

passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them *forty days*; speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Is there not a family centre round which his followers may still rally:—"Do this in remembrance of me." And is there power by which to prostrate the final foe:—"Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And is there an anthem in heaven which will outlast all the songs of Zion, when earth is wan with age?—"Unto him that loved us, and washed our sins in his blood." And thus the beautiful object is kept ever before us with living interest, and is ever making to our hearts its protracted appeal. "The love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us, for when we were yet without strength, Christ died for us; whom therefore we love, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH.

The people of Christ are to be *beautiful*, and beautiful because holy; the text describes them as "willing in the beauties of holiness." The drops of the early dew are beautiful. The rising sun not only discovers them, it brightens and gilds them, and makes them the glittering ornaments in the early morning of our gardens and fields. And what were the early Christians? I am not speaking of those who in later centuries bore the name, but had no more of the likeness of Christ, than we have now, nor perhaps so much; I refer to those who yielded first to the power of the Gospel, and were the first-fruits of the Gospel unto Christ. Their very enemies did them honor; they hated, but they admired them. As they led them forth to persecution and to death, they wondered at their lofty and splendid characters. But their graces were not their own. The dew does not sparkle when the sun does not shine on it. Even a Christian man has no beauty, no holiness, but as Christ imparts it to him. And what is his highest beauty and holiness;—a dew drop reflecting the sun. But still that *dew drop does reflect the sun*; and so does every real believer in Christ Jesus reflect in some measure his Redeemer's likeness—"glorious in holiness"—that is the Lord's own character; beautiful in holiness—that is the character of all who are made partakers of his grace and Spirit—their character now; 'the beauty of the Lord' is already upon them; it will be more brightly, more visibly upon them in a brighter world.—*Bradley's Sermons.*

CHRIST.—There are no saving views of God, but in Christ; and there are no gracious views of God hat of man, but in Christ. If we look on God out of Christ, we are dazzled with an overwhelming confounding

majesty; if God looks on us out of Christ, he seeth hateful and hated sinners; Eph. ii 12, 14.—*Trail.*

THE MARYS AT THE CROSS.

BY THE REV. W. ATHERTON.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."—*John xix. 25.*

The word of God teaches us as well by example as precept; nor is this to be considered a disadvantage, but, on the contrary, a considerable benefit. For, how useful to a scholar is a *copy*! How much more aided are our conceptions of a building by a *model* than a plan! So in spiritual things, the various subjects of Divine grace are most advantageously placed before us, not in their abstraction, but embodied, enlivened, exemplified. Moreover, the example demonstrates the practicability and usefulness of the precept, so that apprehension of inability is removed, and we are encouraged to emulate those who have gone before, and who, "through faith and patience, now inherit the promises."

A lovelier example of moral heroism is not, perhaps, to be found on the page of history, than that furnished in the above passage: the language is peculiarly simple and affecting: the scene exquisitely tender: the characters in the highest degree interesting: the circumstances altogether new and wonderful. The whole forms a fit subject for the painter's pencil and the poet's muse; nor have the Marys at the cross been passed by without an improvement of that kind. We have seen them on canvass, and admired. We have heard of them through the melody of verse, and been delighted. But we have a preference, and preference is not exclusion, for another form of development; that is to say, we wish to see the three Marys drawn out in living characters, exemplified in temper, carriage, and conduct of both sexes. Not that such characters are wanting altogether; but we desire to see them more general and complete.

Mary, our Lord's mother, was "blessed among women," preeminently so, honoured above all the crowned heads which were ever distinguished in the earth. We may not, however, worship or invoke her intercession, as do the Roman Catholics. This were idolatry which the scripture every where condemns. Nor does she require our homage. No! could she speak audibly, doubtless she would say to her mistaken worshippers, as Peter said to Cornelius, or as the angel said to John, "Rise up, I also am thy fellow-servant,—a creature only on a level with thyself,—worship God." Her history is much enveloped in mystery; but her character is transparent enough. How meekly she received the delicate and

inexplicably mysterious communication of the angel! (Luke i. 31–35.) How sweetly she sang as the holy child lay in her arms! (Luke i. 46–48.) We know not which to admire most,—her cheerful resignation to the will of God, or her implicit confidence in her Divine Redeemer. What unquestioning obedience characterised her subsequent career! She followed the Lamb through evil report and good report. Obloquy could not repulse, danger could not intimidate her; she abode faithful.

Mary, the wife of Cleophas, elsewhere, called Alpheus, mother of James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas (not Iscariot), three beloved disciples, a mother in Israel, was likeminded with her honoured relative. She, too, followed the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; nor had the reproaches and execrations of the infuriated Jews any effect upon her, save to cause her affection to burn more vehemently towards "the despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Mary Magdalene, an inhabitant of Magdala, a city on the east side of Tiberias, was not less distinguished by grace. She owed more, in fact, to the Saviour than either of the other Marys; for he had rescued her from a course of impiety the most abandoned. Nor could she be ungrateful to her deliverer, through whose kindly interposition she was now associated with the most virtuous and pious of her sex. I think I see her immersed in deepest thoughtfulness. She is cogitating a testimonial of affection. The idea occurs to her; she immediately acts upon it; and with eager, unostentatious step, hastens off to the place of merchandise to expend her all in the purchase of an alabaster box of very precious ointment,—but for such a purpose not too precious—with which to anoint her adorable benefactor. But where is he to be found? She makes diligent search. At length she finds him in the house of one Simon, a Pharisee. She crosses the threshold,—she enters the apartment,—but as she entered, she faltered. It was her sense of unworthiness that made her falter. She stood, her very position saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." She stood behind, feeling herself too unworthy to stand before him. His dignified head she had vainly anointed; but that was too great an honour; she therefore anointed his feet. But no sooner was the ceremony proceeded with, than her tears fell. Nor could she refrain. Ah! methinks, those tears said,

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay,
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

And she wiped them with "the hairs of her head"—her *glory*! perhaps formerly, her *pride*! But she said, or seemed to say,

"All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood."