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seriousness by the thinkers of the West. Behind this new development, it is possible to discern the strong feeling that Hinduism is well able to look after itself; the Neo-Hindus would find it hard to admit how much they owe to the stimulus and challenge of Christian ideals.

To sum up. The present position of Christianity in India seems in many ways comparable to its position in the Roman Empire towards the end of the fourth century A.D. What the immediate future will hold, who can say? But if history teaches us anything, two lessons may well be learned from earlier times to guide future plans. The first is that the thinkers of the Indian Church will do well to weigh the issues very carefully before they make any sort of compromise with the Neo-Hinduism of which we have spoken. The large body of Neo-Platonic ideas which have found a place in the thought of Western Christendom have proved to be at least of questionable value; and the case may well be the same in the East. The second lesson is one which is fortunately already being taken to heart. The inflow of masses into the Christian Church, as happened after the Edict of Toleration and is happening in no small measure in India to-day, creates vast problems. In earlier days, the Church, not always alive to these problems, showed herself incapable of leading these people out into the full light and freedom of the Christian faith. God grant that the leaders of the Indian Church may have wisdom, courage, and the necessary resources to shepherd and guide the converts of to-day into the whole truth as it is in Christ Jesus!

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

What's in a Hand?

By the Reverend R. Marshall Smart, M.A., Berwick-upon-Tweed.

'And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands.'—Lk 24[40].

I have a little baby boy in my home who has interested and amused us all with one particular practice of his. . . . Since the day he discovered he had *hands* he has been tremendously interested in them. He will lie in his cot for an hour or more without a whimper, indeed with a smile on his wondering face, looking at his hands. Doctor says there is nothing more exquisitely beautiful than a baby's hand. So Baby has a sense of the beautiful. And then he can move them this way and that without losing them—they don't fall off or out of the cot, as a teething ring with its bell does! So he gazes wonderingly—curiously at them day after day. And I say, 'He's right in giving them this attention: he's a good judge.' For, quite apart from the story the palmist can read in a hand, the hand tells a tale. It may speak of long sickness or of tender touch or of art or music or of hard toil. There's the Doctor's hand which has to be skilful and tender both, and there's the Nurse's hand and, in sickness and trouble, Mother's hand with its soothing touch. There's Daddy's hand stained perhaps with ink or hardened with toil—it works *for you*.

Isn't it right that we should look at a hand with wonder and reverence?

In a letter written by a young man dining opposite Sir Walter Scott's house, we read:

'I dined one day with a party, gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday or care of the morrow. After an hour or so I observed a shadow come over the aspect of my friend and feared he was unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well if you will let me sit where you are; but there is a hand at the window in sight of me here which won't let me lift my glass. It fascinates my eye. It never stops; page after page is finished and thrown down on that heap of MS.; and still it goes on unwearied, and so it will be until candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night." "Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, perhaps," said I.

'"No, boys," said our host, "I know whose hand it is . . . it is Walter Scott's!"'

It was Sir Walter Scott's hand writing . . . writing . . . writing his wonderful Waverley novels to clear off thousands of pounds of debt!

I think one of the most touching things told about our late beloved King George as he lay dying was his repeated and pathetic attempts to sign the document that gave his Queen and his sons sovereign

powers. You could almost see the struggles of the royal hand that held the pen in the description given of that closing scene in our monarch's life by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A KING'S HAND dutiful to the last!

THEN THERE'S THE HAND OF THE KING OF KINGS. He was known by His hands after the Resurrection. . . . PIERCED HANDS. . . . 'He showed them his hands.' LOVE DIVINE endured the nails driven into the hands, for your sake and mine. This HAND, like that of the breadwinner, bears marks of love and pain and service. LOOK AT IT WONDERINGLY, CURIOUSLY, AND LOVINGLY. All this He did for me and for you.

You will not be ashamed of the hand, once sweet and beautiful like Baby's, that is now . . . hard . . . stained . . . bruised maybe . . . with work or service . . . the hand of your father or mother, and you will NEVER, NEVER be ashamed of the pierced hand of Christ.

WHAT'S IN A HAND? 'Behold his hands' . . . with the marks of loving service plain to see. . . .Use your hands, little as they are, now, for deeds of kindness, and in the days that are to come may they always tell a tale of sacrifice or of service!

Lord Jesus,
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love
NOW and ALWAYS. Amen.

An Easter Message.

BY THE REVEREND J. IRELAND HASLER,
ORPINGTON, KENT.

'Our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light.'—2 Ti 1[10] (R.V.).

