

THE
CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

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SERIES. } No. 408.

DECEMBER.

[1871.]

MARTHA, MARY, AND THEIR BROTHER.

AFTER the resurrection of Lazarus, our Lord withdrew Himself from the malicious attempts of the Pharisees, and retired to a "city called Ephraim," situated in "the country near to the wilderness." There He remained, with the intention probably of collecting and recruiting His energies; and, when the appointed days had expired, quitted the place of concealment to enter upon His last momentous journey to the Holy City. His first halting-place (it appears) was Jericho, where He healed the blind Bartimæus and his companion, and afterwards illustrated the purpose for which He Himself had come into the world by the conversion of the tax-gatherer, Zacchæus. Thence he passed on, toiling up the precipitous road, to the little village of Bethany, arriving there on the Friday evening, shortly before the commencement of the day of rest. And it is likely enough that He hoped to spend amongst His friends in that locality one calm Sabbath more before His entry into Jerusalem, and the exciting events which were so rapidly to follow.

His arrival in the village created an unusual commotion. The inhabitants welcomed Him with the most lively demonstrations of gratitude and joy, and prepared an entertainment, the management of which devolved upon the active and energetic Martha. It is difficult to decide positively whether this "supper," or feast, was held on the evening of the Friday on which our Saviour arrived at Bethany, or on the following day. But there can be no manner of question that the occasion itself was one of a most remarkable character. With little effort of the imagination we picture to ourselves the Saviour reclining by the side of Simon the leper—Simon, *i. e.*, who had been a leper, but who had doubtless been cleansed by Christ Himself; whilst on the other side of the Divine guest we observe the

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character, the sweetness and humility of a true disciple of the Lord—one whose very presence seemed always to elevate the tone of any society in which he mixed—one who appeared by his very looks to make all that was mean or low, everything that was in the slightest degree irreverent or ungenerous, altogether out of place—one in whose presence men unconsciously took a higher line, and felt drawn towards better things—the accomplished scholar and man of the world, who well knew all that was due to society and to friendly intercourse, and always paid it, and yet joined with that such a depth of religious life, that wherever he went he, as it were, spoke the very message of God without saying a word.”

The last fifteen years of his life were passed in complete retirement. The sudden death of a wife who had been in every sense his helpmate through a most happy union of forty-eight years, was a blow he never recovered; though, with the habitually reverent and thankful tone which was one of his chief characteristics, he seldom adverted to this, the great bereavement of his life, without adding, “Thank God for *all His mercies.*”

The simplicity and manliness of his Christian faith would, to those who knew him, render any attempt to raise the veil from his inner life unsuitable. Yet in these days, when the contest between good and evil seems to grow fiercer, it may help some struggling spirits to know that one who lived to the age of eighty-four grew daily in the love of his Bible and of prayer both public and private. His last effort, within a month of his death, was to receive the Holy Communion in his accustomed place, kneeling at the altar rails when scarcely able to move without exhaustion.

His end was peace. His morning prayer over (which no bodily weakness was ever permitted to shorten), his Bible had been placed ready for him to read the Daily Lessons, as was his custom, with any of his family who were with him. But while he was dressing, a sudden faintness came over him, and without a struggle, he was at rest.

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT, the gifted author of “Just as I am,” “My God, my Father, while I stray,” and many other hymns highly esteemed, and very valuable to the Christian Church, has just passed away from amongst us, having died, on the 22nd of September last, at Brighton, in the house where her home had been, for some years past, with her youngest sister, Mrs. Babington.

Her memory may well seem entitled to more than a passing tribute in the Christian Observer, which was set on foot and sustained for many years by those amongst whom her early life was passed. Their principles were hers. They formed the basis of her religious life. To the last she clung to them with unwavering consistency, and always took the deepest interest in the energetic measures that have been required to stem the Rationalising and Romanising tendencies of our day. We cannot doubt, therefore, that the readers of the

Christian Observer will take a lively interest in all that relates to so earnest an upholder of the Truth, as it has been always maintained in these pages. But our present notice must necessarily be brief.

