
5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.
6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.
7 And they had no child; and they both were now well stricken in years.
8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God—his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.
11 And there appeared unto him an angel standing on the right side of the altar of incense.
12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Luke was the companion of the Apostle Paul in all of his labors during many years. He also wrote the Acts of the Apostles.

He was a Syrian, and became acquainted with the Christians at Antioch. He is called by Paul “the beloved physician.”

Luke opens his book with the parentage and the birth of John. His father, Zacharias, was a priest, and his mother, Elizabeth, was also descended from Aaron. They were exemplary persons. They habitually walked in an upright course of obedience to all the commandments. They had no children, but in answer to their prayers a son was at last given to them, whose name was John, which signifies “grace, or favor of the Lord.”

While Zacharias ministered at the altar, an angel appeared to him to tell him of the advent of his son. The vision was so startling that Zacharias was struck dumb for a season. The same angel appeared soon after to Mary, the mother of Jesus, with glad tidings of her motherhood. She and Elizabeth met often during that joyful period, and talked over the promised blessings. John was born
about six months before Jesus, and is sometimes called his fore-
runner. Elizabeth and Mary were cousins on the mother's side.

Soon after the angel appeared to Mary she went in haste to the
home of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth, who said, "Blessed art
thou among women; and how comes this honor to me, that the
mother of my Lord should cross my threshold?" Mary replied, "My
soul doth magnify the Lord that he hath thus honored his hand-
maiden. Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

When Elizabeth's son was born, the neighbors, cousins and aunts
all assembled and at once volunteered their opinions as to the boy's
name, and all insisted that he should be named "Zacharias," after
his father. But Elizabeth said, "No; his name is John, as the angel
said." As none of the family had ever been called by that name,
they appealed by signs to the father (who was still dumb); but he
promptly wrote on the table, "His name is John."

36 And there was one Anna, a prophet-
ess.
37 And she was a widow of about four-
score and four years, which departed not
from the temple, but served God with fast-
ings and prayers night and day.

Anna having lost her husband in the prime of her life, remained a
widow to her death. She resided near the temple that she might
attend all its sacred ordinances. Having no other engagements to
occupy her attention, she spent her whole time in the service of God,
and joined frequent fastings with her constant prayers for herself
and her people. She was employed day and night in those religious
exercises, so says the text; but Scott allows the poor widow, now
over eighty years of age, some hours for rest at night (more merci-
ful than the Evangelist). She came into the temple just as Simon
held the child in his arms, and she also returned thanks to God for
the coming of the promised Saviour, and that her eyes had beheld
him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem
every year at the feast of the passover.
42 And when he was twelve years old,
y they went up to Jerusalem after the custom
of the feast.

43 And when they had fulfilled the days,
as they returned, the child Jesus tarried be-
hind in Jerusalem: and Joseph and his
mother knew not of it.
44 But they, supposing him to have been
in the company, went a day’s journey: and
young him among their kinsfolk and
acquaintance.  
45 And when they found him not, they
turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking
him.  
46 And it came to pass, that after three
days they found him in the temple, sitting
in the midst of the doctors, both hearing
them, and asking them questions.  
47 And all that heard him were aston-
ished at his understanding and answers.  
48 And when they saw him, his mother
said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus
dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I
have sought thee sorrowing.  
49 And he said unto them, How is it that
ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be
about my Father’s business?  
50 And they understood not the saying
which he spake unto them.  
51 And he went with them to Nazareth,
and was subject unto them: but his mother
kept all these sayings in her heart.

These texts contain all that is said of the childhood and the youth
of Jesus, though we should have expected fuller information on so
extraordinary a subject. Joseph and Mary went up to the feast of
the passover every year, and it was the custom to take children of
that age with them. They journeyed in a great company for mutual
security, and thus in starting they overlooked the boy, supposing
that he was with the other children. But when the families sepa-
rated for the night they could not find him, so they journeyed back
to Jerusalem and found him in a court of the temple, listening to, and
asking questions of the doctors, who were surprised at his intelli-
gence.

It is often said that he was disputing with the doctors, which the
commentators say gives a wrong impression; he was modestly ask-
ing questions. Neither Mary nor Joseph remembered nor fully
understood what the angel had told them concerning the mission of
their child; neither did they comprehend the answer of Jesus.
However, he went back with them to Nazareth, and was subject to
them in all things, working at the carpenter’s trade until he entered
on his mission. It was a great mistake that some angel had not made
clear to Mary the important character and mission of her son, that
she might not have been a seeming hindrance on so many occasions,
and made it necessary for Jesus to rebuke her so often, and thus sub-
ject herself to criticism for his seeming disrespect.

