

Interesting subject of christian contemplation. If it be blessed to be the instrument of even a common good, what is her blessedness through whom salvation was brought to a ruined world, through whom and in whose substance that union was effected, which by allying God to us in the human nature, exalted that nature and us in it to a participation in the glories of the divine nature? Whose substance furnished the connecting link between the unclean and the clean? between sinful flesh and sinless God? thus giving earnest that at last the whole ransomed humanity shall be exalted to supra-angelic glory, And then the blessedness that her own soul received immediately from Him. Hers was an intercourse with Him, which mortal beside her could never have. She cherished Him as a mother but adored Him as a handmaid. She nourished Him at the breast, yet revered Him as God. She labored in poverty to give Him bread as her child, yet saw Him as the Living Bread, the Saviour of the world. He dwelt with her in her lowly tent, but she knew that He filled heaven and earth. Was He a man merely? No, for His conception was divine. Was He God only? How then could she see Him as flesh of her flesh, and bone of her bone? 'Great is the mystery of godliness.' And great above all saints is her honor, who was a second paradise prepared for Him the second Adam, 'to feed in and to gather lilies.' Alone of mortals she could say, 'my beloved is mine and I am His, and He feedeth among the lilies'—those plants of righteousness which the Lord had placed in her, the garden that He made so lovely for Himself.

"We might carry this subject on to deeper and more minute details, but it is a good and important warning, that we should in reference to the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, follow the example of scripture, which mentioned her not, save as connected with Christ's presence; nor then allows us to see that which would be of most thrilling interest, but only as it seems, to catch occasional glimpses of her when under constraint, from the presence of the multitudes. Once only do we know of her approaching Him in public with anything like the familiarity that we must believe to have existed between them, and then at the marriage of Cana, though He complies with her request, and in the compliance commences His miracles, He yet checks her conduct, as if saying, that should she at all continue this way of address, so much did she know of Him, that she would unwittingly betray to the gaze of the rude world, mysteries that had been confided to her, only for the satisfaction of her own soul and will, and obediently does the mother seem to have profited by the admonition of her Son; for from that hour her lips seem only to have been unsealed in private, at least they are the last words recorded of her, by the holy evangelists. After that it was other lips

that told the Lord: 'His mother stood without desiring to speak with Him.' Indeed so entire was the reserve that many have supposed that Christ, the perfect exemplar of domestic as well as of public virtues, was indifferent to or neglectful of His mother. And so it still continued, even till that fearful day of His crucifixion. When at the foot of the cross, 'as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so she opened not her mouth.' Next to Him that hung upon the cross, might she of all others say in that hour of desolation, 'Behold and see all ye, that pass by the way, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,' yet in further exemplification of that same mind and spirit which was common to her with her Lord, and if her life of self-denial had fitted her for even this, not when all was over did she strive, nor cry, nor did any hear her voice in the street.

"'God is the will of the Lord.' Obedience was the law of her life and from it she learned to trust God always. 'And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.'

"Two important remarks may be drawn from what has been said:

"A life of poverty and self-denial is a great religious privilege. 'God hath chosen the poor of this world.' It is a mistake to place it as a state merely compatible with high religious character. To him that would attain in this life to perfection, it is an indispensable requisite. It obtained for St. Mary, that her womb should bear, that her breast should nourish, and her hands supply the earthly wants of the Lord of Glory. I farther remark that the nearest united to God and holiest of every age live and die unknown save by their God. St. Mary was far greater, and far better than any of the human race beside. We have seen the *quietness* of her character. Such await the great reward of the unseen world. There St. Mary sits in the glory of her Lord. There we shall see her if we follow her good example unto the end, where we shall 'glorify God' in her, free, at once from the false reproach and the real danger of ascribing that glory to herself. In hope thereof let us join with her in that old song of the church, and say, 'my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaid, for behold from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name.'

"And His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation.

"He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their heart.

"He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

"He hath filled the hungry with good