Charlotte Elliott was one of a large family, remarkable for their various talents. Her father and mother for many years formed the centre of a very interesting religious society at Clapham and at Brighton. Her uncle, the Rev. John Venn, was rector of Clapham. Her mother was the eldest daughter of the Rev. Henry Venn, of Huddersfield and of Yelling, one of the leaders of the religious awakening in the last century, and to her, as Eling Venn, are addressed many of the interesting letters that appear in the published memoir of his life. Her two brothers, the late Rev. H. V. Elliott, of Brighton, and the Rev. E. B. Elliott, author of "*Horæ Apocalypticæ*," still surviving, are well known by their character and their works.

Charlotte Elliott herself, in early life, gave much promise of the ability that was subsequently developed. Her lively sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others, and her rare powers of conversation, gave a peculiar fascination to her society both at home and throughout a large circle of Christian friends.

At an early period her poetical talents were exercised in the celebration of family events for the gratification of the family circle, and in writing lines of the deepest pathos for the consolation of those who were afflicted. Gradually it became natural to her to throw into the form of verse her own personal experience, and all her richer impressions of that which, after a while, alone became deeply interesting to her, the "life of God in the soul."

Often was she solicited to lay before the public eye both her lighter early verses and her more spiritual later compositions. But as often she steadily refused. At length she was induced to print anonymously "*Hymns for a Week*," for sale at a bazaar in support of St. Mary's Hall, Brighton, but she afterwards published them with her name, as some of the hymns had been pirated. "*The Invalid's Hymn-book*" was arranged by her; it contains many of her own hymns, printed anonymously, among which was the well-known one, "*Just as I am*." Two other volumes of hymns followed these publications, and for twenty-five years she arranged and edited a pocket-book called "*The Christian Remembrancer*," in which many of her hymns first appeared. A daily text was provided in it, and upon the selection of these texts she bestowed much thought and care; but the search of the Bible was attended with so much satisfaction, that she retained this part of the publication till within two years of her death. Throughout life, even when her hymns and poems became widely known and admired, and when she was receiving the highest and most gratifying testimonies from people of all ranks, and in all countries, to the blessing and usefulness of her most favoured hymn, "*Just as I am*,"* the genuine language of her heart and of her lips

* This hymn has found its response, not only in the chamber of retirement by the sick and afflicted, but it has

been equally dear to those engaged in the most active and useful departments of the Lord's work. As an illustration,

was always the same. "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy name be the glory; I am nothing."

Her health was never strong, and she was often confined to a sick room. Here her Bible was her chief companion, and prayer her delight, especially intercessory prayer for her friends, and for the cause of Christ throughout the world. This retirement enabled her to prepare, in the Invalid Hymn Book, a rich collection of original and selected hymns for those who, like herself, were withdrawn from the world by sickness, or any other affliction.

After the family home was broken up by the death of both parents, she formed a fresh home with her youngest sister, who took upon herself all the household cares; and so Miss Elliott, as she often avowed, had leisure secured to her for her diligent searching of Scripture, and her many poetical compositions.

In the last year of her life, and especially during the last few months, there was much increase of weakness and suffering; but, amidst all, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was hourly magnified in her. Those at her side noted most thankfully her sweet peace, her bright hope, her gentle, humble, fearless drawing near to the gates of death; her deep love of Scripture and rich enjoyment of its precious truths; her earnest resistance to all error; her bringing all to the standard of that Divine Word; her abiding love to the name and the person of Jesus; her full trust, most humbly, in His atoning merits and intercession; her yearning after the hour when He would come to take her to Himself; and yet her patience under prolonged suffering; and her simple desire that God would glorify Himself in her, living or dying, doing or suffering His holy will. All is but as a present, living, most blessed history to those who survive, an earlier fragment of that which will be fully developed in eternity. The principle of all was simple reliance on the word and the work of Christ. He had *done all for her*. He had *promised all to her*.

She was as the limpet on the rock (she would often say) so clinging to her blessed Saviour, that any effort to tear her from Him was like rending her soul asunder; or, she was as the happy infant on its mother's lap, with no strength, but needing none; fully supported by those loving arms, and only looking up to the beam of light and love on that blessed countenance, when the sweetest joy would steal into her soul.

