, surrounded by a circle of friends. The tidings flashed along the wire—"LINCOLN *is nominated President!*" A burst of congratulations followed, which was cut short by the nominee's taking up his hat to leave the room. A light of peculiar softness, a smile of peculiar sweetness passed over the great man's homely face, as he said: "There's a little woman over here on —— street who would like to hear this news!"

Yes, there it was—the soul of ancient chivalry uttered itself within that sentence. The newly-named President hastened from applauding friends to lay the great honor just conferred on him upon the breast of the wife he loved! Her sympathy, her applause, her honoring smile and congratulations were dearer to him, doubtless, than those of all others.

Women there have been who have met this spirit with repulse; who have shut themselves out from all sympathy with the ambitions of husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, lovers; who have withheld applause when others cheered; who have chilled ardor by indifference, stayed sympathy by opposition, quenched hope by the imbecility of littleness. Men struggling, in the highest spirit of genuine knighthood, in the world's arena for the world's good will and word, have hastened with their chaplets, flushed with joy and honest pride, to crown their loves, and win from them applause sweeter than all the world's, and have seen their laurels wither on the brow of scorn, or droop, like dead leaves, upon a frozen heart. True, most true! the knights and prophets of this world have



too often been without honor among those of their own kin and home !

Well, what must follow? One of these two things shall follow: Men become hardened against their friends, under the thought that their loftiest ambitions and greatest deeds are undervalued, even slighted. They say, "Why should we give that which is holy unto dogs, and cast our pearls before swine?" They draw a deep, wide trench around their higher self-hood, and cut themselves off completely from those who should be at home with them in the very inmost life of the soul. Thus men learn to live to themselves in a thought-world of their own. The real joys and sorrows, trials and triumphs of their nature are all wrought out therein. They are alone; the decree of divorce in all intellectual communion is recorded in the highest court of the soul, and so—and so, men and women drift apart, mothers and sons, husbands and wives, fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters, and both grow weaker and more wretched day by day. That is one result.

There is another, even more unhappy.

Men are driven by lack of woman's sympathy

with their loftier ambitions to those which are low and unholy. They waste a life that might have been noble, in gross pursuits. They become mere money-getters, ring politicians, seekers of wealth and place by modes which no man would dare to unfold to a true woman. Alas, even worse befalls some who, lacking moral stamina, fall into the power of men and women who have little scruples and less worth!

This may seem to you an overdrawn picture. Be assured, then, that it is true! See to it, that you keep your place within the love and sympathy of the men of your homes by following them into their lawful ambitions. It is only thus that you can guide those ambitions into yet loftier channels, and hold forever upon them the reins of a healthful influence.

3. Now, finally, we pause to note the fact that Salome's ambition for her sons was not without the element of courage and self-denial. The words of Jesus concerning the perils and sufferings before Him were surely not forgotten, even though not apprehended. That they were understood to savor of coming trial, and to summon

the Master's friends to lofty daring in perilous ways, would appear from the answer of James and John to our Lord's challenge:

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?"

"*We are able!*"

There are not wanting commentators who make a very close connection between the Saviour's communication of His pending persecution and death in Matt. xx. 18, 19, and the word "*then*" of verse 20 with which this act of Salome is introduced. "Then,"—when these sad words were spoken; "*then*,"—in view of the perils implied to his friends also—"then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children!" Does it not truly seem that Salome and her sons were stirred by the same spirit which led Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, those secret disciples of Christ, to leave their cover in the face of their Lord's calamity, and brave in the roll and danger of the battle hour what in peaceful days they had shrunk from? Let us say then, that while Salome and her sons sought the chief of the promised thrones, the right hand and the left, at

the Messiah's side, their ambition was not tainted with poltroonery; they would take the highest place in danger and suffering, too! They too would drink the cup—would share the cup and the baptism of their sorrowing Lord!

So, at least, must it ever be with those whose ambition lifts them into chief seats of usefulness in this world. "The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering." His lieutenants must mount the rounds to his side with the same painful travail. Ah! praying Salomes, whose pleas besiege the Master's throne in behalf of sons, "Ye know not what ye ask!" What and if ye knew, would ye still press that prayer?

"Ye shall drink, indeed, of-my cup," the Master said. Swiftly was the prediction fulfilled in the case of the eldest-born. The name of James, the son of Salome, leads the noble company of the apostolic martyrs. First of them all he greeted his enthroned Lord in the Heaven of heavens, and sat down with Him on His throne. John, the other son, the beloved friend of Jesus, alone, of the twelve, escaped the martyr's doom, but his

long life was a daily baptism into the Master's sufferings. And so, whether by the sharp, quick stroke of martyrdom, or by the long-life struggle with "the burden and heat of the day," Salome's sons point the lesson that the highest places in Christ's kingdom come through service.

This is the lesson with which the Lord Himself improved Salome's ambitious prayer. He called the twelve to Him and said, "Ye know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But not so is it among you: but whosoever would become great among you let him be your minister (*διδάκωνος, diakonos*); and whosoever would be first among you let him be your servant (*δοῦλος, doulos*). Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Here is the true ambition, alike for man and woman, to be first in the service of Christ by ministering of one's life's best for the ransom of many.

We close by quoting the comment of Chrysostom<sup>1</sup> upon this lesson of our Lord's: "Where-

<sup>1</sup> Homily lxxv.; Matt. xx. 27.

fore dost thou set thy heart on the first places? That thou mayest be before others? Choose, then, the last place and then thou wilt enjoy the first. So that if it be thy will to become great, seek not to become great, and then thou wilt be great. For the other is to be little. For the arrogant is of necessity base, and on the contrary the lowly-minded is high. For this is the height that is true and genuine, and exists not in name only, nor in manner of address. For that which is from without is of necessity and fear, but this is like to God's. Such an one, though he be admired by no one, continues high; even as again the other, though he be courted by all, is of all men the basest. The one is an honor rendered of necessity, whence also it easily passes away; but the other is of principle, whence also it continues steadfast. Since for this we admired the saints also, that being greater than all, they humbled themselves more than all. Wherefore, even to this day, they continue to be high, and not even death hath brought down that height."

## LECTURE IV.

### SUSANNA: WOMAN'S PHYSICAL MINISTRY.

THE name of Susanna appears but once in the New Testament. She is mentioned as one of the women who followed Jesus in His preaching tours and "ministered unto Him of their substance."<sup>1</sup> This is certainly a narrow historic basis upon which to build a lecture, yet it may perhaps appear not wholly presumptuous to make the attempt.

The name Susanna signifies "a lily," a most appropriate meaning in view of its associations in Hebrew literature. In those writings known as the Apocrypha, which were usually bound up in a separate space in old-fashioned Bibles, there is a book known as the "History of Susanna." It bears also the title of "The Judgment of the Elders," and "Susanna and the Elders," and forms one of the three Apocryphal additions to

<sup>1</sup> Luke viii. 3.

the Book of Daniel. The story is one quite characteristic of the times, and bears upon its face the stamp of probability, although the details may have come to us somewhat exaggerated. According to this tradition, Susanna was the daughter of Chilcias or Hilkiah, and wife of Joachim, a rich and honorable Jew, and was celebrated alike for her beauty and virtue. She became the victim of a conspiracy formed by two elders whose dishonorable advances she had spurned, and on their testimony was condemned to be executed for adultery. The unhappy woman appealed to the "everlasting God who knowest the secrets and knowest all things before they be," and then was led forth to be put to death. At this juncture Daniel appeared upon the scene, a youth "of holy spirit" whom "the Lord raised up." He persuaded the assembly to turn back to the judgment hall, and by a separate cross-examination of the witnesses proved their falsehood. Thus the innocent matron was vindicated, and the guilty elders in turn were condemned and met the fate which they had prepared for their victim. It is not strange that such a tradition as this should have



been tenderly cherished by Jewish women, and that mothers should have been found to call their daughters after Susanna, "the lily."

That the name of Susanna is specifically mentioned along with those of Mary of Magdala, Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, Salome and Mary of Cleophas, is evidence that some special importance attached to her in her relations to the Master or His friends. What that relation was it is useless to conjecture. She lives among us in this brief record of a single act or series of acts—her ministry to the bodily wants of Christ and His company. It is therefore not inapt that she should stand among the Women Friends of Jesus as typifying the physical ministry of women.

What was the nature of that service which Susanna and the other "ministering women" rendered our Lord? It is not difficult to conjecture when we remember that it was continued during Christ's public life, at least upon His more formal progressions through the country. It was the custom of those days for the pious Jews to go up in caravans to Jerusalem at least once a year to

the great religious feasts. Any one who has had experience of tent or bivouac life in a pleasant climate and season, can imagine how fascinating those journeys must have been. The enthusiasm awakened by the gathering and reunion of friends and kindred; the religious fervor that colored all the conversation and plans; the free, delightful, unrestrained life of the camp,—all this was pleasant.

More charming than all would be the evening halt. At the Passover season, during the night hours, the full moon of Palestine would pour down her silver light upon the mountains and into the valleys. Here the tents are pitched. The camp fires glow. The soft air plays through the tent doors at which the pilgrims sit in groups. They are singing, it may be, one of those fifteen "Pilgrim Psalms,"—from the 120th to the 134th,—the "Songs of Degrees" or of *the going up*, which were wont on such occasions to resound from the up-going pilgrims. Let us listen! Perhaps it is the 121st Psalm that they sing, the Psalm of the Evening Rest. From out the encampment there floats the harmony of mingled notes of lute, dul-

cimer, tambour and harp. Now voices rise upon the night and accompany the instrument.

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,  
From whence doth come mine aid.  
My safety cometh from the Lord,  
Who heaven and earth hath made.

“Thy foot He'll not let slide, nor will  
He slumber that thee keeps.  
Behold, He that keeps Israel,  
He slumbers not, nor sleeps!

“The Lord thee keeps! the Lord thy shade  
On thy right hand doth stay:  
The moon by night shall thee not smite,  
Nor yet the sun by day.

“The Lord shall keep thy soul; He shall  
Preserve thee from all ill.  
Henceforth thy going out and in,  
God keep forever will!”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the echo that returns from the hillside is mingled with the voices of song that come up from a similar encampment whose tents and campfires may be seen in the distance.

<sup>1</sup> Rouse's Version.

But man cannot live on the romance or charm of a pilgrimage, even one so pleasant as this. Something more substantial must be had! So it comes that forms of Galilee's comely matrons and fair maids may be seen gliding back and forth through the tents, around the fires, here and there, in those offices of household craft that cannot be dispensed with in any mode of life. In these and similar ways Susanna and her friends ministered to our Lord and His apostles, and thus gave them perfect freedom and strength for the work of teaching. Is it possible for us to call before our minds some details of this service?

Let us try!

It is a pleasant picture of the simple table tastes and habits of the patriarchal times, which is brought before us in the scene which shows Abraham and his wife entertaining the three angels sent to them.<sup>1</sup> We see Abraham hasting from his tent door to meet the strangers, bowing before them with stately Oriental courtesy; pressing upon them his hospitality, bidding them stop and refresh themselves with the bath, and rest in

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 6, 7.

the shade of the trees. "And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts, and after that ye shall pass on. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran into the herd and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave unto a young man, and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter and milk (no wine!) and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree and they did eat." Yes, the angels ate, and, no doubt, enjoyed the eating. Doubtless Sarah's skillful kitchen craft added savoriness to the meal, for the record shows her to have been better qualified to "entertain angels," or mortals of more substantial mold, than some of our modern mistresses of homes.

In the Orient, customs have held on unchanged for several millienniads. The above picture, therefore, gives us some notion of the manner of meals which Susanna and her co-laborers may have spread before the Master and apostles, in those evening camps in Galilee and elsewhere.

Indeed, we have so many references in the Bible to the table habits of the Israelites, that we could, if time allowed, present a most copious bill of fare. The portable Eastern oven would, doubtless, accompany the ministering women, or an oven would be extemporized from a hole dug in the ground and inlaid with flat stones. There are two ordinary substantials of an Oriental meal, which, like our bread and beef, we may be sure were not lacking,—such cakes as Sarah baked, and such pottage as Abraham prepared. The latter is the same “mess of pottage” for which Esau sold his birthright, the same dish as that into which the young men at Elisha’s school of the prophets shred for seasoning the poisonous wild gourds instead of vegetables; the same as the “sop” into which the Master dipped the bread at the Paschal supper.

There would also be fish broiled on the coals and eaten with honey, as at that early morning meal which Jesus made on the shore of Galilee after His resurrection. Eggs, too, there would be: “If he shall ask *an egg* will he offer him a scorpion?” There would be salt which had not “lost

its savor;" spicery, "mint, anise and cummin," rue, coriander and mustard for seasoning; vegetables boiled with the pottage; butter of kine, parched ears of young wheat, and abundance of fruits, such as figs, raisins and dates.

For beverages there would be milk in plenty, and the popular Oriental mixture resembling the modern sherbet, formed of fig-cake and water. Perhaps, as with the Arabs to-day, the Hebrews did not drink much during meals, concluding them with a long draught of water. We would not dare to put in the melange, the flasks, bottles and demijohns which too often disfigure tent life in our days and among our race.

We might draw from our Bibles a healthful picture of even the kitchen and table ware with which the skillful hands of Susanna and her friends ministered. There would be the caldron; earthen pots; a wide, open metal vessel, of which we might perhaps speak as a dish-pan, to which the Psalmist referred in the text, "Moab is my wash-pot;" jars or pots of earthenware, firkins, dishes, and water bottles of goat skin.

These are some of the details which we glean

from Scripture narratives. It is thus that our holy religion touches the very lowliest and most ordinary objects and offices of common life, and sanctifies them to noble uses and exalted aims. In truth, when thus touched nothing remains common. The voice which spoke to St. Peter on the tanner's house-top, at Joppa by the sea, speaks in our hearing day by day: "What God hath cleansed call not thou common."<sup>1</sup> We turn in this spirit to gather up some of the lessons of Susanna's ministry.

First, then, is not the sphere in which this ministry was wrought out a worthy one for any woman? Can we persuade young American women to ask that question? If you have stood on Logan Square, before the Cathedral, or near St. Patrick's, beyond Rittenhouse Square, or at the beautiful gates of marble St. James, you have observed crowds of women thronging the doors of the Roman Catholic churches, who are dropping singly and in pairs out of the spacious residences that centre around those localities. They are for the most part children of the Green Isle.

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 19.



They have come to this country raw, untrained Irish girls from the very humblest homes. They have stepped straight up those marble and brown-stone fronts—through those areas and garden gates, into kitchen, hall, nursery or chamber. They are your cooks, your waiters, your chamber maids, your children's nurses. They live in healthy, beautiful localities, in pure, roomy houses, warmed, clothed, covered, fed, with the best this bountiful land can give. With their wages they aid to support families whom they have brought across the ocean at their own expense ; they build in good part the splendid sanctuaries of Rome, and support her ministry and ecclesiastical operations ; they lay up money by thousands in our savings banks ; they marry thrifty mechanics and workmen, and grow up to be the wives of thrifty manufacturers, and the mothers of wealthy merchants. They find the path to health, comfort, respectability and domestic happiness lies through kitchen and hall !

Now, go and stand with me by yonder woolen or cotton mill, as the six o'clock whistle blows. See these crowds of girls and women, streaming

out of the doors. Their garments are unctuous, their skins look sallow and sickly through the soil of mill-dust, they are (with many worthy exceptions, of course) a dragged and unprepossessing company. And they are in large proportion American born. They work long hours, at heavy toil, for scant pay. They go home to coarse and unnourishing food, to close and crowded rooms in untidy and sewer-tainted alleys. The savings banks do not know them, for their life devours wages as Behemoth the streams. They marry, and families grow up around them, repeating their uncomfortable lot, even exaggerating it generation after generation. I will not say that this is a true picture of every mill, nor that all its details may be found in any one. But the substantial facts are precisely as here set forth in too many cases.

There is a strong feeling among American working girls against that sort of ministry of which Susanna is the type. They shun house-service, with its healthful and remunerative conditions, and crowd into shops, factories, mills—anywhere, rather than take service in kitchen

or chamber. They have thus deliberately abdicated the best fields of labor open to American women. There are, perhaps, some causes working to this end, for which mistresses of homes are responsible, and which they alone can remedy ; but the fact remains, that for present and prospective rewards, in steady and honorable labor, for solid comfort and health ; for those advantages of manners and moral restraints which make toward respectability, house-service, the physical ministry of the home is far above the ordinary avocations for which American working women wait, ask, beg. The one field wherein they might be supreme, and make themselves true ministers of blessing, they turn their backs upon ! Is this not a folly ? Is there anything in the nature of house-service to justify such unwisdom ? I do not believe it !

I have intimated that household service frequently opens a wide door to health and prosperity. It contributes equally to the preservation of morals and the formation of good manners. In varied observation, as a pastor, of the domestic life of many families, I have sometimes been

amused to see how the formal peculiarities of the mistress of the house were reflected in the tone, style and bearing of a family domestic of long standing. That is a perfectly natural and almost inevitable result under the circumstances, and it suggests this important fact: The refining influence of the homes into which young serving women come, unconsciously, but steadily works to improve their manners and exalt their characters. They become more sensitive to gentle ways and less accessible to coarse and low ideas. The level of their lives is lifted up steadily toward the level of their domestic environment, whose silent but powerful influence molds their inner life and behavior. Here is one fact which strikingly illustrates this: Among all the many thousands of women in household service in this city, how few cases of dishonesty occur! Most of these girls come into our families wholly unknown, often without reference, or with references that are seldom scrutinized closely. They are turned into our houses with little restraint, and in the round of their various duties the entire household properties are open

to their care. They go and come unwatched ; we trust them implicitly, and it is a just and honorable testimony to their characters and to the healthful, moral tendencies of their mode of life, that they are, with rare exceptions, entirely worthy of that trust. I do not forget the trials with domestic help over which so many house-mistresses have groaned, nor the purgatorial pains that have driven others from housekeeping into hotel and boarding-house life. But, in the wide view of the field and in the matter of personal honesty, the facts which are here declared challenge denial. It remains, therefore, a truth that in its influence upon character also, household ministry is an inviting field of labor for women.

Our subject leads to another thought. There is not a brain worker, aye, or a body worker, in all the land who does not know the advantage in mental comfort and physical strength of such service as this rendered by Susanna and the ministering women. A pleasant home, cheerful, sympathetic faces around house and table, and healthful, palatable food are elements in the Christianizing of this world. For they tell very directly

upon the character and condition of those who are to be the exemplars and teachers of Christianity. Religion needs to enter the kitchen! There is a vast mission field before those who will convert the world's cookery and kitchen craft into ministers of religion, happiness and health. The field in America—in many parts of it at least—is well nigh unlimited!

Gluttony is sin—and sin of a very odious form. But while the body lives and works it must have food; and there is no reason why the bounty of God should be so abused in its preparation into human food as to make it a minister of dyspepsia, insomnia, indigestion, headache, and all manner of disorders. How often has a good sermon been spoiled by a bad Sunday breakfast! How many a noble home missionary has fallen a victim to the salaratus-biscuit, sad-bread, and indigestible bacon of early days in the South and South-west! How many a foreign missionary has lost his life for lack of that healthful food and home care which only civilized woman's hand could give!

It is held to be economy in many respects to send *married* men to mission fields, but especially

because of the influence of home and home cookery upon the husband's health. While he busies himself in giving the evangel to perishing heathen, he himself receives daily the gospel of a good meal, a cheerful house, a family ordered in beauty and godliness.

The reasoning is quite good as toward any worker in the whole range of human toil. The world's work must be divided, and while men labor for Christ in the study, office, store, field, or shop, women must work for Christ in the kitchen, nursery and parlor. Or, while one of the female ministers of the house goes forth to daily duty, others must make home pleasant and healthful.

One may find a pitiful commentary on this truth among multitudes of our working women. Far too many of them miss from their lives the saving elements of "home." Cheap lodgings, cheap boarding, cheap catering for their own wants in their own little rooms—such is the home-life of these working women. Cheap, did we say? *Dear*—it is terribly, extravagantly *DEAR*! Their systems break down under the unpalatable food and wretched cookery of their ill-managed lodging-

houses. Or, if they have been driven to "set up housekeeping for themselves," they often return from their work too weary to think of cooking, and so, satisfying themselves with a cold bite and sup, retire with unnourished bodies to uneasy slumbers, to wake with throbbing head, heavy eyelids, unsteady nerves, to resume the round of daily toil. Thus they pass on from suffering to suffer, and alas! some of them, from suffering to sin; for there is truth in the old saying, "a sound mind in a sound body."

What is true of young women is true also of young men, who are so largely dependent upon lodging-houses for table comforts. Doubtless many of these houses are models of their class, presided over by truly Christian persons, who carry to their daily duty (and a very trying duty it is!) as much of conscience as commonly is found in business affairs. But many of them, the cheaper sort especially, are miserable substitutes for a home. Now it is taken for granted that no landlord or landlady can afford many of life's luxuries for the sum which working women and men can afford to pay. Cheap terms imply



cheap goods. But the fact of *cheapness* does not necessarily carry with it the idea of unsavoriness. Food need not be unpalatable because inexpensive. In bountiful America especially there is no need for any laborer of hand or brain dying prematurely under the daily aggravations of ill-prepared food. For it is the *preparation*, not the *food*, that commonly is the essential thing.

A pleasant-faced Scotch woman came among us a few years ago, teaching ladies at the Hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, and the public generally at the Franklin Institute, the mysteries of plain cooking. Every thoughtful person must have looked upon her as a genuine benefactor—a true missionary. I know a hundred ladies in this city whose admirable mastery of the culinary art might quite as well qualify them for a similar task. They would be doing a public benefit were they to put their talents at the service of the community, and organize some kind of a "School of Cookery." In a quiet way, perhaps, they do something of the sort, by drilling and educating the raw material that comes so often

into their kitchens, and then turning them over—sorely against their will—to neighbors with smaller skill and larger purses. But there is a great public work to do in this line. “Kitchen gardens” are a step in the right direction. To teach young girls how to do plain cooking neatly, economically and well, is a work which will give blessings of comfort, content and health to many future homes.

It is not for the strong and hearty alone that we plead. The sick, the aged, the convalescent, those of tender years, need skilled hands in the kitchen. The medical profession never apprehended this truth more clearly than to-day. The most skillful and distinguished physician does not suppose himself above thoughts for his patient’s food. He knows what fastidious management a sick man’s appetite requires, and that his patient’s recovery often hinges upon that management. No one knows better than he that his usefulness and reputation are often at the mercy of the cook!—that a good nurse is a doctor’s mainstay in many diseases, and that among the foremost qualifications of a good female nurse, at least, is

the ability to prepare little delicate morsels, relishing tit-bits for the invalid. His memorandum book bears the name of more than one such ministering woman, who thus is well equipped for such work as shall win the Master's plaudit: "Sick and ye visited ME!"

Nor is it from the purely physical benefits conferred that we are to view this physical ministry. Woman's influence upon man is woven very often around the food he eats. Men make the most skillful professional cooks simply because men are greater epicures in eating than women. Naturally they take to generous living far more eagerly than the other sex. But as society is organized, the world's kitchen-craft will be chiefly in woman's hands, and for her this is an element of protection and power. If consecrated to the All-holy One, as was Susanna's skill, it will surely be a blessed ministry in Christ's service.

It will serve at once to lift our minds into a loftier frame if we remember that some of the most sacred events of history and hopes of man are associated with table scenes. The Passover festival of the Jews for ages commemorated the

Great Deliverance in Goshen. It was at a paschal board, "after He had suffered," that our Lord took bread and blessed and brake and gave it to His disciples, and so handed forward to the ages the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood. In the vision of the exiled apostle John, at Patmos, the final joys of the redeemed with their enthroned Saviour, are represented under the figure of the "marriage supper of the Lamb." And this, remember, is but an echo of our Lord's own beautiful imagery of the nations coming from the east and the west, the north and the south, "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

No good woman need hesitate, in the face of such facts, to weave around the daily table-life a witchery that shall entice her family to home, and wife, and mother, and all the tender and exalting associations which those words may enfold. How fragrant is the aroma of Thanksgiving Day, with its family re-union, its morning sermon, its mid-day dinner, and the evening fervor of its home-communings for the adults, and parlor plays for the young. Glorious Christmas tide! what blessed

memories enfold thee with the mellow glow of hearth-fires falling on the row of lusty stockings swinging at the mantel-piece, and with the twinkling light of tapers flashing amid the spicy leaves of pine! Yet, what would even Christmas be without that grand climacter of the day—the Christmas dinner?

You do not often stop to think how much the world is moved and moulded by memories and prospects such as this. But, if you will pause, and add to your reflections such numerous illustrations as your own experience must supply, you will have taken the thought here presented of that true ministering to the Christ in which all have part who consecrate the humblest offices to the Heavenly Father and His children. I could cite from my own observations many examples of the moral degeneracy which follows the loss of woman's physical ministry, and of the healthful moral influences which that ministry supplies; but one or two general illustrations will suffice. Stand with me, for a few moments, in the main street of that youngest born of American cities—Leadville, in the mountains of Colorado. Wherever the eye turns it

meets crowds of men—men—men! Only here and there the ribbons and robes of a woman fluttering in the mountain winds, show that the gentler sex have begun to domicile within the camp. Men—men! All nations, colors, conditions, are here. Tourists, speculators, mine owners and operators, prospectors, mechanics, miners, roughs of every hue, complexion and crime. They crowd the streets, they obstruct the corners, they throng the drinking saloons and gambling hells; they seem, many of them, mere idlers, vagrants, disappointed workmen seeking a job, sturdy miners hunting a “grub-stake,” smart young fellows crookedly auguring their way to riches, grizzled men of lost fortunes trying one more struggle for a competence. Good and bad; rogues and honest men; adventurers and steady-going laborers; wild, blind, enthusiastic visionaries waving their hands, snapping their eyes, declaiming of the “millions in it,”—and clear-headed, cool-hearted, canny men of affairs ready to turn to their own advantage the folly, covetousness or passions of their fellow men. That was Leadville as I saw it eighteen months after the discovery of

“Little Pittsburg” mine—a camp of twenty thousand *men!* Men—nearly every one of them without the gentle offices of ministering women to woo them to the charms of home, of healthful food, and cheerful meals with the companionship of virtuous women. It was a melancholy sight!—and day and night the wasting and wreckage of manly strength and purity pointed the lesson of our lecture.

We leave the town and drive around over the range. Throughout these mountains for many miles around, prospecting parties are at work. Close by the road-way; far up the mountain-side, where one would think a man could hardly climb; along the gulches, in ravines, on hill-slopes, the pits of the prospectors are seen. Their tents and huts are near by, and we have glimpses, as we bowl along, of bronzed, dirt-stained, unkempt and bearded men, looking as only men can look who have been separated for weeks and months from the gentle offices of woman. They sluggishly grind the windlasses which raise rock and dirt from their pits. They cook their coffee and bacon by smoking coals in

the early morning, or smoke their pipes by the evening camp-fire. They have a home-sick and doncie sort of an air, like conscript soldiers, which seems to say, "It's miserable work, but we must go through with it, and we will!"

We have a lady tourist in our party. Let us stop here, and question this knot of miners. How their faces blush and brighten, at the sight of woman's form and the sound of her voice! You wouldn't think it, but most of these young men are *gentlemen*. They have only settled down into the normal condition of their sex when deprived of woman's ministry. Our lady friend is speaking to them of home; she has peeped into their house—half hut, half tent; she has thrown a quizzical glance at their kitchen and table-utensils; by some subtle power of her own she has drawn out the rough-looking fellows to speak of mothers and sisters, one of them of wife, and to raise upon the blushing cheeks of several the suggestion, at least, of sweethearts. How their eyes light up and grow soft with moisture! Their thoughts have leaped the barrier of the Rockies and are communing with loved ones "over the hills and



far awa' !” Oh ! if they could only drop into the old dear home, and sit down for just one hour at the home-table ! There is something ludicrous, it may be, but also something really pathetic, yes, and something profoundly instructive and encouraging to women in the way these pioneers speak (to quote their odd expression) of “a good square meal.”

Alas ! for homes whose daily meals are patterned rather after the manger of horses or the troughs of swine, than after the orderly, cleanly and refined service of Susanna and her friends in their ministry to Jesus. So we leave them, standing around their pit, looking after our wagon as it rolls through the gulch, on its way up the snow-capped summit of Mosquito mountain. That woman-face and voice have lifted their thoughts across the Rocky ranges, the blue divide, the vast reaches of plain and prairie to the distant East, and home. While woman's ministering hand can bind sons, brothers, husbands, lovers, with cords like these, they need not fear to ask Heaven's blessing on their daily task.

Believe me ! it is not simply for the mere animal enjoyment of the eating, but because there have

been inwoven with daily meals, from very childhood, the comforts and graces of home, the forms of mothers and all loved ones. Woman's physical ministry has thrown the spell of hallowing humanizing associations around them.

We take one more example. Come back with me to our days of civil war—God grant we may never return to them except in memory! A great battle has lately swept through yonder valley and across the brow of yonder hills. See those long beds of fresh turned yellow soil. They are burial trenches! Our gallant soldiers of the blue are sleeping there side by side; and there, just opposite in like graves lie the soldiers of the gray. The Cumberland ripples peacefully against the foot of the bluff; the south wind sweeps softly through the woods of oak and cotton-wood, papaw and persimmon, which wave

“ Above them their green leaves  
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,  
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
Over the unreturning brave! Alas!”

Stay your vain regret! There is no time now for tears. Yonder flies the yellow flag of the

hospital. There is work there for all willing hands. We enter ; the chaplain passes from couch to couch, speaking a word of comfort, uttering a prayer, quoting a sentence of Scripture, pausing to write a note—ah, there it is again!—to mother, wife or friend. Sad notes, some of them, that tell of hopeless wounding, and give the last good-bye. Glad notes, some of them, radiant with hopes of speedy furlough and return to “home—sweet home!”

And who are these, gliding back and forward through the wards ; threading the avenues of cots, with bowls of steaming broth in hands, or savory rice, or aromatic jellies—that have in them the very aroma of home-cookery? Who?—they are the Lady aids of the Christian and Sanitary Commission! In that hospital across the way they wear the simple livery of Sisters of Charity. But whether Protestant volunteers or Romanist Sisters, they are ministering women all! They have followed on the trail of battle, like sweet spring birds upon the receding steps of winter. What a revolution one day's sovereignty of their deft and tender hands has wrought.

The hospital is transformed—not into a home, indeed; alas, no!—but into a home-like place. A new life has awakened within these suffering men; vital forces have coursed their veins with fresh vigor; hope has spread her soft wing over those beds; and sleep comes to the fevered brain, as the head sinks down into the pillow to which a woman's touch has given some strange soothing.

Let us watch and listen as this ministering woman stops at the adjacent couch. How deftly her fingers glide among the coverings and over the pillows, seeming simply to touch them here and there, but giving them an air of home-like comfort, that is pleasant to see. Can you mark that soldier's face? He is only a boy, seventeen years old, and there he lies nursing the stump of his good right arm. His eyes follow every motion of his gentle attendant, and there shines in them a beautiful light of gratitude, tenderness, longing, and confidence. Hark! the nurse speaks to him. She has laid her hand upon his white forehead, and pushed back his brown hair. "Poor lad! you are young for such sad work! Your name?" It is given promptly. "What regi-

ment?" There is a pause, a flush upon the white cheek, a momentary hesitation of speech, and then, with the eye full fixed upon the woman's face, the answer comes: "The Second Mississippi, ma'am."

Ah, my boy, if you had thought that this announcement would make any difference upon that Northern face you never erred more widely! There is, if possible, a deeper trace of pity in her look, and a gentler tone in her voice, as she utters the ejaculation "Oh!" as though half-sorrowful, half-apologetic, for raising the question. And there *that* matter ends! There follow quickly such questions about mother, home and friends as are asked at every bed, and such words of sympathy and hope as are breathed into every soldier's heart. She is gone! A sweet content, a touch of happiness even has illumined the lad's face. He lies quite still; his eyes are closed; and the round, great tear-drops are chasing one another quickly over his cheek. As the chaplain steps to his side, and wipes those tears away, and speaks of the love that passeth even that of woman, the Compassion that is Infinite, his blue coat stirs no

thought of enmity in the young Confederate's bosom, but seems rather a type of those blue depths of heaven, beyond which, and beyond the silent stars, the Heart of Divine Pity waits for the coming soul.

O mothers of the South! your bitterness would turn to blessing could you have seen, as I have often seen, your sons lying side by side with our sons, sharing every comfort, aid, and holy ministry which women of the Northland came to bring their own. Blessed ministry! whose Christ-like offices are brought even to foes! Nay, rather, which dissolves all thought of friend or foe in the presence of a common fellowship of physical pain!

Blessed ministry! blessed ministers! While woman's ministering hand can bind sons, brothers, husbands, lovers, even enemies, with cords like these, they need not fear to ask Heaven's benediction upon the lowliest service of their daily tasks! The spirit of consecrated love inwrought therewith shall give to them—yes, to the lowliest offices, the power of an endless life. That spirit, inextinguishable, shall live though buried and long latent within the memories of the loved, and

the day may come, to some it surely shall come, when the Christ of God shall speak, by Providence and the Holy Ghost, quickening words to hearts that have long been sealed by sin to forgetfulness of God. Then shall memory give up her dead. That spirit of love that hovered over the old, dear home of boyhood or girlhood, and breathed upon every faithful service therein, shall come forth, and amid the recollections of hearthstone, table, nursery, and parlor, shall call and plead and invite the erring one to come home—"sweet home"—yes, and to that Sweeter Home in Heaven.

"Come home! come home!  
From the sorrow and blame,  
From the sin and the shame,  
And the tempter that smiled,  
O prodigal child,  
Come home, oh, come home!

"Come home! come home!  
There is bread and to spare,  
And a warm welcome there;  
Then to friends reconciled,  
O prodigal child,  
Come home, oh, come home!"

## LECTURE V.

# JOANNA, THE ROYAL STEWARD'S WIFE.

SICKNESS AS A MEANS OF GRACE.

THE lecture on Salome brought us into a fisherman's home and in contact with the humble life of the fishermen of Galilee. We are now to follow Joanna into the palace of a king. We are introduced to this disciple of Christ in the eighth chapter of Luke's gospel as one of the sisterhood of grateful ministers to our Lord's physical wants as He passed through Galilee preaching the gospel. Her name, Joanna, is the feminine form of John, and is the popular "Joan," known in history in connection with the Maid of Orleans, Joan of Arc, and in the more prosaic annals of "Darby and Joan." She was the wife of Herod's steward, and therefore had her home at Tiberias, the capital city of that king.

Herod Antipas was the ruler whose sovereignty extended over the earthly home of Jesus. Most



of our Lord's disciples and personal friends were his subjects ; Christ's ministry was in great part exercised within his domain. Let us therefore try first of all to picture to ourselves the elements that made up the daily life of Joanna, and which were also of such great importance in shaping the character and destiny of so many of those men and women of Holy Scripture whose names are household words with us. Tiberias, the metropolis and capital of Galilee, stood upon the western shore of the beautiful lake which now bears its name, about two-thirds of the way from the northern to the southern end. In the days of Joanna the town was new. We are in the habit of thinking that the suddenness with which great cities spring up within our Western republic, with their solidly built blocks of houses, and magnificent temples and halls, is something exceptional in communal history. Not at all. The old monarchs had a great passion for town-building. They would deport populations by thousands and set them upon the site of a city named in honor of some friend, kinsman or kinswoman, and, as if by magic, there would rise from sea-shore, hill-side,

meadow or woodland, a stately metropolis. Such was the history of Tiberias. It was built by Herod Antipas, and named in honor of the emperor Tiberias. The site of the place is a strip of slightly undulating land, two miles long by one-fourth mile wide, which lies between the lake and the steep Galilean hills back of it. At one edge of the city were the famous warm springs, whose steaming waters glide over the pebbled beach into the lake. Nearly the entire lake is exposed to view from this position, with the scenery which has been heretofore described. Just across the water rise the precipitous walls of the hills of Bashan, in whose rock-hewn sides the Gadarene maniacs had their home, and on whose tops the Gentile Gadarenes fed vast herds of swine.

Herod had passed most of his early life in Italy, and sought to mirror a miniature Rome in the bosom of the little fresh-water sea, on whose shore his new town was rising. He built a palace, which, in defiance of Jewish laws and prejudices, he adorned with figures of animals. He built a stadium for the practice of those martial and other feats and games so popular in that period in

Greece and Italy. He caused and encouraged the erection of magnificent houses, gardens, and pleasure grounds. He did what he could to transfer the pomp, customs, vices, and pleasures of old Rome from the banks of the yellow Tiber to the beach of the blue Galilee. He succeeded only too well, his Jewish subjects thought.

