

righteousness. 'And as they were still flesh and blood probably we do them no injustice, when we suppose that they might experience some personal satisfaction, not to say pride, when they thought that God had honored them, the one to be the mother of the Messiah's harbinger, and the other of the Messiah himself. And very natural is it for us, if not to envy these highly favored women, at least to regard them as more highly honored, and blessed than any other mothers in Israel. But as if to show us that there is no pure and unmingled happiness here, and that high honor and distinction often expose those, who are possessed of them, to great suffering and sorrow, these women were both exposed to the most exquisite sorrow, in connexion with their most honored and beloved sons. We know little of Elizabeth's early trials, in connection with John the Baptist; but how intense must have been her suffering, if she lived to see him imprisoned, and hear of his bloody death by order of a cruel tyrant. And as to the virgin, however great her joy in that glorious child, yet how great must have been her anxiety in regard to him, during the dangers to which his childhood and infancy were exposed; and well may we be assured, that the sword spoken of by Simeon, pierced through her heart, when she saw him suspended on the accursed tree. And O brethren, let us learn not to attach undue importance to a mere natural connexion with the Saviour himself. When he was told that his mother and brethren were without, seeking him, he answered them saying, "Who is my mother, or my brethren?" And he looked round about, we are told, on them who sat about him, and said—"Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

Whilst we respect and honor the memory of the virgin, as one of the holiest

and the most highly favored of women, let us take care not to idolize it; and learn from the words of the Saviour himself, that a mere fleshly relationship to him is of little value, in comparison with a spiritual connexion with him. Let us rejoice in the assurance that all may attain that spiritual relationship to the Saviour, who really desire, and seek earnestly and perseveringly to obtain it. And then in virtue of their union with the Saviour, all things will be theirs, the purest and most exalted happiness on earth, and afterwards the fulness of joy, which is in God's presence, and the pleasures which are at his right hand, for ever more.

A Thoughtless Sailor.

A Sailor once paid a visit to St. Paul's in London. Whilst carelessly passing along the isle, he heard the officiating minister utter the words, *Pray without ceasing*. They made no impression on his mind. One fine evening, many years afterwards when at sea, as he was walking on deck, suddenly the words darted into his mind, 'Pray without ceasing.' 'Pray without ceasing! what can these words be?' exclaimed he. 'I think I have heard them before, where could it be?' 'Oh! it was at St. Paul's in London, the minister read them from the Bible. What! and do the Scriptures say, 'Pray without ceasing?' Oh, what a wretch I must be, to have lived so long without praying at all! God who had first deposited this Scripture in his ear, now caused it to spring up in a way and at a time, and with a power, peculiarly His own. The sailor felt conviction seize on his conscience. He began to pray, but praying was not all. 'Oh,' said he, 'that I had a Bible, or some good book!' He ran to his chest, and at one corner, found a Bible, which his poor old mother had, twenty years before, put among his clothes, and which, till now, he had never opened. He embraced it, clasped it to his heart, read, wept, prayed, believed, and became a 'new man' in Christ Jesus his Redeemer.