

**MARY, THE  
HANDMAID  
OF THE LORD**

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Mary, the Handmaid of the Lord by Mary Elizabeth Charles

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**MARY ELIZABETH CHARLES**

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# MARY,

THE

## HANDMAID OF THE LORD.

By the Author of

"TALES AND SKETCHES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE  
IN DIFFERENT LANDS AND AGES."

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21, BERNERS STREET.

1854.

101. d. 381.



Ed avna in atto impressa esta favella  
*Ecco ancilla Dei*, si propriamente  
Come figura in cara si suggella.

## INTRODUCTION.

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To those who have so kindly welcomed the "Sketches of Christian Life," and the "Two Vocations," I gratefully offer this little book, feeling that I do not send it forth among strangers.

The hours spent in writing it have been very happy ones to me: may it lead others to the fountain from which the happiness of those hours flowed,—to that Book which, like Him of whom it testifies, is at once perfectly human and perfectly divine.

In disenthroning the Mother of Jesus from the imaginary empire of heaven, have we not suffered

ourselves to be robbed of much of the influence of the life of one of the lowliest and most blessed among the children of God? Errors are often best refuted, not by the manifestation of the contrary truth, but of the very truth from whose distortion they arose; and in the life of Mary, handmaid of the Lord, we may find the surest antidote to the adoration of Mary, Queen of heaven.

Not that we may fill up a portrait with decided outlines and full colouring where the Scriptures only give us broken touches. It cannot be without meaning that but One Life in the New Testament is laid before us from infancy to the sepulchre and beyond. The silences of the Bible teach us scarcely less than its revelations; and whilst we may affectionately gather and string together the few notices given us of Mary the mother of Jesus, it must not be forgotten that their very scarcity is among their most significant lessons.

On reviewing these pages, the fear has often come over me that it may be presumption to present them to others. Any representation we make of sacred



things must, however unconsciously, contain so much of the darkness of our own confused and sinful hearts. The mirror is not only partial ; it is marred, and broken, and distorted. And there are so many lessons which life alone can teach, that there must here be a thousand deficiencies which more experienced eyes will detect. I can only entreat the reader to pray that He, in whom alone is no darkness at all, would deign to use what there is of His light in these pages, and to forgive and render harmless their mistakes and deficiencies.

3

4 5 6 7 8

9 10

11

12

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
CHAP. I. THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS . . . .	1
II. THE SALUTATION OF GABRIEL . . . .	35
III. THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD . . . .	53
IV. THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE COUSINS . . . .	79
V. THE HOME AT NAAZARETH. . . . .	99
VI. MARY AMONGST THE DISCIPLES. . . .	121
VII. "SHE IS NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPETH" . .	139