There was a time, not long after these days, when Tiberias became the seat of a renowned Jewish university. Therein the Mishna was prepared, and the Masorah originated. For three centuries, under the leadership of such men as Maimonides, it held its place as the intellectual centre, the very Athens of the Hebrew race. But when Joanna lived in Tiberias, Jews were not numerous, at least the more devout and serious sort. It was too like a pagan Roman colony!

It is a remarkable fact, that our Lord never entered Tiberias during his public ministry. Though dwelling in its vicinity—though it was the métropolis of His country, the home of His earthly kingdom, He seems to have persistently shunned it. Doubtless, in earlier life, when the new town called throngs of carpenters to its pre-

cincts, He may have been there, and there have wrought with Joseph at His craft. Often as the sharp gusts that blow so frequently in that region carried His boat along the shore, or as more slowly the bark was rowed out and over the lake, He must have marked her domes, walls, palaces and theatres ; have seen the pomp and stir of her gardens, halls, wharves, camps and barracks, and heard the sound of her business and her revelry. But His ministry girdled her round about with a zone of love, truth and divine potency, that never reached within her walls.

This was not because Herod would not have welcomed Him, or was ignorant of His power. For a long time that sovereign had desired to see Him, and behold some of His miraculous works. But Jesus knew the frivolous, tyrannical, weak, vascillating, pleasure-loving Herod thoroughly. He could do miracles to save a suffering woman or child, but to be made a *show* for the gratification of a sensationalist king—ah! that could never be. Then those Roman customs, those frivolous, heartless, worldly ways ; that pandering to the lusts of the flesh ; that burning of incense before

the gods of Rome, and building cities out of the enforced toil of God's poor, to be monuments of honor to a pagan Emperor; that hollowness of heart which made life but a jest, a parade, a song and show, a revel and a dance—how could that have any attraction to the Son of Man? His earnest spiritual nature revolted against it all, and He passed by the place!

After the death of John Baptist, as the result of a revel held within this very town of Tiberias it has been conjectured, this feeling must have been deepened into the profoundest emotion. Herod was the one man of his age whom Jesus seems to have regarded with a sentiment which we may express in the word—*contempt*. “That fox,” was the epithet which He found for Herod—“That Jackal,” that wild, yelping, cavorting, night-prowling, carcass-loving animal, was not an unfit emblem of such a prince. On the notable occasion when Jesus was sent a bound prisoner by Pilate to Herod, the Christ treated the king with contemptuous silence, and Herod showed how worthy he was of such treatment, by exposing One whom he knew to be a prophet, and his own subject at

that, to cruel mockery, and by sending Him back to death.

There is no more eloquent sermon against such character and life than these actions of our Lord. O frivolous, empty souls, giddy mockers at all that is serious; frittering away life in a round of idle, pleasure-seeking folly; scorning or shunning the sober duties and honest work of the world, reflect on these things. The Saviour of men, the Prophet of Galilee silently, scorningly turns away from a life like that. Awake to some ministry of toil and duty! Do not longer lie beneath the disapproval and separating curse of the Holy Son of God. A Herod-like lack of earnestness will make a Christ-shunned Tiberias of any heart, house, hamlet or town!

In such a city, the court, probably the very palace of such a king, Joanna had her home. Her husband, Chuza, was Herod's house-steward. (*οἰκονόμος, Oikonomos.*) The position was one of first importance and responsibility. He was, as the Greek name implies, the ruler of the house. He was the dispenser, says Jerome, not only of the food, but of the money, and, indeed, of

everything that the house possessed. Such was Eliezer in the house of Abraham, the wise steward who negotiated in so charming and effective a way, for Rebecca, the fair spouse of Isaac. Such was Joseph in the house of Potiphar. In pictures on the Egyptian tombs, which delineate the life of those ancient ages, the steward often figures with tablets and pencil, noting the value of the harvest as it is prepared for the store-houses.

There is nothing at all inconsistent, whatever the probability may be, in the theory which has been advanced that Chuza was that "certain nobleman" whose son was healed by our Saviour. Many of the most elevated positions in England to-day have attached to them titles even more expressive of service than that of Chuza: the Royal Equerry, the Lord High Chamberlain, the Lady of the Bedchamber, the Mistress of the Robes, are examples. Chuza was evidently a person of considerable importance, and may have been a titled lord. In any case, his wife must have come into close contact with all the life of that godless palace.

Perhaps, indeed, she may have been secluded therefrom for a season by personal affliction. She is mentioned among those women who had been "healed of evil spirits and infirmities." It is probable from the language of the record, that the healing from evil spirits refers to Mary of Magdala, first named, and that Joanna was one of those healed of infirmities. This healing, from what we have already seen, could not have been effected within the city walls. But there were many swift, beautiful and convenient pleasure boats at the Tiberian quays of Herod, with which his steward could have borne his sick wife to the adjoining coasts of Genesareth, where Jesus could have been met. Or, a short journey into the village-covered hill-country, back of the city would have found our Lord on some one of his preaching tours throughout those regions. In some such way Joanna, the invalid, was brought face to face with her divine Master. This great good her affliction at last had wrought—it brought her to the feet of Jesus. True, she came as a suppliant for physical healing only, and that she obtained; but beyond that, immeasurably



beyond, was the gift which also she obtained of forgiveness of sin and hope of immortality through the Christ of God.

Here we may pause to review some of the peculiar views of the people of that era concerning sickness in its various forms, and the relation of physical healing to the work and religion of Jesus. As early as the days of Joseph, who "commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father,"<sup>1</sup> we have intimation of the great and ever growing struggle between mortal sickness and medical science, a conflict of the ethereal elements of mind with the harmful and destructive material conditions of man's bodily estate. The Egyptian records confirm the Bible allusion, and show that the practice of medicine was carried to a good degree of perfection in Egypt, where every disease had its own physician, a tendency to specialist practice which modern times have seen revived. That Israel did not escape from the doctors by fleeing into Palestine is evident from the reference to the sin of Asa in trusting too much to earthly physicians.<sup>2</sup> In New Testament times, Palestine, in

<sup>1</sup>Gen. l. 2.

<sup>2</sup>2 Chron. xvi. 12.

common with the circumjacent lands, was under the influence of the Greek medical schools represented by such extant writers as Galen and Hippocrates. That Luke, "the beloved physician," was regularly trained in these schools and thoroughly imbued with the ideas and habits of a physician, is apparent on well nigh every page of his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. His language has a strong medical flavor, and one of the most interesting studies which the original Greek Testament affords is to trace this bias in Luke's descriptions of diseases, and introduction of his professional and technical terms into other details.

An example or two can readily be understood without acquaintance with the original Greek. In recording our Lord's discourse about the houses built upon rock and sand, there is a striking contrast between the words used by the writer of the first gospel and that of the third. Matthew, in the phrasing of common life, says that the *rain* (brochē, βροχή) descended and the floods came and the winds blew and *beat upon* (prosekopsan, προσεκοψαν) that house and it *fell*, (epesen, ἔπεσεν)

and great was the *fall* (ptosis, πτωσις) of it. St. Luke, to express the same facts, resorts to words all of which are peculiar to himself and are technical medical terms. "And when the *flood* arose" (plēm̄mura, πλημμυρα, a word used to express excess of the fluids of the body—flooding), "the stream *did beat vehemently*" (proserhrēxen, προσεῤῥήξεν, a word used for the rupture of bursting veins), "and immediately it *fell*" (sunepese, συνέπεσε, a word used of the falling in, collapsing of the body or some of its members); "and the *ruin* of that house" (rhēgma, ῥήγμα, ruin, a medical term for laceration, rupture). Another illustration is found in the proverb quoted by the Saviour concerning the camel and the eye of a needle. Both Matthew and Mark use the word for the ordinary domestic *needle*, raphidos (ῥαφιδος), and *the eye* is rendered in Matthew from trupēmatos (τρουπήματος, a bored hole), and in Mark from trumalias (τρουμαλιᾶς, a hole). On the other hand, Luke uses for *the eye* a word, trēm̄atos, (τρηματος, that which is pierced through) applied in medical language to all perforations in the body, as in the ears, nostrils, vertebræ, and the sockets of the teeth. For *needle* his word is belones

(βελόνες), the term invariably employed by the Greek medical authors for the needle used in surgical operations.<sup>1</sup> Thus we see that "the ills that flesh is heir to" were not only felt and feared, but studied and treated professionally, and passed into technical terms or professional "lingo" in the land and days of Jesus.

The same fact comes to us from the Rabbinical literature. Among the regular temple officials was a medical man whose duty it was to attend to the priesthood who, from ministering barefoot as prescribed by the law, were specially liable to certain diseases. The Rabbis ordained that every town must have at least one physician, who was also to be qualified to practice surgery, or else a physician and a surgeon. Some of the Rabbis themselves engaged in medical pursuits, and in theory at least every practitioner ought to have had his license, a degree of civilized precaution which some of our Commonwealths have not even yet attained to. To employ a heretic or a Hebrew Christian was specially prohib-

<sup>1</sup>The Medical Language of St. Luke. By the Rev. William Kirk Hobart, LL. D.

ited, although a heathen might if needful be called in.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt Joanna had experienced somewhat of the same disappointment that befell the poor woman of the gospel who had spent all her substance upon physicians and was nothing benefited but rather the worse.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is not so much to be wondered at when we read the modes of treatment which prevailed. The means recommended were either generally hygienic,—and in this respect the Hebrews contrast favorably even with ourselves—or purely medicinal, or else sympathetic, or magical. The prescriptions consisted of *simples* or of *compounds*, vegetables being far more used than minerals. Cold water compresses, the internal and external use of oil and wine, as in the case of the Good Samaritan and St. Paul's prescription to Timothy, baths medicated and other, and a certain diet—these were all carefully indicated in special diseases. Goat's milk and barley-porridge were recom-

<sup>1</sup> Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the days of Christ. By Rev. Dr. Edersheim, Vicar of Loders, Dorset, Eng.

<sup>2</sup> Mark v. 26.

mended in all diseases attended by wasting. Jewish surgeons seem even to have known how to operate for cancer.<sup>1</sup> It was also a custom to anoint the sick with a mixture of oil, wine and water; the preparation of which was allowed even on the Sabbath. This fact indicates that the practice of anointing the sick with oil referred to by the apostle James<sup>2</sup> instead of having a religious significance as claimed by the Latin advocates of "extreme unction" and the modern Protestant advocates of the "faith cure," was nothing more than a primitive remedy for various forms of sickness. It is not strange that St. Paul himself, probably an ex-Sanhedrist, and wise in the traditions of his people, should have done in this case, and in that of Timothy, what home and foreign missionaries have often been compelled to do, viz., offer his disciples simple prescriptions for common ailments.

In modern times sufferers are wont to solace themselves for their pains of body and purse by quips and gibes of various sorts against the doctors. This seems to be rather a trait of

<sup>1</sup> Sketches of Jewish Social Life.

<sup>2</sup> James v. 14.

human nature than to be founded in serious disrespect of a noble, hard-working, and self-denying profession. At all events the ancient Hebrews had their caustic sayings, one of which has found place in the New Testament, the proverb quoted by Jesus, "Physician heal thyself!" Another runs thus: "Live not in a city whose chief is a medical man," which may mean that he will have an undue advantage in forcing his ill-tasting nostrums upon the public; or, which is more probable, that he will attend to public business and neglect his patients. Still another and more cutting proverb runs, "The best among doctors deserves Gehenna,"—because of his bad treatment of some and neglect of others. The science of medicine has taken many and vast strides forward since those days, and so also has the world's opinion of the profession.

When the disciples asked our Lord in regard to the man who was blind from his birth: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"<sup>1</sup> they queried from the standpoint of the Jewish belief. That children benefited or

<sup>1</sup> John ix. 12.

suffered according to the spiritual state of their parents, was a doctrine current among the Jews. Further, sickness was regarded as alike the punishment for sin and its atonement. One may see how early and thoroughly the Eastern mind was imbued with this notion from the various harangues of the friends of the patriarch Job.

That the law of heredity has much to do with the physical condition of men, and that the fruits of sin are entailed upon posterity in the form of divers diseases, is not to be denied. But among the great services which Christ wrought for humanity, was the denial of this old, hard Hebrew conception, that illness and misfortune are proofs and punishment of special personal spiritual transgressions. To the disciples' question concerning the blind man, Jesus gave answer: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." In other words man's extremity becomes God's opportunity. The sicknesses of humanity gave occasion to display alike the divine compassion and power of the Christ. These words are written of Jesus after a day of laborious duty



among the sick, during which He restored to health the Centurion's servant, and Peter's wife's mother, and cast out demons with His word, and healed all that were sick: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." It is true that both our spiritual infirmities and bodily woes have been ameliorated by the Great Physician. Our sins Jesus bears *from* us, our sicknesses He bears *with* us. His blood cleanses us from sin, His grace supports us in affliction, and through great tribulation we pass into the presence of His Throne. Such are some of the reflections that start upon our minds as we follow the invalid Joanna from her palace home to the feet of the Divine Healer. Let us look at these thoughts a little more in detail.

First, then, it is certainly true that the religion of Jesus Christ has given a great impulse to the science and art of healing. One who will take the pains to analyze the miracles of Jesus will be surprised to note how large a proportion of them belongs to works of healing. Herein, as He declared to the messengers of John Baptist, was

a chief testimonial of His Heavenly commission. Such acts were precisely in the line of that benevolent faith whose very key-note was "on earth peace, good will toward men." What Christ did while incarnate, He continues to do by the very spirit of His religion. Instead of works of healing ceasing, they have immeasurably multiplied since the ascension. Before that event, said the Master, alluding to His life works, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father." This has literally been fulfilled. The spirit of Christianity has leavened all human thought; it has possessed medical science; indeed, it may almost be said to have created it as it is now presented to the attention of men. The number of restorations to sight, hearing and soundness of limbs, of deliverance from malarial, contagious, congenital and chronic diseases recorded in the Gospels, is as a small drop in the bucket when compared with the results of medical art as developed in Christian lands.

Even in the character of these healings the works of the disciples follow at no great distance behind the Master's. The results which physi-

cians and surgeons to-day accomplish could have been wrought in the days of Jesus in no other way than by the interposition of miraculous power. The works which Christ did have continued upon earth; the change which has occurred is simply this, that the healing succession has been turned and continued by the Holy Ghost within the line of natural means and secondary causes. Yet none the less is that masterful art, by which to-day the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the fever-stricken are healed, and the dead are brought to life again throughout the homes and hospitals of Christendom, a triumph of the spirit and power of Him who healed Joanna by His word.

“And the dead are brought to life again!” Can you classify such a work with the fruits of medical science? Take your stand upon the seashore and look out across that surf urged into fury as it rolls shoreward before a winter storm. Your eyes are fastened eagerly on yonder ship driven and fixed upon the sands. The breakers are pounding great fissures in its hull; the wrecked mariners cling to the rigging. They are lost men

but for the gallant crew of the Government's Life Saving Service, who, with all the appliances of science, stimulated by Christian benevolence, are laboring for their rescue. At last they are landed safe and sound, except these two sailors, who lie upon the beach dead to all appearance ; and dead men surely they would have been in like estate if thus cast up two thousand years ago upon the shores of Palestine. But a Christian physician has the limp and lifeless bodies in hand ; he tries the art which a Christian civilization has taught him, and lo ! breath at last comes back to those congested lungs, circulation slowly returns along those clogged veins, the glow of life tinges the clammy flesh, the lips move, the eyes open,—the dead have come to life again !

A friend, who is an honored pastor of one of our principal churches, told me this incident, one day when I had congratulated him upon the birth of a son. "What is the babe's name?"

"I have called him thus and so" (mentioning the name of his family physician), "and a strange story hangs upon the name. When the little fellow came he showed no signs of life. When

the physician communicated this fact, he saw the bitter disappointment on our faces, and, as he afterward told us, resolved to try what seemed a hopeless experiment. I can hardly recite the details of his operations—friction, artificial heat and respiration were prominent among them. Like the prophet Elisha with the Shunamite woman's child, he placed his mouth upon the babe's mouth and sought to induce breathing. The minutes lengthened nearly into an hour ; still the brave, kind physician wrought with the infant. At last, at last—joy ! there was a feeble flutter of the little heart, the tiny lungs faintly rose and fell—the babe lived ! And he is living and healthy to-day ! 'In almost any other case,' the physician said, 'I should have abandoned hope and effort ; but, thank God, the child is yet alive !' When the infant had been laid upon its mother's bosom I took my medical friend by the hand. 'Doctor,' I said, 'this child is *yours* by the triumph of a science and skill which have wrought almost a miracle. Permit me, in recognition of your gift to us of this life to call our boy by your name.'"

It was a fitting and beautiful thought ; and by

that good physician's name the restored babe was baptized and is now known. That name is, and, as the years roll on, will continue to be a seal and symbol of the great fact upon which we are thinking. These cases are but types of multitudes, who, directly and indirectly, owe the gift of life granted, restored, preserved, to a Christian medical science. Yes, the Master's prophecy is fulfilled; His works are continued upon earth, wrought by the resistless potency of His divine Spirit, and in ever expanding circles are spreading over the races of our suffering humanity.

The stream never rises higher than its fountain head; the effect is not greater than the cause. Who is He who worketh thus among men these triumphs of healing skill? Who is He before whose thoughts the world has been transfigured; under the touch of whose charity the whole compass and paraphernalia of medical science and art have sprung up? How softly fall the sunbeams upon the earth. Does any great power abide in them? Let us see. The streams and rivers of the globe—Amazon, Missouri, Nile, Danube, Yang-tse-Kiang, Ganges—whence have

they come? The sunbeams have raised them from the sea and wheeled them in cloud-wains around the world, to the places where they have fallen in rain. That is but one of the great things which the sunbeams do. What mighty force is within them! How vast their power when measured by their effects!

So let us reason as we turn our adoring thought toward that far horizon of Palestine above which we behold "The Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings."<sup>1</sup> It is not man who has inspired and wrought out these great results. These transforming miracles are the fruits of a Divine power. It is the hand of a divine Saviour that has sent forth into the world this perennial stream of life, and raised up and nourished upon its banks that Tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.<sup>2</sup> Thus, with the restored invalid Joanna, do we fall down at the feet of the Christ of God, and "crown Him Lord of all!"

But we cannot stop at this point. We are here standing only in the vestibule of truth, and

<sup>1</sup> Malachi iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 2.

must pass on into the very temple itself. The healing of the body was with the Master but a stepping-stone to a spiritual cure. Thus, He demonstrated His heavenly commission; thus, He illustrated the way of salvation through faith in the Son of God; thus, above all, He won an entrance into grateful hearts of healed patients and their friends for that holy religion which gives the remedy for sin, the panacea for grief, and immortal health in the heaven of God. The problem of human suffering has ever perplexed thinking men. Its mysteries may not wholly be solved, but they lift and lighten greatly under Christian teachings. We read our present afflictions in the light that shines out of the eternal glory; we judge them not by temporal and tangible results, but by spiritual effects, by relations to things unseen and eternal. The ploughshare of pain draws long furrows over the soul; the harrow of tribulation tears across the quivering heart-strings, but when the winter is overpast, life blooms with flowers and grows wealthy with fruits of a spiritual harvest. So we have come to the question, what effect did Joanna's



affliction have upon the characters of herself and husband during their exposure to the temptations of Herod's palace? Alas! it is not a rare thing that the gilded pleasures of such society prove the ruin of the best qualities in women.

A painting exposed in a shop window attracted my attention. The artist had evidently sought a theme which would enable him to lay a wealth of color on his canvas. He had chosen a garden scene; and flowers, plants, climbing-vines, the house and window-drapery, even the coat of an old gardener trundling his barrow along a walk—fairly blossomed over with bright tints. A peacock perched upon the garden wall, whose plumage drooped almost to the ground. Near by, the central figure of the sketch, walked a woman gorgeously appareled from hat to slipper. She held over her head a glaring parasol, and her face was ruddy with health and beauty.

Has the artist any lesson for me underneath this mass of color?—I pondered. As I looked at flower-beds, growing plants and climbing vines, even at the bird's plumage, the effect of the brilliant hues was only pleasant. No sense of

repulsion was stirred at the sight of these dumb things, wearing a livery upon which nature had lavished her utmost wealth of color, and rejoicing, seemingly, in the same. But, as I looked again upon the woman, I was conscious of a feeling of disapprobation and sorrow. Here was a creature with an immortal soul ; endowed with powers of heart and mind which might have lifted her into a realm of lofty thoughts and spiritual communions, whose holy of holies no beast of the field, nor fowl of the air, nor flower of the garden and woodland, can approach unto ! Yet, there she walks, mincing through life, like the woman of Isaiah's picture<sup>1</sup>—a thing of color alone, and no stability, all glitter and no gold ! Oh, it is pitiful to see an immortal flitting across life with no higher aim and issue than a blossom, or a bird !

Many women have been turned aside from such a destiny by loss of health. Sickness comes as a voice of Providence, saying : "Go aside into a desert place and rest awhile !" The sick room becomes as the brook Cherith to Elijah, wherein,

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah iii. 16.

excluded from the whole round of occupation and pleasure, the soul may regain its moral tone, recover from the warp of worldliness, meditate upon the serious duties of life and the immeasurable issues of eternity, turn unto God, and be saved. A timely bodily sickness has brought to many the blessing of spiritual health.

Sickness, moreover, is often a means of grace to friends. An invalid wife has been the very salvation of some men. That fact has held them by the cords of duty and affection to the home roof, when gilded ways to death were spread for them outside. It has developed their noblest traits of character, fostered manly and Christian sentiments, lifted them by the exalting power of self-denial into a manhood beautiful to see. The followers of Jesus, like their Divine Captain, are "made perfect through suffering."

However it may have been with Chuza, at least Joanna's sickness seems to have been the means by which she was brought to the knowledge of Christ. The infirmities of her body yielded before the touch of the great Physician, and at the same time her soul's sickness was healed.

Sickness is often woman's portion. Far oftener than man is she called to learn the lessons of what Hood has called "the finest lecture in that great school of humanity, the sick-chamber." Perhaps we may attribute to this her finer spiritual nature, her quicker apprehension of spiritual truths, the fact that she is found "last at the cross and earliest at the tomb" of Jesus, and that she greatly outnumbered the other sex among followers of the Christ. Hard to be borne as the burden is now and here, eternity will disclose how these light afflictions which are for the present moment have wrought out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"It is a strange and awful sensation," says a modern writer,<sup>1</sup> "when, after having enjoyed to the full the powers and energies of manhood, we find ourselves suddenly reduced by the unnerving hand of sickness to the feebleness of infancy—when giant strength lies prostrate, and busy activity is changed to the weary bed. It is strange and it is awful; for it shows us most sensibly how frail a thing is that vigor which in our boisterous days

<sup>1</sup>G. P. R. James.

of health we madly think an adamantine armor against all adversity. It is strange and awful, for it leads us to the brink of that fatal precipice over which all must fall, and displays as if from the very verge the inside of our future grave."

From that vision can the soul return unbettered? Is there not that, in so sharp an outlining of our destiny upon the mountains of vision, which should mellow the spirit into penitence and turn it with hearty tenderness upon present duties, and with humble trust upon the Saviour of man? Surely there is much—much, whether our gaze be into our own grave from our own bed of pain, or into the grave of a beloved sufferer at whose couch we watch and listen for the footsteps of him whose coming none can stay. There is a poem in our English tongue that breathes this sentiment with exquisite tenderness, Tennyson's "The May Queen." I learned it from my mother, and I cannot read it now with unmoved heart; indeed, I pity the man or woman who has no tears at the reading of this piece. The poem opens in the spring time, with the gladsome outgoing of a fair

maiden's heart over the fact that she has been chosen the May Queen by her companions :

“ You must wake and call me early, call me early,  
mother, dear,  
To-morrow 'll be the happiest time of all the glad  
New Year ;  
Of all the glad New Year, mother, the maddest, merriest  
day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be  
Queen o' the May.”

The next canto opens on New Year's eve ; summer and autumn have passed ; winter frosts have fallen, and the frosts of fatal illness has nipped the fair May Queen. She lies and has long lain upon a sick bed, and knowing that after the night's tossing and wearying with her fever and pain, she will fall asleep at the morning dawn, she makes this plea :

“ If you're waking, call me early, call me early, mother,  
dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New Year.  
It is the last New Year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no  
more of me.”

From this reflection memory goes back along the path of the good old year, to the Maying days beneath the hawthorn ; it recalls all that has been and may never be again, and in the great sadness of the thought the invalid breaks forth into mingled mourning and longing :

“ There’s not a flower on all the hills ; the frost is on the  
pane :

I only wish to live till the snow drops come again :

I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on  
high ;

I long to see a flower so before the day I die.”

Thence thought runs on in that track which, oh, how often ! you have followed as you sat with fading loved ones of your own home ; yes, and few of us have not also traversed it when the mind has been allowed to reach out beyond the grave.

“ The building rook ’ll caw from the windy tall elm tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow ’ll come back again with summer o’er  
the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering  
grave.

“ When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the  
waning light,  
You’ll never see me more in the long, gray fields at  
night;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow  
cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass and the bulrush in  
the pool.

“ You’ll bury me, my mother, beneath the hawthorn  
shade,  
And you’ll come sometimes and see me where I am  
lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother ; I shall hear you when  
you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant  
grass.

“ I have been wild and wayward, but you’ll forgive me  
now ;  
You’ll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another  
child.”

So runs the song along through all the mingled  
sadness and sweetness of that retrospect of the



life past, and prospect of a future in which earth and home shall bloom on, move on, bereft of her young life. The third and concluding canto brings in once more the spring time. The invalid, against all her hopes, has survived the weary winter, and lies now in the returning warmth of May, at the door of death. Here the poet tunes his verse in harmony with Grace as well as nature. The "uses of adversity" have indeed been "sweet" to the suffering maiden, for a vision of the Man of Sorrows—the Healer of all sorrows—has risen upon her soul, and through Grace of the Holy Ghost she has been born into a new life radiant with a larger, a blessed hope.

" I thought to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the  
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year,  
To die before the snow-drops came ; and now the violet's  
here !

" Oh, sweet is the new violet that comes beneath the  
skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot  
rise,

And sweet is all the land about and all the flowers that  
blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

“ It seemed so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed  
sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay ; and yet His will be  
done !  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words  
of peace.

“ Oh, blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair,  
And blessings on his whole life long until he meet me  
There !  
Oh, blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !  
A thousand times I blest him as he knelt beside my bed.

“ He taught me all the mercy, for he showed me all the  
sin,  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let  
me in ;  
Nor would I now be well mother, again, if that might be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him who died for me.”

Let us pass what follows, sweet fancies of  
angel-calls and music, kind words to Effie her

sister, and Robin her lover, and to youthful companions, and farewell to the mother beloved—to read together the two noble stanzas with which, as with a pæan of victory, this exquisite song of the sick-room closes.

“ Oh, sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day  
    is done,  
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the sun,  
Forever and forever with those just souls and true :  
And what is life that we should moan ? Why make we  
    such ado ?

“ Forever and forever, all in a blessed home,  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come,  
To lie within the light of God as I lie upon your breast,  
And the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are  
    at rest.”

After her conversion did Joanna permanently leave Tiberias ? There is a tradition that Chuza was discharged from his high position on account of the piety of his wife. I can find no ground for this. The language of Luke implies that Chuza was at the time of Joanna's ministry still Herod's steward. The king's foster brother, Manaean,

was a Christian ; Herod himself had for a while been a disciple of John Baptist, and had made one of those sporadic reforms which are too common now-a-days. Doubtless, many of his court joined him in this new departure, and among these some may have been sincere. It would not be strange that Chuza, Joanna and others were of the number of these original disciples of John Baptist, and had thus been readily led to accept Jesus as Messiah. Herod's knowledge of Christ and His works is well accounted for on the supposition that there were still at his court some of these disciples.

At all events, there is nothing in the Christian religion that would have compelled Joanna to forsake permanently her husband's field of duty. Had duty bidden her stay in Tiberias, God's grace would have held her there in purity and peace. You pluck an artificial flower from your bonnet and plant it in garden mold. The sun shines upon it, the rain and dews fall upon it, and soon it is beaten into the ground, its beauty is marred, it becomes a befouled thing which you will not touch. You cut a slip from a rose

geranium stock, and plant it in the same spot. The sun shines upon it, the rain and dew fall upon it, and by and by it sends down roots into the earth, and casts out leaves into the air, and grows and blooms, and is fragrant the whole summer long. What caused this difference in results? The spray from your bonnet had only the form of life—nothing more. The slip from the living plant contained a principle of life, and, with the power of this upon it, it had the gift of nature to extract strength and beauty from soil, and sun, and showers, instead of finding in them the elements of defilement and death. Thus is it with the souls into whom has passed the power of an endless life. Even though their work may lie within a Herod's palace, by the grace of God the environment shall rather foster than smother the spiritual life. Into such estate, no doubt, many godly women are called to venture. Indeed, no men more need the presence and restraint of pious women than those whose duties are in public places. If woman will be true to her higher nature instead of yielding to the temptation of unchristian customs, doubtful practices,

and the frivolities, rivalries and displays which are parasites upon good society, she can find no higher field of duty than that which companionship with public men affords.

How happy are the days of convalescence ! When, at last, the ebbing tide of health pauses, turns, and begins slowly, then faster to rise, what joy fills the house. It is as though a great stone had fallen from the heart, a great cloud had rolled away from the sky. Each stage of progress brings new pleasure. From the bed to the easy chair ; from the chair to the lounge ; from the sick chamber to the family-room—thence, for the first time, to the dinner-table,—ah, what a day of triumph is that ! Then come the first walks in the open air ; the first visit to the place of business, and so gradually life merges once more into the common round of duty and pleasure. If, with Shakespeare, we may exclaim : “ In sickness let me not so much say, am I getting better *of* my pain ? as am I getting better *for* it ? ” surely in convalescence we may well exclaim, with King Hezekiah, when recovered from a sickness unto death : “ The living, the living, he shall praise

thee, as I do this day. The Lord was ready to save me : therefore, we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Such, at least, seems to have been the spirit in which Joanna received from Jesus the boon of health. We may imagine with what new feelings, hopes, aspirations, resolves, she who had left the Tiberian walls an infirm invalid, returned to her home in that worldly metropolis. There is a part of her life hidden from us, which, could we know it, would, no doubt, speak of faithful testimonies, a consistent walk, a daily struggle of heart, with triumphs and defeats, such as you all have experienced in battle with the flesh. We know enough of her character to believe that she did not deny her Lord. Nay, her confession was most emphatic and public. She proposed to go forth boldly and follow in the train of her Saviour, to help forward His work, and contribute of her substance and housewifely skill to His physical comfort, while He went through the land on His Divine mission.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 20.

What will scoffing Herod think of it? What will the frivolous lords and dames, servants and handmaids of the palace think of it? Do you suppose Joanna never asked herself such questions as these? She, too, was human, a woman like yourselves. You may well think that her heart had some tremor when the gay ladies of the household sneered, as they would certainly do, at one of their number for leaving "the comforts, pleasures and honors of a palace to cook and be housemaid in the company of a strolling prophet—a Nazarene!" Yet, she took up her cross and went forth.

What would her husband think of it? How would it influence his position, this step? He was head of the private household. Everybody knew him; all from the king down came into daily contact with him. What comments would they not pass upon this strange freak of the royal steward's wife! More than that might not Chuza lose his high place, and be cast out into the world, dishonored because of her?

We shall take for granted that Chuza, at least, made no opposition. He owed his wife's restora-



tion to Jesus. That she could go at all, go anywhere was due to Him. He had ministered to her comfort in healing her from painful infirmities; if now she could do anything to promote the Master's comfort and success—let her go! So he may have reasoned. Thus, we find Joanna with the ministering sisterhood following Jesus and his apostles, as they moved from point to point throughout the beautiful hill-country of Galilee. Here we trace the worthy sequel of Joanna's cure. She dedicated her restored powers to Christ.

Ah! how few there are who walk along that pathway which Joanna trod from convalescence to consecration unto God! The vows of the sick-room! how many and fervent have they been when the pangs of acute pain, or the disheartening distress of weakness have conjured up the vision of death. "Deliver, O Lord, this once, I pray thee, and I will give my restored life unto thee!" The Master has interceded. "Spare it this year also!" He has cried. The gardener standing with uplifted axe in hand, and on his lip the word of judgment, "cut it down!" has turned away his

stroke. A new lease on life was given to the suppliant; but what now of those sick-room vows? Where are those promises of a new life, with which the invalid's mouth was full? Alas, they have been broken, forgotten—forgotten of men, and remembered in the judgment records of God, wherein they lie heaping up wrath against the day of wrath! O soul, by the memory of those broken vows, by the patience of thy sorrowing Lord, I beseech you turn to-day in penitence and faith to the Good Physician of souls!

## LECTURE VI.

### MARTHA OF BETHANY: WOMAN AS MISTRESS OF THE HOME.

EASTWARD of Jerusalem rises the Mount of Olives, a ridge a mile long, which is divided by the deep cleft of the Kidron ravine from the Temple Mount and the city. On the Eastern slope of this ridge, one mile from the summit, and about two miles from Jerusalem, stood, in the days of Jesus, the village of Bethany. There is still a question whether the name signifies a "house of sorrow," or a "house of dates." The latter meaning, when we consider that the mountain was known as "Olives," and the nearest village as Bethphage, the house of "figs," seems certainly very probable. In that case the word would be about equivalent to our English combination, "Date-ville," or "Date-town."

At the sound of the word, therefore, "the feathery palm-trees rise" before us, and we

imagine pleasant suburban homes, nestled away among groves of that prince of trees, the date-palm, with its tall, upright trunk and graceful foliage. The modern village is but a hamlet of some twenty houses. It bears the name of El-azariyeh, from "El-azir," the Arabic form of Lazarus. It lies in a shallow wady or woody hollow, more or less planted with fruit trees, olives, almonds, figs, pomegranates, as well as oaks and carobs, but no trace of the noble tree from which it had its ancient name.

Between Bethany and Jerusalem rises a secondary ridge of Mt. Olives which hides the town from view. The traveler climbs the road from Bethany up this ridge for a mile, and now, as in the days of Christ's entry, reaches the summit and sees, suddenly bursting upon his view, the city of David spread out in the knuckled depression below. Looking backward from this summit Bethany is not visible, being hidden in the ravine wherein it lies, behind the tree-covered terraces that surround it. In this beautiful, secluded spot Jesus, especially in the latter part of his life, found a congenial home. As we read the simple,

animated Gospel story we may almost see the weary form of the Son of God passing out of the Eastern gate of Jerusalem, down the steep slope of Kidron, threading the winding path over the mountain, doubling the summit, and hastening through the groves and over the verdant fields to that quiet home in Bethany, whose Christian hospitality has been heard of and honored among all civilized men. It is of the mistress of that mansion that we are now to speak—*MARTHA*. The very name, indeed, which is the feminine form of “lord,” means “mistress;” and as the house is spoken of as being Martha’s (“her house”) there can be little doubt that it was she whose voice most frequently gave greeting to her Saviour; her hand that ministered to his wants, and made Him welcome to the generous cheer of her well-stored larder, and the sweet courtesies of her refined home. She is, therefore, well worthy to be considered as the type of the hospitable woman.

Tradition, of course, has been busy in spinning theories and pseudo-histories around the Bethany family. We select from the mass of

conjecture what seems to be the most reasonable. The father of Martha was Simon the leper, whose death, or banishment from society (which was a civil death according to Jewish law), placed the three children, Martha, Mary and Lazarus, in possession of a comfortable estate. Simon was a Pharisee, and, therefore it was that such numbers of that class visited Martha and Mary at the time of their brother's death, to condole with them.

All Pharisees were not the bigots and persecutors who have left their unlovely stamp upon the Gospel history. The type of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, also existed, and to that type the Bethany family belonged. We may, therefore, confidently suppose that Martha's early training was, like St. Paul's, after the strictest of the sects, thorough, religious, orthodox, severe. If it be, indeed, true that Lazarus, her brother, was that "rich young ruler" of the Gospel story, whom Jesus "loved," then was she thus closely connected with the ruling class in the Sanhedrim, the highest court, the Senate of her people. The influence of such early instructions,

life-associations and companionships upon her mind must have been very great, and thus gives all the more value to her friendship for Christ Jesus, and her confession of faith in Him. Her testimony was not that of an uncultured, ill-poised mind, but that of a keen, well-disciplined, practical woman, thoroughly trained in all the religious and philosophical discussions of the most intellectual men of her rank.