That's a strange statement to make about death. How can it be true? Why, Jesus Himself died, and later on Paul who wrote these words died also, and, from that day till now, all over the world people have died. Outside London there's a very, very big cemetery with hundreds of graves, and it is called the 'Necropolis,' which means 'City of the Dead.' And there are those of you who can remember some one whom you knew and loved who was with you a year ago but who has since passed away. What could Paul have meant when he said that Jesus abolished death?

You are not the first to ask that question. Once, away in India, in the main street of the city of Delhi, an Indian preacher was speaking to a little crowd of people about the difference which Jesus Christ has made. Suddenly one of his hearers interrupted him and said: 'You say that Jesus Christ has abolished death, but you Christians die just as we Hindus and Muhammadans do. How can you expect us to believe that?' The preacher replied: 'My friend, you know that if you go on down to the end of this street you'll come to the Fort, and perhaps you have been inside to see the marble buildings. If so, you know the nature of the entrance. First you pass through the outer gateway into a long passage, all roofed over so that it is rather dark, and then at the end of it is another gateway which leads you right into the Fort itself. There are British soldiers living in the Fort now, but in former days the King of Delhi used to live there in the beautiful palace. And in the Fort, too, are dungeons where prisoners used to be shut up. Sometimes a prisoner would be brought out of his dungeon and led through that long arcade. But he knew that when he came out again into the light it would be to his place of execution, and so his passing through those gateways was full of fear and sadness and despair. At other times, however, the King's own son would have to visit the city. He would have to pass through the same gloomy passage as the former man, yet how different would be his experience. He would be full of excitement and the hope of pleasure. There would be crowds outside ready to welcome him with shouts of joy, and there would be new sights and scenes such as he could not see in the palace. Prince and prisoner both had to leave the Fort by the same way, yet to one that way was a way of delight, and to the other, of dread. So all men have to leave this world by the same dark gateway, but Jesus Christ has taken away the dread and uncertainty connected with it. Those who really love and serve Him know that they pass, not into a denser darkness, but into a brighter light and a fuller and happier life.'

So we sing on Easter Sunday:

Jesus lives! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm our trembling breath
When we pass its gloomy portal.
Hallelujah!

The Christian Year.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

Sweeping and Furnishing.

'The unclean spirit . . . saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.'—Lk 11[24].

The homing instinct is natural and praiseworthy. Given the existence of unclean spirits—and of

their effectiveness, if not of their actual being, there are unhappily too many signs—it would be natural for them to go, or return wherever they feel that they are entitled to expect a welcome. The situation here envisaged is a very common one. A character has won a partial victory. But there is a weak point somewhere. Somehow the defence is not adequate.

The ordinary interpretation of the passage lays stress on the word 'empty.' It is because no trouble has been taken to fill up the empty space with positive, constructive goodness. This is in itself profoundly true. No less than Nature, grace abhors a vacuum. But the word 'empty' occurs only in St. Matthew's version, not in St. Luke's. It is probably not part of the original. It is in St. Matthew's version what is called a 'gloss,' a comment which some copyist could not refrain from putting in because he thought it must have fallen out, or perhaps even unconsciously, without knowing that he was adding anything. Such additions give an illuminating glimpse into the psychology of copyists, and very often, as here, they are a sign of the intrinsic reasonableness of the addition itself.

But, if our Lord only said 'swept and garnished,' does it not make the warning much more subtle and much more profound? Any one can see that an empty character is dangerous. It takes consummate insight to be the first to perceive that a 'swept and garnished' character may nevertheless be, in the common phrase, asking for trouble.

What is meant by 'swept and garnished'? It must mean a character over which pains have been taken. But that, it may be said, is surely right. Is it not most important to cultivate the virtues—justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude—to build up moral capital?

The answer may seem strange, but it is not an unqualified affirmative. The abstract way of righteousness is practised with success by the few already strong characters. But most of us are not choice and master spirits. A good many of us, in younger and less humble days, and even now in twisted and unrecollected hours, have tried that way, and have come to a dead end. The real way is that indicated by one of St. Paul's metaphors. After speaking of the works of the flesh, he goes on to speak, not of the works, but of the fruits of the spirit. Goodness, it seems, is a thing which grows. We do not create it, any more than we create our bodily health. If a soul is converted—that is to say, if it belongs to Christ and is united with Christ—then goodness will presently manifest itself.

In the first century, and again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were some who laid hold of this Pauline doctrine of justification by faith with a crooked and one-sided grasp. They were called Solifidians. They said, 'We have faith. We are enlightened. And so' (this was the fatal inference) 'it does not matter what we do. We are beyond good and evil.' There is in Scott's *Woodstock* a picture of an ignorant soldier who had persuaded himself of the truth of this soul-destroying creed. But, generally speaking, the people who have set most store by this Pauline doctrine of justification by faith have been most scrupulous in their conduct.

