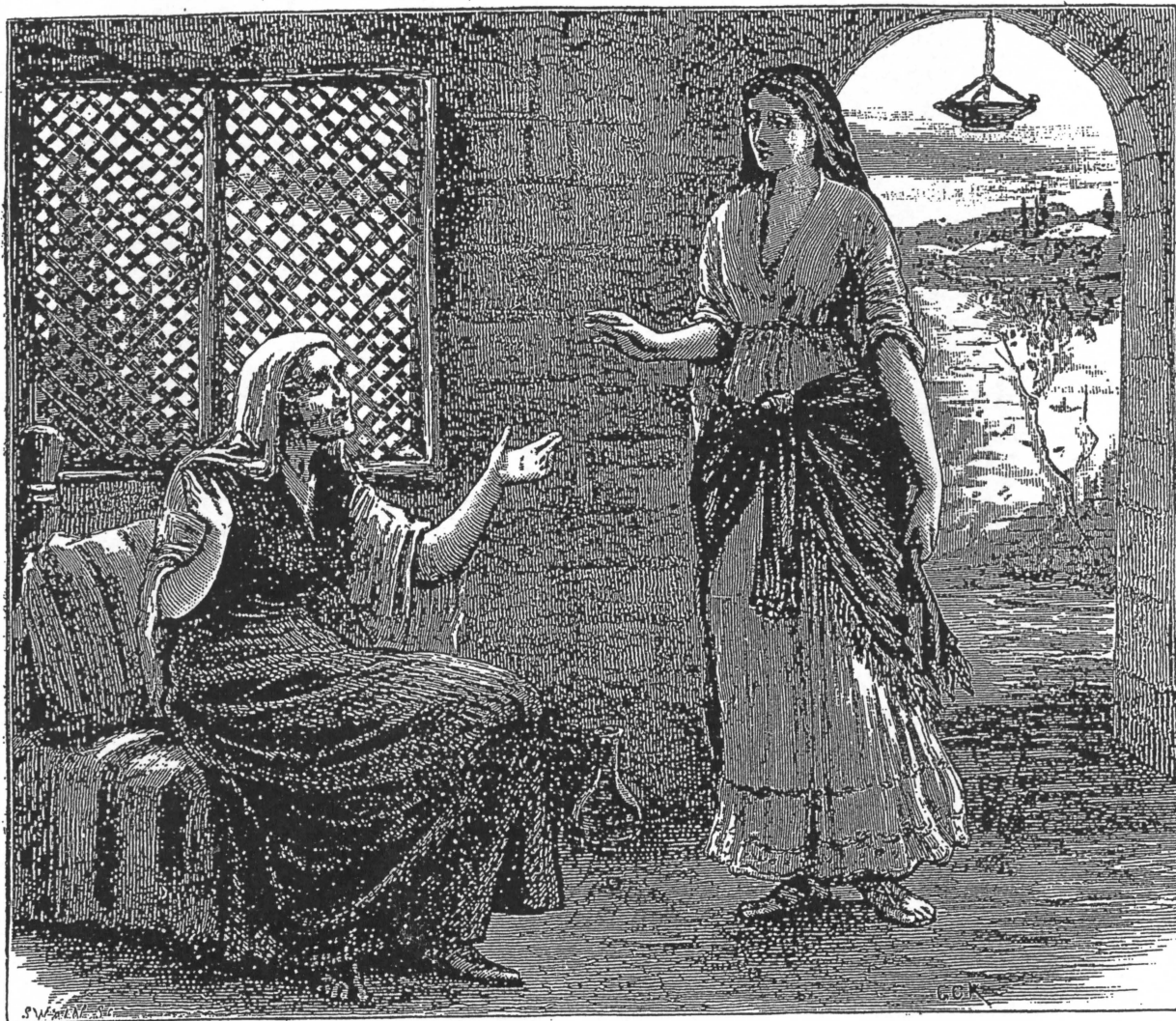


Mary's Magnificat and Meditations, Luke 1-2

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



MEETING OF MARY AND ELISABETH.

The Miracles of Christ's Birth

The month was probably April, the year was 5 B.C., when a young Jewish couple slowly made their way from Nazareth to the little town of Bethlehem, a trip of some 80 miles. Warm days and cool night, much like Florida's weather, followed their journey. Deeply in love, they could not help but recount the miraculous event which led to their journey.

The story of a miracle is always attended by miraculous events, which, if taken by themselves, may seem only ordinary until taken together. The birth of Jesus Christ was just such a miracle.

I. The Miracle of the Preparation

- A. First and most important, it was in God's predetermined time (Gal. 4:4).
- B. Next, there was a Messianic expectation throughout the Jewish/Arab territories. The Jews were seeking a Deliverer to overthrow the hated Roman Government. Plus the expectation of hearing from God, since there had been no direct revelation from God for 400 years.
- C. Next, the Law of God (10 Commandments) had run the course of its instruction since being given 1500 years before. They knew all they needed to know about their own sinfulness, and their need for the promised Messiah.
- D. Next, the Roman government determined to complete a census of its people and their property (not a "tax") by forcing them to return to their city of origin.
- E. Also, an official and complete genealogy of every Jew was available in the Temple. Thus Jesus' birth, in Matt. begins with His genealogy as the rightful heir to the throne of David the king.
- F. Last, far to the east a star appeared in the night sky.