Luke xiii.  
11 And, behold, there was a woman which
had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and
was bowed together, and could in no wise
lift up herself.  
12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her
to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou
art loosed from thine infirmity.  
13 And he laid his hands on her: and im-
mediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, but not on the Sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, to these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day, and saw the distress of this woman who attended worship; he called her to him, and, by the laying on of his hands and by prayer, immediately restored her; and being made straight, she glorified God before all for this unexpected deliverance. The ruler of the synagogue, who hated the doctrines of Jesus and envied the honor, tried to veil his enmity with pretence of singular piety, telling the people that they should come for healing other days and not on the holy rest of the Sabbath, as if the woman had come there on purpose for a cure, or as if a word and a touch attended with so beneficent an effect could break the Sabbath. Jesus’ rebuke of the malice and hypocrisy of the man was fully justified.

The Sabbath-day-Pharisees are not all dead yet. While more rational people are striving to open libraries, art galleries and concert halls on Sundays, a class of religious bigots are endeavoring to close up on that day, all places of entertainment for the people. The large class of citizens shut up in factories, in mercantile establishments, in offices, and in shops all the week, should have the liberty to enjoy themselves in all rational amusements on Sunday. All healthy sports in the open air, music in parks, popular lectures in all the school buildings, should be encouraged and protected by law for their benefit.

_, 2 There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, neither regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?
The lesson taught in this parable is perseverance. Everything can be accomplished by continued effort. Saints hope to acquire all spiritual graces through prayers; philanthropists to carry out their reform measures through constant discussion; politicians their public measures by continued party combat and repeated acts of legislation. Through forty years of conflict we abolished slavery. Through fifty years of conflict we have partially emancipated woman from the bondage of the old common law of England, and crowned her with the rights of full citizenship in four States in the American Republic.

The condition of the woman in this parable, bowed to the earth with all her disabilities, well represents the degraded condition of the sex under every form of government and of religion the world over; but, unlike her, women still, in many latitudes, make their appeals in vain at cathedral altars and in the halls of legislation.

E. C. S.

The sentiment concerning the equality of male and female, which Paul avowed to the Galatians, is perfectly in accord with what "Luke" reports of Jesus' own custom. It will be remembered that the chief adherents of Paul accepted only this report (and this only partly) as worthy of credit; and therein we find the statement that many female ministers had accompanied Jesus and the male ministers, as they wandered (in Salvation Army fashion) "throughout every city and village preaching." It is true that we now find a qualifying passage in reference to the female ministers, namely, "which ministered unto him of their substance" (Luke, ch. 8, v. 3). But this is, plainly, one of those numerous marginal comments, made at late date (when all the original manuscripts had disappeared), by men who had, doubtless, lost knowledge of women's original equality in the ministry; for Ignatius of Antioch, one of the earliest Christian writers, expressly affirms that the deacons were "not ministers of meats and drinks, but ministers of the Church of God."

Although this is well known, our modern theologians seem to have been unable to avoid jumping to the conclusion that, whenever
women are mentioned in the ministry, it must be only as ministers of their substance, either as a kind of commissaries, or, at most, as kindergarten officials. It is manifestly true that the early Church was immensely indebted to the benefactions of rich widows and virgin heiresses for the means of sustaining life in its fellowship. Thecla, Paula, Eustochium, Marcella, Melanie, Susanna, are but a few of the women of wealth who gave both themselves and their large fortunes to the establishment of the ethics of Jesus. Yet Paula's greatest work (from men's standpoint of great works) is rarely mentioned in Christendom, and it is significant of the degradation which women suffered at the hands of the Church that the time came when Churchmen could not believe that she had performed it, even with Jerome's acknowledgment confronting them, and consequently erased the word "sister" accompanying the name Paula, substituting therefor the word "brother!"

Paula founded and endowed monasteries, won to the Christian cause allegiance from one of the noblest families of Greece and Rome, and originated within the monasteries the occupation of copying manuscripts, to which civilization is indebted for the preservation of much precious literature; but her most important service to the Church was her co-labor with Jerome in the great task of translating the Jewish scriptures from the original Hebrew into Latin. It was Paula who suggested and inspired the undertaking, furnishing the expensive works of reference, without which it would have been impossible, and being herself a woman of fine intellect, highly trained, and an excellent Hebrew scholar, revised and corrected Jerome's work; then, finally, assisted by her brilliant daughter, Eustochium, performed the enormous task of copying it accurately for circulation. It was the least that Jerome could do to dedicate the completed work to those able coadjutors, and it is an amazing thing to find Churchmen still eulogizing Jerome as "author of the Vulgate," without the slightest reference to the fact that, but for Paula's help, the Vulgate would not have come into existence. But until men and women return to more natural relations, until women cast off their false subserviency, thereby helping men to get rid of their unnatural arrogance, nothing different from the injustice Christendom has shown Paula can be looked for.

E. B. D.