Against actually taking pains with ourselves there is nothing to say. Only there are two ways of doing it. One way produces Pharisaism, the other humble faith.

'Swept.' In India the principle of the division of labour is carried to great lengths. There are 'sweepers,' who sweep and do nothing else, just as there are water-carriers and punkah-coolies, and so on. We can imagine that a simple-minded Indian sweeper might suppose that the well-being of the whole household depended upon him. He sees the world in terms of his own calling. So might a domestic animal, the cat, think of the family as those who live in her house.

Sweeping to earn a living is an honourable trade. Sweeping our character is a desirable and necessary practice. But it is a mistake to define all life, all duty, in terms of brush and broom. And any who may think that by performing duties they have established a credit balance at the eternal exchange, which God cannot choose but honour, have misunderstood the nature of the Christian religion, have confounded law with grace.

'Garnished,' adorned, furnished. It would seem that the unclean spirit in the Parable, returning to his former home, found there a character not only swept amiss, but also furnished wrongly. What can have been the matter? Was it that the owner—or shall we say the tenant?—of that life had ill-chosen furniture? It is not difficult to cumber up the space with unprofitable and even evil things. But there is no hint of that—at first. Was it ill-arranged? Had he still in what should have been the serious study of his house the toys and child's books of his youth, not yet outgrown? Did he hang his clothes or keep his stores of food and drink in the place which should have been an oratory or place of prayer? It may be so, but there is no hint of it—at first. Was it that he allowed the furniture to be an end in itself? The truth is that all fittings are good, or bad, in some

kind of relation to life. Furnishing, or the lack of it, is nothing, or very little, in itself. What matters is the kind of life which is served by it. Sweeping and furnishing are steps in the preparation of material for life. They are not life itself. Let us suppose that a man has acute intelligence, a marvellous memory, a vivid historical imagination, an attractive manner. That these things are good material it would be foolish to deny. But is it not possible for such a man to think of himself, as St. Paul says, so temperately, yet so condemningly, 'more highly than he ought to think'? In the Parable the actual meaning was that from the Jewish nation there had been cast out the one demon of idolatry. That had gone from their national life. But somehow the sweeping and garnishing that followed had come to be thought of as ends in themselves. And so the old demon came back—shall we say in the form of the worship of the Letter?—and with it came the seven other demons of covetousness, hypocrisy, spiritual pride, uncharitableness, faithlessness, formalism, and fanaticism.

These may seem idle fears. But there are many kinds of idolatry, and one or two demons may do as much harm as seven. Imagine, for example, a victory—a real, undoubted victory—gained over some sin of the body. In spite of that, perhaps even because of it, pride and intolerance contrive to win a lodging in the refined and polished character.

But we do not end with a prospect so discouraging. All of us like to avoid discouragement, and Christians always can. The Gospel ends with the sentimental person who said, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee.' She envied the Mother who had been brought into an intimate and personal relation with the speaker of the beautiful and gracious words. But there is something about Christianity essentially democratic, vernacular, and popular. 'Yea, rather, blessed,' the Lord says, 'are those who have not the rare gift that few, or only one, can have, but those who have the gift that any one can have. Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.' [1]

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Law of Liberty.

'We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.'—Gal 4^{31}.

Here we are concerned with the thought of two things—liberty and captivity. We are to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. When He gives us His command, Go and prepare My way before Me, if we are true disciples we must obey. When He lays down the law of the spiritual life that none can reach His right hand and His left except through suffering and crucifixion, it is a law which must be obeyed. But on the other hand we read such words as those of the text: 'We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free'; or 'the glorious freedom of the children of God'; or 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom'; or 'stand therefore in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free.' How can we speak of captivity and obedience in the same breath with freedom or liberty? St. James twice over is bold enough to speak of 'the law of freedom'; and St. Peter says that Christians are to be 'as free,' and yet 'as slaves of God.' The words seem, at first sight, to present to us a contradiction in terms. When a man is freed from chains, or locked doors, or slavery, or restrictions, he can do as he likes and go where he pleases. And the word 'law' might seem to give us yet another restriction. Thou shalt do this, and Thou shalt not do that, hardly appear to leave a man free. If he is obliged to obey, that is, if he is punished when he disobeys, where is his freedom? But does a parent enslave his children when he teaches them to obey him? Does he give them freedom when he spoils them, and allows them to disobey him? St. James quite clearly says No. His expression, 'the law of freedom,' gives us a new and higher idea of what freedom means.

It has this meaning in the natural as well as in the spiritual world. There are what we call the laws of health; and, if our body is to be free from illness, we must obey them. The laws are absolute, for they are laws of God's own making. Which, then, is best—to be free to do as we like with our bodies, or to be free from illness? The one is the wrong, and the other the right meaning of freedom.