II. The Miracle of the Birth of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ

- A. His parents "were both righteous before God, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless".
- B. His mother was "of the daughters of Aaron" (first High Priest).
- C. They were old and without children (a sign of God's reproach/judgment to the Jew). God had kept them for this hour!
- D. Zacharias was serving in the Temple, at the altar of incense (the place of prayer), probably a once-in-a-lifetime privilege.
- E. The angel of the Lord appeared to him, breaking the 400 years of silence.
- F. Their son was named John (grace of God) by God.
- G. John would be great, would drink no alcohol, would go before the Christ to make the Jews ready, would preach in the power and spirit of the greatest O.T. prophet, Elijah, and would be filled with the Holy Spirit from conception.

III. The Miracle of Joseph

- A. Joseph was of the house/lineage of king David
- B. He was a "just" man (saved)
- C. Joseph was called Mary's husband because "espousal" could only be broken by divorce, though the marriage was no consummated for a year from the espousal
- D. He was unwilling to make Mary a public example, though he could have: 1) divorced her, 2) simply given the child his name, 3) had her stoned for adultery
- E. He "thought on these things," wanting to do right and waiting on God for direction
- F. He believed God and took Mary to be his wife

IV. The Miracle of Mary

- A. Mary was a virgin (by her own testimony & according to prophecy)
- B. She, of all the Jewish maidens, had been chosen by God
- C. She was calm in the presence of the angel
- D. Mary called herself a slave of God, and willingly trusted God's Word

E. She realized that, though favored by God, she was a sinner by nature, needing a Saviour by choice

V. **The Miracle of the Conception**

- A. God had prophesied Christ's conception 700 years before it happened. God said the virgin shall be with Child (as to His humanity), and would bring forth a Son (as to His relationship to God), and His Name would be Emmanuel (as to His deity).
- B. Mary was a virgin, and Joseph "knew her not."
- C. Christ was conceived in Mary without the involvement of a human male
- D. Jesus' conception was "on this wise," different from any other birth
- E. Jesus' conception was wrought by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the Highest (God), resulting in "that holy thing which shall be born of thee called the Son of God"

VI. **The Miracle of Protection from the Sin Nature**

- A. His birth did not use the participation of both male and female (Jer. 31:22)
- B. His human nature was obtained through Mary. His divine nature was eternal, but combined with human nature by the Holy Spirit
- C. Each cell of Jesus' body was prepared ("knit") by God (Heb. 10:5), therefore Jesus was human, though sinless

VII. **The Miracle of Christ's Birth**

- A. At the end of a list of normal births, and lines of descent ("begats"), Christ is "born," which has the meaning of a particular birth, different from all the others
- B. Mary, "out of (as to source) whom (fem. gender not related to Joseph) was born Jesus"
- C. Jesus' birth was "on this wise," different then any before
- D. Jesus was the firstborn of Mary, one of others
- E. It occurred in the exact town prophesied of 700 years before
- F. The infant was worshipped by the poorest of the working poor (shepherds), the richest of the working rich (magi), and the most devote of the temple (Simeon & Anna). He was worshipped by male and female, Jew and Gentile
- G. He was not made a king, He was born the King. He was not made the Son of God, He was born as God come in human flesh

VIII. **The Miracle of the Magi**

- A. They were Gentiles who knew the Jewish Scriptures
- B. they saw the Star and followed it path for perhaps two years
- C. There were not just three Wisemen. Their numbers cast great fear into Herod and all Jerusalem
- D. The Gentiles came to worship the King of the Jews. Must have been justified (saved)
- E. They recognized the Christ in the babe
- F. They found Jesus in a house, not in a manger

IX. **The Miracle of the Names of the Child**

Jesus ("God is salvation"), **Christ** ("anointed One of God"), **Son of David** (king), **Son of Abraham** (descent), **Son** (relationship), **Child** (humanity), **Emmanuel** (God with us), **King of the Jews** (ruler), **Governor** (ruler), **Nazarene** (locality), **Son of the Highest** (Deity), **Holy Thing** (sinlessness), **Son of God** ("same as God"), **Lord** (Master, God), **Saviour** ("Deliverer"), **Babe** (innocent humanity), **Consolation of Israel** (Completer), **Thy Salvation** (God's salvation, Yeshua), **Light, Sign.**

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Mary's Magnificat and Meditations, Luke 1-2

Introduction:

- ❖ The name Mary comes from the Greek *Maria*, which is a shortened form of Miriam.
- ❖ There is perhaps no person in sacred or profane history around which so many legends have been grouped.
- ❖ Mary was the only person to have been with Christ from His birth to His death.
- ❖ Luke's gospel mentions Mary most often, identifying her by name 12 times.
- ❖ Mark's gospel mentions Mary once as Jesus' mother, but without naming her (3:31).
- ❖ Mary and "the brethren" of Jesus are in the company of the eleven who are gathered in the upper room after the ascension (Acts 1:14).
- ❖ Mary is portrayed in Scripture "as we should have expected, as the most tender, the most faithful, humble, patient and loving of women, but a woman still" (*Peloubet's Bible Dictionary* [1925] 396).