It has been conjectured that Martha may have been the wife, or widow, instead of the daughter of Simon the leper, in whose house the Bethany feast at the close of Christ's ministry was given. But the commoner view seems more probable, that Martha was unmarried, and as the eldest sister was naturally and fitly the mistress of the mansion. We generally associate a home and home virtues with the idea of wifehood and motherhood. There are many, very many women to-day who shed sweetness and blessing all around them from home centers of the highest Christian type, who, like Martha, are unwedded, and, it may be, like Jephtha's daughter, for ever devoted to celibacy. Sisterhood, nay, simple

womanhood, glowing with love for Christ and desire to place at His feet the honors and graces of hospitality, may build up and bless the world with true homes.

Martha appears in the Gospel history three times, under such circumstances and with such detail of incident as to give us quite typical views of her character. Our first sight of her is at Luke x. 38. Our Lord, it would seem, was journeying from the Jericho valley up the mountain pass which led to Jerusalem, along which is located the scene of the Good Samaritan's noble act. Bethany lies at the head of this pass, and is a natural stopping place before entering the city on the other side of the mountain. "And it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house." Thus, at the very first, Martha is presented to us in the noble and amiable attitude of a Hostess.

Hospitality is one of the Christian virtues. Its decay marks the progress of bad morals as well as of bad manners. There is a healthful, elevating influence about the exercise of this virtue



and grace which is always noticeable. It is still so far literally a truth that she who is not forgetful to entertain strangers entertains "angels unawares," that the angelic grace, blessing and beauty surely come into the hospitable home. Therefore the woman who has not this virtue lacks one of the highest qualifications to be mistress of a home.

On that day of which we speak there came to Martha—probably not for the first time—One before whom the door of any mansion might well spring open. Sweet office of love to give home welcome to Jesus! Do you covet Martha's hospitable part? Bring the blessings of your home to the sick, the friendless, the disconsolate, the poor and thou shalt have under thy rooftree the divine Guest who said, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto Me. Still the Holy wayfarer passes, by His Spirit, from village to village among men, ready to enter into the hearts and homes of those who will receive Him. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in

and sup with him, and he with Me!" The home into which Jesus enters will be "sweet home" indeed; therefore hasten to receive Him into thy house. Still, as at Bethany, He sanctions, sanctifies and sweetens home life by his gracious presence, his holy counsels and his loving spirit. Your homes may be "ever so humble," the rich and great may scorn to sit by your fireside, nay, you may have neither loaf nor lodging for the stranger, but the Divine Guest will enter your garret or cabin, will sit by your side, and though He be the King Eternal will gladly dwell with you. O what mercy! Lord, Lord come in!

It is not strange that Martha with the true instincts of a hospitable housewife, should have wished to honor so great and beloved a Guest with the best which her house and hand could supply. Not only Jesus, but probably His disciples also were present, a large company, in whose entertainment Martha was "cumbered about much serving." The original Greek word means *distracted*, an expression which even now is not unknown to housekeepers when overrun by domestic cares. It implies that Martha's attention

had been drawn away from the Master, and was fixed upon the meal. The phrase "about much serving" in the original suggests the idea of one busily moving about in eager preparation. You may perhaps have heard the expression "flying around" used in similar cases of American housewives, and it is really a good idiomatic translation of the original.

In the mean time, Mary had separated herself from the busy whirl of the kitchen, with its turning mills, baking cakes and seething pottage; from the dining-room, with its ceramic clatter of pottery upon tables spread with snowy linen, and had sought the guest-chamber. Seated, or reclining upon divans, in the Eastern manner, were our Lord and His disciples. We may know what turn the conversation had taken. Not that we are to suppose that Jesus never interested Himself in the many little needful, common affairs of life. True greatness is not above the smallest details of duty and work. The small things, whose aggregate makes up the sum of woman's ordinary being, could not have been despised and cast out of mind by One whose sympathy with all

phases of honest, pure, real life was so great. But, Christ was now upon His heavenly mission. He was moving among His people as a prophet. His days were few, His duties many and great. To use His own expressive words, the day was far spent, the night was at hand wherein no man could work ; He must work while the day lasted ! Therefore, the conversation turned upon the great things of God. Mary listened to this discourse. She "sat at Jesus' feet," not, perhaps, in the literal, but figurative sense, as Paul sat at Gamaliel's feet—that is, was taught by him. "She heard His words"—she listened to Christ's teachings, as a learner.

So things stood, when a discordant voice was heard in the midst of the questioning and teaching. Martha entered the room, or came to that part of it where the company had gathered together. "Lord," she exclaimed, "dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ?" It is not exactly the language of petulance, nor a censuring of Jesus because He did *not* care, but it rather took for granted that Jesus *did* care, and would side with her

in her opinion of Mary's duty. Hence, the request "Bid her, therefore, that she help me!" The phrase "my sister hath left me," in the original permits either the meaning, *hath allowed me*, which would imply that Mary had taken no part in the preparations; or, *hath abandoned me*, which would imply that Mary had been helping, but had forsaken Martha. The latter is the preferable reading, as it gives us liberty to suppose that Mary had taken part in all necessary duties, but had declined to help Martha in her unnecessary preparations.

"Martha, Martha," was Christ's admonitory answer. "Thou art cumbered with many cares, and wont to be troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

These words have been popularly misunderstood, both those addressed to Martha and those to Mary. Doubtless, our Saviour's reference to Martha was not only to the duties of that occasion, but to her general habit; she was full of cares and perplexities concerning house-

hold affairs. Yet, He does not deny her faith in and regard for Himself; neither does He undervalue her necessary labors of hospitality. It was that anxious thought, that worrying over meat and drink which engrossed her attention to the loss of His own holy instruction, for which He reproved her. The two "parts" which the sisters had chosen respectively in their reception of Jesus, are referred to. Martha chose to leave Him sitting upon the divan, conversing with disciples and others, while she prepared a sumptuous and showy entertainment, and thus separated herself from Christ's words of wisdom. Mary had chosen to offer her Lord and his friends sufficient but plain fare, and thus have time to sit at Christ's feet and hear his discourse. These are the facts which showed the peculiar disposition and religious characteristics of each, and it was concerning these that Jesus spoke.

That exegesis which makes the expression, "Mary hath chosen that good part" refer to the choice of salvation in Christ, with the implied contrast to Martha who had *not* chosen it, seems to be wholly unfounded. Both sisters are surely

here recognized as disciples. But Jesus cautions the disciple Martha against neglecting communion with Him and growth in His knowledge and grace, in order to have time for ministering to *superfluous bodily wants* of her family and guests. He justifies and commends Mary for preferring to receive the Christ's words from His own mouth, before the duties which seemed to be imposed by gratifying the amiable vanity of a thrifty and affectionate housewife. The principle which seems to underlie these words, and which touches us all is this : While Christian devotion and Christian activity each has its sphere and each its special representatives in the church, the former must never be subordinated to the latter ; for, *receiving from Christ* is always the most real fact and ground of *imparting to Christ*. Moreover, the words received from Jesus are an eternal portion, the one absolutely needful thing to man. To feast upon these words is, therefore, the good part for all ; but all that awakens earthly anxiety and pride, like a feast of fat things perishes in the using. The active duties of life, the courtesies and charities are praiseworthy and required. But

the law still stands, "Seek first the kingdom of God!" After all, woman's sublimest sphere is Mary's place at Jesus feet. Yet, it is no narrow one, for since the earth is His footstool, a woman's sweet devotion may compass the world with charities.

We may apply these thoughts a little more closely, and learn from this incident in Martha's career the true scope of Christian hospitality. The word is taken in its largest sense as applying to woman's obligation as mistress of the house, not only to guests but to her own family. Let us emphasize a little more strongly the beauty of this Christian virtue as it was exercised and is illustrated by Martha. It is amazing that with the full light of the Scripture narrative before the world there should have arisen such a gross perversion of this woman's conduct and character. She is held to be a type of a *worldly woman*,—of a housekeeper, who, like Israel of old, had not yet been delivered from the pots; whose soul had not risen above her kitchen, pantry, china closet and dust brush. She is pictured to us as a bustling, unquiet maiden of uncertain age, a very



Hebrew incarnation of the spirit of that old-fashioned angular New England matron, who has been popularly supposed to have carried broom and dust-pan at her girdle, as soldiers did sword and shield, and to have made home a terror to all the male members of the house by unceasing warfare against dust.

And yet, Martha was the mistress of that home where Jesus loved to dwell! It was her hand that made it such a sweet and favorite retreat from the anxieties, hostilities and burdens of his daily ministry. Therein was given whatever of comfort came to refresh his Spirit in those last awful days of wrestling with the world. Into Martha's house came Jesus, and loved to come, and loved the mistress of the house we are told, as well as Mary and Lazarus, and therein gave Himself up for the time to sweet content. It was a refuge to Him, that palm-shaded home of Martha, from the blast of human passion, from the swelling torrent of bigotry and hate. It was to Him as a rock in the desert, a spring in a thirsty land. And Martha, the mistress, made it such!

It was certainly no low-minded worldling, no

ungentle and unwomanly heart, no curt and acrid wrestler with the genius of dust, who did all that ! Certainly it was a well-ordered home, otherwise we cannot think that Jesus would have sought and been happy within it. There were grace, gentleness, amiability, faith, true womanhood needed to win such a testimony as we have in the simple fact of Christ's approval, and to administer such refreshment to His soul in those hours of great anxiety. No groveling worldling could have done that ! We shall see this presently from another standpoint, but let us here set this noble woman before us as the true ideal of a hospitable mistress of a beautiful and homely home. She had her faults, for she was a woman, not an angel, but if we would be truly instructed, as our Lord would have us, by the fault here pointed out, we must first do justice to her real character and worth.

What was her fault ? In her hospitable intent she exaggerated the importance of the physical ministry to her guests. Her warm, loyal heart wished to show the utmost honor to Christ. But it was a mistake to suppose that Jesus was most

honored by a sumptuous feast. He would have been better honored by sufficient food and attention, and for the rest by yielding the soul to be instructed by Him in spiritual truths. The Saviour is better pleased to give than to receive. He is the giver of every perfect gift. He came to give eternal life to men. The more we receive from Him the more closely do we follow along the line of His eternal purpose and grace to men. The inward furnishing precedes in order and value the outer demonstration, and that comes solely from the Holy Spirit's teachings.

We are thus led up to the truth that any true honoring of Christ on the part of the mistress of the household must not leave out of view the spiritual welfare of herself and those under her care. These are obligations which no claims of hospitality should ever set aside. No one has greater need of the holy influences and instructions which Religion bestows than the Marthas of this world. Communion with God in prayer and through the Scriptures is absolutely needful to the life and health of the soul. It is the Spirit's daily bread. No plea of business, duty or pleas-

ure should ever cheat one of that. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Meat strengthens for a season a perishing body, but the soul's bread, the precious word of Jesus, gives a strength which Eternity cannot waste. The eater and the meat alike shall be food for the worms, but the portion of the soul who chooses Christ neither moth nor rust shall corrupt. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of the Lord abideth forever."

There are homes in which the physical comfort of the inmates is held so strongly to the fore that spiritual necessities are slighted. Let us lift the curtain and peep into one such on a Sunday morning. The clock has long since struck the usual hour for rising, but the family rooms are darkened still. "It is Sunday morning," the mistress says, "let husband take a good long sleep!" That plea touches a responsive cord in many hearts, for it *is* a comfort to one who must be roused early every week-day that he may reach his daily business, to feel that for Sunday, at least, he can wake when he will. Nevertheless,

it should not be forgotten that our master of the household for the very same reason had retired on Saturday night long after the usual hour! At last the family is astir; the domestics (if there be any) have already returned from their early mass; there is dressing in hot haste; the late breakfast is scarcely over ere the warning Church bells sound for morning service. Now comes the question: Can we get ready for Church? Alas! the hour's extra nap is purchased at a sad discount of ease of mind and personal comfort when conscience says *yes!* Can the children be made ready in time? "Better let some of them stay home to-day!" suggests paterfamilias from behind his Sunday paper. Too often that hint has been heeded. Our Martha says *no*, to-day. And now at last, the children are prepared; bonnet and cloak have been donned, and the mistress stands in the hall flustered, nervous, discomposed, her fingers trembling over her glove-buttons as the last bell rings out over the rooftops and proclaims the hour for worship to begin. What frame of mind is this for the holy service and sanctuary of God? Should the minister that

morning happen upon the text, "Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things!" there would surely be at least one of his auditors who could respond with a heartfelt *Amen!* Is it not well worth considering whether the spiritual welfare of the household is not sacrificed by revolutionizing the domestic economy on Sunday in behalf of Sunday sleep and Sunday meals? Surely no housekeeper can hope to please the Divine Master by a policy which sets aside communion with Him, or hinders communion by inducing a perturbed spirit.

When I first began to preach the Gospel, in a country town in central Illinois, it was my good fortune to find lodgings with a widow woman whose household arrangements were well nigh perfect. She had come from one of the best families of the South, had seen a fortune melt away at her husband's death, and set herself with strong faith to win a living for herself and children. The spotless purity of linen, the sweetness and tidiness of rooms, the charm and tastiness of table-service and fare were a continual delight to her boarders; and these results were accomplished

without domestics, aided only by a maiden sister. It so happened that by the prevailing custom of that section, Saturday was the housekeeper's day for general cleaning and baking, duties which were performed, for the most part, by housemistresses themselves. I was not long in learning that seventh-day was an inconvenient time for Christian ministers to make pastoral calls upon Illinois Marthas. But amid this universal Saturday household bustle, my good landlady sat serenely at knitting, embroidery, or book! No baking, no room-cleaning, no scrubbing, no swash and splatter on pathway and sidewalk went on within the precincts of that home. I ventured to ask the reason for this divergence from the village custom.

"I fell into the general way at first," was the answer, "but soon found that I was so wearied out by the hard household service of Saturday, that I was wholly unfitted for the service of God's house on Sunday. Now, I take Saturday for my holiday, and bring a rested body and composed mind to Sabbath worship. I consider it my duty to come before the Lord with a suitable frame of

mind. I owe it to Him and to myself to present myself and my family in the best condition to be blessed by Him. Instead of going to church fagged out and returning unprofited, I now go with a restful spirit in a ready body, and I can join with pleasure and advantage in the service. That is the reason why I religiously abstain from all labor on Saturday afternoon."

I have never forgotten that lesson. It is one that ought to have wide study among both sexes and all conditions. Cannot men, on the high Christian ground which this lady took, so arrange their work that they and their employees shall not be compelled to toil late into the evening hours of Saturday? The law of Israel forbade to bring the lame and the halt for sacrifice. Should not the law of Christian duty urge us in the same reverent spirit to bring into the sanctuary, as far as circumstances will allow, a sound mind in a sound body?

There is profound wisdom in the Divine law that made the Hebrew Sabbath begin at sunset and extend to the following sunset. I doubt whether that phase of the Sabbatic law was ever



abrogated. At least, I feel certain that the world's happiness and welfare would be highly promoted by a return to a custom formerly observed by our New England ancestors. I well remember my grandmother's stories of Sabbath days in Connecticut a century ago; how, when three stars could be counted of a Saturday evening, all work was set aside, and the Sabbath spirit fell like a brooding dove upon the home. Thus the public worship of the Lord's day found rested and ready worshipers. They did enjoy it, and in good measure, too, as we well know. Perhaps we are here on the track of the prime cause why so many modern church-goers find their spiritual digestion pall under even a half-hour sermon taken once a week!

“But what did the Puritans do with the Sunday night?” you ask. Well, they plied the same rule of the “three stars visible,” to mark the ending of holy time, and when that bound was passed the evening was given up to home enjoyment of various sorts. A social visit, a cozy hour of knitting or sewing, a sleigh ride with wife or sweetheart. Have you ever heard that they were any the

worse for that? Thus, emerges the question: An afternoon or evening Sunday service? I am almost persuaded to proclaim myself a convert to the views of the late Dr. Henry A. Boardman, the distinguished pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church of this city. It was his belief that much of the spirit of Sabbath desecration, and much of the spirit of home desecration, and the neglect of family religion were traceable to the new mode of counting and keeping Sabbath time. He held the Church unwise and guilty for allowing the world to rob God of Saturday night's preparation for the Sabbath, and for herself robbing the family of the quiet home-life of Sunday night by her evening religious services.

I would not express myself so strongly as that, but I can declare from my own experience and observation that a Sunday night at home, surrounded by one's family, is a benediction to the soul. I have already spoken of the Saturday evening rest, but mark you, I would not have one without the other! God asks from man one whole day in seven, however it may be counted, on which to rest from worldly cares,

and engage in holy worship and Christian work.

There is another way in which the house mistress falls into Martha's fault, and permits her household administration to deal too largely with the questions "What shall we eat and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" In visiting the various homes of your friends you must have been struck with the great difference in the *tone* of various establishments. One can hardly describe it, but there is the difference which appears between a fossil and a living plant, between the most perfect product of the taxidermist's art seen in a stuffed bird, and the animated vitality of a living creature. There are some homes that seem to have a living soul within them—a soul that blossoms out in forms of life everywhere; the house evidently exists for the sake of the life which it contains. There are houses, on the contrary, that compel the feeling that the living beings within them exist for the sake of the house! The family life, the daily duties and pleasures of home crop out nowhere. That graceful abandon, the easy and natural pose of

furniture, books, music, all the paraphernalia of housekeeping, which shows the habit of comfortable use, is nowhere seen. A busy, joyous, growing, boisterous *life* has laid no living tendrils upon the outer shell of home, sent no living rootlets into parlor, library, dining-room, chamber and hall.

I have seen among restored Pompeian mosaics the figure of a dog wrought upon a panel, and beneath him the familiar motto—"Cave Canem"—beware of the dog! Our carpet-weavers have reproduced that old design upon a parlor rug, and as the visitor stands upon it, awaiting the coming mistress of the house which I have described, he may think of the spirit that, like the watch-dog, keeps ward over all incoming obtruding disorder, and well suggest an apter motto—"Cave pulverem!"—beware of the dust. Is it strange that the inmates of that house find happier spots *outside its doors?*

I know a house—yes, thank God, I know many of them!—into every room and corner of which the spirit of home-life runs and roots and blossoms into happiness and goodness. No spot, no article

is too sacred to use in the blessed ministry of making for husband and children a home-like retreat. The daughters may have their associates there, and their sweet innocent laughter ripples through all the house. The sons may have their chums at will, and they rarely abuse their liberty, for the sense of honor which such treatment keeps keen and fine forbids that. To be sure, there is sometimes a little over-plus of spirits to tone down, a little boyish boisterousness to hold in check, a little more confusion among the household properties than a tidy taste finds pleasant, but then, the lads love their home! they love home-life, they grow up with the sense of its sweetness, and they can sing, and do sing: "The dearest spot on earth to me, is home, sweet home." Ah, Christian Marthas, you can give your sons no better guardian angel than that! What if the furniture be somewhat scuffed? Think of the scars that might disfigure these souls, if exposed to life's temptations without such experience as you have given them. What if the noise be sometimes wearying to brain, and hands grow tired in righting the disorders of such a free

home-life? Ah, soon enough silence shall fall upon those rooms; soon enough the children shall grow to youth, the youth to women and men, and the day shall run swiftly upon you, when, sitting in your empty house, you will long for the dear old-time din, for the rude music of boyhood's glee, and the sweet tinkle of maiden's mirth—but long in vain! Be assured, no sweeter memory shall come to you in the future than that which peoples the home places once again with the images of your boys and girls, happy boys and girls, playing fancy free in the house which you have made for them—"a house not made with hands," as verily as that which the Father builds for us in the heavens.

Do you cry, "I have not time to follow my children in their plays, in their reading, in their school tasks, in their friend-making!" O mothers of children, you have not time to neglect these things! "Seek first the kingdom of heaven" for them as well as yourself. Care *first* for the forming of their characters, their pleasures, tastes, their social, intellectual and spiritual habits. Less time upon elaborate dress, less time upon luxu-

rious and varied food ; more time upon culture into a true womanhood and manhood ! “Is not the life more than meat ?” Less time for mere outward show ; and more, continually more, for the inner adorning of the spirit,—that is a lesson which the Marthas of this generation should hasten to learn.

Our next view of Martha is in that memorable scene which centres upon the grave of Lazarus. No home is so fair as to charm away the angel of death. The great shadow that forever follows man in his earth-pilgrimage fell upon that palm-embowered country seat at Bethany. The beloved brother sickened,—a sudden sickness apparently, one of those sharp, malignant fevers of Palestine, which do their fatal work swiftly. There was but one ray of hope before the sisters—Jesus might save their brother. But Jesus was far away from them—driven by the hate of the Sanhedrim into Perea.

He had come to the feast of dedication, which occurred in the winter or rainy season. Teaching in the streets or open courts was not then convenient, and we find the Saviour preaching to the

multitudes in the shelter of Solomon's porch, on the East side of the temple. There "He walked," like the peripatetic philosophers of Greece, and uttered some of those golden truths which we read in the Tenth of St. John's Gospel, the parable of the Shepherd and the Door, for example, and the assertion of His Oneness with the Father-God. The Jews took up stones to stone Him, but were disarmed by His eloquent remonstrance. The Sanhedrim accomplished what the mob had feared to do. They drove the Holy Prophet into exile. "He escaped out of their hand and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized."

To this residence in Perea a messenger is despatched from Bethany. It is a journey of more than twenty miles, and in the rainy season, over the rough precipitous descent to the Jordan valley, through the pass of the good Samaritan. The river Jordan has to be crossed; the Christ has to be found; a day, at least, has already been consumed before the sister's message can be given to the Great Physician: "He whom thou lovest is sick!" It strikes one as a peculiar message for



such an urgent occasion, but how significant it is! There is no urgent "Come! Haste!"—no extravagant appeal, nor mention of favors which may now be repaid. There is meek, loving, confident submission of the case: "Lord, our loved one is sick. He is Thy loved one. Do Thy will, but ——" The heart of Christ is trusted to read the yearning of the sisters' love. It is a model prayer for sorrowing hearts; trustful, patient, tender, yet potent with the mightiest plea that suppliants can speak: Help, O Thou whose name is Love, for Thou lovest me and lovest mine!

Indeed, there is a lofty reserve behind the simple phrasing of this message, which speaks volumes for the mistress of the Bethany home, whose agency was, doubtless, chief in this prompt measure. It shows a consciousness, on Martha's part, that Jesus would know her well enough to understand that no hasty, unconsidered alarm would have led to such a measure. Her practical character, her coolness, judgment, tact, and affection for Him would all have checked any mere ebullition of sisterly anxiety. He might

have known—He did know that nothing but the sorest exigency would have led her to send for Him, under circumstances so perilous to Himself, to return to the vicinity of Jerusalem.

“He whom Thou lovest is sick!” Such was the message that Jesus received from the Bethany courier. What answer does He give? “I will come instantly”? You would expect that—but, no! “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” That is the message which Martha’s courier receives.

Back with it, then, to soothe the anxious sisters! Back—down the Perea hills; over the Jordan’s ford; across the green, palm-covered plain of Jericho; up, up the rugged steps of the mountain pass! He reaches Bethany; he hurries into the presence of Martha with his comforting words, “This sickness is not unto death,” only to find that Lazarus is dead already! Dead,—ere the clatter of his mule’s hoofs had ceased to ring upon the limestone pass of the Good Samaritan, on his journey downward to Perea! Dead,—before Jesus had sent him back with these

strange words! How discordantly they must have fallen upon that bereaved heart! Were they mockery? Was the Master, after all, a prophet of deceit? Let us think of this. We must weigh the probable influence of this seemingly untimely message, if we would fully appreciate the beauty and faith of Martha's subsequent behavior.

"Now," says the Gospel of John, after the record of this answer to the messenger, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister and Lazarus. When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was." That did not seem much like an act of love; and yet, one of the lessons which Faith has ever had to learn is that "God's delays are not God's denials!" Faith learns to "wait on the Lord." Faith's wisest councilor and truest comforter is patience. Two days! Then, said Jesus, "Let us go into Judea again," It was a perilous resolve; it was returning into the open jaws of death! The Sanhedrim waited to seize and destroy Him. Why should He run this risk?

"Lazarus is dead; let us go unto him."

Then said Thomas the twin, unto his fellow-dis-

ciples, "Let us also go that we may die with Him!" That was the apostles' interpretation of their Lord's resolve. And so the holy company set out together for Bethany.

Meanwhile, the sisters have given up all hope of His coming. Their brother is dead and buried. Why should Jesus now come? Yet, He is coming! The road is rough, the way is long, the Jews have threatened death, but the Christ will come! The disciples remonstrate, but Christ will come! He comes at the call of friends to save a friend, to save him from the very grave. Though the timorous and doubting would hold Him back; though the wise and courageous would warn Him to stay the risk; though death lurk in every mountain-pass, and devils dispute every step, yet He will come!

He has come. He was met outside the village, it would seem, by the news that Lazarus had already been buried four days,<sup>1</sup> and there halts. He will not press forward as usual, and intrude Himself now, with his company of disciples, upon that grief-stricken home, filled with mourning

friends, most of whom are Pharisees and His deadly enemies. But some kindly neighbor has already sped to the Bethany home and announced to Martha the Lord's arrival. The old habit of hospitality is strong upon her. Mary sits in the house amid the wailing women; Martha, the mistress of the house, goes out to meet the beloved Guest, whom she had so often welcomed to her mansion. She turns from her old family friends, the Pharisees, who had come "to comfort" the sisters in such wise as the perfunctory and traditional topics for like occasions might suggest. Out from the gloomy rooms, and the wailing of the mourning women; out from the palm-shadowed yard, where the beloved dead had so often walked and talked in the evening cool with the Master and his friends; along the narrow village streets, out of the village gate and bounds to the grassy slopes of Olivet beyond, the bereaved woman speeds. There she meets Jesus waiting in the midst of His disciples. The silence which falls upon a group of visitors when thus approached by one mourning over the dead; the looks of sympathy; the constrained action; the

momentary embarrassment, we can picture them all, for human nature is changeless through all races and time.

The Gospel record opens the interview with Martha's outbreak of grief: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" Whether said of Jewish maid on the slopes of Mt. Olivet, or sung of New England maiden raking the meadow hay, it is equally true that

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen  
The saddest are these—*it might have been!*"

It was the thought that had been uppermost in the sisters' hearts. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" It expresses that feeling of which many of us have been conscious, which comes again and again at the thought that if *this* had been, or if *that* had been done, our loved ones might have been saved.

"If?" Yet, the case is not hopeless even now. The sad "might have been" in the presence of the Divine Messiah may yet become the joyful: It hath been! It is! The light of faith shines through Martha's falling tears, and lo! the rain-

bow of hope bends, above the cloud of grief. "But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

"Thy brother shall rise again," the Master answered.

There is a touch of impatience in Martha's response. "Yes, I know that! So the Pharisees have been telling me these four days. I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day? But? ——"

It is this unuttered query, this return to the hope just breathed in her "I know that even now," which gives the point to this echo on Martha's lips of the orthodox creed concerning the resurrection. Something more than that vouchsafed to the race of men, her Lord could give. The resurrection of the last day—that shall come, of course; but for *this* day has the divine Messiah no gift besides this?

Then fell from the Saviour those words of might and hope, which, without cessation for eighteen centuries, have been spoken among sorrowing men. Uttered first to Martha in sight of the village graveyard of Bethany, they have fallen

from the lips of Christian men and Christian ministers every day, and well nigh every hour of the day, throughout the era of Christ. The Church has ever embalmed them within her services for the dead, spoken them at the brink of the grave, carved them upon her memorial marbles, written them upon her very heart of hearts.

“Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life : he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this ?”

Oh ! how the words re-awaken in our memories the sorrows of days when we bowed in grief above our dead. But with the pang there has also come the recollection of our help. This precious word, Christ’s gift of comfort to Martha, has been a gift to us. The Saviour has stood beside us also, and spoken peace through our faith in the Resurrection and the Life.

There comes a period in the life of the mistress of the house, when a thought which often had obtruded, flitting like a shadow over the sunny home, rounds out into sharp outline of fact. The



old home circle must be broken up! The dear ones for whom the household cares were borne;—whom to clothe, and feed and make contented and happy, near her and with her under her roof-tree, shall pass away from her loving offices. The crown of household queenship shall be set aside; the scepter of home ministry lose its subjects,

“ — Scattered like roses in bloom,  
Some at the bridal and some at the tomb.”

No woman sees such power slip away without a pang. And when it is death that robs her little kingdom of the subjects of her love; when she must fold her hands above the empty crib, or look upon another vacant seat at the fast contracting table, and remember that her ministry can never, never more reach the departed, her heart needs a consolation other than earth affords, even that which Jesus gave to Martha of Bethany. “He that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live!” The mistress of the house can deeply enter into both the sadness and the hope of Longfellow’s song of “The Old Clock on the Stairs”:

“All are scattered now and fled,  
 Some are married, some are dead ;  
 And when I ask with throbs of pain,  
 ‘ Ah ! when shall they all meet again,  
 As in the days long since gone by ? ’  
 The ancient time piece makes reply,  
     ‘ Forever—never !  
     Never—forever ! ’

“ Never here, forever there,  
 Where all parting, pain, and care,  
 And death, and time shall disappear,—  
 Forever there, but never here !  
 The horologe of Eternity,  
 Sayeth this incessantly,—  
     ‘ Forever—never !  
     Never—forever ! ’ ”

The busiest life has known the pause of the solemnities that wait upon death. Our Marthas often carry aching hearts into their activities, and none need more than they the aid and comfort of the spiritual life. Yet such life has a continuous and strong tendency to push the spiritual out of view. The clatter of home industry and the cry of home-cares drown the voice of Him who stands

at the door and knocks. The care of this world chokes the Word, and the soul becomes unfruitful.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it comes that the Heavenly Ruler commands that pause from ordinary duties which can only be enforced by the presence of death. Face to face with the issues of eternity, within the awful circle of solemnity that encompasses the coffin and the tomb, the soul is constrained to meditation and question :

“To die? To sleep. To sleep? Perchance to dream.  
Aye, there’s the rub! For, in that sleep of death,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
What dreams may come?—should give us pause.”

To many a Martha, in the hallowed silence of this pause, the Holy Dove has come and made a nesting place forever within the temple of the soul. Thus, too, has come the song :

“Out of my stony griefs  
Bethel I’ll raise.  
So by my woes to be  
Nearer my God to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!”

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 22.

“Believest thou this?”

Such was the Lord's question to the sorrowing Martha. It was certainly a crucial question; it was so then; it is so to-day. Put it to your own thought: Christ Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. The believer in Him, though dead, shall live. Nay, the power of an endless life is hers—she is deathless! “Believest *thou* this?”

That we may measure rightly Martha's answer, let us go back a little in our Lord's ministry, to the days of retirement amid the charming scenery around the head-waters of the Jordan, at Cæsarea Philippi, near the site of ancient Laish, or Dan. Those were beautiful days, indeed. The holy company pitched their tents by the pure fountains of Jordan, in the green vales enriched continually by those dews of which the Psalmist sung, “As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore.”<sup>1</sup> Above them rose the crown of the great mountain, holding still within its fissured summit the snow-packs which have given the name of

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxiii. 3.

“Snowy Hermon.” On one of these swelling spurs the Transfiguration of our Lord occurred. Somewhere here the Master first opened to His disciples the fact of His coming death at Jerusalem. Here the Rock Confession of St. Peter was made.

“Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” the Master asked.

And they said, “Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.”

He said unto them, “But whom say ye that I am?”

And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”

And Jesus answered and said, “Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.”

Take up now the thread of our lesson, and hear the answer of Martha to her Saviour’s question: “Believest thou this?”

“She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord! I believe that Thou art *THE CHRIST*, the Son of God, which

should come into the world." This is Martha's confession. Wherein does it differ in fullness, in earnestness, in faith from Peter's? Yes, if man has in St. Peter the Rock-confessor of the Faith, woman has also a Rock-confessor, in St. Martha. The Master did not, indeed, say to Martha, as to Peter, "On this Rock will I build my Church." Yet, it might so be said, for on that true confession which Martha uttered, as well as Peter, and on the living confessors thereof, represented by Martha no less than by Peter, does the Divine Master-builder raise His Spiritual house.

√ We cannot stop to picture the touching and thrilling sequel of the Master's visit—the resurrection of Lazarus, the amazement of the people, the joy of that home which Jesus had made bright with restored life and love by His saving power. We hasten to our last glimpse of Martha. Six days before His death the Lord visited Bethany again. There the village disciples made Him a supper, a banquet of honor, for Jesus seems to have had a large and influential following in the city of dates. The feast was spread in the house of Simon the leper, and as the extraordinary

demand upon the hospitality of the house called for voluntary aid from the neighbors, we read that "Martha served." So we have seen at a supper in our American villages the matrons of several families sharing the pleasant task of serving at tables. It was at this feast that Mary of Bethany anointed the Lord for His burial, and the mention of Martha, in this characteristic position, accounts for Mary's presence as well as her own; for although a remarkable degree of liberty was allowed the Jewish women, as compared with other Eastern nations, yet it does not appear to have been customary for them to be present at public banquets, a feature which has unhappily descended to modern times. So closes our vision of this noble woman Friend: "Martha served!" In the end, as in the beginning, we behold her consecrating her household skill to the honoring of the Christ. But on this occasion we have no sight of a spirit cumbered by the cares of service. The Master's rebuke, the chastening of her recent great affliction, the tempering influence of gratitude for the gift of a brother's life, all had separated the dross from her willing work, and

enabled her to wait upon her beloved Lord with a heart open to His words ; and this was a sweeter service than ever she had wrought before. The querulous spirit that marked our first acquaintance with her does not here appear ; there is no complaint that another had left to *her* the burden and heat of the day ; no echo is heard on her lips of the apostle's censure of Mary's waste. No ! rather hers, no doubt, would be the first and warmest commendation of an act that gave honor to One who was worthy of the costliest and best. So may our service be sweetened daily by experience of God's goodness ! So may we learn to work without comparing our toil with others, without censure and complaint of others, careful only that the Master be served and honored in the service.

Here direct mention of Martha drops from the record ; but we cannot forget that during the passion week Bethany was the Master's daily resort. When the cares, toils, struggles of the day were over, out from the surging city, away from His bigoted and cruel foes Jesus passed up shaded Olivet to the sweet retreat in Martha's



house. How restful those hours! how holy the communings there! What strength must the suffering One have gained for the next day's duty from the balm of that saintly rest and loving sympathy! Can you follow Martha in her round of hospitable service during that week? Can you think of the anxiety with which each evening she looked forward to the Lord's return? Her close affinities with the Pharisees, her keen, practical judgment and insight of affairs, must have led her to see her Lord's peril and to forecast, at least to fear the end. So we may think of her going the round of daily duty with a spirit subdued, hushed, uplifted by dread of impending disaster, and ministering with chastened tenderness to the Master when he came.

At last the blow fell—the beloved Guest was dead! No more should she see His dear form thread that palm-shaded path over Olivet, and enter her door as the evening shadows fell! No more should her hands have holy and pleasant service in ministering to His wants! Alas! it was the love which gave her back a brother from the grave that hastened the Lord's doom!

Then came the resurrection morn! Over the deep of Kedron, up the steep of Olivet, down the palm-embowered slopes of Bethphage and Bethany ran the joyful tidings: *the Lord is Risen!* Will He visit Bethany again? Did He again visit Bethany during those days of His tarrying? I cannot doubt it. At least it was near that spot, within sight of the dear retreat, so dear by Martha's loving sympathy and hospitable skill, that the Master stood one day with His disciples to speak the last words of grace. Why should we not believe that Martha was there with the women and the mother of Jesus, who, apparently, are included in the company that returned from Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> to engage in prayer? "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."<sup>2</sup> Up, up from the very sight of the Bethany-house into the heavenly mansion, "the House Beautiful." There, long since, Martha has joined her Lord and received her reward, in the divine hospitality which a Saviour's hands dispense.

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 9.

The Bethany home dissolved on earth, but was formed again in heaven as the members were "gathered one by one." The path into the heavenly home leads through the earthly one. The mistress threw open the door of her house to the Divine Guest, and He threw open heaven's gates to her loved ones, and keeps her in the eternity still with her home treasures around her. So may it be with you all!

“ When soon or late you reach that coast,  
O'er life's rough ocean driven,  
May you unite, no wanderer lost,  
A family in heaven ! ”

From the sweetness of home will our spirits arise,  
To the " home of the soul "—Sweeter Home in the skies!  
There, there with our loved and our lost we shall meet,  
The circle of home be forever complete.

Home, sweet home, there's no place like home !