Not many years ago the aeroplane, the submarine, the telegraph, and many other inventions, were undreamt of. All these involve certain natural laws—the law of gravitation, the laws which 'govern,' as we say, the strength of metals, electricity, chemistry, and a hundred other things. And these laws were all existent in the world then as now; and then as now they were absolute, inexorable. But men had not learnt to understand them, and therefore could not obey them. And because they could not obey them, they were not free. They were unable to send a message to the other side of the planet in less than the twinkling

[1] S. C. Carpenter, *The House of Pilgrimage*, 158.

of an eye; they were unable to travel and take photographs at the bottom of the sea; they were unable to fly through the air at a hundred miles an hour. They were unable to do countless things that they can do now, and therefore they were not as free as they are now.

If a man goes up in an aeroplane and disobeys some law involved in flying, would he be prepared to justify himself by saying that he is a free man and can do what he likes? We know that the result of his disobedience will be catastrophe, immediate and very likely fatal.

We cannot turn to a single department of thought or life without finding the same principle unalterably at work. And we need not expect to find any difference when we think about the spiritual life of our souls. Some of us may have had moments when we were swept with a longing desire to grow in holiness. We have read of some of the great saints, modern as well as ancient; and we feel that we are not in the least like them. We are so ordinary, so weak, so easily tired of goodness and of God. And all because we have not learnt to *obey*. The man who knows and obeys the relevant laws can mount his aeroplane and fly freely. We know the laws of the spiritual life, and we don't obey them, and therefore we remain earthbound and helpless.

We know the law, for instance, that he that loseth his life—his Self—shall find it. Obedience to that law means a steady, continuous, consistent sacrifice of Self. But if, instead of that, we live our life on the do-as-I-like method, the result is not freedom but catastrophe; 'he that saveth his life shall lose it.'

We know the law that spiritual progress is impossible without prayer, as the progress of a steam engine is impossible without steam. But instead of storing our life with a full, driving, irresistible supply of this source of energy, some of us try to get along with a minimum of it. Let us remind ourselves again that God is one in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. He has given our spiritual life a law which shall not be broken, the law of the absolute necessity of real prayer. And nothing in heaven or earth will induce Him to alter it. If we obeyed it our progress would be free.

Once more. We know the law—or the truism, or the self-evident proposition—that if a Divine gift is to be of use to us we must use it. The supremest of Christ's 'gifts unto men' is His gift of Himself by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We possess the possibility of the whole, full, boundless energy of God. And we don't use it. We *can* use it; it can be as a burning, blazing furnace within us, producing the steam power which can drive us forward. And we *can* change the hearts, and comfort the sorrows, and strengthen the wills, and lighten the darkness of the men and women round us; we can draw them with the cords of a man, the cords of love, to yield themselves to Christ's captivity and follow in His train; or we could, if we obeyed the Divine law. Our love would be free, and therefore our spiritual work and progress would be free, if we obeyed the perfect law, the law of freedom.[1]

Passion Sunday.

Uncounted Sacrifice.

'There came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.'—Mk 14^3.

This episode in the last week of Jesus' life forms a passing gleam of brightness, just before the sun went down in a brief night. The effect is heightened by contrast with incidents before and after. The first two verses of this chapter reveal the priests and politicians plotting how to get their hands upon Christ, and silence Him for ever: the verses next following let us see Judas driving his bargain, fixing the price. Between the two comes our story. It stands out framed between malice and treachery. Like some shining object, set in the foreground of a gloomy canvas, it draws and holds the eye, and from its surroundings we turn to it for relief.

According to St. John, the woman concerned in this episode was Mary, Martha's sister.

Let us think first of the *greatness of Mary's sacrifice*. When in these last days she woke up to realize that Christ's references to His approaching death were seriously meant, it is likely that her first impulse was to ask, was there anything she could do? Her intuition told her what was coming—not only the fact of Calvary, but something of its meaning. She did not try to give Him advice; she did not say, like Peter, 'Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be.' Instead, she thought of something that would manifest her reverent gratitude. She came in quietly with this present fit for a king, broke the neck of the vessel lest it should ever be used again and also lest the bystanders might have time to interrupt her, poured the perfume out upon His head, and from it rose

[1] A. H. McNeile, *He Led Captivity Captive*, 100.

up a sweet odour that filled the room, and even yet fills the Church of God.