After the infancy narratives, Mary appears only five times in the Scriptures:

(1) In the temple in search of her son, (2) at the marriage of Cana (3) at Capernaum where she with her family had gone to inquire about the activities of Jesus, (4) Mary is at the foot of the cross, (5) Mary with her children in the upper room.

1A. Mary's Maternity:

This remarkable woman was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus. She was of the royal house of David, as was her husband, Joseph. Early espoused to Joseph, she was under his lawful protection, when the angel Gabriel informed her that, by a miracle of divine power, she was to be the mother of the Messiah. The angel further informed her that her cousin Elizabeth, who was old and barren, was already six months pregnant. Mary responded humbly, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

The news of Elizabeth's and hers miraculous pregnancies prompted Mary to visit her cousin:

Luke 1:39-40 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

A number of towns in Judah have vied for the honor of being the birthplace of John the Baptist. The most likely site is the village of Ein Kerem ("The Spring of the Vineyard"), five miles west from the center of Jerusalem. The settlement dates back to the Israelite period, where it was known as Beith Hakerem (Jer. 6:1). Today it is a picturesque artist village.

2A. Mary's Magnificat:

Mary's hymn is the first of four nativity hymns in Luke's Gospel. The other hymns are Zechariah's *benedictus*, the angels' *gloria* and Simeon's *nunc dimittis*. These songs are the last of the Hebrew psalms and the first of the Christian hymns. They appear only in Luke's Gospel

because Luke emphasizes the concepts of joy and rejoicing. It is, as it were, his conviction that the mighty acts of God in salvation need to be celebrated in song.

In Mary's song, says Charles C. Ryrie, "There are 15 discernable quotations from the OT. . . showing how much the OT was known and loved in the home in which Jesus was reared" (*Ryrie Study Bible*, note). The hymn further shows that although Mary was apparently just a poor peasant girl, she had been reared in a godly home where Mary was exposed to the sacred Scriptures. Like Zechariah, Simeon, Anna and others, Mary was looking forward to the redemption of Israel. As she heard Elizabeth's greeting, she was filled with the Holy Spirit and Scripture came out of her heart.

The Magnificat can be divided into four stanzas. (Luke 1:46-55)

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
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 shewed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
And exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

The basic content of the four strophes:

1. Rejoicing in God's salvation: 46-48
2. Remembering God's sovereignty: 49-50
3. Reflecting God's sympathy: 51-53
4. Resting on God's steadfastness: 54-55

1b. Mary's attitude:

Mary's inspired hymn displays an amazing depth of spiritual maturity and scriptural versatility.

- 1c. Mary's response to her promotion.
- 2c. Mary's recognition of God's provision.
- 3c. Mary's realization of her position.



Visitation, Mariotto Albertinelli, Uffizi, Florence.

- 4c. Mary's reticence toward publicity.
- 5c. Mary's recall of passages of Scripture.
- 6c. Mary's regard for the precepts of the Lord.
- 7c. Mary's relying on the promises of God.
- 8c. Mary's relishing of fellowship.

2b. God's attributes.

Even a cursory glance at the Magnificat shows Mary's extraordinary emphasis on the attributes or perfections of God.

1c. God is a saving God.

As an Old Testament believer, Mary's hope of salvation rested on God and His promises. Her hope was not in her own merit or ability to make herself acceptable to God. Her reference to "God my Savior" indicates she realized her own sinfulness and need of redemption.

Mary answered the Roman Catholic dogmas of the immaculate conception, which maintains that from the moment of her conception Mary was by God's grace 'kept from all taint of original sin,' Only sinners need a Savior (Walter Liefield, "Luke," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, [1984] 836).

2c. God is condescending v. 48

Mary was only a young bride of a humble carpenter in a small village. Because of God's condescension, all generations would call her blessed.

3c. God is mighty v. 49a

Another reason why Mary glorified God: "the mighty God" had done great things for her (Psa. 24:8; Zeph. 3:17).

4c. God is holy v. 49b

Holiness is God's main attribute. In Isaiah 6:1-5 the seraphim paid tribute to God's holiness, an attribute to be reflected by believers (1 Peter 1:16).

5c. God is merciful v. 50

God's mercy (Greek: *eleos*; Hebrew: *hesed*, "loyal love") balances His power and holiness. His loyal love refers to His compassion, especially toward His covenant people.

6c. God is powerful v. 51

God has shown Himself powerful, especially in reversing certain social and political conditions.

WHY HOLINESS IS GOD'S MAIN ATTRIBUTE

1. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

**BY THE
ANGELS.**

ISAIAH 6:2-3

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

2. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE TO BE

BY MAN.

1 PETER 1:15-16

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

(LEV. 11:45-46)

3. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

**BY
MORTALS**

1 SAMUEL 2:2

There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

(EX. 15:11)

4. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

**IN THE
MILLENNIUM.**

ZECHARIAH 14:20-21

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 14 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

WHY HOLINESS IS GOD'S MAIN ATTRIBUTE

1. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

RECOGNIZED

BY THE
ANGELS.