## LECTURE VII.

### MARY OF BETHANY: WOMAN'S LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

FROM the Eastern gate of Jerusalem there runs a path across the brook Kedron, through the Garden of Gethsemane, up the Western face of Mt. Olivet, over the summit. At the Eastern slope, just where it begins to sink into the pass of Jericho and the deep cliff of Jordan, it enters the village of Bethany. Here was the home of one of Judah's gentle families. Father and mother, it would seem, were already dead, and the three heirs of the estate occupied the homestead. The youngest was a son, Lazarus, the eldest was Martha, and the third member was Mary, the subject of this lecture. The position and circumstances of her family, the social and religious influences which helped to mould her character, have been referred to in remarks upon Martha's early training. This may be inferred from the

company, "the many of the Jews,"<sup>1</sup> who came out from Jerusalem to condole with the sisters. "Jews" is the common name used in John's Gospel for the class of Pharisees, the ruler and the religious class, the orthodox, the conservative element in Religion, Society and State. The ranks of the primitive Church were chiefly recruited from this sect. Orthodoxy has its repulsive manifestation when allied with bigotry, pride and selfishness; but it should not be forgotten that the loveliest and the strongest characters of the New Testament are also the truly typical manifestations of a doctrinal orthodoxy. Mary appears in three marked incidents in the New Testament. She is introduced to us as an earnest listener to the teachings of Jesus, in her own home, for the sake of which she had left Martha in the midst of household cares, which had evidently been much exaggerated by that ambitious housewife. With that impatience of less active laborers which sometimes marks stirring characters, Martha chid her sister for this behavior, for which in turn she was chidden by the Lord. It is this incident, and

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 9.

Mary's attitude on the occasion, which have most deeply impressed the Church, so that Mary has passed into the popular heart as one who, "sat at Jesus' feet," and who was declared by the blessed Lord Himself to have "chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her."

It is, however, to the third incident recorded of Mary, that we must attach the greatest importance; for the anointing of our Lord at Bethany is expressly declared to be her "memorial." It is, therefore, fitting that this event should suggest for us the type which Mary gives of Christian womanhood.

Six days before that Passover which has been made forever memorable by its association with the death of Jesus, our Lord came to Bethany. He had left Jericho on the morning of the sixth day of the week (Friday), the 8th of the Jewish month, Nisan (March), having spent the first part of the day, that is, the preceding night, with Zaccheus. It is five hours' journey to Bethany, over a rough, lonely mountain road. The day was, therefore, well advanced when they finally accomplished the ascent and approached the

village. Now, they would pass the spot where first Martha and then Mary had met Jesus with their great sorrow ; here they had turned off the road to the tomb in the hillside, where, in speaking words of life to Lazarus, Christ had touched the springs of death to Himself ; and there in the village, hidden away in the foliage of the olives that gave their name to the mount, and of the palms that gave their name to the town, stood the Bethany home, so often a retreat for the Divine Wayfarer, who then approached. In this home the Sabbath was passed—the Lord's last earthly Sabbath. In what holy services and holy converse its holy hours must have been spent ! Doubtless, the memory of it lingered in that household long afterward, a far sweeter fragrance than that which Mary's ointment shed through it.

The Jewish Sabbath closed at sunset, and after that hour one of the principal meals of the day was spread. On this occasion, in honor of the holy and beloved Guest, the evening meal took the form of a feast. The scene of the reception was the house of Simon, whom (we conjecture) the Lord had healed of leprosy and restored to

his family, but who, like Blind Bartimeus, still bore in his name the badge of his great deliverance. The twelve were there, and the village disciples, among them, most conspicuous, Lazarus, "which had been dead," and Mary and Martha, his sisters. Each one of the Bethany household contributed to the Lord's honor. Lazarus sat at meat with Him, testifying thus publicly to His divine power over death. Martha, with true housewifely piety, ministered to His temporal wants. No common servant should wait upon this blessed Prophet—her own ready hand should render the grateful service! Mary, in her own peculiar way, gave her tribute of adoration. She appeared in the banquet-room, carrying in her hand an alabaster flask, containing a pound weight of nard, an ointment highly esteemed in antiquity as a precious aromatic and a costly luxury.

The possession of this article is taken to be one of the hints which the Gospel gives of the superior wealth and position of the Bethany family. But whether the spikenard was a common thing among the toilet conveniences of Mary, or a rare acquirement, or gift treasured up care-



fully for her personal adornment on high and festal occasions, matters little. It was something very pleasant to her womanly senses. Her delicate and Oriental taste rejoiced in these costly unguents and choice perfumes. Of all her maidenly possessions there was nothing more valuable or agreeable to her than that. To her it was a beautiful thing to anoint her person with the precious perfume, and move among her friends redolent with the sweetness of the costliest spicery of the East. Therefore, she came with her alabaster vase of nard to the banquet of the Bethany villagers.

We must remember how wholly different is our attitude at table from that prevalent in those days. The *triclinium*, or three-couched table, was arranged in the form of a hollow square, open at one end for the free admission of waiters ; in fact, quite like the tables used by our lady friends at their booths on the occasion of a charity "fair," or "bazaar." In front of these tables were arranged three banks of couches, in corresponding position. On these the guests were stretched, reclining with one side upon pillows, and using

the free arm for taking food. The body stretched backward; the feet were sandled lightly or unclothed, and thus the action of Mary was easily wrought, and was, indeed, after a custom occasionally observed in the case of distinguished guests.

“Then took Mary a pound of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.<sup>1</sup> It was a thought born of woman’s graceful piety; an inspiration of that enthusiastic love which so often overleaps the ploddings of reasoning, the haltings of prudence, the calculations of policy, the barriers of punctilio, and the graspings of self, and sees the sweetest and the noblest thing to do, and with happiest manner does it; awakening the murmurs of the present, but commanding the approval of the future, and, above all, of the eternal Lord. The apostles murmured, led off by Judas with his hypocritical cant about devoting the price of such costly things to the poor. But the Lord Himself said, “Let her alone! She hath done what she could.” This

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 3.

graceful act, sanctioned thus by the Master, we may consider as a representative act of woman, and direct our thoughts to that love of the beautiful which is one of the native graces of the womanly character, to its lawful use, and the perils which it involves.

There are men in whom a native sense of the beautiful is very strong; and there are many women who are lamentably deficient in the æsthetic quality. But experience has shown that, as a general rule, woman is more sensitive to the influence of external beauty, and, other things being equal, more fertile in the conception of beauty, than man.

Her ideal of the Beautiful is naturally higher, finer, more perfect. It dictates her more accurate and delicate taste in all matters of form and color. It is the spring of that passionate fondness for shapes and shades of beauty which, in its true culture and lawful exercise, gives such loveliness to our homes, and garnishes life with the delicate touches of her exquisite taste; but which, when uncontrolled and unsanctified, becomes what the apostle John has called the "Lust of the Eyes,"

and smoothes and embowers the path to hell with the semblance of heavenly beauty. All this the experience of every age, and notably of our own, affirms.

There are facts that might be quoted as against this view to show indeed, that on the contrary, the superiority, even in this particular, belongs to man. The world's great poets, orators, musicians, painters, sculptors, artisans—have they not been men? Yes, and has not wellnigh everything else been man's that demanded thought of brain, work of imagination or labor of hand? These facts only prove that heretofore the stronger sex has had and kept the opportunity to develop in certain directions those faculties, out of which springs a special class of beautiful works. Yet, in spite of this fact, and in spite of the exclusion of woman from opportunities to develop her peculiar quality of mind and heart in these special lines, that quality asserts its pre-eminence. If woman has not created, she has inspired art and eloquence, poetry and song. To the immortal men who have been the creators of the beautiful, woman has ever been the *ideal*. She has kept

pace, too, in her appreciation of these higher things with those who have ever had the monopoly of their production. Her native taste, undisciplined as it was, has been as a magnet drawing to her and to the world the true beautiful. When, as in latter days, the opportunity has been given to her also to embody that taste in the works of her hand and brain, she has sprung at once, if not to the highest, to a very high place. The centuries in which man was developing, by continual exercise under the strongest incitement, all that was in him, and during which woman simply waited, judged, admired, applauded, had not set so great a distance between the two sexes, but that, as by one stroke, the wing of woman's fancy bore her close upon the heights of her companion birds of song—the poets, the artists.

But success in these things is not the only test of a nature imbued with love of the beautiful. There are many spheres besides studio, study, forum and shop, in which that faculty may work and gather triumphs. The home, the church, the social circle—the field of charity—therein the

gentler sex has reigned and loved to reign supreme. Therein her noblest and most beautiful works have been wrought, and whilst the civilization which Providence has developed around her may invite her more largely to enter fields of which the other sex has had the wellnigh exclusive occupation, still it is true that the choicest flowers, lovely, most fragrant that her hand can pluck and hold, are to be culled from them. Nay, is it not a tribute to that higher æsthetic instinct that abides in woman's bosom that she *has* turned and lingered and stayed, with her own free choice and full affections, within the beautiful precincts of home, social and religious life? Where grow such rare and costly flowers as there? What soil so capable for the highest culture of the highest forms of beauty as they? Yes, and from these the hand of woman has expressed the ointment, which, like that of Mary's, has been shed over the Divine Master, and with its sweet fragrance has filled all the house—the home, the real home—one of the most beautiful of beautiful thoughts or things of God and man.

Yet that art, poetry, letters and song are

foreign to this higher field one may deny. The true woman may find a congenial work in either sphere or both spheres. There is no great gulf fixed between the two. Indeed, they are mutually helpful and inter-dependent. The true conceptions of family, society and religion, the womanly conceptions at least, are needed to elevate and spiritualize letters and art; whilst she who labors in study, studio or shop is serving her sister whose lot lies wholly within the domestic circle, as well as her own interests within that circle. Let there be no barrier raised between these two interests. Let the warmth of a wise and steadfast sympathy dispel every cloud that prejudice or ignorance may have placed between them. They are joined together by the strongest mutual motives and aims. Let no man, much more let no woman, put them asunder! What! will the true woman of song tune her voice against the Family? Will the true poet-woman be-fog with false or sickly fancies the holy light of that Heavenly Revelation which has been a very star of Hope to her sex? Will the true woman of letters, who may be lifted to drink of the springs of

high Parnassus, turn the waters thereof to quench the ingleside of home? Will the true woman of science come back from studies of Nature's wondrous order and law, to fling the apple of discord into social life, that its beautiful order and laws may be confounded? Will the true woman of art turn from her canvas, or her marble, or the works of graceful bijoutry which her delicate touch has carved and formed, to bedaub the sacred walls of church and home with ignoble filth, or fill the walks of society and the halls of state with images and arts of a gross diablerie? No! We will not believe it! You do not believe it! One shadow does not make a night. One cloud does not make a storm. One demon does not make a pandemonium. One bad woman, nay, a score of such, forcing their blatant social heresies upon an indignant public, these do not make a rule by which you are to settle it once for all that there can be no beautiful living for the woman who may carry her love for the beautiful, through her works of hand or brain, before the public eye, whether for personal gain or for the elevation and education of public taste and morals.



We have heretofore and correctly thought of Martha as the mistress of the Bethany home ; but we must not forget that it was Mary's home also, and that to her is due in part the charm that attracted to it our Lord and His disciples. We might not go far astray were we to yield to Martha the credit of those substantial comforts and improvements which minister so largely to the physical nature, and credit Mary with those acts which added more especially to the beautifying of the homestead. We may think that it was her hand that continually broke the alabaster vase of nard, whose perfume filled the house. This surely is noble work, to make home fragrant and lovely before all indwellers and incomers ! Home should be, may always be, a beautiful place ; not a den or nest like the habitations of beasts and birds ; not a hut or wigwam, like the abodes of savages ; not a mere staying-place or lodging for ministering to animal comfort and safety, or an "establishment" for ministering to vanity and pride, but a true *home*, "a thing of beauty" and "a joy forever."

And home is what woman makes it. It may be

a creation of true art—the product of the finest culture and taste. It may be a blotch upon the social world, a very breeding-point of storms and discontent. Home is what woman makes it! As the lake reflects from its bosom the forest growth, the flowers and plants that girdle it, so home mirrors the soul of its presiding genius. If the thicket and wild-wood press down upon its shores, whose tangled undergrowth is swarming with reptiles and creatures of the wilderness, so shall the image be! If the hand of care have trimmed the thickets, shaven the lawn, trained the vines and planted flowers, so shall the image be! We are thinking, of course, of home under normal organization of the household, not of such exceptions as those wherein drunkenness and bestiality of men have invaded its precincts and paralyzed or prostrated the graces and sweet ambitions of woman's heart.

If we speak of material adornments, it is true that woman's taste and delicate touch must, after all, throw the spell of beauty over home. It is possible for wealth to fail here. One may order her books by the yard, her pictures by the square

foot, by flashing frames or artists' names, and trust house furnisher, upholsterer, gilder and decorator for all the rest, and yet true taste may stand in the midst of all and refuse the commendation, "a beautiful home!" The alabaster box may be there, but it has not been broken. The odor of the nard is not within the house!

On the other hand, one may enter a plain mansion and walk through parlor and chamber with a keen sense of pleasure at every turn. In the new homes of our rising Western towns such an experience often occurred to me. Home-made odds and ends, barrels, boxes, half-discs of pine-wood mounted on tripods, sofas of rough planks and old chairs had been converted by the alchemy of a graceful womanly taste into really pretty and becoming pieces of furniture. Bits of old silk gowns were honorably retired on ottomans and crickets; a cast-off cloth coat of *pater-familias* had yielded a skirt to cover yonder broïdered foot-stool; muslins tied in dainty knots and folds, hung in drooping wavelets, trimmed with bits of lace and fringe, did marvelous duty on toilet-tables, windows and wash-stands; bright

chintzes, stretched, tucked and frilled, had transformed unsightliness into beauty, and sprays and tufts of wild grasses, autumn leaves and ferns brightened nooks and corners with a reflected glory of Nature. It was a triumph of genuine taste over crude material of Nature, precisely the same in kind as that which has called the statue out of the block of marble. No ! The dower of the beautiful is not limited to the rich. Let no one despair of having a beautiful home while taste can prompt to fair contrivance and guide touch with delicate skill.

We echo Mrs. Hemans' lines :

“The stately homes of England !  
 How beautiful they stand,  
 Amidst their tall, ancestral trees,  
 O'er all the pleasant land !”

But do not forget that “beautiful” also  
 “stand”

“The cottage homes of England !  
 By thousands on her plains,  
 They are smiling o'er the silvery brooks,  
 And 'round the hamlet fanes ;

Thro' glowing orchards forth they peep,  
Each from its nook of leaves,  
And fearless there the lowly sleep,  
As the bird beneath the eaves."

In all these reflections it is accepted that the true beauty of a home is determined by the beauty of the inner life. Sir William Hamilton, the Scotch philosopher, had written upon his study the motto: "In earth there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind." So, if we seek the source of that power which beauty wields within the family circle we must enter the heart of its presiding genius. Hands sometimes learn to mould objects into shapeliness as automatically as a machine. Home may abound in objects which, like a sea-shell in the cabinet, are lovely, indeed, but lifeless. The soul-beauty—the odor of the spikenard is wanting!

This sentiment is well uttered in Bayard Taylor's poem, "The Quaker Widow." The aged matron, just bereaved of her venerable husband, thus speaks half apologetically of her purpose to spend the rest of her days with "daughter Ruth," whose "husband's of the world":

“ Thee’ll say her ways are not like mine ; young people  
now-a-days  
Have fallen sadly off, I think, from all the good old  
ways.

“ But Ruth is still a Friend at heart ; she keeps the sim-  
ple tongue ;  
The cheerful, kindly nature we loved when she was  
young ;  
And it was brought upon my mind, remembering her  
of late,  
That we on dress and outward things perhaps lay too  
much weight.

“ I once heard Jesse Kersey say : ‘ A spirit clothed with  
grace  
And pure, almost, as angels are, may have a homely  
face,  
And dress may be of less account ; the Lord will look  
within—  
The soul it is that testifies of righteousness and  
sin.’ ”

Let it be said, then, for the comfort and encour-  
agement of the humblest, that the presence of the  
beautiful spirit is the chief and real inspiration  
of a beautiful home. If woman cherish this her

triumph is assured, however scant and common her estate. One winter day I watched a neighbor fitting up a bird-house for the sparrows, whom he wished to lure into a tree opposite his window. With an eye to beauty as well as comfort, he had given the box a comely shape, and had tastefully set just above the roof a sheaf of oats. The effect was very pretty, and one would have thought the dainty birdies would have flocked to their ornamented quarters. They perched upon the doors and peeped in—but flew away! They hopped upon the roof-top and picked grains of oats from the sheaf—but back they flew to the old, weather-beaten box mounted bare and alone upon a dead trunk near by! Ah! there was that something in the old place which made it *home*; something which no bird cote, new and pretty though it might be, could offer to them. How tenderly has the author of that sweetest of our national songs touched upon this sentiment as it exists in man.

“Mid pleasures and palaces tho’ we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home!

A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there,  
Which seek thro' the world is ne'er met with elsewhere.  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home!  
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

It is to this beautiful sentiment that woman can minister; it is this that woman may create and foster, by breathing into home-life that "charm from the skies," the spell of a beautiful spirit; a spell that in after days, from the remotest ends of earth, will draw her children's yearning hearts to her and the dear old home; a spell that often will traverse the allurements of sin, and burst the cords that would bind and lead them into death. This shall be her "memorial," carrying and keeping her forever in kindly and potent recollection. Beauty of person fades; beauty of character and life grows brighter with age. External adornments pall upon the taste, but spiritual beauty is enduring as spirit itself. She who holds husband, son or lover by the charms of person and sense alone, holds a Samson with a Philistine rope—the giant awakes one day; the rope is in fragments; the prisoner is gone! She who holds her kindred and friends by the



spell of a loving and lovely heart, by a beautiful life wrought into the fabric of home,—wrought into the dreams and plays of childhood, the triumphs and defeats, the toils and recreations, the ambitions, the joys, the griefs of manhood,—she holds them by a cord that shall never cease to bind, and the thralldom will grow sweeter as it waxes stronger, and shall know no snapping but at the strain of death!

We come now to consider a thought which has, as yet, been barely suggested. There is a *bane* as well as a *blessing* in this strong natural love for beautiful things in woman's heart. It is the source of many of her severest temptations, an element of weakness, as well as of strength. It may be a source of blessing to others and happiness to herself, but as surely may become a curse to the world and a bitter spring of pain and degradation to herself. If you will turn back to the first fatal temptation you may see this strikingly illustrated. Satan did indeed appeal to the better nature of Eve—"Ye shall be as gods"—as angels, higher, holier, mightier than you now are. But this appeal was vigorously seconded by that which spoke

through the senses to Eve's love of the beautiful. "When the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was *pleasant* to the *eyes*, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." There was in the very beginning that "lust of the eyes," which has in all ages betrayed so many to sin. Those beautiful things, hanging there amid the beautiful foliage, so "pleasant to the eyes," what harm could there be in them? Is not the beautiful always good, and always to be loved, and always lawful to be tasted? The door of her heart swung open to the temptation, its inner bolts and bars having been unloosed by this very quality of which we speak. It became not a faithful porter, but a perfidious traitor.

It may occur to some of you that this view is marred by the fact that the tempter himself appeared in shape of the most odious of all creatures—the serpent. Some of the old commentators would not have been put out by such an objection, for they held that the serpent was originally some very beautiful creature, and that its present form is the result of the curse. But is there not a better answer, and one that bears

to us a lesson? Are not our ideas of the odiousness of the serpent, after all, results of education and association alone? Considered abstractly, what is more beautiful in form and motion than the serpent? Its shape—the long series of perfect circles, tapering to the thread-like point; its motion—a perpetual repetition of Hogarth's line of beauty; its evolutions, as graceful as the spirals in which the fair moon revolves! You smile, perhaps, and doubt; but look, for example, from the mountain-top upon the brook or stream, creeping, meandering, threading its serpentine way, to quote the standard terms; do you not call it beautiful? Look out upon the waves of the sea, rolling in like the coils of a monster serpent toward the shore; do you not call them beautiful? Do you not affect for ornament the very serpentine coils and curves—from the braid on the crown of the head, the gold chain that encircles your neck, to the tucks on the hem of your garment? One may well see how Eve, in her primitive innocence and love for all creatures, beheld only a beautiful, nay, one of the most beautiful of all the creatures, in the form that uttered

the words of temptation. Thus her senses were fascinated, and her regard for the true beautiful perverted. "Now the serpent was more subtile," we read,<sup>1</sup> "than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." Certainly it would have defeated his purpose had he appeared in a form deemed unlovely by his victim.

At all events, there is a parable here full of meaning if we read it aright. You start from the serpent in your path; you cry and flee, filled with horror and fear. Yet that is the beautiful shape that lured to her undoing the mother of all living. Beautiful? But it is beauty with the ban upon it! It is an accursed thing, for it led you under the curse. It is a symbol to you forever of the temptation that lies in those forms of loveliness that may not be enjoyed without disobedience of the Divine law. Flee from them! Behold the satanic spirit that abides within such shapes! Beautiful? But beautiful serpents! Not to be lusted after, nor listened to, nor even looked upon, but to be shunned as the body of sin and death!

<sup>1</sup>Gen. iii. 1.

On one bright January morning I stood with a fellow traveler at a broad gate on the southern part of the Capitoline Hill. Our loud rapping was answered by an Italian matron, who, in response to our inquiry, led us through a flowering garden to the verge of a walled precipice some forty feet in height. Straight down along the rocky face we looked into the paved yard of a house on the street beneath. A bright sun filled sky and city with glory. It lit up the white summits of the distant Alban mountains; it played upon house-tops, nestled in recesses of the yards, shone warmly into the upper open porches, where Roman maidens sat, among blooming plants and cages of singing birds, merrily chatting in their musical tongue over sewing and embroidery. A peaceful home scene it was, in truth. Yet we had come thither to stand in that secluded spot and recall thrilling scenes of a far-distant era. For that garden was the crown of the Tarpeian Rock, and beneath us, where that brown-skinned baby was at play, traitors and political offenders had been dashed unto death from the brow of the cliff whereon we stood. But

the event which especially had turned our footsteps to the spot, and which, indeed, had given the rock its name and its ghastly associations, was one which brings a lesson to women of every land and era.

In the days of Romulus the Sabines invaded Rome. The governor of the citadel was Tarpeius, whose daughter Tarpeia, a vestal virgin, was seized with a strong desire to possess the golden bracelets which the Sabine warriors wore upon the left arm. "I will open the citadel gate to you," said the covetous maid, "if you give me what you wear upon your left arms." The offer was accepted, the betrayal was consummated, and as the invaders marched by Tarpeia into the open gate, loathing the treachery by which they profited, they kept their promise in the letter, and cast upon her the massive shields, which, as well as their golden bracelets, they wore on their left arms. The unhappy vestal was crushed beneath the weight, and the Capitoline Hill, on which she fell, and where she was buried, bore in history her name, the Tarpeian rock. Thus the recollection of that temptation and fall is stamped in inefface-

able characters upon human thought. Would that all the tempters that creep upon imagination in the guise of beautiful things that woo to possess them at the sacrifice of better and lovelier things, might be made accursed and abhorrent to woman by the memories of ills to which they have betrayed her sex!

The public teacher treads here upon difficult ground, not merely because he meets so many human traits into which enter personal feelings, interests and prejudices of the strongest kind, but also because of the real perplexities of the question from the standpoints of duty and lawful enjoyment. The wish to *seem* beautiful, I may say to *be* beautiful, is one of the keenest in a woman's heart. It has all the vitality of an instinct. May it not, indeed, be such? Is its exercise sinful then? What are the limits within which such a sentiment may be indulged?

The questions push us upon higher planes of thinking than many at first would allow. Beauty is a characteristic of the creation; it is everywhere imminent in nature. Yet it implies mind; it is a quality that abides as an active force in

mind alone. This fact points us to the striking inference that mind presided at the creative origins, even the Universal Over-Mind. Of God it is said: "He hath made everything beautiful in his time."<sup>1</sup> Of the Lord's Messiah it was said: "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beauty and glory."<sup>2</sup> It is noted as a pleasing feature of the holy city, both to God and man, that it was "beautiful for situation"; and of the ancient Church it was written: "Out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined." Thus it would appear to be equally contrary to nature and revelation to rail against or advise to eradicate a sentiment which urges to the adornment of one's person and surroundings.

But the regulation of that sentiment demands our care. Dress and decoration should not be made the great end of life, but rather be accepted as accidents of life and means to loftier ends. You commend Mary who sacrificed the costly nard from her own adornment and devoted it to honoring her Saviour. Can you be commended who withdraw or withhold values from the high ser-

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. iii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. iv. 2.



vice of Christ to lavish them upon your own adorning, to minister to vanity and display? To strive after beauty of person, dress, manners, of home and social environment because of the simple fitness and sweetness of the same, in order to minister charm to home and friends, and add to the happiness and betterment of the world—surely these are purposes of life that may easily and broadly be divided from those which centre upon the gratification of a vain spirit, and covet the miserable envy and still more wretched admiration of empty minds and hollow hearts.

Last of all, we note the influence of woman's love of the beautiful upon her relations to religious worship. Mary's act of anointing was worship, and it was beautiful worship. That which was costly in itself, and precious and beautiful to her womanly heart, she poured forth freely to honor her Master. In the same spirit she bowed her head and wound her locks of hair, so abundant and beautiful, and so much the object of care and pride among Oriental women, around the anointed feet of her Divine Lord. That which is the crown and adornment of woman—"a glory to her," as

the apostle declares—she abased in the humblest offices before Him whom she adored.

In all ages a sisterhood of the faithful, in sympathy with the spirit that prompted Mary's act, have sought to bring their most costly and love-liest service to the adoration of Jesus.

One need say nothing to stimulate that sentiment. Rather, it needs to be wisely cultured and directed. That it has sometimes passed due bounds, must be allowed. It has often expended itself in the creation or patronage of a worship whose beauty is simply external. "A beautiful service!" "A beautiful sermon!"—these are expressions that betray the assailable point of woman's nature; out-croppings of that Eve-like longing for things "pleasant to the eyes," which is never more baneful than when its object lies within the sphere of religion.

That there should be order in the sanctuary is a Divine provision. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." "Let all things be done decently and in order."<sup>1</sup> To that end there must be form in all

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.

public worship, agreement of all worshipers upon some outward rite or ritual. What that shall be is largely a matter of human opinion, taste, education. The New Testament is nearly silent concerning it. It becomes a matter of vital importance only when the ritual is inflated by human devices into such magnitude that it overshadows the spiritual. Form is an accident of worship, and is intended to *magnify*, not to be *magnified*. Truer in worship than elsewhere is that saying: "Beauty, when unadorned, adorned the most." It will be wise to keep the mere forms of worship to their absolute *minimum*; to have just enough to satisfy the conditions of human weakness, to preserve the due order of the sanctuary; not so barren and deficient as to suggest painfully their defects, and thus produce the same effect as the other extreme, viz.: the withdrawing of the heart from the Object of worship.

Forms are but the trellis to the flower of devotion. You do not want a trellis that shall overshadow the plant, but one that shall simply support it. It is the plant that is to be displayed, not the trellis. To be sure, the framework need

not be so clumsy and unlovely as to be repulsive to taste. Let it be beautiful, simple, fit. But let the flowers and foliage of the plant be lifted up into the sunlight, and let these be the things to be seen of God and man.

Art in worship! Did it not have a place in the service of the tabernacle and temple of old? Yes, but it was a Divinely inspired art. If we could only be sure that God himself gave the patterns of modern rituals, even as He did of the old service, then, indeed! But all that went up in the chariot of fire that consumed the Temple of Jerusalem, and it has never yet come down again! If God Himself destroyed and abolished a ritual made after patterns given by Himself, if He judged that the time had come when the old things—mere types and shadows of better things to come—should pass away, we may well wait for another “Thus saith the Lord” before we rebuild and recanonize them. The dictates of our own natural sense of a beautiful and artistic service will not suffice here. Art had done its work; it had imaged and educated the world up to the real. And in the presence of the Real it passed

away from the worship of God. "Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father"—neither with temple service of Jerusalem or of Gerizim! "The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth!"—a purely spiritual worship and one which magnifies, meditates and feeds upon the truth. Such is the verdict of the Master-BUILDER of the Church. Here mere esthetic taste may not prescribe. There are things from which art turns instinctively, or only touches to mar. A painter takes the white canvas, and on it lays his pigments, until at last we wonder and delight in the work of his genius. But what a fool we would deem him were he to carry his easel, brush and colors into garden, field or forest, to touch up, paint over and improve upon the Heaven-wrought hues of rose, lily and leaf! So in worship, that natural out-go and out-growth of Christ's Spirit in the heart. The painted mummeries of an over-wrought ritual defile her fair face and dishonor the wretched dauber. There are two truths which this generation needs profoundly to consider. Religion is natural, but the natural is not neces-

sarily religion. Religion is beautiful, but the beautiful is not religion. Wise thinking thereon will strengthen faith, and purify doctrine and cultus.

Is there no guiding principle which may be our rule of conduct herein to be gathered from Mary's act? Yes; her action was the natural, simple expression of her feelings. Her thoughts were fixed upon her Saviour wholly, not at all upon herself. Could you imagine her posing and robing for the entrance, studying the effect of vestments, attitude and speech upon the company? Ah! How the beauty of the act would vanish then, its fine gold become dim!

Simplicity, freedom, naturalness, heartiness, these are the elements in acts of worship which make them beautiful. Without these no art of music, oratory, processional, vestments, ceremonial, can make God's worship beautiful. With these even a cumbrous ritual has been made beautiful, and certainly these alone can make it endurable to a truly spiritual nature.

Good Bishop Heber, in his hymn of the Nativity, has set before us the truth in a well-known verse:

“ Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
     Vainly with gifts would His favor secure ;  
 Richer by far is the heart's adoration—  
     Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.”

With a spiritual perception scarcely less true, Burns has given us the same lesson in the noble setting of his “Cotter's Saturday night.” Where has ever a service been described so beautiful, even in its simplicity, as the evening home worship of the Scotch cotter?

“ They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;  
     They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim.  
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,  
     Or plaintive Martyrs worthy of the name ;  
 Or noble Elgin beats the heavenward flame,  
     The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays ;  
 Compared with these Italian trills are tame.  
     The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise,  
     Nae unison hae they with their Creator's praise.

“ Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,  
     The saint, the father, and the husband prays :  
 Hope ‘ springs exulting on triumphant wing,’  
     That thus they all shall meet in future days,

There ever bask in uncreated rays ;  
 No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator's praise  
 In such society, yet still more dear,  
 While circling time moves 'round in an eternal sphere.

“ Compared with this how poor religion's pride,  
 In all the pomp of method and of art,  
 When men display to congregation's wide  
 Devotion's every grace, except the heart !  
 The POWER, incensed, the pageant will desert,  
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;  
 But hap'ly in some cottage far apart  
 May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,  
 And in His book of life the inmates poor enroll.”

Surely we may forgive much in the poet who has thus described our worship, and forget much of his caustic complaints and sneers against a Church and faith that have nurtured a type of devotion so simple, so sublime as that of the Scotch cotter.

Thus Mary of Bethany, whom we first see sitting at Jesus' feet a devout listener, drops away from the record in this act of worshipful anointing. Still at the feet of Jesus ! That place is woman's throne ! As she sits there most devoutly



she rises thereby most divinely to rule the world for its good and for her own. "She stoops to conquer," do you say, O doubter? She is not stooping who bends in meek homage before the Eternal and Infinite Master! But, if you will call it stooping, it is as when the eagle stoops upon her wing for a moment to mount, with gathered momentum to her wing-stroke, into a higher circle of her flight. It is beautiful to see woman's devotion before Him who is the fairest among ten thousand, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the valley, the bright and morning Star, the Altogether lovely; for the beauty of that Object of her adoration enters into and is reflected from her own nature.

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the  
sea  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and  
me."

"Verily I say unto you," the Master affirmed, "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her."

It hath been so, not only of Mary, but of every woman whose sweet piety has brought anointing to Jesus. The rudest men have seen, honored and yielded before it. Upon the unbelieving woman the world looks with round, wondering, abhorrent eyes, or pays her the high compliment of unbelief in her sincerity. But the pious woman raises around her name in every community, and wellnigh every heart, a memorial of sincere respect and reverence. Yes, fairer and more enduring than the tomb of Mausoleus, or the Taj, or shaft or dome that mortal art shall ever rear, is that monument which love and piety raised for Mary of Bethany, and shall raise for you, if you too break the precious-nard upon the feet of Jesus.

## LECTURE VIII.

### PROCLA: A WIFE'S WARNINGS.

A GOOD wife is a second conscience. In any matter of principle no man can afford to disregard her warnings. There is one striking illustration of this in the Gospels, that which occurred in the judicial relations of Pontius Pilate to the Lord Jesus Christ at His trial. The development of this illustration is now to engage our thought. It requires us, first of all, and somewhat at length, to study the political relations of Israel at the time of Christ's incarnation.

Our theme brings us face to face with the Roman power seated upon the throne of David. The knight Pontius Pilate represented Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman emperor, as procurator of Judea. Let us glance rapidly backward over the history of Palestine to see how this fact originated, as it is around this that the historical connections of our subject are to be grouped. One hundred

and sixty-two years before Christ two Jewish ambassadors appeared before the Roman Senate. They bore the Greek names, Jason and Eupolemus,<sup>1</sup> and had come that long journey from the camp of Judas Maccabeus, the chief of the insurgent Jews, against the oppressions of Antiochus and the Syrians. It was the first meeting of those two powers, whose destinies in the future were to be so closely and fatally blended. In his far-off mountain fastnesses the patriotic Maccabee—"The Hammer," as his name implies, given because of the crushing blows which he had dealt upon his country's enemies,—had heard of that great people whose seat of government was on the yellow Tiber. Their victories over the Greek allies of his country's foe; their successful combats with the great oppressor himself; their victories in Spain; their republican simplicity, which rejected royal crowns and purple; their senate house, so like the ancient Sanhedrim of the Jewish people—all these and more, as appears from the eighth chapter of the first Apocryphal book of Maccabee, the warlike Judas had heard. There-

<sup>1</sup> Josephus Ant. xii. 10, 6.

fore, turning with hope toward this valorous and virtuous republic, he sent his embassy thereto and formed a treaty of peace and confederacy, an alliance offensive and defensive.

How little do men know the issue of their acts ! The great Jewish patriot and priest never lived to hear the confirmation of his foreign policy, for he died in battle before the ambassadors returned ; but if he could have looked down the vista of the future, more than two centuries distant, and have seen the legions of this new power sowing salt upon the ashen ruins of Jerusalem—how would he have cursed the day that his ears had tingled with the tale of their glory !

Just one century after that, B. C. 63, Pompey the Great advanced his victorious Roman Eagles from Antioch, on the Orontes, to Damascus, the Eye of the East, the oldest city of the world. Damascus—Antioch ! How with these names come trooping to our thought the scenes in the inspired history of the foundations of Christianity ! And now at Damascus, once again, two Jewish envoys bowed as suppliants before the power of Rome. Far different the circumstances and relations of the

parties. Immense changes had come within that century. The stern simplicity of the Roman character had yielded gradually under the blandishments of prosperity. Her power should, indeed, long survive; but the seeds of her decay were already sown. That very year he was born—Augustus—whose imperial splendor should form antipodal contrast to that republican simplicity which won the heart of Judas Maccabeus.

It was the year of the consulate of Cicero—of the conspiracy of Cataline.<sup>1</sup> Yet Rome was still in so far the same that her sword dominated the world.

Alas! The change in Palestine was more pitiful to note. Not now two ambassadors with one heart burning with patriotic and religious love for their country, the representatives of an imperiled but united, brave, and godly people, as in those days when Judea and Rome first met on the banks of the Tiber; but they were two rival claimants to the Jewish scepter—Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, who came there to Pompey, each to beseech his help. They had ploughed the land with civil war, and now drew breath

<sup>1</sup> Stanley, *Jewish Church*, iii. p. 443.

awhile only to face each other in intrigue before the great Roman conqueror. It was a sad day for Israel. Her rival princes laid her down, torn, bleeding and captive before the pagan general, willing to seal her bondage and dishonor, if their own selfish ends might be gained!

Pompey favored the suit of Hyrcanus, and Aristobulus raised the standard of defiance, and entrenched himself within Jerusalem. Down from Damascus swooped the eagles of Rome; over the Syrian uplands, alas, for the first time their wings now spread above the Holy Land!—along the Jordan valley to Jericho; up the pass which Jesus afterward trod; over the slopes of Bethany to the crest of Olivet! There, beneath them, lay the doomed city, shining resplendent, beautiful with temple and tower, hill and valley, as it lay in the day when Jesus beheld and wept over it. You know the familiar story. How Jerusalem fell at last, and thousands perished by the sword and in the flames of the homes themselves had fired. How the priests, clad in their sacerdotal vestments, sat in the Temple court, and with a coolness of valor that has never been excelled,

calmly met the flood of insweeping barbarian soldiery, and died with faces unblanched and immovable forms. How Pompey—eager to solve the great mystery to the inquisitive minds of Greece and Rome, what manner of God the Jews adored, pressed forward through the sacred naos into the Holy of Holies, withdrew the vail, and stood amazed before a vacant seat, an empty shrine as the Roman historian Tacitus expressed it,—“*vacuam sedem, inania arcana.*”<sup>1</sup>

From that day forward the grip of Rome upon Judea was never relaxed. In one form or another she ruled Israel. In the period which our lecture embraces, Herod Antipas, a puppet in Roman hands, governed Galilee and Petrea, and Pontius Pilate as procurator ruled Samaria and Judea. The independence of this old heroic people was gone. “The scepter had departed from Judah, the law-giver from between her feet.” The SHILOH had come, and found her still bound, bleeding at every vein, within the clutch of the Eagles of the Tiber. And now Himself, the Lamb of God, the Shiloh of Promise, stood there

<sup>1</sup> Tact. Hist. v. 4.



in Pilate's Hall, bound and bleeding, cast by His own countrymen within the same cruel talons. Alas! Fit type was He of the unhappy country's fate—their King thrown by their own hands into hands that should work his death!