The gift cost much in money, but far more in spiritual effort; and it is that inexpressible inward strain, clothing itself in outward sacrifice, that imparts to her action some of its most beautiful qualities. One of these qualities Jesus Himself brings out—its *timeliness*. 'She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying.' There is something inept in the suggestion that by this statement is meant only that by chance she had happened to select that precise moment in the week of Calvary. No: she had thought and thought again concerning His destiny, because faith and love made Him the inevitable subject of her pondering, and thus she had worked her way into the secret that Christ was going to die in fidelity to God and for love of men. It is not the logical faculty or business-like acumen that guides us right; all depends on whether or not we care for Him and the things for which He stands, and whether, as we look to the Cross, it is with eyes quickened by faith and love.

Another quality of her act is its *unconventionality*. Her methods obviously were very far from commending themselves to the disciples, who never dreamt that half the value of the act—so at least Jesus felt—lay in its being so spontaneous, so untaught, that manifestly it came from the heart. The bystanders thought it most peculiar conduct, opposed to all rules, quite absurdly generous and quixotic. Is not this the very objection levelled at Jesus every day of His life? He broke the rules. He refused to be the kind of Messiah demanded by the Jews, and even thus far by His followers, and, instead of shattering the nations with a rod of iron, He gave Himself away by sympathy, by kindness, by sacrifice.

Christians are in need of this lesson. In religion tradition has terrible power for evil, and perhaps in all life there is nothing more difficult to abolish than a religious practice or opinion which once upon a time marked a real advance, but is antiquated now. No one argues that what was good enough for our grandparents in locomotion or public health is still good enough for us; but is the conviction equally widespread throughout the Church that a parallel steady progress is not only natural but indispensable in affairs of conduct or religious methods?

John Wesley tells us of the struggle it cost him to begin preaching out of doors—'I thought souls could not be saved,' he writes, 'unless it were done in a church'—but his great heart drove him out into the fields, where he worked a miracle for England.

Christian religion is perpetually in need of more heart; and that precondition, if history can prove anything, has far more to do than clever brains with spiritual inventiveness or philanthropic originality.

There is next the *moral beauty* of what Mary did. In our version Christ calls it 'a good work'; but what He really said was, 'She has done a beautiful thing to me.' Now this view was roundly challenged by the onlookers, with Judas at their head; and we ought not to close our eyes to the fact that it is challenged to this hour, and on substantially the same grounds. The disciples took what may be called the view of common sense. The thing is unpractical, they said; it is wickedly extravagant.

Now any of us, in our worse moments, might have sided with them, or at least felt they had an extremely strong case. It is always easier by all odds to state grounds for the shrewd, hard-headed opinion of the man in the street than for the loving intuitions of faith in the Unseen. And yet the man in the street, so far as he is merely shrewd, is wrong. What proves him wrong is this, that in certain spheres of life, if there be a spark of nobleness left in him, he brings in other and loftier principles which laugh utility out of court. No man conducts home life on business methods. No man treats his own sick child on commercial lines. Love breaks in, and workaday business flies out of the window. Christianity tells us, what in our hearts we know, that there are certain things—truth, purity, the world-wide cause of righteous liberty, fellowship with God—the worth of which has no relationship of any kind to mere usefulness in the lower sense. It is their intrinsic worth that matters.

Let us now turn to *Jesus' defence of Mary*. He has been defending women all these centuries, sometimes against themselves, sometimes against men who take rank as His followers. And He defended a woman now. It is as though He spread His hands protectingly above her head. As if to say: None of you, maybe, would have done such a thing, but do not make your insight, your imagination, your love a standard for the world. Refuse to hamper the pioneers. Let the great-hearted have their opportunity.

Then He continued: 'She hath done what she could,' by which we mean: 'It was a small thing, but at least she did it, and could you ask for more?' But as a writer of insight points out, that is not what Jesus meant at all. 'It is precisely the re-

verse. The disciples did not reproach the woman for doing so little, but for doing so much; and Jesus justified her, not by reducing her act to smaller proportions, but by revealing it in all its depth and height, and showing that it was greater than she herself knew.' But in fact, as we read the story, we perceive that Christ's defence had begun long before He opened His lips. It began when silently He accepted Mary's gift. He knew that for Him, and for all that He represented as well as all He was about to do, no offering could be too great.

Jesus' defence concludes with a prophecy, unparalleled in Scripture, predicting for Mary's act a future of undying fame, and to-day, as we look on together at this scene, we are helping to fulfil it. 'Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached . . . this also that she hath done shall be spoken of.' But everything that has to do with Christ has the two aspects of judgment and of promise. These two are here. What Mary did, judged and condemned the bystanders, and also it may condemn us. It may remind us that a Christianity that has become nothing more than sensible, prudent, or self-regarding is not what Christ seeks and can win no one for His cause. Religion is only convincing, it is only infectious, when it does things over which the selfish shake their heads.