ISAIAH 6:2-3

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

2. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE TO BE

REFLECTED

BY MAN.

1 PETER 1:15-16

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

(LEV. 11:45-46)

3. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

REVERED

BY
MORTALS

1 SAMUEL 2:2

There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

(EX. 15:11)

4. IT IS THE ATTRIBUTE

RADIATED

IN THE
MILLENNIUM.

ZECHARIAH 14:20-21

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bows before the altar. 14 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

7c. God is righteous v. 52

Mary sings of a God who in perfect justice exalts the lowly and subdues the proud.

8c. God is caring v. 53

His filling the hungry with good things will find its ultimate fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom.

9c. God is faithful v. 54-55

God keeps His numerous promises to His special people.

3b. Mary's acquaintance with the Old Testament.

Mary's Magnificat Compared with Other Scripture Passages

<i>Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1)</i>	<i>The Psalms, etc.</i>
46, 47 "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."	Ps. 103:1
48 "Because he has looked with favor upon his servant in her humble state."	I Sam. 1:11 (this is <i>not</i> part of Hannah's Song!); Ps. 25:18
49 "Holy is his name."	With slight variations this phrase is found in many of the Psalms: 22:3; 71:22; 89:18; 99:3; 103:1; etc.
50 "And his mercy extends from genera- tion to generation to those who fear him."	Ps. 103:17
51 "He has performed mighty deeds with his arm."	Ps. 44:3; 98:1; Isa. 53:1
"He has scattered those who are proud."	Ps. 89:10; Job 12:19
52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones."	II Sam. 22:28
"But has lifted up the humble."	II Sam. 22:18; Job 5:11
53 "The hungry he has filled with good things."	Ps. 103:5; 107:9
54 "He has helped Israel, his servant."	Ps. 98:3; 147:2, 19
"In remembrance of his mercy."	Ps. 25:6; 98:3; 136 (second part of each verse)
55 "—Even as he promised our fathers— (Mercy) to Abraham and to his seed forever."	Gen. 12:2, 3; 17:7; 22:15-18; Exod. 2:24; II Sam. 22:51; Ps. 105:6-10; Micah 7:20.



1c. Similarities in concepts:

- ❖ Personal happiness
- ❖ Provided Savior
- ❖ Perfect holiness
- ❖ Proven strength
- ❖ Punished pride
- ❖ Prospering poor
- ❖ Profound spirituality

In this psalm, Mary said (1:46-55):

1 SAMUEL 2:1-11

Song of Hannah

¹Then Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.

²"There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

³"Do not keep talking so proudly
or let your mouth speak such arrogance,
for the LORD is a God who knows,
and by him deeds are weighed.

⁴"The bows of the warriors are broken,
but those who stumbled are armed with strength.

⁵Those who were full hire themselves out for food,
but those who were hungry hunger no more.
She who was barren has borne seven children,
but she who has had many sons pines away.

⁶"The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the grave and raises up.

⁷The LORD sends poverty and wealth;
he humbles and he exalts.

⁸He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and has them inherit a throne of honor.

"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
upon them he has set the world.

⁹He will guard the feet of his saints,
but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.

¹⁰"It is not by strength that one prevails;
those who oppose the LORD will be shattered.
He will thunder against them from heaven;
the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

¹¹Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

*For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts
He put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.*

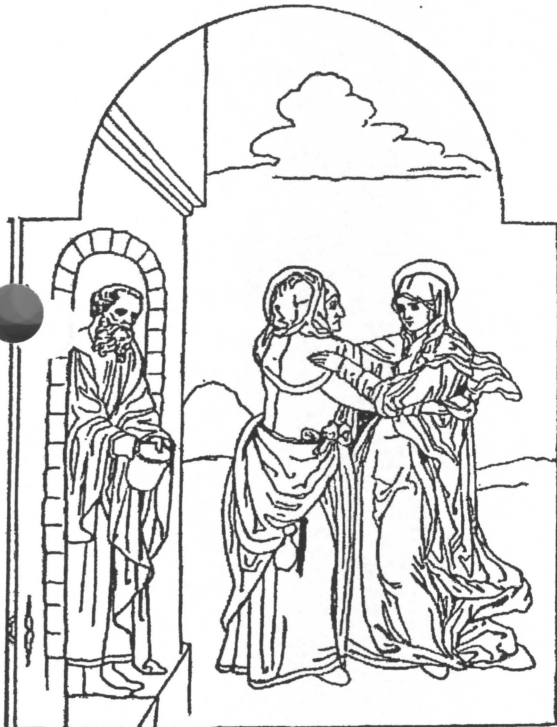
*He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.*



4b. Hannah's Antecedent.

1c. Similarities in wording:

Did you hear the parallel expressions and ideas? For example:



ELIZABETH RECEIVING THE VISIT OF MARY.