Such were the results of party rancor, selfish partisan pride, jealousy and hate. Such were the ills that lust of place, which party spirit genders, and which genders fiercer party spirit in turn, had wrought for God's ancient people. Such ruin shall these vices work to us. Such ruin they wrought upon Rome in after days. Macauley, in his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, makes his narrator of the tale of "how Horatius kept the bridge" against Lars Porsena, thus graphically put the contrast:

" Then none was for a party ;  
    Then all were for the State ;  
Then the great man helped the poor,  
    And the poor man loved the great ;  
Their lands were fairly portioned,  
    Their spoils were fairly sold,  
The Romans were like brothers  
    In the brave days of old.

“ Now Roman is to Roman  
More hateful than a foe,  
And the tribunes beard the high,  
And the fathers grind the low.  
As we wax hot in faction—  
In battle we wax cold ;  
Wherefore men fight not as they fought  
In the brave days of old.”

Pilate, a foreign ruler, sat in Judah's chair of state, the fruit of faction, of uncontrolled and selfish party spirit ! Let that be our first lesson to-day. Do we not need to ponder it well ? Is our Republic stronger than the Judean ? Than the Roman ? Will God's laws be suspended in our favor ? Shall the shadow go back upon the social dial for us ? Let us be warned before it is too late !

“ Suffered under Pontius Pilate.” The history of the man whose name is thus preserved in our creed, associated with the passion of our Lord, has interest for us all.

Pilate was the sixth procurator of Judea, and at the time of those events, which have given him such an unenviable immortality, he had been

eleven years in power. He had succeeded during this period in arousing against himself all the bitterest religious prejudices of the Jews. However much the parties hated each other, they were united in hating him. Twice he nearly plunged the city into insurrection by introducing images of deities. His first act had been to transfer his army from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, which necessitated carrying into the Holy City the imperial standard which bore the image of the emperor. This was an outrage upon the religious principles of the Jews, which forbade the presence in Jerusalem of such emblems of an idolatrous religion and objects of idolatrous veneration, that no other governor had dared to commit. The standards were carried in by night. In the morning the enraged people rose against this desecration of their Holy City. They swarmed along the road to Cæsarea and besieged the residence of Pilate there with petitions and remonstrances. In spite of threatened death they held to their point, and Pilate at last yielded. On another occasion he stirred up the same spirit by hanging up in his Jerusalem palace gilt shields inscribed with the

name of pagan deities. An appeal to Tiberius caused a removal of these. A third time the city rose in revolt when Pilate appropriated from the temple treasury the "Corban"—the revenue arising from redemption vows—in order to build an aqueduct. He suppressed the riot by sending among the rioters soldiers with concealed daggers, who, at a given signal, massacred numbers of the people. It has been supposed that this was the insurrection for which Barabbas was imprisoned. The slaughter of certain Galileans in the very court of the temple, to which reference is made in St. Luke, is another illustration of Pilate's mode of governing the Jews.

The Passover feast had called the procurator to Jerusalem. The vast crowds that then frequented the city; the revival of the national spirit; the religious enthusiasm that prevailed; the number of unquiet spirits that were then congregated; the added peril of insurrection, made his presence there important. In accordance with this wise custom Pilate was at his official residence, and there it was that the Sanhedrim visited him to procure his consent to Christ's death. This was

the Judgment Hall of Pilate, the scene of our Saviour's trial, scourging and condemnation.

Yet we cannot be quite sure concerning its location. The most plausible opinion makes the Prætorium<sup>1</sup> or Hall of Judgment to have been the fortress Antonia, which covered a tract on the north of the proper temple square, extending from north to south some five or six hundred feet (Robinson), and from west to east about nine hundred and twenty-five feet. According to Josephus this place had been built by the kings and high priests of the Asmonean race who preceded Herod, and was called *Baris*. The purpose was to have a secure place in which might be laid up the high priestly robes which were worn during the offering of the sacrifice only. This was rebuilt by Herod, and called "Antonia," after his friend and patron, Mark Antony. The interior of the fortress had all the extent and arrangements of a palace, being divided into apartments of every kind, having courts surrounded with porticoes and baths, and also broad open places for encampments. Among the Romans the

<sup>1</sup>Mark xv. 16.

Prætorium was the headquarters of the Roman military governor wherever he happened to be. The whole Gospel narrative seems to carry the impression that Pilate lodged in the midst of his troops at their fixed barracks in Fortress Antonia, where his Prætorium or headquarters would most naturally be.

Jesus had been condemned to death by the Sanhedrim, but the execution of their purpose was checked by the Roman law, which would not allow the death penalty to be imposed without Roman sanction. It was early morning. The breath of spring was fresh upon the slopes of Olivet, the birds were singing in the olive groves of Gethsemane and the palm trees of Kedron's vale, as the tumultuous senators pushed out of the hot Sanhedrim-chamber in the Temple cloisters, and thronged the way to Pilate's mansion. Their Prisoner, bound, doubtless, as was the custom, to the arms of his soldier guards, was dragged along with them. At the confines of the Prætorium they paused. Did their hearts fail them? Had they felt some meltings of ruth—some probings of conscience? Quite other than that, indeed.

They were too holy men to put their feet at such holy time upon pagan premises! By entering a Gentile's house a Jew became unclean until evening; and during the passover festival, which continued for seven days, every strict Israelite would avoid ceremonial uncleanness, which debarred from the privileges of the feast. Therefore they paused, and sent a message to the governor. Well might Augustine exclaim over this act: "O impious blindness! They would be defiled, forsooth, by a dwelling which was another's, and not be defiled by a crime which was their own!" Yes—and still the world pauses in amazement at the scruples of the unscrupulous. The tendency of hyper-formalism has ever been to pervert the soul's healthful action,—to make a morbid conscience, sensitive to the breach of some trifling ceremony, but callous to the demands of justice, mercy and truth;—straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel!

With a courtesy that often marked the Roman knights, and a policy which was not indifferent to the fact that the Jewish senate stood at his doors Pilate came forth, early as was the hour, to know

what accusation was laid against Jesus. No doubt the simple request had been sent into the house that the Sanhedrim wished His death as a transgressor of their law, and they hoped to carry the matter by the mere weight of influence. The fact that they dared present such a request with hope to have it granted showed their estimate of the governor's character; that they judged him to be quite competent to buy their good will on such easy terms as signing the death-warrant of a poor Jew. But for some reason the Roman was in no mood to pleasure them in the matter. The characteristic Roman sense of justice and respect for law may have prevailed. He may have heard much of Jesus and His works through common fame, or through his wife, who evidently did know enough about Jesus to judge His character rightly. Therefore Pilate pursued the usual and right course and required some accusation that the law could recognize. At first the Sanhedrists tried to turn the beam of justice by the weight of assumed respectability. Hiding their great sin under the cloak of great honesty of purpose, they cried out: "If He were not a malefactor we would not have delivered



Him unto thee!" Nevertheless they were ready to meet the objection, and turned the governor's evident purpose to discharge the prisoner, by roundly preferring the charge of treason: "He calls Himself a King—He makes Himself thus Cæsar's enemy!" Cunning Jews!—the governor now *must* act. Pilate re-entered the judgment-hall, and summoned Jesus to his presence. He would question Him separate from His accusers. It is a spectacle before which imagination may well pause. On the one hand, Pilate—the representative of stern Physical Power, as well as its luxury and culture; alike of the honor and selfishness, the superstition and incredulity, the good and the evil of the Pagan civilizations of that era. Beside him, behind him, the visible emblems of Imperial Rome. On the other hand, JESUS of Nazareth, stripped of His comely apparel, bruised with the servants' blows, bound with a prisoner's chains. Beside Him, above Him, yea, within Himself, the invisible Powers of the Unseen World, of the future Faith, of the coming Era, when the silent forces of Love, Truth and Duty should melt away the iron sceptre of the all-con-

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quering Empire, as the Sun of Spring dissolves the snow on Lebanon and Hermon. At last Destiny has brought Military and Pagan Rome front to face with her Conqueror.

How significant the first sentence that fell from the governor's lips—as though there had blown upon his spirit a breath of the future fates! “Art Thou the King of the Jews?”

The conquered provinces and people of Rome had many a fallen sovereign or scion of sovereignty. It did not, therefore, seem a strange thing to Pilate that Jesus might be a descendant of some royal ancestor.

Listen, then, O belted knight of iron Rome! Listen, O proud representative of him who sits imperator of civilized men upon the seven-hilled capital of the world! Gentle as the breathings of the spring zephyrs that blow through thy Prætorian camp the fragrance of Olivet's groves and Kedron's gardens, but confident as the voice of the enthroned Cæsar himself who calls to thee from the Tiber, this Captive speaks:

“Thou sayest it! I *am* a KING!”

The soldier had something to learn of true

kingship that day. In a sentence our Saviour sweeps away the lying accusation of the Sanhedrim: "My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews."

That argument would strike the mind of a soldier with peculiar, with irresistible force. The charge of the Sanhedrim had implied that Jesus had many servants throughout the whole nation. Certainly, Pilate would reflect, recalling his own experience, if they were like their countrymen there outside the judgment-hall, they would not quietly have submitted to this indignity upon their King and Master! But a King without fighting soldiers was an absurd thought to a Roman. No armed followers! "Art Thou a King then?" he cried.

Still the Captive answered: "I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one is of the truth that heareth My voice."

Ah! that was indeed a royal birth, a royal

realm, a kingly mission! And as for followers—yes, there are not few converts to-day;—and they shall swell, O Pilate, into an irresistible company as the ages move on,—an army with banners, a host panoplied with the armor of righteousness, and wielding the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. Hark! if thou hadst faith, thou mightest lay thine ear against the vail that bounds Past and Future time, and hear the tread of the coming hosts, marching, marching down the vista, waving their branches of palm, shouting their hosannas to the Eternal King. O Pilate, this King stands at the door of thy heart and knocks. Wilt thou hear and open the door? Alas! the governor is not of the Truth! With that sneer of blind incredulity upon his tongue, whose echo has been rolling from lip to lip since ever the world was: “*What is Truth?*” he turned away. “Physical force and civil authority I understand and appreciate, but what is truth? It is a problem over which philosophers and Jews may vex their brains, but it is a vain question, and I have neither hope of nor relish for an answer!” Christianity to-day is full of Pilates who give to the Witness of the

Truth, Jesus, the same half doubting, wholly indifferent answer. "*What is truth?*" he cried, and straightway turned his back upon the Truth.

Yet the element of truth still surviving in his character was quickened by that brief contact with the incarnate Truth of God, and for the moment the just judge prevailed over the political ruler. "When he had said this, he went again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all." In the midst of the fierce clamor that this verdict aroused, Pilate caught a word which promised deliverance to himself—"Galilee." "Is the Man a Galilean?" he asked. "Then let Him be sent to Herod, to whose jurisdiction He belongs." It was the shrewd policy of a politician to avoid the risk of doing an unlawful thing, and at the same time escape the enmity of the Sanhedrim, and win the friendship of Herod. But that frivolous prince, not to be outdone by Pilate either in courtesy or policy, waived whatever right of jurisdiction he may have had, or declined jurisdiction altogether, and sent the Holy Prisoner back to the Procurator. Once more, at Pilate's summons, the Sanhedrim was assembled before

the judgment-hall. "I have examined this Man," was the governor's message, "and have found no fault in Him. I sent you with Him to Herod, and he has found no fault in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him."

*Chastise!* This was meant to conciliate the Jews. He wished to ease their disappointment somewhat, and make them more willing to submit, by allowing them the satisfaction of seeing the object of their enmity publicly disgraced. It was an unfortunate effort at conciliation. A taste of blood does not calm the tiger! Pilate's weak concession only inflamed the rulers' anger. The echo of his "chastise Him" came back from the throats of the aristocratic mob multiplied and magnified into the bloodthirsty cry: "*Crucify Him!*" It is a notable example of the folly and sin of attempting a compromise between the right and the wrong, Christ and Belial, God and mammon, justice and policy. Between *chastise* and *release* there was in this case no connection, and should have been no compromise.

The conflict between the governor's better nature and his worse had begun. He earnestly



desired to save Jesus, and so proposed to release Him under the custom of the feast. "But they cried out all at once, Away with this man! release unto us Barabbas!" Again he spoke to them. Again rose up the cry, "Crucify Him:" "Why? what evil hath He done?" cried Pilate, with yet more impassioned tones. He was appealing thus to their sense of right, but what hope for such a plea, when he who urges it has smothered his own sense of right? It is a humiliating spectacle, a Judge pleading for the life of One who had been arraigned at his own bar, whom he had again and again pronounced innocent, and whom he had full power to discharge. How Pilate must have despised that howling mob of bigots; those ministers of religion raising the tiger cry for blood! How he must have despised himself! He knew that he was doing wrong—violating law, justice, humanity, honor! But the influence of these yelling Senators was needful just then to strengthen himself in his position. They could injure him before Tiberius with the charge that he had released one who set himself up to be a king. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend."

As that threat—yes, knighted soldier of Rome, a threat!—fell again upon Pilate's ears, he yielded. He cowered before the fear of offending Cæsar and losing his position. "The voices of them prevailed." But had there not been within his own bosom the traitor voices of ambition, love of place, selfish thought, his own interest, that mob might have shouted itself hoarse ere his Roman will had bent! It is the voice within, and not the voice without, that calls the soul's surrender to the power of sin.

Bring forth now the judgment-seat! The *Bama*, as it is called in the Greek, was the place from which official judgment or sentence was pronounced by Roman rulers. It was placed upon an elevated, tessellated, or mosaic pavement of stone, arched and movable, as we may judge from the fact that Julius Cæsar was wont to carry such a pavement with him on his expeditions, in order to give the *Bama* its conventional elevation. This pavement, we are told, was called by the Hebrews "Gabba-tha," from a word which signifies a *ridge* or *hump*. Justice was the boast of Romans. A pure code of laws and an impartial administration thereof

were among the highest glories of their race. Sit high upon the judgment seat, Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea, and think of that! Justice! pause a moment; look down from thy seat upon that holy Prisoner—upon those angry, blood-thirsty, bigoted priests and doctors of divinity, and think of that!

Ha! A messenger! Who is it? He wears the livery of Pilate's own household. He bears a message from the bosom of his own home. One more warning voice to stop him on the path to doom! It is from his wife: "Have thou nothing to do with that Just Man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of Him."

So the governor heard, or, it may be, read from the ivory tablets which served a Roman lady in that day the purpose of modern writing material. While Pilate ponders the message, let us see what tradition has to say of his wife. Her name was Procla or Claudia Procula. A Roman by birth, she was a proselyte of the gate, having abandoned paganism, and accepted Jehovah as the true and only God. As early as the time of Origen there is a further tradition that she became

a Christian. Whether this be so or not, she had learned something about Jesus. She knew His holy character; that He was a "just person," a righteous man. She evidently had also followed closely the course of proceedings before her husband's tribunal; had probably learned from his own lips, while the Sanhedrim was off to see Herod, some of the facts in the case. With instinctive sense of justice, of the vastness of the crime against law, humanity and righteousness which Christ's condemnation involved, she threw the weight of her womanly judgment and wifely influence into the scale in behalf of right. She knew her husband's temptation to yield for the sake of policy. Nor could she have been ignorant of the possible injury which the Jews might do him, should he persist in the just course. Her own interests, too, were deeply involved—wealth, station, comforts of life. But she followed conscience and the heavenly admonition vouchsafed her. She sent the message of warning, lifted her voice, and cast her influence against the impending wrong. For this we are entitled to write her name among the women friends of Jesus.

Nor could we withhold this tribute and title, even were there no ground for the tradition that removes her from the pagan matrons of Rome to the ranks of the true faith. Her act shines amid the black depravity of that trial like a sunbeam in a dungeon cell. It is one of the few incidents that relieve a little the deep shadows of the Passion history. It speaks of justice, humanity, courage, and in so far it shows that Procla was "of the truth." It not only uncovers to us these natural virtues, but sets her before us as one with the courage of her convictions, willing to cast her influence, whether privately or openly, on the side of right. If we think of her simply as the Roman wife of a Roman official, we must acknowledge the keen intellect, the good sense, the clear moral perceptions which cut through all the craft of the Sanhedrists, and arrived at the just verdict as to the Just Man before her husband's tribunal. If we think of her as a secret believer in Jesus, or at least in sympathy with His teachings, then her warning and plea become her confession. In either case her act declares her righteousness, her goodness, her faithfulness to her wifely duty to

remonstrate against a husband's purposed wrong. This last characteristic is the one which we accept as typical, and it shall suggest the practical lessons of this hour.

In the varied and delicate relations between husband and wife it is often difficult to determine where the right and duty of interference with personal action ought to be exercised. Doubtless there are those who transgress against that reserved personal sovereignty, that individuality of behavior and responsibility which not even the marriage tie should bind. There is a region in the domain of every soul into which none but God may come. Warnings, advices thrust therein are intrusions upon which a true woman will hardly venture, or ventures only to discover her error, in the loss of legitimate influence.

But assuredly the marital relation does establish a right, yes, and impose the duty of a wife to give her husband timely warning against policies and actions that violate righteousness. The consequences of the husband's wrong-doing are often felt most keenly by the wife and children. Self-interest, self-protection, family affection and

duty, justify remonstrance against sinful ways. When the "head" of a household is rushing upon ruinous courses, the "members" thereof may well be excused for vigorous outcry.

Even were there no such reasons, the nature of the marriage relation warrants the wife's effort to save her husband's conscience from defilement. What! Shall we admit the office of a "help-meet" as lawful in all that bears upon physical comfort and welfare, and not acknowledge it in that which makes for righteousness, purity and truth? Not so! There are obligations of the most imperative force that can possibly bind human consciences which urge a wife to help her husband, by example, by precept, by warning, to shun unholy practices and walk in uprightness. Procla exercised that right, fulfilled that duty, and whatever else was the result, she at least freed her own soul from blame.

It speaks well for Procla, and in so far for Pilate also, that the Procurator was visibly influenced by his wife's warning. Happy would it have been for him had he yielded unreservedly to her influence! Happy would it be for many men

now, as it has been for numbers in the past, were they to heed the monitory voices of their noble wives! A good wife is a second conscience, and fortunate is the husband who has discovered and walks by the fact. In all matters that involve questions of principle, which are not pure affairs of business, there are quite evident reasons why a woman can and will often give a better decision than a man. Her life is separated from the personal and partisan influences which quite unconsciously will bias the best of men. Her standpoint is above the arena. She can look with a more impartial mind upon the combinations among which her husband moves. She is more likely to see where "the other side" also has claims in justice. She often knows better than he the secret motives that mould and are likely to warp his judgment. She often sees more clearly than he the selfish, hollow or nefarious motives that animate his confederates and friends. Her moral standpoint is higher. She lives in the purer air of home; the intense personality of conflict, the pride which pleads for consistency even in wrong-doing, the anger, wilfulness, ill-



will that bear so strongly upon her husband, all have little, certainly less, power upon her decision. Therefore, the higher interests and the moral faculties hold the scepter upon her judgment, and keep it purer, wiser, juster, safer. It is an admirable court, therefore, to which one may submit his policies and behavior—a good woman's judgment; and when the decision is against him, he will find in ninety cases out of a hundred that he was in the wrong, just as, alas, too late! Pilate discovered in this warning of his Claudia Procula.

To insure successful exercise of this power these two things, at least, are necessary. First, a wife must herself be under the sway of righteous principles. Inconsistency is dumb, or, if it speak, finds the uttered words drift back into the face like sand flung in the teeth of the wind.

Second, it should be understood that indiscreet and untimely reproof defeats its purpose, and rather hardens than averts the object thereof in his course. It is written: "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his heart, shall suddenly be

cut off!" Doubtless the text has been quoted to justify a course of irritating and indiscreet reproving, which would never have been sanctioned by the wise proverb writer. It would at least be well, in such cases as the proverb covers, for the wife to seriously start the question: Has not my often reproving been done in a hasty, ungenerous, unwise, unloving way? It is so easy for reproof to degenerate into fault-finding! So easy for fault-finding to run utterly down to that course which is so accurately, if not elegantly, expressed in the popular term "nagging!" Be well assured that a wife's warnings will soon pall upon a husband's ears when they have fallen into such estate.

But these most common faults avoided, there is no reason why woman should not maintain the duty and privilege of friendly admonition and entreaty. The only bond that many men have to the Church and the heavenly salvation is their relation to their wives. These men constitute in our land a large class—"the Church's brothers-in-law," as they have been quaintly called—who are possessed of noble qualities and abound in manly

and righteous deeds ; they give liberally to support the Church, her ministry, her missionary and charitable works ; they are often found in the House of God, and not unfrequently give largely of their time and personal energy to promote the interests of the local congregation. They are “not far from the kingdom” ; “almost persuaded” to confess Christ ; of them it may be said, as said the Master to the young ruler of old : “One thing thou lackest !” The hope for the final redemption of these men is largely in the faithfulness of their wives, whose prayers and pleadings under heaven shall continue to rescue many of them from the guilt of delivering up their Saviour for the sake of a world’s pleasure, plaudits, or gains.

We go a step further, and see in Procla’s warning a type of woman’s plea in the high courts of earth for an imperilled Christianity. The interests of woman are deeply involved in the establishment of good laws and the pure administration thereof. The weakest elements in society, like the minority, should feel profoundly concerned that the judicial ermine be unstained and unstainable, and the

executive sword unsullied, for their hope of justice and prosperity lies in that. Few American women may be called to sit in a jury-box, like their sisters of Wyoming Territory; only here and there may woman's voice be heard at the bar as a licensed lawyer; the civil administration may make no call upon her services save for an occasional post-office and a multitude of clerkships; many circumstances may conspire to hold her back from a direct and personal share in the strifes of the political arena, yet none the less, rather all the more, should she keep careful, unceasing and intelligent watch upon the administration of human government. Procla's example is a call to girdle our seats of justice with woman's prayer. Whatever else may be denied her, the right of petition and remonstrance is hers, and in the wise exercise of that right there opens up a path of usefulness which may lead into broad fields of success. Let her plead for good laws and faithful administration; for clean, well-paved streets, that her person and home may be free from the horror of drifting dust foul with street filth; let her plead for pure water and ample

sewage that her family may be saved from malaria-breeding and pestilence-hatching germs ; let her plead for the execution of Sabbath laws, temperance laws, laws against gambling ; let her lift her voice for every law and policy that saves husbands, sons, brothers, her fellow men, from peril, and against all men and measures that spread and protect the fatal snares that threaten her peace by imperilling health and morals ; let her do all this with such wisdom, zeal and persistency as woman can command, and see if the lagging limbs of reform be not started into fresh vigor ! Why should woman be silent on themes like these, when man's partisanship, treachery, sluggishness, poltroonery and covetousness are betraying the interests of community, are sacrificing the welfare of helpless wives and children ? Why should *not* Procla cry " pause ! " when Pilate from the very judgment seat is delivering the Christ to doom ?

I am not thinking simply of the public influence of woman in warning against wrongs, but of her private influence upon the administration of justice. How often has she been the power behind the throne !—alas, at times a power for evil, but

often for good. History is full of examples, on the one side and the other. No intelligent reader can deny the fact. What concerns us to-day is that this power shall ever be used as by Procla on the side of mercy, righteousness and religion.

It is indeed true that we here must face what seems to be a waste of effort, a failure. Was not Procla's a lost plea? Was not her influence vain? Many of her sisters in this and in all time have found here a point of sympathy with the Roman matron. What pleas, what tears, what influence have fallen vainly upon world-hardened hearts! Do not judge too hastily. Is any good deed ever done in vain? Moreover there are times when the question for us to face is not so much "Can I do any good?" as "Shall I do my duty?" Duty must be done for its own sake, for the doer's sake, for God's sake, irrespective of results. Then remember the final appeal to the Great Assize of Christ's Judgment Seat. Think of the uncovered secrets of eternity. Deeds, words that have seemed to lie unquickened, as seeds sleep in winter beneath the frost-crusted ground, shall then be found to have had a spring-time, even after all

hope had gone out—a spring-time which caused the sheaves of harvest to come home in the hands of angels.

But even at the worst, no honest plea against wrong can be wholly vain. Procla's warning is woman's testimony to the innocence of Christ, and that remains. Herod and Pilate, both in their own peculiar way, acquitted Jesus of wrong—commended even while they condemned Him. To this acquittal woman's voice was added. Procla, too, declared the thorn-crowned Sufferer to be a "Just Man," and so declared it that nothing in her behavior undid the force of her witnessing.

No! let not a woman's heart grow weary in plans against the forces of evil which assail her loved ones because of Procla's seeming failure. That failure itself pleads in her behalf to-day; for the fate of him who refused his wife's counsel in Pilate's judgment-hall joins its solemn warning with the voice of every woman who speaks on the side of duty.

The characters of the Bible record are living pictures of Divine truths. They teach us by their

shades as well as by their colors. Lights and shadows!—every truthful portraiture of human life has both of these. Dark enough is the shadow that falls from the story of the Roman knight. Over against it is the form of Procla, his wife; we have but one glimpse of her, and that reveals her wholly in the light. We know her by that single act, which has enfolded her forever in the glory which now gathers upon the Christ. Her name brings before us one image only; we can think of her no otherwise than as the faithful wife venturing to warn her husband from the path of dishonor; sending, amid the discordant voices of the Lord's accusers, her friendly plea for Jesus! The selfish place-seeker, Pilate, retires into the shadow. The name of Procla, with her tender conscience, righteous judgment, pitiful heart, we write among those daughters of our race whose example lives in the world only as a voice that calls to Duty, Justice, Truth and Humanity. Surely the lesson may stir some souls to-day to utter the vow and prayer so admirably written in her "Legend of Tubal" by a great Englishwoman who recently passed from among men:



“ Oh, may I join the choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence ; live  
In pulses stirred to generosity ;  
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
For miserable aims that end with self,  
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars ;  
And with their mild persistence urge men's search  
To vaster issues ! ”

If the ivory tablets of Claudia Procla carried a message that seemed to be vain, yet she had done her duty ; she had obeyed conscience ; she could wash her hands of the stain of her husband's sin and the blood of the Just Man whom it brought to the cross.

Not so the Roman procurator. He stood, indeed, before his desecrated judgment-seat, and in the face of the Jewish rulers washed his hands, declared his innocence, and sought to shift all responsibility for the day's proceedings upon the Sanhedrim and Jewish nation. In vain ! Human responsibility is one of those things in this God's world of ours that will not be cast loose to shift for itself. No act of will can divorce it from its

proper belongings. Cast it out like a foundling! Some invisible hand—aye, it is the Hand that covers all our schemings and doings, and holds in the hollow thereof the links that bind every effect to its proper cause—that Hand will lay it again at your own door! No bird ever came back in the soft spring time to the old nestling haunts more surely than comes back to every son of man that burden of duty and responsibility that pertains to himself. That is one of the fixed moral laws of God, as fixed as any law in the physical world.

Yes, there are two sides to this matter. Man may hand over Principle to the cross that Policy may come to the crown. But Principle will rise from her grave and shake her bloody accusing garments in his face, while Policy will steal into his enemy's camp and help bind *him* to the cross. He may chastise Conscience and Duty for awhile; but they will have freedom again for all that; they will spring up and smite with the force of Titans on every trembling centre of feeling within him; on brain, and heart, and nerve.

Pilate found it so. In spite of the criminal concession made to keep his place, in the end he

lost his province. He was banished to Gaul six years after our Lord's crucifixion, A. D. 36, where, says Eusebius, wearied with misfortunes, he killed himself. There is a tradition that he sought to hide his sorrows on the Swiss mountain, by the lake of Lucerne, now called Mt. Pilatus, and after spending years of remorse and despair in its recesses, he found a suicide's grave in the dismal lake upon its summit. Says Sir Walter Scott: "According to the popular belief, a form is often seen to emerge from the gloomy waters, and go through the action of one washing his hands; and when he does so, dark clouds of mist gather first around the bosom of the infernal lake, as it was styled of old, and then wrapping the whole upper part of the mountain in darkness, presage a tempest or hurricane, which is sure to follow in a short space." It is a fable, of course, but it illustrates the future unrest of that man who smites unto death the Christ within himself! The ghosts of murdered duties, the echoes of voices raised to warn and save, but silenced in the deep sepulchre of smothered conscience, shall haunt and follow that soul, aye, forever more!

## LECTURE IX.

### THE WEEPING DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM: WOMAN'S TEARS.

“AND there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us! For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?”<sup>1</sup>

Our Saviour's address to the Daughters of Jerusalem who bewailed Him on His way to death, is the last uttered by Him before His crucifixion. The Seven Words from the Cross, which

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiii. 27-31.

followed, were brief sentences or ejaculations. This fact, as well as the deep significance and exquisite tenderness of the incident, give to it an especial interest. The event occurred upon the "Via Dolorosa," or The Sorrowful Way, as the route has been named along which our Lord was led from Pilate's judgment-hall to Calvary.

All conjectures as to the location of the Via Dolorosa depend upon the question concerning the true site of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre. The "Sorrowful Way" of tradition, as now shown to travelers, runs for about five hundred feet in a north-west course from the north-west corner of the temple area, thence turning, extends south-east some two hundred feet, and resumes the westerly course to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The whole distance is about a quarter of a mile,—according to Bonar,<sup>1</sup> a five minutes' walk. Along this way the resident monks have located the "Stations" of the Cross, as they are called, familiar to many by the mimic observance of this mournful journey of our Saviour among churches of the Latin communion during Passion Week.

<sup>1</sup> Mission to the Jews.

If, however, we consent to fix the site of Calvary at the Grotto of Jeremiah, outside the city walls, the path which Jesus trod on the Crucifixion morn was longer, perhaps a full half mile in length, much of it lying through the city limits.

We need have little difficulty in recalling the order of proceedings, which doubtless was according to the usual form. A procession was formed at the gate of the judgment-hall or camp, headed by a mounted centurion, the officer who had charge of the execution. Next, it is probable, followed the detail of Roman soldiers who were to maintain order on the occasion. Then came the condemned, each bearing his own cross, and guarded by the four soldiers, the "quaternion," chosen to inflict the death penalty, two on each side. In front of each of the condemned marched an inferior officer of the Prætorium, bearing before him the block of white wood on which the sentence of condemnation was written in large characters. Thus, with a sedateness that marked Roman military ceremonials, which on this occasion may have taken a tinge of solemnity, the death-escort moved out of Castle Antonia, along the

Via Dolorosa, out of the Damascus gate, over the fields to Calvary.

“A great company of people” thronged the narrow streets of Jerusalem, before and in the rear of the procession, most of them moved by the same morbid passion that urges so many now-a-days to hang around the place of capital punishment. Nor was it the mob alone who composed these spectators; nor was it simply curiosity that impelled to the scene. The rulers, the educated class, the leaders in Church and State, the scribes, priests, and elders, were there to gratify their pride, bigotry, and jealousy,—to gloat upon the agonies of Him whom they had brought to the condemnation of death. Moreover, it would be but natural that the inmates of houses along the route of the procession should, with friends and acquaintances from other quarters of the town, press around doors and windows to gaze upon the passing spectacle. It will also be remembered that at this time of the Paschal festival the Temple City was crowded with pilgrims from all parts of the Holy Land, and indeed of the world. Thus Heaven controlled the wrath of Man to the

praise of God. The misguided men who hoped that they were smothering forever in death the Voice of the Prophet of Nazareth, were following up their purpose in such wise that the story of Jesus was heralded in the most imposing manner to the uttermost ends of the earth.

There came a halt in the procession. Jesus had broken down under the weight of his cross ! We can hardly account for this, as has sometimes been done, by a natural physical frailty, for there is no evidence that our Lord was not in perfect bodily health. As he had been hardened by the active, open-air life which the carpenter's trade compelled, and no doubt had often borne upon His shoulders beams of wood much larger and heavier than the ordinary Roman Cross, there was nothing in the task imposed, simply in itself considered, which accounts for this giving way of His strength. If, however, we remember the terrible mental agonies of Gethsemane, the exhausting nature of the scenes before the Sanhedrim, before Herod, before Pilate, the buffeting, the mockery, and the final cruel scourging by soldiers, we have reason enough why even the



most rugged frame might have sunk in weakness under that burden laid upon our Lord.

We may suppose that the Centurion in command was not devoid of natural kindness ; at least that he saw the folly of seeking to force an impossible task upon a prostrated man. He therefore ordered one of the crowd to be pressed into service. The Romans dealt with the Jews as a conquered nation, and now did as soldiers have always done. The task fell upon Simon, a Jew from Cyrene, a Greek city, celebrated for its commerce and learned men, the chief town of Cyrenaica, a district which comprised that wide projecting part of the coast of Northern Africa that corresponds to the modern Tripoli. Simon may have been a visitor to the Passover, one of those of whom we read in Acts ii. 10. Mark speaks of him as the father of Alexander and Rufus, who apparently were well known members of the Christian Community at that time.<sup>1</sup> It is pleasant to find such indications of the fact or hope that this part of Simon in bearing the Lord's burden, although involuntary, was the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 13.

means of bringing the salvation of the cross into his household. Or it is possible that he may have been even then a believer.<sup>1</sup>

The fact recorded in the Gospel that Simon was met "coming out of the country," or field, has raised the suggestion that the incident occurred at or near the gate of the city, into which Simon was about entering. In any case, there would have been a pause; possibly lengthened by the unwillingness of the Jews to accept so menial an office as a cross-bearer, and the fear of a riot in the enforcement of the Centurion's order among so excitable a populace. The advent of Simon, a foreigner, a new-comer from the open country, and all the more readily if he were known or suspected by any one present to be a Christian, settled the difficulty, and the mournful march toward Calvary was resumed. But during the interval there would have been abundant time for the address of Christ to the weeping women, and the very occasion of His prostration would have been one well calculated to call forth their tears. Accordingly, it is at this position in the

<sup>1</sup> See, also, Acts xiii. 1.

progress along the Via Dolorosa that the incident is commonly placed.

We are at once attracted by the exhibition of serious grief shown by these Daughters of Jerusalem, "which also bewailed and lamented Him." The original words express the violent demonstrations of mourning common among Orientals; they beat upon their breasts, raised the funeral lament. Nor was this an outbreak of emotion to be solely attributed to sympathy with so grave an event as the execution of three human beings. Their grief centered upon Christ alone—they "lamented *Him*." Undoubtedly there was in the hearts of these women a friendly feeling for Jesus, which justifies us in giving them a place among the Women Friends. They had no sympathy with the joy of the priests and scribes. They were deeply touched by Christ's patient sufferings. They openly showed their feelings—a bold act, considering that the Roman law allowed no expression of sympathy with a malefactor on his way to execution, and that the utmost severity might naturally be anticipated on this occasion. Even the bold, strong disciples of Jesus had for-

saken Him under the terror of that law and the panic of that awful hour.

But those daughters of Jerusalem were made brave by their womanly humanity, to defy alike the popular prejudice, the ecclesiastical hatred and the military arm, and lay this last flower of compassion upon the Saviour's path of thorns. Well may woman be happy in thinking upon the place which her sex has taken in all these scenes. How strangely discordant with her instincts seems the conduct of that woman who has jeers rather than tears in the presence of Christ's cross! Surely this friendliness was praiseworthy. This sympathy was kind, womanly, courageous. It deserves our unstinted and cordial recognition as a brave, pitiful,—yes, a pious act.

Over against its graceful and pronounced humanity, tradition has drawn for us a terrible picture of that judgment which the opposite course forever invites. During this prostration of our Lord, or somewhere else along his sorrowful way, when overcome by His great sorrows, He sank upon a citizen's door-step to obtain a momentary rest.

“*Move on!*” shouted the householder, turning fiercely upon the weary Saviour, and voicing in his words of expulsion all the bigotry and hatred of the Sanhedrim.

The Divine Master looked upon the inhuman man with the light of righteous judgment kindling in his eyes.

“Move thou on likewise!” He said.