But promise is here as well. It is a good omen if we have felt the impulse, and at least sometimes have yielded to it, to do things for Christ and man that left all calculation far behind. The capacity for it is in us all. A few years ago, men in thousands whom we called pleasure-loving gave all they had for country and freedom. There is in Jesus a mightier power still to inspire this readiness 'to spend and be spent to the utmost for a cause greater than life itself.' [1]

PALM SUNDAY.

How far away to Galilee?

'He started from Galilee, and now he is here.'—Lk 23[5] (Moffatt).

'Jesus started from Galilee preaching the gospel of God,' and now He is nearing the gate of Jerusalem. We must believe that the Cross was already casting its shadow over those happy days in Galilee, and that Jesus knew how this journey, begun in Galilee, was going to end. The preaching of the last generation was largely engaged with what came to be known as 'the Galilean Gospel,' with its idyllic convention of simple fishermen and flower-bedecked meadows, through which Jesus walked with His disciples, or by the blue waters of the lake. The Cross had largely dropped out of the picture, and it was of the great *human* Friend and Teacher that we heard, with His unclouded trust in God and His new message of forgiveness and love, which the common people were so glad to hear.

We tried to make our services happy and attractive by dwelling on the tender and comforting aspects of the life and ministry of Jesus, but there was no joy in our worship. Without the Cross there can be no reality or joy. Without the dark background, the Galilean Gospel has no meaning; without the dark, threatening forces of evil that were massing up against Jesus and in the end broke like a flood, carrying all before it, sweeping aside even the Roman authority itself and its boasted sense of justice.

> And when I read the thrilling lore
> Of Him who walked upon the sea,
> I long, oh! how I long once more
> To follow Him in Galilee.

Not that picture of Jesus, but the picture given of Him in another hymn, brings us to a sense of our sin, to a sense of God:

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.

The Galilean Gospel was too colourless to convert, or to give a sense of the great reality which went with Jesus from the beginning in everything He said or did. Even the demons knew who He was and what He was about. 'What have we to do with Thee?' or, as Moffatt turns it, 'What business have you with us, Jesus of Nazareth?' Yes, He meant business when He started out from Galilee, preaching the gospel of God.

In face of all opposition Jesus went on. When they told Him that the daughter of Jairus was dead, and that He need not trouble Himself to come farther, we read that Jesus went on. An angry crowd once tried to stop Him for good, but we are told that He passed through their midst. He was possessed of the Spirit, the Spirit that was afterwards released at Pentecost, sweeping all before Him. And as He came within sight of the end and set His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, the sense of impulsion and urgency became all the stronger. Think of that scene which Mark gives us

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *The Highway of God*, 123.

so dramatically: Jesus walking on in front with great strides and the disciples following behind, in a huddled, breathless sort of way, not able to keep up with Him. 'He had a baptism to be baptized with, and how he was straitened till it should be accomplished.'

It is of that last pilgrimage that we are being reminded to-day, the last journey into Jerusalem. Before ever He set out from Galilee He knew where He was going. Dr. John Hutton reminds us that 'we, too, must know where we are going before we set out, unless we are, as we say, out merely for a walk!' Only the other day I asked my little girl to come out with me, and she asked where I was going. I said, 'Nowhere in particular, just for a walk'; at which her face fell and she said, 'I like always to have somewhere particular to go.' Jesus had a definite objective; although there were those even of His own disciples who thought that He had none, that He was an idealist, without any plan of campaign or goal of endeavour. If we trace the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, we shall realize something of the urge, the Divine determination and purpose that drove Him on and on. We see the various places through which He had to go, as, for instance, Samaria. It was on the direct route between Galilee and Jerusalem, although no Jew ever went that way if he could help it. Yet 'Jesus must needs go through Samaria.' He had work to do there that had far-reaching effects. Punctually He was there. We are told the actual hour. 'It was about the sixth hour,' that is, about noon.

Professor Gossip tells of his induction to a charge in Forfar and of a speech on that occasion by Dr. Alexander Whyte, whose assistant he had once been. He told them how God had from all eternity been thinking of them and anticipating all their needs and requirements, making plans and provision for them and preparing for them just the right kind of minister who would meet their need; and then, sinking his voice almost to a whisper, for he himself was greatly moved, and pointing in the direction of the new minister, he said, 'And now, at long last, *punctually* he is here!' It is the idea of the text. 'He started from Galilee and now, punctually, he is here.' His hour had struck.[1]

The triumphant entry into Jerusalem startles us by its apparent incongruity with the way of Jesus. It was a principle with Him to avoid the spectacular, and He kept a watchful eye on any rising tide of mass emotion. But His entry into Jerusalem *was* spectacular—and it was intended to be so. The prophecy of Zechariah which St. Matthew recalls in this connection cannot have been absent from the mind of Jesus, and it is worth while to continue it beyond the point at which the Evangelist stopped. 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.'