Hannah (1 Samuel 2)	Mary (Luke 1)
v. 1 My heart exalts in the Lord; I rejoice in thy salvation.	v. 46f. My soul magnifies the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
v. 2 There is none holy like the Lord.	v. 49 Holy is his name.
v. 4 The bows of the mighty are broken but the feeble gird on strength.	v. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree.
v. 5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.	v. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/meditation-on-th...>

3A. Mary's Meditations:

Repeatedly it is said that Mary kept all these things in her heart (Lk. 2:19, 51). Literally, she kept on keeping together all these things. Mary was treasuring and carefully storing away such things as what the angel had told Joseph and what Gabriel had told her, what her encounter with Elizabeth meant, what her experience had been upon arriving in Bethlehem, what the shepherds had reported with respect to the angelic announcement and much more.

Mary laid all these events and experiences together and thus was able to compare them and remember them. Fortunately, Mary did not keep these things exclusively in her heart but shared them. Undoubtedly she was able to recall these things for Luke who penned them for the benefit of godly individuals ever after.

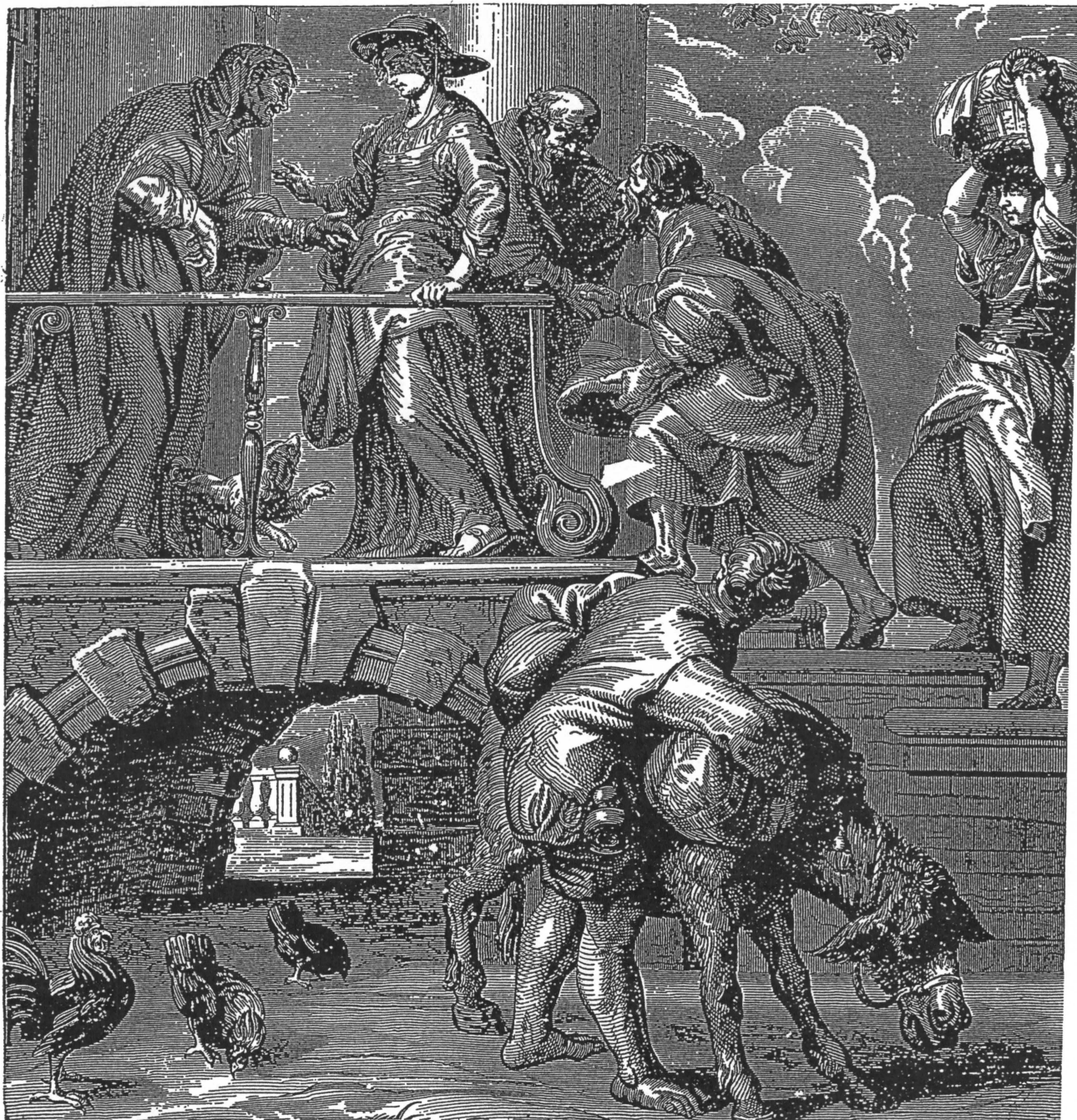
4A. The Meaning of the Magnificat for Believers:

- 1b. Like Mary, we need a Savior who grants forgiveness to all who put their trust in Him.
- 2b. Like Mary, once we realize what God has done for us, we magnify Him by our life and lips. We worship Him and witness for Him.
- 3b. Like Mary, we need to know God's attributes. The only way we can learn of God is by diligently studying His Word, memorizing it and meditating upon it.
- 4b. Like Mary, we can take comfort in the fact that God will always exercise His loyal love to His people and will ultimately triumph over evil.
- 5b. Like Mary, let us sing intelligently, enthusiastically, and evangelistically. Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached a magnificent sermon in Luke 1:46-47 relating to Mary's song of faith. One short paragraph from that sermon must suffice:

It is interesting to note that when Spurgeon preached the sermon on April 22, 1875, there was already concern on his part for popular music void of the gospel. His remedy, of course, was to abandon such choruses and songs forever.