Thenceforth that unhappy offender moved on, while centuries came and went; moved on, deathless, though seeking on every battle-swept, and pestilence-stricken field of earth the release from life for which he longed. On, on, on—forever followed by his sin, haunted by the pale, worn, bruised face that had appealed in vain to his pity; by the same words, weighted with Divine judgment, that had driven him forth, “The Wandering Jew,” to roam the world forever. Alas! Shall the wanderer ever find rest—rest which can only come when the weeping penitent finds a place in the bosom of the crucified and risen Messiah?

This is the shading which tradition has laid upon the canvas of that incident which brings

out into such pleasing light the lamenting women of Jerusalem. Well may all who profess and call themselves by the holy name of the Sorrowful One, keep in their hearts a fragrant spot for these nameless daughters of the City of Zion. In hours when the prejudices of race and religious caste, as hateful and sinful now as in the days of Christ and in the hearts of Pharisees, shall shout with the mob, or purr in parlor, or plot in cabinet, or hiss in the pulpit, against the children of unhappy Zion—then remember the brave, the tender, the godly tears of these weeping sisters of Jerusalem, on that awful day upon the Via Dolorosa, and turn away from persecution to gentleness and prayer!

Woman in all ages has been the consoler of the cross-burdened.— Can the wealth of sympathy with which God has enriched her heart have holier or higher office? On this occasion that sympathy was poured forth upon our Lord's sorrowful heart, and was no doubt very grateful to Him. At least He recognized and well rewarded it. "Jesus turning unto them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me!" Even in the utter weakness

and humiliation of that hour the Master forgot His misery to follow once again His divine mission to seek and save that which is lost. In the hour of sorest need He could gently push aside this one proffered token of sympathy, that they who offered it might learn to seek the sweetness of Divine favor. Wonderful self-forgetfulness! Sublime devotion to the welfare of man! Nowhere, in word or act, throughout the gospel history, is there a more impressive appeal to Christ's disciples to do good as they have opportunity, to weary not in well-doing, to bend life's first and latest energies upon glorifying the Eternal Father by rescuing souls from the doom of sin.

“Daughters of Jerusalem!” We can conceive of the tenderness with which this salutation was uttered. On the surface the words mean only *dwellers in Jerusalem*, but in a deeper sense they pointed to the central truth of the whole address. Daughters of the old Jerusalem of sin, impenitence and condemnation, are ye still! Yes, though the fountains of sympathy had been unsealed by pity for His grief, and they had wept over Him;

though they had shown the courage of confessors in their womanly protest against injustice and inhumanity ; though their act was beautiful in its timeliness and compassion, and had shed a moment's solace upon the misery of Christ's sorrowful way to the cross, yet still were they in the bitterness and death of sin.

“Weep not for Me ! Such tears are unavailing. It is well with Me, even though on the way to the cross. But with you—oh ! It is *not* well, nor is it too late for tears, if they be tears of repentance, to avail for yourselves !” Thus may we interpret the spirit and aim of our Saviour's last discourse. So He began His ministry among the hills of Galilee, “preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup> So, on the Via Dolorosa, He closed that ministry of Love and Redemption. Repent ye ! “*Weep for yourselves !*” This remarkable closing of the Master's earth-messages to the lost is certainly worthy of the serious study of those who, in this age, so

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 14, 15.



strongly condemn what is called "preaching of the law."

We may think, without much fear of error, that Jesus discerned in the hearts of these daughters of Jerusalem a germ of true religious feeling; at all events, He sought to awaken a profounder sentiment than human sympathy. Emotion in view of the sorrows of Christ is not always religious emotion, but the wise teacher may take advantage of it to lead the soul on to a true experience. The very faintest beginnings of a religious feeling are to be cared for. Such careful husbandry, under the warmth of a Saviour's glance, and the foster of the Holy Ghost, shall ripen into genuine repentance and faith. Such emotions one should neither dissipate nor soothe, but rather seek to deepen and make permanent. Thus we read our Lord's dealing with these weeping matrons.

It might be asked, was it not a poor return for the humanity of these weeping women to hold before them the horrors of the coming days? Why should Jesus seek yet more to harrow up their souls, and instead of soothing them open more deeply the fountains of woe? What way was

this to deal with the beginning of a religious experience? So called "Liberal Christianity" could hardly approve of such an orthodox method. But we humbly conceive that the Master's example is authority for us in the judicious and tender representation of the penalties of sin and the horrors of the life to come, as a healthful influence upon the soul in leading it to repentance. Certainly the awful nature and consequences of sin are such that every child of Adam needs to weep for his fallen estate. No loss is so well worthy to be wept over as the loss of holiness and the favor of God.

“Weep not for broad lands lost ;  
Weep not for fair hopes crossed ;  
Weep not when limbs wax old ;  
Weep not when friends grow cold ;  
Weep not that death must part  
Thine and the best-loved heart ;  
Yet weep—weep all you can—  
Weep, weep, because thou art  
A sin defiled man !”

It would be quite impossible to dwell long upon this scene on the Via Dolorosa without as-

sociating with it that memorable event of the great Palm Sunday when Jesus stopped upon the brow of Mt. Olivet, and, amidst the hosannas of His triumphal entrance, wept over Jerusalem. He saw then the vision which now he would fain impress upon these tearful friends—the coming and near desolation of the Holy City. He saw the Roman legions compass her 'round ; the imperial Eagles flying from towers upon the summits of those surrounding mountains that once gave Israel's psalmist a happy figure of the all-environing care of Providence. He heard the crash of artillery against gate and walls, the noise of battle, the voice of captains and the shouting, the cry of dying warriors, the wail of perishing women and children, the blessing of maternity for the gift of offspring turned into curses upon the pallid lips of famished mothers ! He heard the survivors as they gazed in vain upon the hills whence came not now their help, but wrath and destruction, utter the despairing words : “ Fall on us ! Cover us ! ” This was the sad picture that Jesus saw from Olivet and which compelled his tears.

Once more the vision came to Him upon the Via Dolorosa. Not a shadow had been lightened, the future seemed darker than ever. The Roman treatment of Himself, the terrible guilt of Israel in His death, deepened and quickened the impending doom. "If they do these things (those iron soldiers of Rome) in the green tree,"—now, ere the judgment has ripened, to Me the Branch, the Innocent, the Messiah of God, what shall be the horror of their punishment when the measure of Israel's iniquity is full, when the "dry tree" is ready for the fires of judgment that shall leap forth to consume it?

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,<sup>1</sup> . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."<sup>2</sup>

"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy

<sup>1</sup> Matthew xxiii. 37, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xix. 44.

peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus wept! He wept over that sinful impenitence and unbelief which hardened His own nation against their Saviour, and blinded their eyes to the star of hope that had risen before them to beacon them upward to the everlasting hills of God! And for this, too, He bade Jerusalem's daughters weep!

The tender and familiar hymn of Beddome, well opens to us the lesson of the hour:

“ Did Christ o'er sinners weep?  
And shall our cheeks be dry?  
Let floods of penitential grief  
Burst forth from every eye.

“ He wept that we might weep;  
Each sin demands a tear.  
In heaven alone no sin is found;  
There is no weeping there!”

In the same spirit does Keble, the poet of “The Christian Year,” impress the lesson of

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 42.

Olivet's tears, which is no less the teaching of the Via Dolorosa :

“ And doth the Saviour weep  
Over His people's sin,  
Because we will not let Him keep  
The souls He died to win ?  
Ye hearts that love the Lord,  
If at this sight ye burn,  
See that in thought, in deed, in word,  
Ye hate what made Him mourn.”

Surely in the light of such reflections we can read, underneath its seeming harshness, the heavenly tenderness of Christ's message to Jerusalem's daughters. It indeed summoned them to weeping, but only that through tears they might be led forward into an eternal peace. The light of Divine truth flashing athwart the falling tear-drops of penitence should cast upon the clouds of heaven the rainbow of their hope, the covenant sign of deliverance from future wrath. Such tears may well be called the lenses through which the soul gets fuller and deeper insights of the heaven of God. Thus King David, weeping

through his penitential psalm, the fifty-first, beheld once more the heavenly lights that his sins had hidden from him.

“Wouldst thou the pangs of grief assuage?  
Lo! here an open page,  
Where heavenly mercy shines as free,  
Written in balm, sad heart, for thee;  
Never so fast, in silent April shower,  
Flush'd into green the dry and leafless bower,  
As Israel's crownèd mourner felt  
The dull hard stone within him melt.

“The Absolver saw the mighty grief,  
And hastened with relief;—  
‘The Lord forgives—thou shalt not die;’  
’Twas gently spoke, yet heard on high,  
And all the band of angels, us'd to sing  
In heaven, accordant to his raptured string,  
Who many a month had turned away  
With veilèd eyes, nor own'd his lay.

“Now spread their wings and throng around  
To the glad mournful sound,  
And welcome, with bright open face,  
The broken heart to Love's embrace.

The rock is smitten, and to future years  
Springs ever fresh the tide of holy tears,  
And holy music, whispering peace  
Till time and sin together cease.”<sup>1</sup>

Of a summer morning the flowers show drooping heads borne down by the dew and hidden in the mist ; their fair clothing is sorely bedraggled and they seem cheerless enough. But now up comes the sun ! The dew-drops sparkle like diamonds on petals and leaves ; the flowers lift up their heads, the moisture runs into coral cups, the plant drinks in the draught, and shoots forth to welcome the day with new vigor and growth.

So falls the light of a Saviour’s love upon a contrite soul who weeps over sin. It stirs the spirit strangely ; it awakens an inward voice which says : “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God!” The feeble knees are strengthened ; the hands that hang down are lifted up ; the day-spring is welcomed by fresh-born vigor and new spiritual growth, for the tear-drops of penitence are, under Heaven, true nurture for the soul. These are the tears that

<sup>1</sup> Keble’s “ Christian Year.”



Heaven will not forget—tears of repentance kept before God as treasures of His Throne. “Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle! Are they not in Thy book?”<sup>1</sup>

It is within the reach of probability that some of these women may have experienced a temporal as well as spiritual salvation as the result of their Saviour's call to repentance. They might well have witnessed the final siege of Jerusalem which occurred forty years afterwards. That some of them wept over their sins in time, and escaped the threatened doom with the Christians who fled to Pella, we fondly believe. That some of the little company may have suffered the tender emotions of that day to be dissipated in tears, and so shared the destiny of the unhappy city, alas! is only what may be feared in view of our sad experience of the ephemeral nature of too many religious awakenings.

In either case, there would still have been reason enough for the call to weep for their offspring. “Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, *and for your children.*” There are

<sup>1</sup> Psalm lvi. 8.

special reasons why woman should weep over sin for her own sake, for human depravity has wrought sore distress to her. Tears are sin's legacy to womankind. "Man must work, and woman must weep!" But in the tenderest feeling of her heart, the mother-love, sin has been especially cruel to woman. How many this day and every day weep bitter, bitter tears over sin-wrecked sons and daughters! Indeed, all the aggravated forms of human iniquity uncover their most pitiless features to woman.

Do you think of slavery? Who suffers therein more than woman. I once attended a slave auction in the days when human slavery stained American soil. An old plantation, largely "stocked" with "hands"—such was the barbarous nomenclature—was forced into partition by sale, for the benefit of heirs. Family slaves, field hands, all long and warmly attached to the glebe, were put up to be sold at public out-cry. From all the country-side neighbors had flocked to the scene, and among them came the dreaded "slave-trader." Oh, it was pitiful, alike to witness the joy that quivered in every human feature

of the poor victims as they were bought by some neighbor planter, and the utter, unutterable despair that came upon them when the auctioneer's hammer fell and they were "knocked down" to the trader for shipment to the distant South. Let us note a few of these cases. A stalwart, handsome house-servant steps down from the block with chin drooping upon his broad bosom and mute anguish upon his face,—sold to the trader! Over there by the blacksmith shop, where the negroes are gathered in silent groups, is his wife, a slave on an adjoining plantation. Her heart had fluttered between hope and fear, as the sale went on, and now was wellnigh breaking under the terrible enforced and hopeless separation. Yes, sin constrains woman to weep.

A girl of twelve steps upon the block. With tears and cries and clasped hands and bended knees she pleads with every planter whom she recognizes to save her from the trader's hands. In vain! the dealer in human flesh out-bids them all, and Annie steps down, his property. She is trembling like an aspen; the horror of a great grief has quieted her cries and quenched her

tears. Come round here into the negro group. There kneels the girl with face buried in her grandmother's lap. The old woman sits upon the ground; her turbaned head is bent above her child, and as she sways back and forth she moans "O Annie, my chile, my last, my all! Dey sold husban' and chillen, and gran'chillen! an' dis was de las' I had! Dey said dey would never, never take dis one—and now—she is gone—gone wid de trader! O my chile! O my God!" Yes it is woman who must weep for sin.

A tall quadroon woman ascends the block. She carries a babe in her arms. She is comely; she is strong; she is a skilled cook; the trader must have her!

"I will never go with you," she cried, turning upon him fiercely.

"Aha!" said the man-buyer, and rose upon his feet. Fast and quick the bids fly, and high up mount the figures that gauge the worth in dollars of this human chattel. One would not have thought it possible for the countenance to show such rapid and extreme transitions from hope to fear, from expectation to despair, as flitted over

that woman's face as she followed with indescribable eagerness the progress of the bidding. Fewer and at longer intervals come the voices from the crowd of planters. The last bid is the trader's. The hammer swings as though reluctant to the fall. "Once—twice—three times, and *gone!*"

Hugging her babe to her bosom she cast one glance of mingled hatred, agony and fear toward her owner, and fled from the stand—God help her!—I know not whither. Yes, woman must weep while sin is regnant over our race.

Do you turn from slavery to war? Do not tell me that man there, at least, is the chief sufferer. I know, indeed, too well what pains are borne by soldiers in march and bivouac, in battle and hospital. But wives, mothers, sisters, sweethearts, who sit in the agony of doubt at home; who weep in the agony of dreadful certainty at home—ah! they, too, must bear their part, and it is no unequal part of the miseries wrought by sinful war.

Do you think of intemperance?—that dreadful Moloch that year by year consumes thousands

of our best? They are woman's tears that chiefly flow before this sin, this scourge, the most fatal that afflicts humanity. If you have not yet had cause, may heaven forever save you from cause, to "weep for yourselves and for your children" over the wastes of drunkenness!

Women of this world; women whose tears are so cruelly wrung from you by human guilt, who is so deeply concerned as you in that holy work which is to redeem man from sin? Weeping there must always be while time endures. But there are floods of tears that should not be shed, that will not be if the gospel of Christ shall reach the sorrowing daughters of our race. Surely *hopeless* tears, at least, may be expelled from this world by the Evangel of faith, hope and charity. Will you pray, will-you labor to this end? Give to your sorrowing sisters everywhere the consolations that are in Christ Jesus. It is because of an absent Christ—a banished Saviour, because of a heart, a home, a country without the salvation of God, that the curse of sin falls like a blight, and grief weeps hopeless tears.

Turn, if you will, and read this truth in the

history of Israel. Two modern English poets have put songs upon the lips of Zion's daughters which mark a sharp and instructive contrast. One song is Thomas Moore's familiar rendering of the prophet Miriam's triumphal ode upon the deliverance of the Hebrews from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. How joyful, how exultant, how vital with hope in God is the strain!

“ Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!  
Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free!  
Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is broken,  
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave;  
How vain was their boast, for the Lord hath but  
spoken,  
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.  
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!  
Jehovah hath conquered—His people are free!

“ Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!  
His word was our arrow, His breath was our sword.  
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story  
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?  
For the Lord hath looked out from His pillar of glory,  
And all her brave thousands are dashed in the tide.  
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!  
Jehovah has triumphed—His people are free!”

The other song is that exquisite one which Sir Walter Scott puts upon the lips of the Jewess Rebecca, one of the noblest and most attractive female characters in fiction, whose original was one of Philadelphia's own fair daughters. "Rebecca's hymn" opens with a glance upon the proud days which awoke the timbrel of Miriam; but it is only to bring out more sadly by the contrast the plaintive minor of her own harp.

"There rose the choral hymn of praise,  
And trump and timbrel answered keen;  
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,  
With priest's and warrior's voice between.  
No portents now our foes amaze—  
Forsaken Israel wanders lone;  
Our fathers would not know thy ways,  
And Thou hast left them to their own.

"But present still, though now unseen,  
When brightly shines the prosperous day,  
Be thoughts of Thee, a cloudy screen,  
To temper the deceitful ray.  
And, oh, when stoops on Judah's path  
In shade and storm, the frequent night,  
Be Thou, long suffering, slow to wrath,  
A burning and a shining light!



“ Our harps we left by Babel’s streams—  
The tyrant’s jest, the Gentile’s scorn ;  
No censer ’round our altar beams,  
And mute our timbrel, trump and horn.  
But Thou hast said, the blood of goat,  
The flesh of rams, I will not prize—  
A contrite heart, a humble thought,  
Are my accepted sacrifice.”

Here then the generous heart can find peace. Lift up the tear-dewed eyes to the All-Merciful Father ! In the face of God shines hope, and that we see reflected upon us in the face of Jesus Christ. That face was also stained with tears. “Jesus wept !” His tears interpret to us the Divine Tenderness. His tears drop as cleansing waters upon the penitent sinner, as healing lotion upon the sick at heart. “Jesus wept !” The sun of Love Divine shone through those tears and lo ! yonder upon the clouds of human guilt and grief rests the rainbow of peace, the covenant sign of a promised Redemption. Yes, the tears of Christ shall assuage the tears of humanity. It is true He bids you “weep for yourselves”—tears of personal contrition ; and weep “for your children,”

tears of maternal anxiety and piety over sin-imperilled souls. But you are not bidden to un-availing tears—the bitter, bitter weeping of the hopeless and the lost. “He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves ;”<sup>1</sup> “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;”<sup>2</sup> “Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.”<sup>3</sup>

“In the morning”—the cloudless, endless morning of Heaven! There, as heavy dews upon the bended foliage dry up before a summer morning sun, there shall all the tears of time vanish forever at the great shining of Him who is the Light and Glory of all worlds.

“Tell me, ye wingèd winds,  
 That round my pathway roar,  
 Do ye not know some spot  
 Where mortals weep no more?  
 Some lone and pleasant dell,  
 Some valley in the west,  
 Where free from toil and pain,  
 The weary soul may rest?”

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxvi. 6.<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxvi. 5.<sup>3</sup> Ps. xxx. 5.

The loud wind dwindled to a whisper low,  
And sighed for pity as it answ'r'd—'No!'

“ Tell me, my secret soul,  
O tell me, Hope and Faith,  
Is there no resting place  
From sorrow, sin and death?  
Is there no happy spot  
Where mortals may be bless'd,  
Where souls may find a balm,  
And weariness a rest?  
Faith, Hope and Love, best boons to mortal given,  
Waved their bright wings, and whispered—' Yes,  
in *Heaven!*' ”<sup>1</sup>

Yes, in heaven! “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.”<sup>2</sup>

“After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. . . . And

<sup>1</sup> Charles Mackay.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxi. 4.

he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple—and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

“Yes, in HEAVEN !”

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vii. 9, 14-17.

## LECTURE X.

### MARY OF CLEOPHAS: WOMAN'S MINISTRY IN SORROW.

MARY of Cleophas, or Clopas, as the name properly reads, has been chosen as the representative of woman's ministry in sorrow because her name is brought before us wholly in connection with the passion days of Jesus. There were other women, who, like her, were "last at the cross and earliest at the grave." But their lives ran also into other channels which suggested the varied incidents and themes upon which we have meditated.

Yet we are not wholly without a clue to her daily life-history. She was the "mother's sister" of Jesus;<sup>1</sup> "the mother of James the less and of Joses;"<sup>2</sup> of two other sons, Simon and Jude,<sup>3</sup> and of daughters (three or more), who dwelt in Nazareth, as did the Virgin Mary.

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xiii. 55, 56.

These were apparently in such close fellowship and family unity that the sons of Mary of Cleophas were commonly known as the Lord's "brethren." Without entering into the details of the discussion as to the real relationship of Mary to our Lord, which has divided the learned world, the above facts may be accepted as the ones which seem most likely to be true. We have hitherto considered that Nazareth home, which has already been described, as one that sheltered a double family. Joseph and Alpheus, or Clopas, were dead, and two widowed sisters, Mariam and Maria, dwelt together in one house; perhaps the paternal mansion, perhaps the home of Mary of Cleophas. The single child of the Virgin Mary was the "holy child Jesus." The family of Mary Cleophas, as just stated, consisted of four sons and at least three daughters, all, or most of them, older than our Lord; for it is conjectured that Mary Cleophas was the eldest of her family. The whole attitude of these brethren, or, to speak more properly, "cousins," of Jesus, was one which seems to imply that they were our Lord's elders in years.

The recorded testimony of the citizens of Nazareth in their protest against Christ's assumptions, shows that both families lived in that village, and in such close unity as to be known as "brothers." They were thus, in their native town, popularly regarded as forming one family.

The gospels have no hint of the parents of the Virgin Mary as living, nor do we read of her father's house. We need not wonder, therefore, at the conjecture that the Virgin's home was with her sister before her marriage; that she went out from that sister's house, to return again after the flight into Egypt, and dwell there permanently after her husband's death. Such examples of co-operative housekeeping are in nowise rare.

Probably the first popular objection against this view would arise from the fact that it requires us to place two sisters with the name of "Mary" in one family. However, it is possible that there was as decided a distinction between the original names *Mariam*, the name of our Lord's mother, and *Maria*, the name of Mary Cleophas, as between "Miriam" and "Mary" with us. Nor is the recurrence of the same name in families so

rare as might be supposed. The family of a late king of the Two Sicilies is one which has been cited, the first names of three sisters being Maria, Maria-Pia, and Maria-Immacolata. In ancient genealogies, again, we find in three several families a pair of *Antonias*, another of *Octavias*, and a third of *Cleopatras*.<sup>1</sup>

The oldest sister is a sort of second mother. Her influence in the household is often very great, and may always be for good. No doubt, especially where the family is large and the resources few, burdens are laid upon such young shoulders, and responsibilities upon such young hearts, that are excessive, that crowd more cares into tender years than are their fair natural due, and express more joys out of them than childhood's beautiful period should ever lose. But the song of life has many minor strains, and the small voice of children, too, must sing them. Nature is rarely without a system of compensations. That which is lost on one side, her bountiful mother hand returns on another. The burdens that bring premature age develop many

<sup>1</sup> Smith Dic. *in loc.*



noble traits, and ripen virtues that else would never have matured. The eldest sister—like little Miriam watching her baby brother on the banks of the Nile—grows up into a strong, ready, motherly, helpful body, whose quick judgment and skillful hand bring blessings to those around her. How many of you have had occasion to bless God for the faithful counsel and loving care of elder sisters!

We may think of Mary at the period of Christ's ministry as a woman somewhat advanced in life, of mature character, all the riper for her childhood experience as eldest sister, a steadfast and ardent believer in the Messianic mission of Jesus. She was among the number of those who followed Him on His preaching tours to minister to His physical wants. Like Salome, she would have another interest in such work, for two of her sons, James the Less, afterward called the Just, and Jude, were among the Twelve Apostles.

Yet not all of her children sympathized with herself and with these two. Some of her sons—the Lord's "brethren," as they are called—did

God was to be suspended in the agonies of an awful death. Who were these women? "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene," says John.<sup>1</sup> Salome was also there, says another evangelist. There they were, that faithful loving band of disciples and friends, to stand mutely by in that hour of trial, and support their suffering Master by their sympathy.

Let us glance briefly around upon this scene as it lay that day, under the eyes of these women friends of Jesus. It would be impossible here, even were it desirable, to enter into any full decision of the claims of the several localities that have been thought to be the scenes of the crucifixion. The traditional spot is covered by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, about a quarter of a mile west of the prætorium. So far as Scripture gives us light upon the subject, the following facts are established: the place was outside the walls of Jerusalem, was nigh to the city, was called "Golgotha," in Hebrew, "Kranion,"

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 25.

in Greek, or in Latin "Calvary"; was close to one of the principal thoroughfares to and from the city; was of such elevation as to be seen far off; was in the vicinity of graves and gardens. After careful and long-continued examination of the best authorities, I have accepted the view of the late Fisher Howe as expressed in his *True Site of Calvary*, that the Grotto of Jeremiah is the spot on which stood the cross of Christ, and on which that day Mary and her friends were gathered. This is an isolated skull-shaped hill situated a few rods north of the Damascus gate. This hill rises abruptly to the height of sixty feet above the general level of the plateau on the northern side of Jerusalem. Its isolation is the result of a vast excavation, made at an early period of Jewish history, which cut it off by a wide chasm from the original Bezetha ridge, of which it was a part. This ridge extended, and now extends within the city walls down toward the temple area. Thus a hill is left steeply rounded on its west, north and east sides, forming the back and sides of the Kranion or skull. The skull-like front or face on the south side is formed

by the deep perpendicular cutting and removal of the ledge. To an observer at a distance the eyeless socket of the skull would be suggested at once by the yawning cavern, hewn within its face, beneath the hill. This hill is less than one-half mile from Herod's palace on Mt. Zion or Pilate's Judgment Hall in Antonia.

Here, that day, the greatest event in human history, in all its details was unrolled before the eyes of Mary. St. John expressly says, in the midst of his account of the crucifixion scenes,<sup>1</sup> that he was personally a witness of them. "He that saw it bare record and his record is true." As Mary and the other women were with John, and as we find her and Mary Magdalene still on the ground at the close of the day, there is no reason to doubt that she also was an eye witness of the Passion.

Ah! that old, old story of how the Saviour died for us upon the accursed tree—it was a terrible reality then before this woman's weeping eyes and aching heart. She saw the stalwart Simon of Cyrene throw down the wooden tree

<sup>1</sup> John xix. 35.

and turn away while the Holy Prisoner stood pale and patient by. Her eyes fell upon the placard bearing, according to custom, the charge for which the convicted was to die, as a soldier nailed it to the head of the cross. One might almost think that she saw flit across the Master's patient face a quiet smile as he caught sight of the words of the writing: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." In Hebrew, Latin, Greek, it read the same. Strange charge that; strange crime that for which to go to the cross! THE KING OF THE JEWS! Aye, even His enemies were constrained to publish the truth, and He was to die, the Captain of man's salvation, under a banner which bore no false device, but repeated, in a trinity of tongues the truth for which he gave His life.

All is ready at last! the unresisting form is spread out upon the cross; the iron soldiers of Rome drive the iron spikes through the quivering flesh. They bend their arms beneath the tree; they lift it with its agonizing Burden from the ground, and fix it in the socket where it is to stand.

Their work is done. They have only now to

sit down and watch Him there, until slow death, or swift, as the case may be, shall come to the sufferer's relief.

“Now there stood by the cross His mother and His mother's sister Mary.” Yes, close by—so that the sorrowful eyes of Jesus could look down into their faces. Further on in the Passion history,<sup>1</sup> we find the faithful women farther removed from the central Figure. They were there beholding afar off, says Matthew. The cordon of sentinels may have been so widened out around the crosses, on account of the turbulence of the Jews, as to put spectators at a distance. Or the friends may have removed for a time in order to indulge their grief more freely and less obtrusively. Still, the moving incidents of that day would be under their eyes. The cruel mocking of the chief priests, scribes and elders; the deriding of the rulers; the railing, reviling, the wagging of the head by the people; the mockery of the soldiers; the railing of the impénitent thief; the tender plea of the penitent one, and the Lord's gracious words of salvation; the commission which consigned her

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 55.

sister to the care of John and gave her thus a surer home than her own advancing years could promise,—all these Mary must have heard and seen.

The day has worn on toward noon. High noon! See, what is this? The sun is turning black in the heavens. It is night at mid-day! The shadows are creeping over the side of Olivet, deepening within the vale of Kedron, settling over temple and town, and gradually closing around the three crosses on Calvary and the awe-stricken guards and spectators. Mary feels the earth tremble beneath her; she sees the rock-ribbed hills, and hewn stone tombs that are everywhere around yawning open; and, amid the sound of the crashing ruins, hears the voice of the Roman Centurion cry “Truly this was the son of God!”

The hours wear on—one o'clock! two o'clock! and still the supernatural darkness hangs over all the land. Three o'clock! Hark, there is a loud cry from that central cross! It is the voice of Jesus saying: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!” Again the voice is raised: “I

thirst!" it utters. Once more the Saviour speaks ; "It is finished!" Again, and for the last time, that cry is heard: "With a loud voice He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The darkness has been lifting, the light is falling around the cross. Look now, Mary! That sacred head is bowed forward. Jesus has given up the ghost. The Lamb is slain. The fruit of the curse alone hangs on the tree. Pale, cold, motionless—dead!

Three o'clock! It is the hour of evening sacrifice. On the great altar in yonder temple the dead victims lie smoking, or before it the dumb beasts are bowing under the stroke of priests. And on this cross God's Sacrifice for sin, the Lamb without blemish, without spot, hangs dead. O Levites, turn back those dumb victims! The Victim of infinite worth has died! O priests, put out the fires upon that altar!—the sacrificial fire, whose fury is henceforth forever quenched, hath consumed the Holy Offering whose dead ashes alone are on the cross. O mountain of Moriah, thou hast forever been laid low with the dust. O Golgotha, thy pinnacle hath been exalted to the



throne, and up thy sides and over thy cross men shall ascend, as the angels on Jacob's ladder, into the life eternal! "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto ME!"

Throughout all these hours of pain who can say what comfort His faithful friends may have been to Jesus? Many words of sympathy, pity, encouragement, love, they *may* have spoken, although none are recorded, before they were pressed back from their place near by the cross. But their feelings would be shown in every feature—their silent grief, their falling tears, their very presence there as friends and disciples amid that hostile and insulting crowd—that was a consolation. It was not much? No, it was not much; but it was all that they could do. They waited, as many a sorrower since has waited, by the side of dying friends, helpless witnesses of the struggle of sinking nature with death. Yet it might have been said of Mary Cleophas and her companions as on another occasion it had been said of another Mary: "She hath done what she could."

Often it is all that love can do—stand on the

brink and cheer the parting spirits across the flood by the simple fact that it is there.

This is an office that falls most frequently to woman. It is the hand of mother, wife, daughter or sister, that smoothes the dying pillow, soothes the dying pangs ; it is her voice that speaks the last words of affection, her form that falls the last of earthly shapes upon the dying eye, her voice that falls the last of earthly sounds upon the dying ear.

It is not much to do? No, it does not seem much to do, but in an hour when all other offices are vain, who can say how unspeakably precious to the suffering one these may be? The beasts of forest and field, when they feel within them Nature's strange prophecy of approaching dissolution, steal away from all society of their kind to die alone. But civilized man, in that hour of weakness, craves companionship. He would not die alone. He longs for human presence and sympathy. If he be in a strange land his heart turns with infinite longing toward the friends of his youth, the home of his childhood or of his manhood's love, and there, there—oh, that he might die there !

Most touchingly has Whittier brought out this fact in that poem of peace, "The Angels of Buena Vista." Our hearts swell with ruth and godly charity as we follow the Mexican wife, Ximena, from her dead husband's side to her ministry among the wounded and dying on the battle-field :

"Close beside her, faintly moaning, fair and young a soldier lay,

Torn with shot and pierced with lances, bleeding slow his life away ;

But, as tenderly before him, the lorn Ximena knelt,  
She saw the Northern eagle shining on his pistol belt !  
With a stifled cry of horror straight she turned away her head,

With a sad and bitter feeling looked she back upon her dead.

But she heard the youth's low moaning, and his struggling breath of pain,

And she raised the cooling water to his parchèd lips again.

"Whispered low the dying soldier—pressed her hand and faintly smiled.

Was that pitying face his mother's? Did she watch beside her child?

All his stranger words with meaning the woman's  
heart supplied;  
With her kiss upon his forehead, 'MOTHER!' mur-  
mured he, and died.  
'A bitter curse' upon them, poor boy! who led thee  
forth,  
From some gentle sad-eyed mother, weeping, lonely  
in the North!'  
Spake the mournful Mexic woman, as she laid him  
with her dead,  
And turned to soothe the living, and bind the wounds  
which bled."

There is another poem that I cannot read now without tears. It is associated in memory with one, a kinsman and friend, who gave his life for this land which we call ours to-day through the valor of such as he. We sat one summer night upon the banks of the beautiful Ohio river, and talked together of the happy past, and the troubled, uncertain future. The full moon shone upon the dark foliage that crowned the river hills, and gleamed like silver on the bosom of the water. I do not know how it came, but before we separated, my kinsman recited the familiar poem entitled "Bin-

gen on the Rhine,"—recited it word for word to the very end. We said good-bye and parted. We never met again. When the storm of battle swept dark and wild around Kenesaw mountain, he was ordered to lead his regiment against a rebel earthwork. He dismounted. He gave the word "*forward!*" and at the head of his men dashed upon the blazing fort—through the tempest of iron and lead—up, up; till, waving his hat in hand, he sprang upon the parapet, and with the word of cheer upon his lips, fell back among his men wounded unto death.

As often as I think of that hour, and that death, the soft moonlight seems again to enfold us; the Ohio breezes fan our cheeks; and once more I hear that beloved voice chanting that sad story of another youth, another river, another warrior's death.

"A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,  
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth  
    of woman's tears;  
But a comrade stood beside him while his life-blood  
    ebbed away,  
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he might say.

The dying soldier faltered, as he took that soldier's  
hand ;

He said : ' I never more shall see my own—my native  
land.

Take a message and a token to some distant friends  
of mine ;

For I was born at Bingen—at Bingen on the Rhine !'

\* \* \* \* \*

" There's another—not a sister—in the happy days  
gone by,

You'd have known her by the merriment that sparkled  
in her eye ;

Too innocent for coquetry, too fond for idle scorning ;  
O friend, I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes  
heaviest mourning !

Tell her the last night of my life—(for ere the moon  
be risen

My body will be out of pain, my soul be out of prison)—  
I dreamed I stood with her—I saw the yellow sun-  
light shine

On the vine-clad hills of Bingen—fair Bingen on the  
Rhine.

" I saw the blue Rhine sweep along—I heard, or seemed  
to hear,

The German songs we used to sing, in chorus sweet  
and clear,

And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting hill,  
The echoing chorus sounded through the evening  
    calm and still ;  
And her glad blue eyes were on me as we pass'd with  
    friendly talk  
Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-remem-  
    bered walk,  
And her little hand lay lightly, confidently in mine ;  
But—we'll meet no more—at Bingen—fair Bingen on  
    the Rhine.”<sup>1</sup>

Yes, yes, God knows ! In those awful scenes that follow human strife, there is “lack of woman's nursing” and “dearth of woman's tears.” And none knows, none can know how far deeper is the sorrow of the dying because of that lack and dearth. It is hard for man to die alone, separated from those whom his heart most fondly loves. It is, indeed, something that memory will summon faces of the beloved to the place of death and find some ministry of comfort in the very thoughts of them and their affection. Something, too, that imagination, quickened by the touch of nearing immortality, will encompass the

<sup>1</sup> Caroline Norton.

dying with forms of his dear ones, and fill his ears with the music of their voices. But remembrances, nor visions, nor rude consolations of comrades, can take the place of her whose gentleness, and tenderness, and tact, give the sweetest solace in the extreme hours of mortality.

It is surely fitting and needful that they who are thus the companions and comforters of man's last moments, should themselves be partakers of the deep consolations of the Divine love. Thus shall they be able to give to the sinking soul from out the fullness of that grace which never fails.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”<sup>1</sup>

In one more notable incident of that day Mary of Cleophas is named as a witness, if not a participant. In the famous picture of Rubens, “The Descent From the Cross,” we see her and Mary of Magdala assisting Joseph of Arimathea and

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.



Nicodemus in lowering the body of Jesus into the linen wrappings by which it was to be enshrouded for burial. The same distinguished artist, in his picture of the "Crucifragium," paints Mary and her friends as witnesses of the act of Longinus, the Roman soldier, who pierced the Lord's side with a spear.

There is historic accuracy in the representation. No doubt one of the keen sorrows within those loving women's hearts sprung from the difficulty, nay, to them the seeming impossibility, of securing the poor body for reverent burial. That they had watched beside it, after death, and been witness of the spearman's act, can scarcely be questioned. As on the resurrection morn they pondered the question, "Who shall roll away the stone?" so then they may have asked, "Who shall procure for us this body for the sepulchre?"

Look, Mary! What forms are those hastening along the highway from the Damascus gate? They are Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable Councilor, and Nicodemus, the Master in Israel. They are not unknown to Mary, for they belong to the number of secret disciples. The hour

of adversity has developed their faith, and when many others have forsaken the Lord, they spring to the front to confess Him, and give Him at least the tribute of honorable sepulture. How eagerly must Mary and her friends have hailed their coming, and heard the news that they brought the Roman governor's order to bear the body away. And here come servants bearing linen wrappings and spices to prepare the body, the aromatic gum of the myrrh-bearing balsam, and aloes costly and sweet smelling woods of the tropics, a hundred pound weight. No niggardliness here. "But where will you lay him?" Joseph will give a place of burial in his own new tomb, just yonder in the rocky face of the hill.