Or again, she would trace over in her own mind all she had ever known or read of worth and beauty in man or nature,—all of genius and glory, the highest and best on earth,—all the loveliest and

we may refer to the last scene in the life of one of the most active, laborious, and successful missionaries, the Rev. Joseph Peet, of Mavelicare, in Travancore. He commenced a mission in a city of such fierce bigotry that he was said to have thrust his fist into a lion's mouth. He had hair-breadth escapes of his life; and his labours for above thirty years were most abundant, so

that on his death-bed he received deputations from nearly twenty congregations, gathered by him from amongst the heathen. Afterwards he gave his dying charge to eight native ministers who had all been more or less educated under his charge, and then, composing himself for his last sleep, he exclaimed, "Now repeat my favourite hymn, 'Just as I am.'"

most noble characters that had ever evoked admiration or esteem. She would trace over all, with a rich unfolding of the several pictures, and a comparison of them with the portraiture, in her own mind, of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." She would speak of each one—Milton, Dante, Newton, St. Paul, &c.—as but a faint outline, a shadowy reflection, of His glorious excellency. And thus, when no one was by, in the silent hours of darkness, her solitary musings, of which she would give an account the following day, often made even wakefulness to be no weariness, and her sick chamber as the pavilion of her Saviour's presence.

As to material images or pictures, she felt that they did but cripple and confine her meditations, and draw them down to earth. And the pomp of a gorgeous ceremonial was to her but the attempt to create a semblance of religion, when the heart could not rise to the reality. Many years since, her living motto had been expressed in those simple lines :—

"Oh, Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality,
More present to Faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen,—
More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

At a later period, when her weakness made it no longer possible for her to attend the public sanctuary that she so dearly loved, this was the expression of her mind,—“My Bible is my Church. It is always open, and there is my High Priest ever waiting to receive me. There I have my confessional, my thanksgiving, my psalms of praise, a field of promises, and a congregation of whom the world is not worthy—prophets and apostles, and martyrs and confessors—in short, all I can want I there find.”

In the last years and days of her life—days of increased weakness and suffering—she was sustained and blessed with a sense of her Saviour's love and her Saviour's presence, and with a sure and abiding trust in Him.

In a private paper written for her sister Eleanor, at the commencement of her 81st year, she says,—

“I feel that so great an age as mine requires three things—great faith, great patience, and great peace. Come what may during the year upon which we have entered, I firmly believe that goodness and mercy, like two guardian angels, will follow us during every day in every hour, in every varying circumstance through which we may have to pass,—in every time of trouble sustaining and comforting us,—the angel of His presence keeping ever by our side, and whispering, Fear not, for I am with thee,—Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. We may have to part for a short season with each other ; but He has promised never, never to leave us,—never, never to forsake us.”

When parting with another sister, a few days before her death, she said,—“Our next meeting will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

When the verse, "Let not your heart be troubled," was repeated to her, she quietly said, "But my heart is not troubled;" adding, "My mind is full of the Bible." And that word was her support when speech had failed her, and she was passing through the dark valley.

The last manifestation of consciousness was on the morning of her death, when, on her sister repeating to her their text for the day, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off," she clasped her hands together; and as she raised her eyes to Heaven, a beam came over her countenance, which showed that she fully entered into the precious words, and was realizing the glorious vision she was so soon to behold.

Miss Elliott's original hymns are comprised in three volumes:— "Hymns for a Week." (Small 8vo, 40th thousand.) "Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted." (Foolscap 8vo, 180 pages, 7th edition.) "Thoughts in Verse on Sacred Subjects," with some Miscellaneous Poems. (Crown 8vo, 240 pages, 2nd edition.)

POETRY.

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

A spotless Lamb, by God's command,
Was on the Jewish altar slain,
That men might know that blood alone
Could take away the sinner's stain.

But none, save Jesus, God's own Son,
Could cleanse from sin, or stop the curse;
His body broken, blood poured forth,
Redeemed the guilty universe.

The work He finished; now no more
Jesus Himself is offered up,
Yet still, in thankful memory,
We break the bread, and take the cup.

And as in love, and joy, and peace,
His people in communion meet,
They hail by faith that better feast,
When Christ Himself with them shall eat.

O Lord, thy dying love exceeds
What men or angels can declare;
Teach us, while here Thy death we show,
For Thy bright *Presence* to prepare.

P. P.