Note, again, that *Mary sang evangelically* and we must mind that we always do the same, for I am afraid that there are some popular hymns which have something that is not Gospel in them. And whenever there is a hymn that has the slightest taint of that sort in it, we ought to abandon it forever, however sweet its poetry may be. Mary sings, "My spirit does rejoice in God my Savior." She was no Socinian and she was no Romanist—she knew that she needed a Savior and that she needed a God for her Savior. I do not at all like the boastful talk about "the higher life" in which some people seem to revel. We cannot have too high a life, but "God be merciful to me a sinner," is about as big a prayer as I can manage at present. And often does my soul pray the dying thief's prayer with such earnestness that his petition is forced to my lips, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." The place of the perfect does not suit me yet, at any rate, but the place of the publican and of the penitent more becomes me, as I think it does the most of us. Oh, yes, we still need a Savior! So, like Mary, we will sing about our Savior and even if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we cannot do without the blood of Jesus Christ constantly cleansing us from all sin—for we do still sin. (www.spurgeongems.org. 5)

Elsewhere in the sermon Spurgeon writes: "I am not squeamish about music. But I must confess that I hardly like to hear high praises of God sung to the tune of a comic song or of a dance. There's a certain congruity about things that must be observed and some good music may have associated with such strange ideas that we had better let it alone till those associations have died out, lest, haply, while we are uttering holy words, some people may be reminded of the tune of unholy things! Mary sings very reverently and so should we."



THE VISIT TO ELIZABETH.—From the Painting by Rubens.

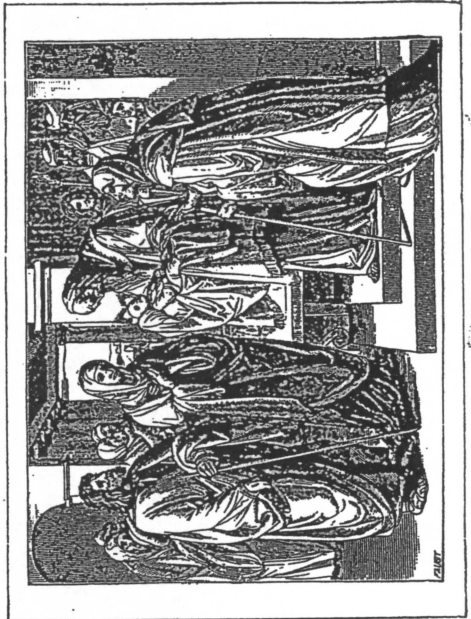


THE ANGEL SPEAKS TO THE SHEPHERDS.