The body was prepared for interment according to the custom of those days, the myrrh and aloes were ready-powdered and mixed, and were spread within the folds of the linen cloths. From the large quantity used it would seem that the whole body was covered with the mixture, as we know that the face was. The process was not properly an embalming; the mixed spices acted

simply as an antiseptic, preserving the flesh for a time from decay. That it was the purpose of the disciples, at least of the women, to complete the embalming thereafter, appears further on in the narrative. The late hour of the day, the near approach of the Sabbath, required the most hasty preparations consistent with propriety, and throughout that entire vicinity lay the ancient necropolis of Jerusalem. The region around the head of the Kedron valley, says Dr. Robinson, is rocky and full of excavated tombs all the way down to Jerusalem. Says Dr. Porter: "The number of rock tombs at this place, and the extent and beauty of some of them, impress the stranger with the wealth and splendor of the ancient Jewish capital." "Now, in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden," just such a garden of shrubs and trees as is our Laurel Hill, and in some of the general features of the landscape not greatly differing from that cemetery as seen from the Schuylkill river front. "And in the garden a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid," a fact which guaranteed the identity of that sacred body that went into it and should rise out of it.

“There they laid Jesus.” Slowly borne away in the arms of the rich men and their servants (“the sepulchre was nigh at hand”), and followed by at least two women disciples, Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdalene, the funeral procession moved over the hill, through the garden, as the shadows of the declining day were falling beneath the trees, to the beautiful rock-hewn tomb of the wealthy councilor.

“There they laid Jesus.” It was not meant that the tomb of Joseph should be the final resting place of the Master. But it was late—soon would be too late to do the necessary work of burial; it was not easy to find a person who would give even a temporary rest to the body of one who had died the accursed death. Thus God had ordered all things, so that the little company unconsciously were fulfilling the prophecy concerning the Messiah “with the rich in His death.” Instead of the dishonored grave of a malefactor, God gave His Holy One a new rock-hewn sepulchre embowered in the garden of the rich Senator of Arimathea.

The day must have been nearly done when

the gentle office of burial was ended, and the stone rolled against the door of the tomb. Who besides the two rulers and the two Marys were present at the scene we cannot say. Other women of those who came with Him from Galilee may also be included with those who followed after and beheld the sepulchre and how His body was laid. But these two would seem to have lingered longest on that quiet spot. For awhile we see them<sup>1</sup> sitting over against the sepulchre, and then before the shadows of evening had fallen, hurrying away into the city<sup>2</sup> to buy and prepare, ere the Sabbath forbade, the spices and ointments needed to complete the funeral honors which they purposed to pay to the body of their beloved Lord.

Night closed around Jerusalem, her temple, homes and hills. The empty crosses standing in the moonlight threw their spectre shadows upon Calvary. Alone, in the new tomb, Jesus slept.

Where were the disciples of Christ during that Passover Sabbath? At least that the bond of union between them was not broken we know.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiii. 56.

They had meetings with each other; they had knowledge of each other's abode,—so that immediate inter-communication was possible, when the great event occurred which we are now to describe. “When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Jesus.” The purpose of the Christian women to complete the funeral honors due to their Lord has been referred to. It is noticeable that the sacred hours of the Sabbath were not used for this purpose—even for such a holy office. The law of the commandments might not be broken by these godly hearts. Their preparations were made before the Sabbath began, and when the Sabbath was past, at the first practicable moment, they hastened forth to accomplish it.

There has been some difficulty in reconciling the Gospel statements as to the time of day when this occurred. Mary Magdalene, we are told, came “*early, when it was yet dark.*” Mary Cleophas, and those with her, came “*at the rising of the sun.*” Two facts will harmonize these state-

ments. First, persons living in the temperate<sup>1</sup> and higher latitudes are accustomed to the phenomenon of twilight—that gradual bridging of the period between darkness and day, which heralds the morning-sun hours before it rises above the horizon, and lingers behind hours after it sinks below our view at evening. Such can hardly conceive of the almost instant transition from darkness to day, and day to night, at the rising and setting of the sun in low and tropical latitudes, where it may be said, with slight allowance, that they have no twilight. So it is in Judea. While yet the stars are hanging bright in the sky the refulgent beams of the sun rush into view and hide the lesser lights. The sun rises literally with the impetuosity of a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. “I remember well,” says a traveler,<sup>2</sup> “a sunrise that I witnessed in the valley of the Jordan. Our camp was pitched at the fountain of Elisha. The sun seemed to spring into view behind the mountains of Moab at a single bound.” Thus the sun-rising and sun-setting were in a

<sup>1</sup> See Howe's “True Site,” p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 60.

more marked sense than with us the natural boundaries of day and night in Jerusalem. So that the phenomena expressed by "while it was yet dark" and "sunrising" are separated by a very small space of time.

The second fact that we may remember is the Oriental custom of opening the gates of cities at sunrise and closing them at sunset, which doubtless obtained at Jerusalem.

Let us now take up our narrative. The streets are yet shrouded in darkness as the devout women, one after another, leave their homes and wend their way toward the Damascus gate to await the sunrise opening. Even while they gather and wait, the earth begins to tremble beneath them. "And behold there was a great earthquake." We can hardly conceive that such a phenomenon would have occurred without awakening throughout the city the utmost terror; men, women and children fleeing in loose attire from their houses into the streets, and crowding in terror and confusion toward the city gates, to escape into the open country. Thus, even before the customary time, the north gate is swung open,



and Mary, with her little company of women, dart out, and over the hill toward Joseph's garden. The quaking earth, the rocking houses and walls, the voices of terrified fugitives, only strengthen their purpose of love, and add swiftness to their flight. There was but one question that troubled them: "Who shall roll us away the stone?"—that great roller, or circular stone door, that moved back and forth in a deep, wide groove or trench cut along the edge of the tomb. But they push on—trusting in that Providence which had thus far directed the funeral honors of their Lord to open a way for them. They have passed the brow of Calvary, where the outlines of the three crosses are still seen against the dull sky; they enter the garden, whose foliage is fragrant with the early morning perfumes and dripping with the heavy dews of Palestine. Yonder, just before them, is the white face of the new tomb. And there—see! over the summit of Olivet the sun of heaven rushes up and streams down into valley, city and garden a flood of purple glory! "They came unto the sepulchre," says St. Mark, "*at the rising of the sun.*"

RISING—*Anastasis!* Ah! the word has had a new meaning to men since that day. And as Mary, in after years, remembered that sun-burst which greeted her first glance into the open and empty grave, would it have been strange should she have associated the risings of the natural sun with the *Anastasis* of Him who as the Sun of Righteousness rose up and went forth that day with healing in His wings?

“Who shall roll away the stone?” Often our weak and fearing hearts suggest obstacles that may keep us from seeing and honoring our Saviour. But let us go steadily toward Him. Perhaps some angel has already rolled away the stone!

At the first glance of the open sepulchre Mary Magdalene, in a paroxysm of grief and alarm, turned from her companions, and fled to where Peter and the other disciples were gathered, with the message, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him!” Mary Cleophas and Salome, less impulsive, older and more sedate, perhaps, stood their ground, and advanced to examine the tomb.

They had probably stood at the door leading into the vestibule or ante-chamber of the tomb, when they first noticed that the stone was rolled back from the vault itself. It was into this vestibule of the sepulchre that they now entered. The direction from which they approached commanded a view of the sepulchre door, through the entrance of the vestibule ; the stone on which the angel sat being rolled to one side was not in view until they entered. Thus they were fairly within the tomb before they saw this shining one.

Perhaps it is not strange that they should have been "afrighted" at such a vision of a spirit. The fall of man has so cut off his communion with the spirit world that the unusual sight of a spirit awakens feelings of dread. Doubtless it was not so in Eden ; it will not be so in Heaven, where we shall dwell and commune joyfully with the angels of God. Indeed, all fear of spirits is most unreasonable, especially with those who, like Mary, are on missions of love and mercy. "Be not afraid," said the angel ; "you seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified. He is risen : He is not here : behold the place where they laid Him.

But go your way, tell the disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him as He said unto you."

There was no tarrying with such a message. "They departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring His disciples word." The awe that must have fallen upon them, the natural fear at the thought of their angel vision, the faith that their Master was again alive, the hope that they would see Him, the anticipation of the reception which the disciples would give to their news, and, beyond all these, the wild wondering thoughts of what would befall the world—these feelings must have deeply excited the womanly hearts of these matrons. This mingling of fear and joy would be most natural under such circumstances. But the joy seemed to predominate; it was "*great joy*." Mark,<sup>1</sup> describing their state of mind, says, "They trembled and were amazed;" or, literally, *trembling and ecstasy possessed them*. So much so, he adds, that as they hurried on, they were silent, speaking neither among themselves, nor to those whom

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 8.

they met on the way. Indeed, they were as yet afraid to divulge their secret or to risk its being overheard, lest in some way, they might bring upon them the notice and anger of the public authorities.

Greater blessings ever await those who run in the path of duty. Their flight was arrested by a well-known form that stood in their path. It was the Lord! First He had sent his angel to them, now He comes himself. Thus from grace to grace the Saviour advances His children. An additional honor was bestowed upon these loving women; they were the first to see the Lord. Jesus met them saying, *All hail!* It was the common form of salutation: "*Chairrete!*" Joy to you all! It was thus that the angel saluted Mary at the annunciation, thus that Judas saluted Jesus in Gethsemane; thus that the mocking soldiers saluted Him in the hall. How gracious and suggestive this word on the lips of Jesus, His first uttered word: *All hail—joy to you all!* Yes, and Christ hath sent joy to all of womankind! Greatly she needed the message; sweetly the message was sent; graciously, benignly it has been per-

petuated and disseminated among the sisterhood of sorrowing, throughout all ages, and to the end of the earth.

“And they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid.” Fear and great joy had possessed their hearts. The “fear” Jesus bids begone, the “great joy” He would have them retain. “Be not afraid: go tell my brethren”—He had before called them disciples, servants, friends; now for the first time *brethren*. “Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me!”

The echoes of those footsteps have never died away. Still they

“roll from soul to soul,  
And grow forever and forever.”

For women’s feet are running the world around with the glad tidings that Mary bore. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring good tidings, that publish peace: that bring good tidings of good, that publish salvation!”<sup>1</sup> Never do the natural graces of womanhood show

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lii. 7; Rom. x. 15.

such charms as when adorned with the ornaments of divine grace, and seen in the walks of Heavenly Charity. All expositors have noted the extraordinary honor conferred upon woman throughout all these scenes. To her came the first announcement of the Resurrection ; to her the first sight of the risen Lord ; she it was whom the angels sent to herald this fact to the Apostles themselves ; to her came the Saviour's commission that summoned the disciples to that tryst among the hills of Galilee, where the sight of His glorified presence should be vouchsafed to them.

Speed thee, Mary ! There are hearts bowed down with sorrow among those friends of Jesus. A horror of great darkness has fallen upon them, and has wellnigh hidden the sun of their hope. Speed thee, Mary ! the deepest grief that ever threatened immortal spirits—the loss of Faith—broods upon the disciples. Fresh from that vision of the risen Saviour, haste thee, with the inspiring news ! Carry the balm to those breaking hearts ; speak the joyful “*Chairrete*” of Christ to those grieving spirits ; disperse with the light of truth the clouds of despondency and unbelief.

See! Mary has broken in upon the sorrowing company with her cry: "The Lord is risen!" See! the sun-burst of that First-day morn, the Anastasis of the Garden, has come also to them. What a transformation! There is no greater, stronger, more striking testimony to the verity of the Saviour's resurrection than the swift and measureless transformation from profound sorrow, weakness and fear, into which Christ's followers had fallen, to that ecstasy of faith and joy, that quenchless chivalry of holy daring for the Truth's sake, which came upon them on the third day after the Passion. It gave their fears to the winds; it lifted their bowed heads into the very halo of hope; it girt their hearts with a faith and courage that never waned, that impelled them forth into every land to bear their Lord's good news through perils by sea, perils by mountain torrents, perils by frost and by drought, perils by nakedness, hunger and sword, perils by scourging, imprisonment, by fire and by cross, perils among their own countrymen, perils among the Gentiles—on, on until the cross of Jesus was planted upon every shore of the then known world and the wail of



human sorrow was changed on multitudes of lips to songs of Christian praise for deliverance from mortal and immortal woe!

This is what Christ's evangel may do, shall do for mankind. The hopeless, faithless, heartless, joyless, aimless myriads who toil through the pilgrimage of life, are transformed thereby into the host of cheerful, trusting, brave, rejoicing sons and daughters of the Almighty, animated by the loftiest purposes that an immortal can know, to reach a place with the HOLIEST in the Heavenly seats, and win a lost world to the same Blissful Heights.

Foremost in this good work woman has ever been. She has been to the grave; she has seen visions of the angels; she has seen her LORD. She has heard the Divine commission: "Go tell!" and her feet to-day, as they run with the message, are making melody in sorrowing hearts the whole world round.

## LECTURE XI.

### MARY MAGDALENE: WOMAN TRANSFORMED BY CHRISTIANITY.

LAKE TIBERIAS, or, as we more commonly name it, the Sea of Galilee, is set like a jewel amid the hills of Northern Palestine. On the east rise the high walls of Bashan; the river Jordan runs through the centre, entering at the northern and issuing from the southern extremity. On the north-western shore is the beautiful and fertile plain of Genesareth, at whose upper corner were the cities of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. In the south-eastern corner of this plain, stood Magdala, the village from which, it is probable, Mary the Magdalene took her name. The place was mid-way between Tiberias and Capernaum, three miles from each city. The modern name of the place is El-Mejdel, which thus preserves the ancient form of Migdol—a tower. Here, no doubt, according to the old

custom, once stood a fortified watch-tower, to command a view of the entrance to the plain. These towers were frequent in Palestine. Such were Migdal-el, "the tower of God," in Naphtali, the Migdal-Gad and Migdol-Edar of Judah. No doubt the place was a pretty and thriving village in our Lord's day, but the modern town is composed of a few huts, near which are ruins that seem to be remains of the old watch-tower. Here, or at the neighboring Magadan, Mary was born. It is not strange that she should have received the name of her native place to distinguish her from the other Marys who were disciples. It was the custom of the times, and the need of it in her case is apparent when we remember that among the women who followed Christ were also Mary, the Lord's mother, Mary of Bethany, Mary the mother of Mark, and Mary the wife of Cleophas.

What early influences may have shaped the character of the Magdalene maiden we know not. We may conjecture, from the fact that we find her after her cure ministering of her "substance" to our Lord with other women, that she was not without some command of material resources,

and that her home was therefore one of comfort. The beautiful scenes of nature, in which her childhood and youth were spent, must have given charm, at least, if nothing more, to her early life. Back of Magdala, and curving around the town, she might have seen the mountain rising three and four hundred feet high. In its steep caverned limestone face were the dens of the robbers whom Herod dislodged by letting his soldiers down from the hill-top in boxes. Eagles build now—and perhaps did then—upon these cliffs, and rear their young in the crevices of the rocks. Often must the eye of the young Jewish maiden have followed the graceful flight of these birds to and from their aerie. Often must she have climbed the high hills, or mounted to the old watch-tower, to look off over the shimmering lake, beyond the eastern hills of Bashān; along the oleander-covered plain to the houses and ships of Capernaum; upward to Mt. Hermon, with its snow-ribbed sides; and southward along the valley through which the crooked Jordan crawls. A lovely scene! More animated in that day than now, when solitude sits brooding above the beautiful

lake and valley, the green mountain-sides and the white limestone cliffs. Then Capernaum and the cities on the shore were populous and prosperous marts. Now, the "woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida," which the Lord Jesus predicted, has fallen and rested like a blight upon the scene for eighteen centuries.

Alas! the serpent came with sin into Paradise; and since then there is no spot so fair into which the ills of life do not continually intrude. No Migdol of men, no human watch-tower can keep out those fruits of sin—suffering and grief. Among those beautiful hills and valleys of Galilee there were many unhappy victims of divers infirmities, but especially of a disease which is uniformly expressed as a possession by demons, or evil spirits. Among the victims was Mary Magdalene. I do not know that there is a word of direct Scripture authority for it, but I have the impression that her childhood was freed from this affliction, and that it came with later years. But it came with terrible power. Mary's case is represented as one of extreme violence. "Out of whom He had cast seven devils," is Mark's

expression ;<sup>1</sup> "Mary called Magdalene out of whom went seven devils," says Luke the physician.<sup>2</sup> What a gloom this cast upon her life and that of her friends we may see from the New Testament descriptions of this malady.

Here let us pause to meet and to deny the tradition which has associated the early life of Mary with the greatest shame known to her sex. There is not a sentence, not a word, not a syllable in the New Testament to justify the present popular belief as to her history prior to conversion. The whole tenor of the gospels, by fair and conclusive inference, is to the contrary. Although the name of Magdalene, chosen from her native home, as we have seen, simply to distinguish her from other Marys, has been associated with one of the noblest, most useful and imperative works of Christian charity, it is surely none the less obligatory upon us to redeem the fair fame of this friend and disciple of the Master from the groundless stain which false tradition has put upon her.

How did this unfortunate fiction gain a place in

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Luke viii. 2.

Christian annals? The origin of the myth appears to have been *first*, the attempt to reconcile as one act the two separate acts of anointing our Lord, one of which was done by a "woman which was a sinner," the other by Mary of Bethany. The belief that Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala were one person, and were identical with the woman which was a sinner, slowly edged itself among the greedily received apocrypha of the Church, until at last Gregory the Great embodied the notions in his Homilies, and thus stamped them with his great authority. Fondness for fabulous traditions, love for that sort of religious sensationalism which leads some men to glorify their early crimes as a commendation to hearing, sympathy, and sainthood; the hymns of poets and the art-work of painters and sculptors; the general literary and biblical ignorance of the mediæval ages, all combined and inwrought the fiction with the faith of the Western Christians.

We have said that there is not a word of Scripture to sustain this legend. The best and earliest writings of the Church Fathers are also against it. Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian

say nothing of it in their allusions to the anointing of Christ. The language of Irenæus is against it. Origen rejects the tradition after full discussion, and after him all the succeeding expositors of the Eastern or Grecian Church. Theophilus of Antioch, Macarius, Chrysostom, Theophylact—among modern and recent commentators, Calvin, Grotius, Bengel, Alford, Steir, Meyer, Ols-hausen—reject the tradition.

In the *second* place this unfortunate slander gained credence from a misunderstanding and utter perversion of the language which describes Mary's affliction—a possession by "seven devils." Surely (was the ungrounded conclusion) this must have meant some atrocious sin, some extreme depth of impurity. Ah! the world has ever been and still is prone to fix the stigma of crime upon the simple fact of misfortune. "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" asked the disciples of Jesus. "Neither!" was the Lord's emphatic answer. How clearly again that Divine Wisdom warns against the conclusion that the men killed by the falling of Siloam's tower, or whose blood was shed by Pilate at the



sacrifices, were sinners above all the Galileans. That was a great step in advance, which showed that the fact of misfortune in this world does not always involve the fact of guilt as the immediate cause. True, generally and indirectly, all human evil flows from sin. And special sins bring their special penalties. As a man sows, he shall reap. But in this world, where the sun shines on the good and evil, and sorrows fall on just and unjust—in this world whose natural ills are overruled for man's good and made the means of his sanctification—in this dispensation whose rewards and penalties are not in this life, but in that which is to come, there is not a whisper of sanction for the thought that because a person is grievously afflicted, therefore he has grievously sinned. Forgetting this, the Church came at last to think that poor demon-possessed Mary must have been a very wicked woman.

There is one consideration drawn from the behavior of our Lord toward fallen women which has a strong bearing against the traditional view of Mary's character. If we accept as authentic the case given in John viii. there are three re-

corded examples of our Lord's mode of dealing with this form of sin, viz., the above cited case, the woman of Samaria, and "the woman which was a sinner." In every instance the Saviour first cleansed and forgave the woman, and second, concealed her name. The Bible sinners against womanly purity are *nameless*. They drop back into the circle of friends and are hidden away in that privacy which experience has always proved to be not only most congenial, but most advantageous to reformed women. How unlike man is this!—man who hastes to put the brand of shame where already he has laid that of sin, and blazons abroad the old fault, however earnest the offender's effort be to reach a new life. How beautiful, how divine, is this behavior of our Merciful Redeemer!—how profound in its knowledge of the human soul, and in its tender and timely sympathy with the hurts of sin and the necessities of the healed! We may be confident that this delicate and heavenly reticence would not have been violated in the case of Mary of Magdala had there been a basis of truth in her life for the tradition of the Church. To set her near His Person, in

the circle of His public ministry, in the full blaze of the public eye and exposed to the scoffs of Pharisees and publicans alike, with the stamp of her past life upon her, Jesus would never have done nor permitted that.

Nay, we can go further, and urge the very silence on this point of the Pharisees and other enemies of the Christ as a proof that there was no ground in fact from which to urge reproach. The Master's foes were ready enough to condemn Him for eating with publicans and sinners. They were swift to argue ill of Him from the compassionate goodness of His treatment of the woman which was a sinner, who worshiped Him in the house of Simon the Pharisee.

Yet further, will you allow the simple suggestion that the very nature of that sickness under which the Magdalene was bowed down was wholly alien and must have effectually precluded her from such a life as tradition attributes to her. It was indeed a real and grievous disease. If you would have some conception of the nature of that disease, you may think of the Gadarenes, who dwelt among the tombs in the hills just across the

Lake from Magdala ; you may recall their solitary life, their ferocity, their hostility to all men. Or, again, you may think of the scene at the cure of the young man brought by his father to be healed when our Lord was up in the region of Mt. Hermon, the lunacy of the lad, his unconsciousness, his convulsive struggles upon the ground, his complete exhaustion. You may study any other of the cases of possession recorded in Scripture, and you will certainly see that the fact of possession by "seven devils" was not a mere figure of speech for great wickedness, but the expression of a great physical and mental malady, which disqualified the unfortunate victim for all intercourse with her fellow creatures.

We need not here stop to ask what was the physical basis of the disease—epilepsy, insanity, or both. We rest satisfied with the statement of the New Testament that it was a possession by evil spirits, who thus vented their malice upon poor humanity, sought to degrade body and soul, to destroy happiness, and, it may be, thus seize the opportunity to wage especial war upon the Messiah of the Lord. Be that as it may, these

possessions gave our Saviour some of His highest occasions for asserting His power as the Deliverer of man from physical and spiritual bondage and suffering. In the case of Mary the Magdalene it gives us a most fitting text for meditation upon Woman as Transformed by Christianity.

We have seen the depth of affliction into which the possessing demons had sunken Mary. Let us see the blessedness brought to her.

The time and place of Mary's healing are unknown, as the incident is not recorded among the miracles. The fact is simply stated, and Mary introduced to us at Luke viii. 2, as already one of the healed and engaged with other women in a grateful ministry to her Divine Benefactor. Did the mercy of the Saviour purposely seek and find her out? In some chance journey through the plain, or when touching in one of the fishing boats upon the beach near by was the unfortunate met, as were Blind Bartimeus, at Jericho, and the maniac of the tombs, at Gadara, and blessed with unexpected healing? Or, as is most likely, did friends bring her, struggling, resisting, raving, to the Master's presence? We can only

picture to ourselves a woman with disheveled hair and garments, with wild eyes, disfigured face, out of which all lineaments of the human were wellnigh faded, and upon which sat the unhappy expression of the demented and demon-possessed, standing one day in that beautiful vale, face to face with the Son of Man. Yes, He who walks in the midst of the seven candlesticks stands before one within whom is centered the malignity of seven devils. The spirit of God meets the spirit of evil; the Deliverer of Man meets the unhappy and despoiled child of grief.

Get thee hence! Hence to thine own place! Hence, though ten times seven—a legion of demons were here! This woman is rescued from thy power. Demons—go forth! MARY—come forth!

It was a new Mary who stood in the presence of Christ. Her first conscious look was upon His face. Her first intelligent thought was of her Saviour and of the words of help and soothing which we may well believe He spoke to her. There never came a time thereafter that

the voice of that Saviour was not the sweetest of earthly sounds, the face of that Saviour the sweetest of earthly sights.

What a change had occurred! We see the Magdalene now, in company with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Susanna and many other of the godly women of the early Church. She mingles with them in rational, healthful and happy intercourse. The old world of ordinary home and social duty and friendship is reopened to her, and with it also a new world of holy activity and pleasure. It was the custom of Jewish women, if we may believe Jerome, to contribute to the support of Rabbins whom they revered. By a natural and beautiful transfer of this custom to the fellowship of saints, we see the Magdalene joining her companions in ministering unto Jesus of their substance. Thenceforth her life diverged more and more from the old solitary haunts, from caverns and tombs, and from herding with maniacs, and interblended with the lives of holy women like Salome and the mother of Jesus. She was no longer a helpless dependent, but wrought in the divine ser-

vice of relieving the wants of others. Thus she became, in sooth, what women are so often called in idle compliment, an angel, "a ministering one." Surely here was a marvelous transformation—from a wretched agent of demons to a veritable agent of good.

And this the Christ had done for her! One word of His had transferred her from the service of devils to that of the Prince of Peace; had delivered her from being a burden, grief, terror and peril to her kind, and made her a blessing to the present and an example for the future. It has been said that "woman is a new race recreated since the world received Christianity." It is a strong figure, but it lies close to the truth. The difference between the demon-distrougnt village maiden of Magdala, and the Mary Magdalene of the gospels illustrates the immeasurable gulf between women wholly separate from and women under the sway of Christianity.

The hand which the world's laws and customs have laid upon the weaker sex has been a hard, a very hard and heavy one. With a strange and wellnigh unbroken unanimity societies have de-



creed to woman an inferior, an abject, a degraded place. Perhaps it is not strange, for societies have been molded by men, and men have been molded by the bare facts of superior animal force and opportunity. Christ created a new conception of society, a new philosophy of the relations of the sexes. He emancipated man from himself, from the domination of his brute element ; He gave him a knowledge and sense of a spiritual power vaster, worthier, diviner than physical strength, and thus prepared him for the transformation of his companion. That transformation came not only as a spiritual regeneration to herself, but in the form of Christian laws. "They twain shall be one flesh." "Neither is man without the woman nor woman without the man." "There is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus." These are precepts of the Christian Church.

If you will consult any history of the Greeks and Romans of our Lord's era, you will be able to imagine the dark background of tyranny, neglect and debauchery upon which the Christian religion limned the noble women characters that

stand out among the records of the Saints. Greece led the nations by the spell of her intellect and taste. Yet it was her Aristotle who said: "Both a woman and a slave may be good; though perhaps of these the one is less good, and the other is wholly bad." "Nature," writes a modern reviewer, "hath cried with a voice almost audible to woman, 'to be respectable you must be chaste.' Athens had the audacity to say, 'to be prized and regarded among us you must be unchaste.' In conformity with these views, the education that was denied to the woman of character was sedulously bestowed upon the woman who thus consented to purchase knowledge at the price of character."<sup>1</sup>

Rome was even worse, if that were possible, in her estimate of woman. Cato, the Censor, had Manlius expelled from the Roman Senate because he had kissed his wife in the day-time, and in the presence of his daughter. He declared that "all women are plaguey and proud," and voiced the distrust and contempt with which they were regarded by his countrywomen. Independ-

<sup>1</sup>Storr's, "Divine Origin of Christianity." Appendix, p. 468.

ence of action she had little ; legal rights she had less. She had no consenting voice in a daughter's marriage ; she could not be legal guardian of her infant children ; no man might make her his heir ; her husband was literally her "lord," holding a qualified power over her life. The verdict of even a Seneca was, "She is an impudent animal, and unless she has advanced in philosophical knowledge, she is cruel and incontinent."

You have heard in late days of the so-called "Light of Asia," and poetry and scepticism have joined to throw a glamour of moral beauty about the religion of the Hindoos, in order to pale the lustre of Jesus the Light of the World. It is a vain fancy!—confuted even by the ballad singers who, according to Maine, in their street songs, complain that life in India has become intolerable since the English criminal laws had begun to treat women and children as if they were men. Missionary literature has made most of you familiar with the condition of Hindoo women, and that knowledge will enable you to judge how immeasurably the Light of Christ outshines the "Light of Asia."

The sages of China have but recently been introduced to Christendom, and their wisdom has often been vauntingly set over against that of Christ and His apostles. Far be it from us to under-rate anything of true wisdom which men have spoken in any age or under any form of religion. We hail with hospitable greeting every good thought and virtuous act born of a pagan world. But it is not of the nature of charity to say (for it is not truth) that the wisdom of China can compare with that of Christ. The difference is striking in the relative views of woman held by Christianity and Confucianism. Confucius, the foremost of the Chinese sages, taught that "woman's business is simply the preparation and supplying of wine and food. Beyond the threshold of her apartments she should not be known for evil or for good." "She may take no step on her own motion, and may come to no conclusion on her own deliberation." Some of you in a lecture-room address heard the statements of one of my valued friends, Miss Adele Field, on the condition of women in China. It was a sad and shocking tale, a record of wretchedness,

neglect, suppression, oppression, despair. Miss Field's long and close acquaintance with China, as a missionary of the American Baptist Society, together with her high standing among men of letters and science, give authority to these statements.

Need I more than glance at the place which woman has in Mohammedanism? In spite of all that the false prophet confessedly owed to his wife, Khadija, even in the paradise which he created for his devotees, woman does not rise beyond a sort of celestial harem. And what shall be said of that lot which has fallen to the weaker sex in those habitations of cruelty possessed by savage men? The picture is too painful to present in such a discourse as this; it is darkness unbroken by a ray of light. Nay, let me rather say broken only by that light which Christian love has sent from afar—sent often at the hands of Christian women who long to bring to their oppressed sisters the great redemption which Jesus brought to themselves.

If there were no other ground upon which to urge the plea, philanthropy alone would justify

the support of foreign missions. Even those who are unbelievers might give and ought to give on the ground that Christianity promotes human happiness, exalts man, emancipates woman. Usually women are better or worse than men, happier or more wretched, nobler or baser. Their capacity for misery is greater far than man's; their power to escape it less. Their need of a Redeemer from the ills of this present life is greater; their rescue should inspire profounder effort, their deliverance awake a higher note of praise.

In the closing scenes of our Lord's life we again find Mary of Magdala brought distinctly into the gospel narrative. She was among the women of Galilee who followed Jesus to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> She was one of the little company of mourners who went with the body of Jesus to its burial place in Joseph's new tomb; and we get a glimpse of her and "the other Mary" in the garden shadows as the day declines, sitting over against the sepulchre. We have had occasion to dwell upon these incidents more in detail in

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiii. 49; Matt. xxvii. 55, 56.

the lecture on 'Mary of Cleophas—woman at the grave.'

But there is one other incident, a chain of incidents, indeed, in which the Magdalene appears, which has commanded the profoundest attention of Christian people. At the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, accompanied by the other Mary, Salome, Joanna and others, came forth to see the sepulchre.<sup>1</sup> The door was rolled back—the tomb was empty! At the first glance into the open grave, Mary, in a paroxysm of grief and alarm, turned from her companions and fled to where Peter and the other disciples were gathered, with the message: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him!" The other Mary and Salome, less impulsive, stood their ground, and advanced to examine the tomb. Thus they had the first vision of the angels and of the Lord Himself, and ran away to announce the glorious news. Meanwhile, the Magdalene returned to Joseph's garden, and when she

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 1.

reached the tomb found herself alone. She took her stand on the outside of the sepulchre by the door. The tomb, empty as it was, had more tender associations with her dear Lord than any other spot. There, then, would she wait and weep ; perhaps not without faint hope that something might present which would give a clue to the missing body.

In one of her paroxysms of weeping she stooped forward into the sepulchre. Doubtless it was not the first look within the vault itself, but the first time that she had ventured to bend forward so as wholly to command a view of the interior, and thus see that side of the cell upon which the Lord's body had rested. Behold ! two angels in white, sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain: could Christians but stoop as did Mary and look within the valley of death as their friends pass into it, what angel guardians would be shown, making the way bright with their presence ! When the hour comes that we, too, shall "stoop down into the sepulchre," how surprised we shall be to see there "angels in white sitting !"



No doubt the angels were the same who had shown themselves to the women. But on this day, and at this spot, we may well believe that the same "multitude of the heavenly host"<sup>1</sup> which appeared over Bethlehem at the incarnation, had many representatives near. The reposeful posture of the angels was one which would have been least likely to alarm Mary; and their position at the head and feet of Jesus, must have been intended to express some thought to her and those who should receive her testimony. Among the Egyptians Isis and Nephthys, the gods who represented the divine attributes of the beginning and the end, were thought to be always present at the head and feet of the dead who had led a virtuous life, and were deemed worthy of admission into the regions of the blessed. It is possible that some such thought as this was symbolized by the position of the angels, their attitude pointing to the truth that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end; that his body by the power of an endless life, had left the place of the dead; that henceforth all they who sleep

<sup>1</sup> Luke ii. 13.

in Jesus shall be guarded and brought to the resurrection of the Blessed. At least, their positions marked the very spot where Mary knew that Jesus had laid, and so associated their presence with that fact.

Hark! Angel voices out of the sepulchre say: *Why weepest thou?* It is a voice of sympathy, comfort, hope, which has never ceased since then to speak to mourning friends. It is a remarkable fact that Mary had not a particle of the fear which the angel vision had awakened within her female friends. Indeed, she hardly seemed conscious that these *were* angels. Had her sorrow so absorbed all her thoughts and feelings as to make her incapable of any emotion but the one? Grief, we know, is a powerful solvent of terror, and of every other feeling. This touch of nature shows more than anything else how profound were Mary's love and sorrow.

“They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him!” To those who have suffered that grievous loss common to all in the circle of mortal loves, there is given the comfort of at least knowing where their beloved dead

are laid. But mine is no ordinary loss, yet this ordinary comfort is denied me! Such was Mary's thought. Thus have godly souls in every age mourned over the despoiling and dishonoring of the Lord's body, the Church, which all the while God was only leading forth into greater glory. How sadly God's most merciful Providences are misinterpreted and mourned over! Alas,—we cry—all our consolations are gone out in endless night!—whereas, it is only the “darkest hour just before the dawn” which is upon us.

Then Mary's ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps. She started, turned away from the sepulchre with the eager thought—here perhaps, is some one who can tell me? Jesus stood beside her! Yes, the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. The blessed Saviour follows his mourning disciples to the grave, standing near them, waiting to pour comfort into their hearts. Yet how many weeping Marys have there been who, like the Magdalene, “knew not that it was Jesus!”

Did her tears blur her vision? Was the body of her Lord so changed by the Passion, the cross

and the sepulchre? Were her eyes holden as in the case of the disciples on the way to Einmaus? Perhaps, more naturally, we may suppose that in the intensity of her one absorbing emotion, she but glanced upon the stranger's face, and uttered her hurried question with little more than the outline of His form impressed upon her mind. The sudden transition from the dim light of the vault into which she had just been looking, to the full light of the morning that fell in her eyes as she turned, would certainly contribute to, if it might not wholly account for, her failure to recognize Jesus. This natural effect would be intensified by that weakness of the organs of sight which always results from excessive weeping.

"Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" said the Master.

It was quite natural that Mary should have supposed one who was in the garden at that early hour to be Joseph's gardener. She made no reply to the questions asked concerning herself, but went straight to the matter that absorbed all her thought. "*Sir*"—in her helpless grief and desire to reach her point she used the most conciliatory

speech—“*if thou have borne Him hence——.*” O Mary, if thou hadst known, thou wouldst not have suspected that stranger of robbing thee of thy dearest treasure, and wounding thus thy heart! Yet, do we not all and often, let us hope ignorantly, make these grievous blunders, and cherish these unjust suspicions concerning our Lord and His doings?

But, after all, thou wast right, Mary. This *is* He who hath borne thy Lord's body from that sepulchre, borne it thence, a living body, by the inherent power of His self-existent life!

That the body had been placed in Joseph's tomb temporarily, Mary knew, having been present at the burial. The hope that it might have been simply removed, not stolen, as she at first had thought, would naturally enough arise in a mind so tossed by conflicting emotions as Mary's. “If thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Her womanly heart did not stop to ponder the difficulties of an act to which love prompted; or, man-like, to reason out the best solution. “*I will do it: the burden of labor, expense, danger, I will*

bear it all! *You* may loathe and hide that body as tainted by death on the accursed tree, I love and would honor it. To you it may be but a despised burden; by me, oh! it will be so joyfully borne!" True, womanly heart! Nobly did she illustrate that impulsive self-forgetfulness, that heroism of love, that steadfastness unto death, which have ever set forward her sex in the sorest hours of human need and of the Church's trial, to bear for herself, or to share with her other self, the burden and heat of the day! That such an evidence of unselfish devotion must have been grateful to the Saviour, who can doubt? At least, the sweet, sufficient reward followed quickly upon it.