When Jesus rode into the city, He knew that every habitable part of the earth had its representatives among the myriads gathered at Jerusalem that day, and all Jerusalem heard a message and were confronted with His claim before the night had come. The action of Jesus is consistent neither with humility nor good sense unless His mind had firm hold of a purpose which reached far back into the history of His people, and forward to a boundless reign of peace and blessedness. Nothing can save the Triumphal Entry from an intolerable theatricality if it was not the symbol of something at least as wonderful and transforming as the Christian faith has declared Him to be. History has its comment to make. Now, after nineteen centuries, when He still has no kingdom worthy of Him, and His people are so little like Him that the best of them are almost ashamed to claim His name, He yet has such a kingdom and such a people as no one could have dreamed of then.[2]

He started from Galilee and now He is here. He has gone the whole round. That is what so many object to in Jesus. It was Emerson's objection: that He made such tremendous claims; that 'He was not satisfied with a segment of life but a complete whole.' If He would only keep to one little corner of life. If He would only restrict Himself to Galilee, it would be all right. If only He would not insist on meeting face to face the naked and brutal facts of sin and unreality and uncover the whole miserable business of hypocrisy, overturning the money counters in the Temple itself, challenging conventional religion and everything that supports it! If only He would not go to such unreasonable lengths more people would follow Him. He always makes it difficult for any to follow Him, any except those who have no reserves in their obedience. He goes the whole way, the whole round, and all who follow Him must do the same. 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,' He is saying to us now, as, long ago, to His disciples.

[1] E. Macmillan, *Seeking and Finding*, 59.

[2] W. R. Maltby, *Christ and His Cross*, 54.

In the life of Christian discipleship the goal is given at the beginning. 'He started from Galilee, and now he is here.' No longer is He preaching the gospel of God. He has delivered His message, and He is now about to seal His testimony. The time for speech is gone; the time for action is come. It is time for the last great Action, as the Atonement used to be called. 'Now he is here,' punctually; not a moment too soon, not a moment too late.

And beyond the Cross and the grave He will still keep His appointments, punctually. 'Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, as he said unto you,' was the word of the angel to the affrighted women on the Resurrection morning. For, as He had started in Galilee so He would end there His earthly ministry. 'Now he is here.' We can start with Him here and now. It is the only place and time of which we may be sure, absolutely sure. Here and now we may begin the journey with Him.

Easter Day.

Mistaken Suppositions.

'Supposing him to be the gardener.'—Jn 20^{15}.
'They . . . supposed that they had seen a spirit.'—Lk 24^{37}.

When Mary Magdalene stood in Joseph's garden on the morning of the Resurrection she mistook the Risen Saviour for the Arimathean's gardener. The mistake is easily explained. The light was still dim. And had the light been better—well, there were tears in the woman's eyes. Yes, and the mistake admits of a somewhat deeper explanation than this.

We see most easily what we are looking for. Expectation is almost part of the power of vision. Mary wanted some one to tell her what had become of the body of Jesus. And when a figure loomed in the uncertain light, she came to the simple and likely conclusion that it was Joseph's gardener. Then the figure spoke her name, and in a moment she knew—first of all human souls to know it—that Christ was risen from the dead, and that the hope of the world was splendid, eternal truth.

Now look at another scene. It was the evening of that same day. The darkness had fallen. The disciples were gathered in a house in some narrow street of old Jerusalem. The door was barred, for the temper of the Jews was uncertain, and there were not wanting tokens that boded no good to the disciples of the Nazarene, and suddenly One stood among them whom they had all known and whom they still loved. But in a flash they thought of that final tragedy on Calvary. Death was final, and He had died. They thought, too, of the door so certainly and securely locked, of the windows so firmly barred. And terror seized their spirits. They supposed that they saw a ghost—something unreal, unearthly, a thing of mystery and dread, till the voice that had revealed the simple truth to Mary Magdalene in the dawn spoke to them: 'Why are ye troubled?' and their hearts caught the glorious truth that Christ was risen.