Five Pieces of Poetic Literature in Luke

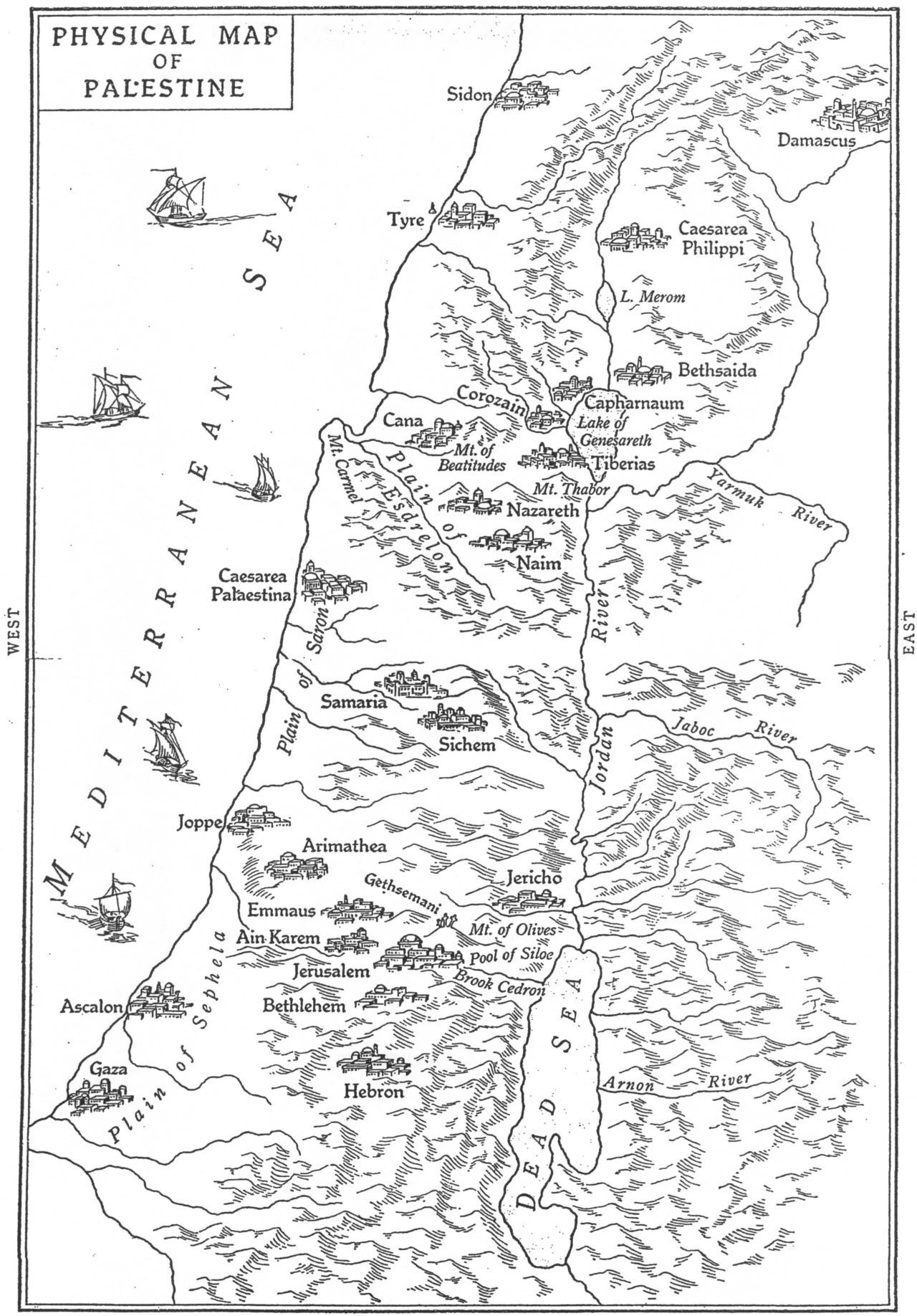
<i>Name of Song</i>	<i>Textual Reference</i>	<i>Distinguishing Feature</i>
The Song of Elizabeth	1:42b-45	LOVE
The Song of Mary	1:46-55	FAITH
The Prophecy of Zechariah	1:68-79	HOPE
The Song of Angels	2:14	ADORATION
The Song of Simeon	2:29-32	RESIGNATION

magnificat
benedictus
gloria
nunc dimittis



SIMEON TAKES JESUS IN HIS ARMS.