Jesus saith unto her—"Mary!"

Tenderly, and in the well-known tones, that word must have been uttered. One word! but as a sun-burst breaks out of a rift in the storm, touches with radiance every falling rain-drop, and lays the bow of promise upon the cloud, so that word cut through the darkness and tearfulness of her agitated spirit, and brightened it with the token of hope and peace. Mary! One word of Christ's

that goes forth with His Spirit, breaks through every barrier into the very heart of the heart, and awakens the soul into the new life of faith by its effectual call. Mary! Never had the name seemed dearer than when He uttered it, never so dear upon His lips as then. Mary! "He calleth His own sheep by name." "And the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice!"

"She turned herself, and saith unto Him, *Rabboni*, My Master!" The recognition was instant and complete. So great was the revulsion of feeling from deepest sorrow to profoundest joy that she could utter but one word; yet that one fully expressed her whole surrender and subjection to her divine Lord. Beautifully has Keble sung in his "Christian Year":

"Oh! joy to Mary first allow'd,  
When rous'd from weeping o'er His shroud,  
By His own calm, soul-soothing tone,  
Breathing her name, as still His own!

"So is it still, to holy tears,  
In lonely hours, Christ risen appears:  
In social hours, who Christ would see,  
Must turn all tasks to Charity."

Our Saviour's response to Mary's action has ever been a perplexing study to Bible students. "Touch me not! (*Noli me tangere*) for I am not yet ascended to my Father." It is plain that with the cry *Rabboni*, Mary had thrown herself at the Lord's feet in a transport of devout love, to embrace His knees. But why should Jesus forbid her to *touch* Him? The companions of Magdalene had *held Him by the feet*<sup>1</sup> but a little while before, without rebuke. On that very evening, He bade His disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I Myself; handle Me and see." This prohibition to Mary did not, then, rest upon anything objectionable in the mere act of touching Christ's person. It rested upon something peculiar in Mary's case. What was it?

May we not, at the outset, suppose that there was a tender and wise regard for Mary's physical welfare? The terrible malady from which she had been healed was the evidence of a naturally excitable temperament, a condition of nerves highly susceptible to agitations. Her cure, thorough as it was, we may be permitted to think, still left

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 9.



her peculiarly open to the disturbing influence of unusual excitements. Her impulsive behavior when she first saw the open sepulchre, her passionate fit of weeping on her return, her conduct when she recognized Jesus, are all indications of a physical and mental condition that required wise and tender treatment. We can therefore understand why the Master should have laid a check upon her passionate devotion by His *Noli me tangere!*—how He should have recalled her to her right mind, tempered her excitement by forbidding her the act which might feed it, and turned her thoughts quickly into a channel of healthy activity by sending her instantly forth with the message, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.”

Once more, if we glance at the peculiar manifestation which Mary’s unbelief in the resurrection presented, we shall see the nature of her spiritual ailment, and thus have better views of the nature of the remedy which the Divine Physician applied. Her whole thought and affection had been centered upon *the body* of her slain Lord; suitably

to honor *the body* she waited on that Friday to see where it should be buried, then hastened away ere the coming of the Sabbath to prepare for its further honoring. It was to honor *the body* that she came with others to the sepulchre early on Sunday; and her passionate grief gathered around the to her terrible fact that *the body* had been removed, she knew not whence, and was therefore debarred from honoring it. This exaggerated estimate of the honor due to the *mere fleshly manifestation* of the Son of God, this undue clinging to and fondness for the material, the human presence, was a phase of Mary's character, which, we may well believe, Jesus here rebuked and corrected.

“Touch me not!”—Not thus; not with such eager clinging to my earth-nature, as though your great joy were in having me present with you, within reach of your human touch and embrace. The fact that our Lord thus put by these embraces, worshipful and pure as they were, must have taught Mary that it was not such reverence as that which she was now giving, in which regard for the Lord's bodily presence had so

undue a proportion, that was most acceptable to Christ. Something more spiritual it was her duty and privilege to give.

Thus we can see the force of the reason given for the *touch Me not* which follows: "For I have not yet ascended to My Father;" therefore, not yet, though soon to be, in that glorified estate in which you and all believers may hope to dwell with me in inseparable communion; I have not risen to stay here within the reach of thy bodily senses, but to ascend to the Father, where thou mayest touch Me from earth in spiritual communion, and be drawn upward to be forever with Me, to sit down with Me upon My throne. To quote the language of De Pressensé: "The *Noli me tangere* was a prophetic protest against all the miserable forms which mistaken devotion has invented in the course of ages. The piety which is worthy of Christ unites holy reverence with holy familiarity. and does not make a fetich of Him who has inaugurated the reign of the Spirit upon Earth."

There is another view of this saying which we may notice as we take our last view of Mary:

Touch me not!—Do not continue thus touching me; do not thus cling about Me, for I am not yet ascended; there will be other and ample opportunities of seeing Me again. But hasten away now, and tell my message to my brethren. Activity and devotion are united in the holiest character and the best service. True, activity is subordinate to devotion; “the hands of the man,” as in the vision of Ezekiel, are underneath the wings of the angel. But there are times when work is the truest worship; when the feet that seem to run most swiftly from the feet of Jesus in obedient bearing of His evangel are bearing the soul most swiftly nearer and nearer to the Saviour’s heart.

Go to my brethren! Woman once more the herald of the good news! The Master was obeyed; the pupil hastened to tell the Teacher’s message. This was the highest duty of that hour, and doubtless Mary found it a sweeter joy than clinging to the knees of her risen Lord in ecstatic dream of clinging for all her earth life to His restored bodily presence.

In this gracious service Mary of Magdala drops

away from the sacred record. Our last view of her shows her in the midst of the disciples "as they mourned and wept,"<sup>1</sup> announcing to the incredulous company the fact of the Lord's Eáster. It is a happy closing of her life-history. She comes before us, burdened with that calamity which despoiled all that is sweetest in life, and which fell from her forever at the voice of the Son of God. She passes from us in the midst of mourning and weeping men, bearing to them the news of that sublime fact—the Resurrection of the Christ, which has transformed sorrowing and sin-burdened mortals into children of God joyful with the hope of a Heavenly immortality.

<sup>1</sup>Mark xvi. 9, 10.

## LECTURE XII.

### MARY, THE MOTHER OF MARK: WOMAN'S SOCIAL MINISTRY.

FROM the Epistle to the Colossians<sup>1</sup> we learn that Mary the mother of Mark was the sister of Barnabas. Barnabas was born in the island of Cyprus, according to the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> We are therefore led to the inference, which is of course not certainly true, but is the most probable conjecture that can be made, that Mary was also a native of Cyprus and of its chief city, Salamis.

Standing on a clear day at the sea-port of Antioch, on the mainland of Syria, and looking westward across the Mediterranean, one may see rising in the horizon the high mountain summits of the island of Cyprus. It is the Chittim of the Old Testament, the ancient kingdom of the Greek Teucer, the nearest and earliest point of contact

<sup>1</sup> Col. iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iv. 63.

which the civilization of Greece had with that of the Hebrews.

On a bay or curve of the coast-line is a large plain, shut in on three sides by the mountain ranges, open eastward on the sea, and facing full toward Palestine. It is threaded by the only river in the island, which enters the ocean a little southward of the location of Salamis. We can therefore readily picture to ourselves the scene upon which the youthful eyes of Mary and her brother Barnabas would often look: the large city, with its crowded streets and wharves; the ever rolling sea; the far-away coast-line of the Holy Land, the home of the people of her race and faith; the wide-spread plain, covered with cornfields and orchards, the blue distance of mountains beyond.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews formed a large and important element of the Salamis population, and had been established there from the days of Alexander the Great. The fertile isle, with its busy trade in fruit, flax, honey and wine; the copper mines farmed by Augustus to Herod, would have attracted so enterprising and commercial a class as the Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *St. Paul*.

The persecution following Stephen's death doubtless drove many Christians into this port, and there, very early, grew up around the several synagogues of the city an active and strong Christian element.

Salamis, like Antioch, takes a conspicuous place in the history of the beginnings of Christianity among Gentile populations. At present, according to De Cesnola,<sup>1</sup> the site of the city is covered with sand drifted in from the beach before the ocean gales, and the surface is covered with tall weeds and thistles.

The name of Mary's father is not known, but he belonged to the priestly class, since we are told that Barnabas his son was a Levite. We may therefore suppose that Mary was thoroughly trained in the knowledge of the Jewish law, and in the hopes of the Messiah and His coming so fondly cherished at that period. It was one of the duties of the Levites to keep alive in the national heart these truths and hopes. They were indeed the teachers of the people; sometimes to a greater, sometimes to a less extent, in different ages. The

<sup>1</sup> Cypruss: Its Cities, Tombs and Temples.



neglect of family duties in this respect was not one of the sins of the Hebrews, and we may well believe that Mary was thoroughly "catechised," if we may be allowed a modern equivalent word.

There is another hint which this Levitical descent may give us as to the influences that bore upon Mary's education and early training, and which may have added to her social power for good in the primitive Church. The Levites were the professional musicians of their race and faith. "The sons of the singers" they were called.<sup>1</sup> In the days of David we read of Heman, Asaph and Jeduthun as chief among the chiefs of the musicians, numbering two hundred and eighty-eight, in twenty-four sections of twelve each, and under them four thousand who praised Jehovah with instruments. What grand choruses those must have been, when, with sackbut, psaltery, harp, and all manner of brazen instruments, the army of Levites moved along the streets of Jerusalem, up the steps of the Temple, marching into its wide courts, shaking the very walls with their melody and the

<sup>1</sup> Neh. xii. 28.

voice of their inspired Hymnal. It was with such a scene in mind that St. John in Patmos could enter into the spirit of that vision of the worship of the great company before the Throne, harping with their harps, and sending up to God the song of Moses and the Lamb, like the voice of many waters.

Would it therefore be strange if in that early Cypriote home of Mary, and afterward in her house in Jerusalem, the instruments of the Levites were as familiar objects as piano and guitar in our homes, and that Mary added to her other accomplishments skill in song and appropriate instrumental music? After all, as has truly been said, a piano is only a harp in a box, struck indirectly with the fingers through the key-board, instead of directly on the strings as in Mary's days. There is not, therefore, such a great difference in the advantages and accomplishments in this respect which our daughters and sisters have over the maidens of ancient Cyprus and Palestine.

But what influence can these facts have had upon the Christian Church, and the customs of

those days, which it is the object of these lectures to unfold? Very much, indeed. As the veil slowly falls upon the inspired canon of the Old Testament prophecy, dividing between the Old and the New, we hear floating down into the coming era these words of the last of the Hebrew prophets Malachi. He has before him the vision of the latter days when the Messiah of God, the Messenger of the Covenant, shall come, "saith the Lord of hosts." "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

That prophecy was literally fulfilled. After the Pentecostal days<sup>1</sup> we are told that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." That they carried with them many of their kinsmen of the Levites is not a hard thing to believe; that some of these stood with the believing priests the case of the Levite Barnabas shows. Thus there comes most naturally the reflection that the *musical service* of the Temple,—so far at least as

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 7.

it had been adapted to Synagogue worship—the grand old chants and psalms, were transferred by these skilled musicians and singers to the religious service and social life of the early assemblages of the Jerusalem Church in the house of Mary the Levite's daughter. In this fact we may trace something of that place which Christian song had from the very first in the worship of primitive Christendom.

We have already seen<sup>1</sup> that the very earliest origins of the Christian dispensation had been marked by a revival of psalmody, as in the blessed Virgin's *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus* of Zacharias. In the jail at Philippi, Paul and Silas sang praises unto God. Twice in the Epistles,<sup>2</sup> we read directions concerning the use of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." More than once, if we will accept the view of some commentators, there appear references to and quotations from some of these primitive hymns, as, for example, in the Epistles to Timothy. One of these ancient doxologies is familiar.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lecture I.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 18; Col. iii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> I Tim. vi. 15. Another example is I Tim. iii. 16.

“The Blessed and only Potentate,  
The King of kings and Lord of lords,  
Who only hath immortality  
Dwelling in light unapproachable,  
Whom no man hath seen, nor can see,  
To whom be honor  
And power Eternal!

Amen!”

Among the earliest references to Christianity in secular history is one by the younger Pliny, who found nothing against the persecuted sect except that they met before the day to bind themselves by oath to live holy lives and sing hymns to Christ as to a god. We may therefore feel at liberty to believe that the old psalms and the new hymns rang out vigorously in the “parlor” and halls of the Levitical Mary’s house in Jerusalem.

Here we strike the *first* element in woman’s social ministry, or at least the suggestion of that which may be and is a mighty means of good upon men. Music originated with the family of Cain; but, as Wesley is said to have remarked when he set his noble hymns to popular tunes: “There is no reason why the devil should have

all the really good things of life!" From the days of David and Asaph to the days of Bliss and Sankey, God's hosts have been marshalled and inspired by holy song. "Next to theology," said Martin Luther, "I give the first place and the highest honor to music. A schoolmaster should know how to sing, or else I will not so much as look at him!" He translated the psalms and adapted them to congregational singing. The echoes of his flute rang through all Germany; they are sounding there to-day—aye, and in all the world! "Since Luther's time," says D'Aubigne, "the people have sung; the Bible inspired their songs, and the impulse given at the epoch of the reformation produced in later years those noble oratorios which seem to be the summit of this art." What Luther did for Germany, Clement Marot did for France and her Huguenots, and Dathenus did for the Calvinists of Holland. The psalmody of the Scotch reformers and the Covenanters gave to their granitic character that fervor which always adds to firmness a momentum that is well-nigh resistless. Thus it was in the sixteenth century precisely as in the first—a flood

of song swept over the world, awaking the careless, godless multitude from slumber, giving to children and youth the first inspiration of soul toward God, fixing a Bible theology in the memories and affections of men.

In this work of molding society through the songs of a nation and church, who can have a mightier influence than woman? She it is who soothes the first unrests of life by the lullabys of infancy, and fills the first thoughts of the awakening mind with such cradle-songs as—

“ Sleep, baby sleep ! Dear Jesus loves the sheep ;  
And thou His little lamb shall be,  
And in His breast He'll carry thee—  
Sleep, baby, sleep ! ”

She it is who puts upon the baby lips the first utterance of such prayer-hymns as—

“ Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me ;  
Bless Thy little lamb to-night !  
Through the darkness be Thou near me ;  
Keep me till the morning light ! ”

It is to the Levitical Marys of our homes, our song-mothers, that we are and must be chiefly indebted for such beautiful examples of the charm of Christian song in family worship as that drawn by Burns in his inimitable "Cotter's Saturday Night:"

"They chant their artless songs in simple guise;  
 They tune their hearts by far the noblest aim.  
 Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive Martyrs worthy of the name,  
 Or noble Elgin beats the heavenly flame.  
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays,  
 Compared with these Italian trills, are tame;  
 The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise,  
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise."

Nor is it in this line alone that woman's social power is felt through the agency of song. The Levites were not only singers of psalms of praise and psalms of instruction ("Maschil"), but they were also the authors of the sacred songs of their nation and church. Here, too, our Levitical Marys have made themselves felt for good upon society.

Along a mountain stream, skirted with trees and alders, near the village of Ellington, Con-



necticut, there was a well-trodden path that led from a cottage to a place of prayer. At the close of the day a mother was wont to leave the cares of her family, and, in the quiet of this secluded spot, hold sweet communion with God.

One summer evening she was criticized by a neighbor for this seeming neglect of her family. She returned home much pained at heart for what had been said, at once took her pen, and wrote an answer to the criticism, which she entitled, "An Apology for My Twilight Rambles—Addressed to a Lady." This mother was Mrs. Phœbe H. Brown, and her "apology" was given to the public in A. D. 1824, in Dr. Nettleton's "Village Hymns." It thus begins :

"Yes, when the toilsome day is gone,  
And night, with banners gray,  
Steals silently the glade along,  
In twilight's soft array—

"I love to steal awhile away  
From little ones and care,  
And spend the hours of setting day  
In gratitude and prayer."

One of these "little ones" afterward became an efficient missionary to Japan.<sup>1</sup> The hymn, which, with some change of phrasing, has a place in many of our church selections, has been a comfort to many weary hearts.

The poet Whittier once wrote :

" Years since—but names to me before—  
Two sisters sought at eve my door ;  
Two song-birds wandering from their nest  
A gray old farm house in the West."

He gave them welcome, for, said he :

" What could I other than I did ?  
Could I the singing bird forbid ?  
Deny the wind-stirred leaf ? Rebuke  
The music of the forest brook ?"

These sisters were Alice and Phœbe Cary and the "gray old farmhouse" from which they came stood in the Miami Valley, Ohio. Among the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Samuel R. Brown, D. D. I am indebted for this and the following incident to Mr. Long's "Illustrated History of Hymns and their Authors."

most popular and beautiful of Phœbe's poems is that which begins :

“ One sweetly solemn thought  
Comes to me o'er and o'er.”

She wrote the hymn one Sunday morning after coming from church, and was especially moved and grateful for the following incident associated with it. Two Americans, one a young man, were drinking and playing at cards in a gambling-house in one of the Chinese ports. While the older one was shuffling the cards, the younger began to hum a tune, and finally sung in a low tone, but quite unconsciously, the hymn :—

“ One sweetly solemn thought  
Comes to me o'er and o'er,  
I am nearer home to-day,  
Than ever I've been before.”

The older man stopped, hesitated, threw down the cards upon the floor with excited gesture, and said :

“Harry, where did you learn that tune?”

“What tune?”

“Why, that one you have been singing.”

“But I do not know *what* I was singing,” was the response.

A portion of the lines was repeated, and then the answer came: “Oh, I learned that in Sunday-school!”

“Come, Harry,” said the older man; “come, here’s what I’ve won from you. As for me, as God sees me, I have played my last game and drunk my last bottle! I have misled you, Harry, and I am sorry for it. Give me your hand, my boy, and say that for old America’s sake, if no other, you will quit the infernal business.”

This incident was witnessed by Col. Russel H. Conwell, when on a visit to China, who says that both of the gamblers were permanently reclaimed by this hymn. After Miss Cary’s death he received a letter from the elder of the two men, confirming his own testimony, adding “and thus the hymn has saved from ruin at least two who seldom or never entered a house of worship.”

We may add to the names of these Levitical women those of Miss Charlotte Elliott, the author of

“Just as I am without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me”;

Mrs. Sarah F. Adams the author of

“Nearer my God to thee!”;

Lady Huntingdon, the author of

“When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come,  
To take Thy ransomed people home,  
Shall I among them stand?”;

Miss Annie Steele, author of

“The Saviour, oh what endless charms,  
Dwell in the blissful sound!”;

Miss Fanny Crosby, the author of “Sweet hour of prayer”; Miss Auber, Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Barbauld, Miss Proctor and others who have been true yoke fellows with those Ezraites—“Sons of the Choir,” who have given the Church Catholic her common heritage of hymns. How blessed,

how wide reaching, how permanent is the influence which woman is commanding upon her race by the Levitical graces and gifts which we have thus associated with Mary the Levite's daughter ! "Let me make the nation's ballads," it once was said, "and I care not who makes it laws !" To woman has been given the gift to make many of our sweetest songs ; to her belongs the even yet greater power of commanding a place in home and social circles for the songs which shall be sung. Let her see to it that they are such as *should* be sung ! that naught but a voice of purity and faith shall chant the songs of nursery, parlor, school, and concert-hall, and her spell shall charm and keep society in sweetness. When the worshipers of Bacchus, according to the ancient classic myth, sought to destroy Orpheus, every weapon became harmless as soon as it came within the sound of his lyre. Thereupon the drunken women raised their voices, and screamed so loudly that they drowned the voice of the music. Then the missiles of the Bacchanals reached Orpheus and slew him. Do I need to interpret the fable ? When the madness of unreason, appetite, vul-

garity and lust shall drown the songs of holiness and healthful sentiment; when woman shall ally herself with the Bacchanalian element of society, the lyre of Orpheus shall cease to charm and sweeten social life.

By one of those changes of location common then and in all ages, Mary's home was transferred from her native Cyprus to Jerusalem. Her father, in the course of Levitical duties may have gone up there, and then located permanently; or, a marriage relation may have carried the Levite's daughter from Salamis to the Holy City, just as the same social causes scatter families now from Philadelphia to San Francisco. At the period in which she is introduced to us, ten or eleven years after our Lord's crucifixion, she was evidently a widow and a disciple of long standing and influence. There is, therefore, hardly a reasonable doubt that she was among the personal disciples of Jesus Christ. She appears to have been a householder of wealth and position. Not only did she hold property in the city of Jerusalem, but, as has been argued, perhaps also a country-seat in the Kedron Valley, on the slope of Olivet,

even the garden of Gethsemane itself. This view grows out of the belief that Mark, Mary's son, was the young man who, at the time of our Lord's capture in Gethsemane, rushed out, evidently from some neighboring house or villa, in the loose linen night-dress worn by the rich, and, after an impulsive effort to interfere, fled away, leaving his wrapper in the hands of the guards.

What we certainly know is that Mary had dedicated her house to the social worship of God and the service of the church, just as Barnabas, her brother, had sold his possessions and placed them in the common missionary fund of the Primitive Christians. Tradition represents Mary's house to have stood on the upper slope of the hill Zion, and affirms it to have been the meeting-place for the disciples, and the scene of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The tradition is not improbable, but we are introduced to this consecrated mansion definitely in the exciting incidents recorded in the twelfth chapter of the Acts.

The fury of the second persecution had broken upon the church at Jerusalem, driven on by the



infamous Herod Agrippa. James, the son of Salome, the first of the apostolic company of martyrs, had been beheaded. Moved by the plaudits of the delighted Jews, the king laid hands upon Peter and cast him into jail to await also the executioner's sword. The events which followed are most vividly painted. We see the gloomy prison walls rising in the shadow of the temple; the captive apostle sleeping between two soldiers, each arm chained to one of them, while other sentinels watch before the doors. There shall be no escape for *this* prisoner! The very next day Herod is to bring him forth and cast his bloody head as a propitiatory morsel to the hate and bigotry of the persecutors! To-morrow Peter dies! So it is written in Peter's doom book. But so it is *not* written in God's!

Yonder in Mary's house the Church is gathered in prayer. No liturgical form could surely have uttered or restrained the agony of their desire and grief, their faith and fear, their trembling and hope. Free, heart-moved prayer must their's have been, and without ceasing it had gone up to God for the apostle.

It is night. The darkness of an unlit Oriental town has fallen over gloating Jews, time-serving king, watching soldiers, sleeping apostle, praying Christians. See! there is a light in yonder dungeon! An angel touch arouses Peter; an angel voice bids him rise; an angel hand smites off his chains and leads him forth. The iron gate opens; the apostle stands at last free—free as yon night stars; free as the night breeze that fans his cheeks; free in the midst of Jerusalem!

What now, Peter? “And when he had come to himself,” says the record; and then, again, “when he had considered the thing.” You have, perhaps, come suddenly from a lighted hall into the street at night, on a spot quite familiar to you, yet found yourself utterly confused as to which way you should turn to find home—“turned completely around.” Think it not strange that the apostle should have been a little confused, thus landed from a prison cell by an angel minister, in the midst of Jerusalem’s streets, unillumed by gas-light in those days, and still. Nevertheless, he soon made out the points of the compass, and with

a directness that speaks volumes for the subject of our lecture, he "came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark." Peter could not have known certainly that there "many were gathered together praying" for him. But he would probably conjecture that much, and, at least, he was sure that a welcome and protection would be given to him in that mansion.

Next we see him standing under the shadow of the great door. Mary's house, like Eastern houses generally, was doubtless built, as are modern hotels, around a court or open square. In the middle of the wall, fronting on the street, was the gate or door which opened through the wall into the court. This was the common gangway for all kinds of portage; and frequently a little side gate was provided for the admission of members of the family and others. At this gate Peter stood and knocked. You know how a loud rapping sounds on a still night! It must have startled the praying band. Who could it be? Some late member of their company stealing in through the darkness to the prayers of the church? Some messenger with tidings of the prisoner, mayhap of his

death? Perhaps the captain of the guard! Maybe the persecutors are on our track!

The portress of that gate has had her name handed down to us. "A certain damsel named Rhoda"—or, as we would say, Rose—"came to hearken," to ask who was there. She peeped through the lattice or port-hole, recognized Peter, ran back to the hall, or parlor, radiant and surcharged with the news, which she was so anxious to tell—(how natural the action is!)—that she left the apostle pounding at the door, while she announced his presence in the meeting.

In due time Peter was admitted. He told the story of his rescue; sent the news to the brethren, and knowing that in the morning the castle, palace and town would be astir, and that his presence would endanger the life and property of his friend Mary, he sought another place of shelter.

Such is the incident that brings prominently before us Mary, the mother of Mark. It proves her to have been a true heroine; one who held her life, her property, her labor, her all, to be the Lord's, to be used for His honor, and sacrificed, if need be, for His service. To fully appreciate

this, it needs only that you reflect upon the nature and intensity of the persecutions which visited the primitive Christians. James slain, Peter condemned, the spirit which seven years before had lived in Saul of Tarsus and breathed forth "threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," seemed now to be flaming into a new fury. Mary's house must have been a marked spot. But she went straight on her way as aforetime. She welcomed the disciples beneath her roof, she braved the hatred of the Sanhedrists and the cruelty of the king, she risked her life, her family, her property, in the service of her Lord. This truly was the spirit of a "confessor!" We honor Daniel, who endangered his position, possessions and life by faithfulness in confessing his religion. We honor the three Hebrew children who went into the burning, fiery furnace rather than bow down before Nebuchadnezzar's image. Equally must we honor this Woman Friend of Jesus, the widowed Mary of Jerusalem, for her courage, love and faith on this occasion.

The moral heroisms of high social position, as

illustrated in the Bible, would make a chapter of thrilling interest. Relatively to the great mass of the Redeemed, it is true that "not many mighty, not many noble, are called";<sup>1</sup> but that some such were among the earliest friends and disciples of Jesus we well know. Nicodemus the ruler, Joseph, Zaccheus, Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, Joanna, Cornelius, Dorcas, the Treasurer of queen Candace, Demetrius, Saul of Tarsus, these are a worthy fellowship for Barnabas the Levite and Mary of Jerusalem, his sister. It may be harder for such to confess their Lord in the times of persecution, but also the field of usefulness is wider and the reward is greater, here and hereafter. Some there have been, men and women, in every period of trial, who have risen above the love of property, of social honors, of life itself, and suffered and been spent even unto death for the faith of Jesus and the fellowship of His saints.

This surely is as it should be. Every good gift is from God. To the most gifted and influential it may ever be said: "What hast thou that thou

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 26.

didst not receive?"<sup>1</sup> Side by side with this fact must be laid this other one: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." In the light of human selfishness, of worldly advancement and rest, it may seem to have been requiring very much indeed of Mary, that she should ally herself with a despised and persecuted people; that she should not only set aside all the blandishments of the great and the associations of the ruling society, but draw upon her the anger and vengeance of that class; that she should convert her beautiful home into a haunt of forbidden conventicles.

Well; but in the light of that Holy Society within which Mary the glorified has dwelt for eighteen centuries; in the light of that historic Christianity whose establishment has blessed unnumbered millions of her sex and race—what must you say of the requirement? True, much was required—and much is required of you, women of to-day, upon whom Heaven has conferred social position. There is too strong a tendency among us to give up "society" to the world, the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 7.

flesh, and the devil; to allow a great gulf to open, and to widen continually between the Christian life and the social life; to utterly divorce the influence which comes with elegant homes and commanding social influence, from the obligations of the Christian and the philanthropist. The life of the "confessor" becomes chained to the sanctuary and the public hall or chapel, and never by any sufferance may find expression in drawing-room or parlor. To serve God with pew-rent, with public worship and private prayers, with Sabbath observance and gifts to Christian missions, that is one life whose claims are admitted, but what have Christian faith and responsibility to do with one's social relations with that medley of women and men of all degrees and no degrees of spiritual tastes and culture, which passes under the current name of "Society"? Such seems to be the drift of much of our Christian reasoning on this subject. How the words of Holy Scripture cut across it with the fine edge of truth! "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God!" How an example of noble confessorship like this of Mary's warms and



illuminates for us the chill fog of such perverse reasoning! No! the Christian dare not resolve herself from a holy into a profane estate because she has passed from the sanctuary to the social circle. "Society" must be won to Christ. And to that end the homes of greatest beauty and culture must, like that of Mary, become centres radiating holy influence upon circles, alas! too often utterly pagan behind their palatial fronts of brownstone and marble.

These thoughts have been spoken with reference to that general duty and responsibility which demands a social ministry for Christ. But there is a special lesson in Mary's example which we may well apply. Often since the days of Obed Edom the Gittite,<sup>1</sup> has the Ark of the Covenant found shelter at the home fireside. The Sacramental feast of our religion was instituted in the "upper chamber" of a house; the prayer meeting of Mary, the descent of the Holy Ghost; the assemblages of the apostolic church for "breaking of bread and prayers";<sup>2</sup> the opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles in the house of the wealthy Cen-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. vi. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 42, 46.

turion Cornelius by the apostle Peter;<sup>1</sup> the preaching of St. Paul in a certain man's house named Justus" "whose house joined hard to the Synagogue" of Corinth—these are facts which meet us in the very establishment of Christianity. They are facts of the utmost significance; and they carry into every householder's mind a question of responsibility, a suggestion of opportunity: "Cannot my house become a centre of Evangelical influence?"

Do not drive the question from you with an impatient "impracticable!" Do not dismiss it with the remark, "We have churches and chapels for all that, now!" True, the necessity may not be, or may not seem so pressing as in primitive times; and it may be believed that were such the case, many a Mary, a Cornelius, a Justus would be found to take the risk for Christ's sake and throw open the sanctuary of their homes. But it is a truth which ought to be pondered, that the *opportunity* for good by means of parlor and cottage meetings is quite as large and promising as ever. I think now of women of our own gene-

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 27.

ration whose private houses have been the meeting places of many a company for prayer, for conversation, for discussion, for work in behalf of efforts to emancipate our fellow men from bonds of sin. The wounded soldier, the benighted heathen, the oppressed slave, the victim of lust and drunkenness, the helpless children, the homeless orphan, the sick and poor, the struggling mission school, the working Church of Jesus—how many of these and kindred charities have had their birth and foster within the homes of the Marys of our times! Still these and kindred causes knock at your gates. Still apostles of the Christ lie bound in dungeon-chains, and still a trembling Church lifts up hands in the night to the God of Salvation. O women of America! dedicate your homes to the service of the Son of God! Lay your social influence on the altar of sacrifice unto the Most High.

Nor should the thought obtain among you that these obligations and opportunities belong only to those of the higher social circles. In every walk of life the social nature must have play. Among all classes and occupations the power of social

influence is continually felt for good or ill. "Cottage" meetings have already been referred to. It must not be forgotten that the bulk of all our homes may be classed as "cottages." Therefore the field for a social ministry is wider therein than elsewhere. The duty comes home to every one—to *every one* upon whom Heaven has conferred the power to influence her fellow creatures through society relations. Society—that is, *your* society, lowly or high, of the palace or the cot—society belongs to God. Society too is in the sphere of one's legitimate and necessary Christianly influence and labor. Our social nature and relations have not been given over to the Devil's service. Seal them unto God! Herein are possibilities of good which have never been evoked, but which, if only Christian women would, might revolutionize the world.

Our last lesson is touched as we observe the title by which Mary is distinguished: "the mother of John whose surname was Mark." There is no consideration which bears so strongly upon many parents, as the social position of their children. It may seem strong language, but it is

well-considered, and is the language of truth and soberness, to say that there are fathers and mothers who risk and sacrifice their children's souls for the sake of position in so-called "Society." To give thought and labor to qualify oneself and family for a high rank which Heaven has already bestowed; to step gracefully and naturally into place and station which have come in the ordinary ways of Providence; to accept this as Heaven's call to duty and to fulfill the duties of such life with zeal and relish and conscientious faithfulness—that is one thing, and is not inconsistent with Christian character and usefulness. But to consume the forces of life, to waste its substance, to absorb its every hour in the heat and passionate struggle to climb, or creep, or crowd into and keep within a coveted "circle of society," that is unworthy alike the simplest instincts of womanhood and manhood, and the plainest duties of a Christian. No true soul can ever do this without enacting anew the story of Eden, and falling from the sweet integrity of a holy nature. Still the Tempter says, "Ye shall be as gods!" some other and higher

than Providence has made you. Still woman's eyes, like Eve's, are fixed covetously upon fruit which seems "good for food" and "pleasant to the eyes," and woman's hand still reaches forth to pluck and eat. Still Adam cries, as of old, "The woman gave me of the tree and I did eat."

It would be a pitiful exhibition of human nature under any case, but when this sad round is continually repeated by parents in the interests of their children ; when it is our young womanhood and manhood who are tempted to the blighting feast, and when the tempters in the midst of the garden are mothers and fathers, who then can measure the depth of the fall? Yet this is a truthful picture of what is transpiring around us in the houses of those who profess and call themselves Christians. You see parents who are more deeply concerned that their children should shine in some so-called "best society," than that they should shine as stars forever in the company of the saints in light ; who would rather see their household plants weeds in a king's garden than Cedars of Lebanon on a bald mountain-top. For them "the chief end of man" becomes a place in

the chosen circle. The church which they attend; the pew in which they sit; the causes for which they labor and give; the amounts which they subscribe; the charities which they patronize and in whose management they consent to take part; the locality in which they live; the appointments of their home; the old friends whom they cherish and the new friendships they form—all, and all else are chosen and regulated without a single thought of their children's spiritual advantage, their growth in sterling virtues, their usefulness to their race, and their acquittal and commendation at the Eternal Throne! To place and keep them in "good society!"—for this, O mothers, will you pass the children of your body and love through the fires of a Moloch more fatal than that which burned of old within the vale of Hinnom?

Let us sit down quietly, and, with our faces toward the light of Eternity, count all the cost. In this life, what is the issue? Call your own experience and observation to the witness stand; summon the wisdom of your older friends; question these broken forms and blighted hearts that flitted once with yon foolish moths around the

treacherous flame ; question these gibbering spectres of once happy and prosperous lives that rise up around the wrecks of honor and fortune—and this is the testimony : The prizes of life for your children are not within the ranks of a godless and worldly society ! The maidens and the men whom you taught your children to avoid as not of proper “set,” though you knew their sterling worth and high character—they are the present rulers of the realm, the dictators of commerce, the merchant princes, the industrial lords, the sovereigns of transportation ! And the creatures for whom you sacrificed your children, where are they ? A few have survived and are worthy of your honor ; as for the rest, their wreckage drifts on many a sea, or lies in fragments on many a coast. It is the old story—Paradise is lost ; lost for the eating of fruit “pleasant to the eyes,” but under the ban of God !

Here we close our study of Mary the mother of Mark. Her choice of Christian friends and influences, her rejection of the society which was anti-christian and un-christian, brought her boy in contact with the good St. Peter. “Marcus my Son” that holy apostle calls him, and it is not



improbable that Peter was the means of his conversion. Mary's choice of the despised people of God, her dedication of her home as an Evangelical centre, proved the turning point in Mark's life, the salvation of his soul. Mary did more: she gave her son to the ministry, an example which needs to be followed by very many mothers of wealth and position among us. England's noble families have always reckoned one son for the Church. Our Puritan ancestors of New England, and our Scotch-Irish fathers of Pennsylvania's beautiful valleys, felt it a duty to educate one son for the sacred ministry. Thus the best blood and intellect of the nation were continually passing into our pulpits. Has not the old, honored custom—the successor of that beautiful Hebrew law which dedicated every eldest born son, and afterward a whole tribe, to God and the Church—fallen into disuse?

Thereafter, we can read the life of Mary only as it appears in that of her son. The minister of Paul and Barnabas, in their first missionary journey; the companion of Peter in Babylon; the friend and attendant of Paul in his first imprison-

ment at Rome ; above all, the author of one of the Four Blessed Evangels. Yes, we may lay our hand upon this GOSPEL OF ST. MARK, with all the hopes of immortality and blessings of life that gather upon it, and we touch the results of Mary's social ministry. First of all, chief of all, it saved her own son for God and humanity. Mary's work lives in and enters the ages interblended with the work of her son. This record is not solitary ; it is but a type of a changeless law. On that imperishable tablet where Honor's hand inscribes the deathless names of wise and just and good, the highest and the fairest there are only MOTHER written large !

THE END.