Putting these two incidents side by side, we can see a picture of the twofold difficulty of that new life that Christ came to reveal. We can see, as in a parable, the two ways in which we fail to gather and use the great revelation that Jesus makes to us. We make the mistake that Mary Magdalene made. We love an easy, earthly explanation of life. We pass unmoved, unenlightened through some hour that might have been a great hour of the soul, because, for us, life is pre-judged. The sanity, the likeliness of Mary's conclusions were beyond criticism. But she was wrong. And her mistake teaches us that the truth as it is in Jesus may give the lie to all time-born probabilities. The empty sepulchre is not an isolated marvel. It is not just a splendid, lonely mystery, challenging for evermore the mind that must still live on in a world wholly governed by laws that are traceable, and wholly made up of situations that admit of being reasoned out. That empty sepulchre has filled the round world with mystery. It has enlarged beyond the range of our reason the possibilities of human life. It has made faith and love and worship and spiritual obedience chief factors in each day's reckonings.

Now we know that the simplest facts of life, its toils and its leisure, its wayside greetings, its laughter and its tears, are beyond our earthly understanding. We can so easily misinterpret them, so habitually mishandle them. They ask of us a faith that shall reveal the wondrous presence and sovereign will of Christ our Saviour. In the earthliness of our minds we suppose so many shallow and foolish things. We suppose it was an accident; we suppose it was a failure; we suppose it made no difference; we suppose it was just a business transaction, a greeting, a disappointment; we suppose it was just the gift of a friend, sympathy of a neighbour, the music of a song, the word of a book; we suppose it was just a thought the sunset brought us, a sickness from which we recovered—thanks to the doctor—the sweet prattle of a little child. Thus we move in the dim light of the garden and see only the gardener. Thus we ask our questions, follow our plans, do our work, and bear our sorrow,

unconscious of that Divine Saviour whose presence and power and love fill all things.

The mistake that the disciples made in the evening was just the opposite of the mistake that Mary Magdalene had made in the dawn. She accepted too easily the verdict of sense and judgment, whilst they in their explanation of the figure that appeared among them went beyond the range of all that had ever been real and intelligible.

Can we find in that stupefied and fear-stricken company a lesson we need to learn? Is it not the reality of the unseen world, the real existence, the immediate and practical significance of the things of the spirit? We lock the door, we bar the windows of the house of life. We shelter ourselves amid the securities and fellowships of earth. But in spite of every bolt and bar He comes. Conscience beholds a vision of judgment. The sinful soul has vision of the hands its sins have pierced. The human heart in its weariness and longing beholds the outstretched arms of Divine pity. But all the earthliness within us rises to cast doubt on the reality and worth of that vision. We treat the deepest thoughts that come to us as mere ghosts of the mind; the most vital and momentous moods as mere tricks of feeling. Our fear of the tremendous spiritual realities is not always manifest. It is often well concealed. But beneath many a specious argument, many a robust determination, many a plunge into what men call practical things, there lurks, as the hidden motive, the fear of coming face to face with the true eternal world of the spirit.

It was the same figure that Mary mistook for the gardener, and that the disciples mistook for an apparition. It was the same living, loving Saviour of human souls. In Jesus the two worlds meet. That new life that we are called to live through faith in Him can make the familiar things of life flash out with wondrous beauty and meaning, and can make the deep and awesome solemnities of the spiritual world brighten with gracious hopes and comforting promises.

Just one other thought. To Mary Magdalene who had mistaken Him for the gardener, Jesus said, 'Touch me not.' To the disciples who had mistaken Him for a ghostly visitant, an unreality, Jesus said, 'Handle me and see—for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having.'

On Mary Magdalene Jesus laid a new law of reverence, on the disciples a new law of familiarity. And does not the Risen Christ this day lay those laws upon us? Sometimes we handle life with too much familiarity. We hold our tasks, our opportunities, our privileges, and our hopes with an almost irreverent assurance. So indifferently the privileges of life come to be handled. We can even tread the path of prayer without awe, and certainly we often face the work and fellowship of life as things of small account. Mary thought that things were just as they had been before. She did not realize the tremendous spiritual meaning of the Resurrection. She did not realize that now Christ's bodily presence was but a sacrament of His abiding spiritual presence in all believing hearts. She would have been content to have kissed the Master's feet. But that was to be too easily satisfied. She had to apprehend Him and to love Him in a higher and a holier way. So would Jesus give us each to pass through life with a new diffidence, a new reverence, a new and holy vision of all familiar things.

And sometimes we do not get near enough to life. We dare not come to close grips with the splendid hopes and visions God in His mercy sends to our struggling souls. They are vague, remote, uncomforting. When it is so with us, there come those other words, spoken to the trembling, vision-haunted disciples, 'Handle me and see.' Put each great thought, each dazzling hope, each wondrous vision to the test here in the maze and sorrow of the years, here in the press of human things. And that same fellowship with Christ that has made each passing duty a thing of immortal worth shall make the eternal truth of God a thing of immediate comfort.[1]

[1] P. C. Ainsworth, *The Pilgrim Church*, 87.