PHYSICAL MAP
OF
PALESTINE

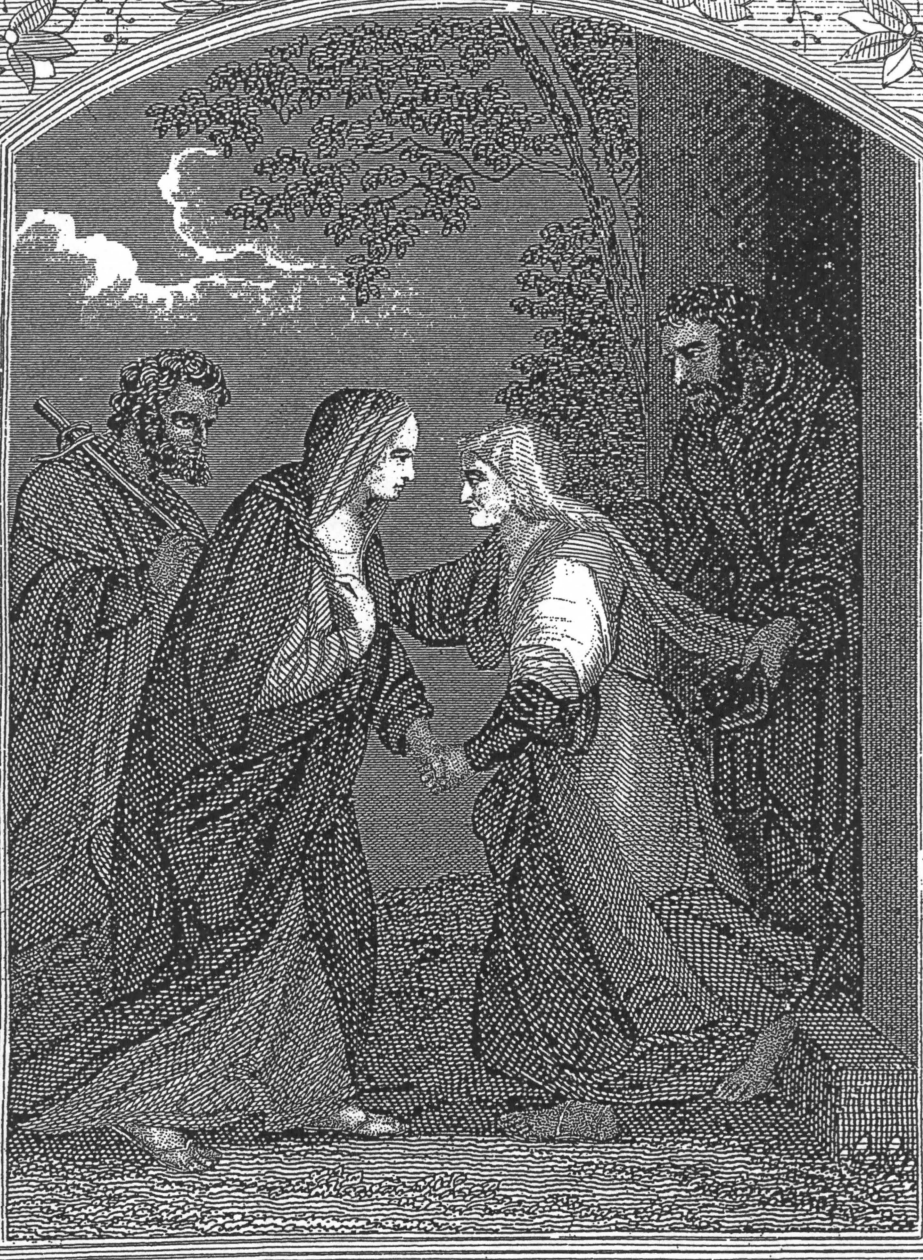


EAST

WEST



THE ANNUNCIATION.



THE MEETING OF MARY AND ELIZABETH

(LUKE, CH. I. V. 39, 40)

THE FAVOURED WOMEN NOW DO MEET,
 AND PRAISE THE LORD FOR MERCIES GREAT,
 SECULS HOLDING A COMMUNION SWEET,
 EACH BOTH ITS HAPPINESS RELATE.



“MY SOUL DOTH MAGNIFY THE LORD.”
 After the Annunciation, “Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste,” to confide her wondrous experience to her trusted and loving relative Elisabeth (Luke i, 39-56). The Visitation painted by the Flemish master, Peter Cristus (c. 1400-73), depicts the salutation between the two women. The home of Zacharias is represented with charming anachronism as a medieval house in the Netherlands.

Prado, Madrid

The People
MEN & WOMEN
OF THE GOSPEL STORY

I

MARY THE MOTHER

by REV. R. J. CAMPBELL, M.A., D.D.

Chancellor of Chichester; Author of "Life of Jesus," etc.

*The Virgin's Song
of Thanksgiving*

THE Magnificat is manifestly based on the song of Hannah evoked by the gift of the dedicated child Samuel in answer to her earnest prayers (I Samuel ii, 1-10). But the similarity is no more than superficial; the superiority of the Magnificat both in spirit and matter is demonstrable, and, whether the composition is Mary's own or not, it fully deserves the esteem in which it is universally held in Christendom. And why should it not be Mary's own? We have already seen that Luke either knew her or had access to the circle of her intimate friends; and the parallel between the experience of the mother of the prophet Samuel and her own, albeit the latter immensely transcended the former in significance for the world, would naturally suggest to Mary devotional sentiments akin to those of Hannah. Hannah sang: "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in thy salvation." Mary sang: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." There can be no mistaking the higher note in the canticle of the new dispensation.

We do not evade any critical problem in what has been stated so far about our Lord's mother. It might be thought that some part of what is told concerning her and the birth and infancy of the world's Redeemer by the first and third Evangelists is less historical than figurative, but for our present purpose this is not really a vital consideration. We may legitimately borrow from the methods of the Form-critics of the Gospel sources—the newest school of New Testament criticism—and ask, not whether this or that item of the Gospel tradition is literally true, but why it is recorded at all. It is now a well-established fact that the Gospel narratives taken as a whole are not dispassionately recorded history but the expression of the mind of the Church of the first generation. When, therefore, we read such details as are recalled above we have to remember that they represent what the Church thought and believed in the Apostolic Age concerning its own genesis and the principal events relating thereto.

HERE, then, we have in these winsome stories preserved by Matthew and Luke a clear and definite indication of what the Church of Christ from the very beginning felt about the personality of Mary. The picture drawn is all the more impressive because so artless and restrained, and we need to bear in mind that Mary was probably

In His Steps

THE LAND AND LIFE OF JESUS

Described and Studied by Living
Authorities on the New Testament



"MY SOUL DOTH MAGNIFY THE LORD." After the Annunciation, "Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste," to confide her wondrous experience to her trusted and loving relative Elizabeth (Luke i, 39-56). The Visitation painted by the Flemish master, Peter Christus (c. 1400-73), depicts the salutation between the two women. The home of Zacharias is represented with charming anachronism as a medieval house in the Netherlands. Prado, Madrid.

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still living when it was originally drawn; as Dr. Torrey, Professor of Semitic Languages in Yale University, has said, there is not a word in any of the four Gospels that might not have been written within twenty years after the death of Jesus. This does not mean, or need not mean, that they existed so early in the Greek language and with their contents arranged precisely as we have them now, but it does mean that everything in the Gospels was well known to the Palestinian Church and that a great part of it was circulating in documents written in the Aramaic tongue, which was the native speech of Mary and Jesus. Mary was still there on the spot while the clearly defined outline of what constituted the Gospel was being formed; she could not be left out of it, nor could the other members of her family; and there can be no shadow of doubt, from what we have thus far seen of the testimony of two of the four Evangelists, that Christians from the first held the