

individuals can think specially of their own or their friends' needs, or in which the whole body is invited simply to wait upon God, are a vital necessity.'

Again, there must be room for Symbolism. What is Symbolism? It is the repetition of certain words which are symbolic, and it is the repetition of certain symbolic acts. Symbolic words are, for example, the Lord's Prayer. Others are the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, by which we suppose Canon STREETER means that we ought occasionally to repeat some creed. Symbolic acts are such as the Holy Communion.

Last of all, there must be room for preaching. Canon STREETER would not leave *much* room for preaching. He does not deny that good preaching will fill a church more speedily than anything else. Still he thinks that in the ordinary service there is too much talking and too little opportunity for quiet and meditation. He does not demand much space for preaching, but he would have it occupied well. And that it may be well occupied he strongly urges the advantage of courses of sermons over 'isolated efforts.' 'A connected series on any subject by a man of quite moderate ability will make far more permanent impression than an equal number of isolated sermons by a brilliant speaker.'

'The Things which Jesus did.'

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'There are a great many other things that Jesus did—so many that if these are all written down I think the whole world will not be large enough to hold the books as they are written.'—Jn 21²⁵.

'This is, of course, a specimen of Eastern extravagance,' we begin to say. If it is, there is plenty with which to compare it in the Bible. Some people forget that the Book was written in the style as well as in the language of the country that gave it birth. The Jews liked forcible and vivid pictures, and never thought it overdone when the colours were what we should call much too strong. Jesus Himself spoke in their style, and we have to translate His style into our own, just as much as we must translate His language into English or Urdu, if we wish to know what He meant. He wanted to describe an utter impossibility—to man, though not to God. He compared it to putting a camel through a needle's eye. We should have been content with a 'cable.' He describes a man offering to help his brother to get a speck of dust out of his eye, and all the time he has a great baulk of timber in his own! For our style a 'splinter' would have been quite enough. He tells us that if we had faith as big as a mustard seed we could order a mountain to uproot itself and be replanted in the sea. We should have composed a tame

sentence to the effect that 'Faith can remove any obstacle, however great.'

Is this verse an example of the same kind? Let us look and see.

It does not need much thought to realize that we have only a very brief life of Jesus in these four little Books which we call the 'Good News.' As they stand, they could all be printed in one issue of some of our big Western newspapers. And there are so many duplicates—things told over again in two of the Gospels, in three, or even all four. Set this against the fullness of that life, as the Gospels themselves describe it. We hear of days when He was too busy to snatch a meal. From dawn till sunset He was teaching His disciples, teaching the crowd, talking to some single soul that needed Him, healing diseases of body and mind. And when the long day was over He often took His rest in hours of prayer. Nor was this all. What about those thirty years of which we have only one story—the years when He was a baby, a school-boy, a carpenter working in Joseph's shop, among villagers who never dreamt what He was? Was all this not worth telling? Why, the full story of one ordinary day out of those thirty quiet years would help you and me to live for God and man better than all the philosophy ever written. If a

cinematograph had preserved a faithful picture of that Figure—eating, working, sleeping, talking, praying—through His whole life from cradle to grave; if a phonograph had caught every syllable He uttered, from the earliest words His mother taught Him, there would have been nothing we could afford to spare. And yet if that whole story had been written out in full from such a record, and the long rolls of papyrus, with their columns side by side, unrolled and laid out on the ground, there would have been plenty of room for them in the field where Jesus saw the sower cast his corn. We are a long way yet from filling the whole world with books that would have to be written!

By a strange coincidence it happens that the verse which stands next to this upon the pages of our Bible has something about 'things which Jesus did.' In his preface to the Book we call the 'Acts of the Apostles,' a Book written perhaps thirty years before that from which our text comes, Luke the Doctor tells us that volume i. of his own work was concerned with what Jesus 'began to do and teach,' up to the day when His disciples saw Him for the last time. *Began!* Does it not suggest that volume ii. describes not the doings of some of His apostles, but the things which Jesus went on to do and teach, even when men could see Him no more? If you were to ask the men who wrote the New Testament they would tell you this was no fancy, but the fact on which their whole life was built. 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.' Life is 'in Christ,' and Christ is 'in' the Christian, just as certainly as we are 'in' the air, and the air 'in' us, if we are to live at all. In the great fourteenth chapter of this Gospel we read some very astonishing words of Jesus Himself. 'He that believes in me will do the works that I am doing.' What *can* that mean? How can you and I match the deeds of One who fed the multitudes on five small loaves, and walked on the sea, as this very Gospel tells? Must we not say then that no one ever has 'believed in him,' since assuredly no one ever succeeded in doing what we read that He did? If that is so, His life was just a failure—a wonderful and beautiful failure, but a failure still. He failed to do just the thing for which He came!

But the verse I have quoted goes on, first to perplex us 'still more, and then to explain the mystery. 'Greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.' They are to

be *Christ's* works, not yours or mine. It is not my hand that is writing these words: my brain composes them, and the hand is only a tool, like the pen. Even so Christ promises to be the very soul of our soul, working these works through us as His instruments—if we will let Him, for there is the point at which *we* come in! And the works are to be 'greater' even than those He did when He was here on earth. For 'I am going to the Father.'

We think that means He is going very far away. We talk of heaven, and we look up to the stars. We take our telescopes, and see stars so far away that our minds cannot faintly imagine the distance. But no telescope ever showed the City of Gold, which the last book of the Bible describes in such gorgeous figures. Men of the world say there is no such place. But you do not want a telescope to see a house just across the street. And heaven is nearer than that! 'The Son of Man . . . is in heaven,' even while on earth. He never left it. Heaven is everywhere where men do the will of God—God the Father 'in whom we live, and move, and exist.' 'Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.' No! Jesus did not go away: His own word to us is, 'I am with you all the days.' It is only that we cannot see Him: He is here just as really as when men touched His hand in Capernaum long ago.

But what happened when He 'went to the Father'? During those years of His life on earth, He was limited as we are, for everything depended on His being a *real* Man. He could not be in two places at once, any more than we can. If He was speaking to a crowd in Capernaum, another crowd in Jerusalem would have to do without Him—still more a crowd in India! But when the weary head drooped in death upon the Cross, He was free—all the powers of Deity, laid aside awhile for us, were His again. No longer 'sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' He can speak to His own in every tribe and people. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, in Britain, in India, in the islands of the Western Sea, He is there, at the same moment, in all His fullness. And what of the 'greater works'? What were the greatest works of His earthly life? He gave a list of them once—sight restored to the blind, lepers cleansed, and so through all that catalogue of mercies. But the climax of them all was that the poor had Good News brought to them. No one

had troubled to bring any good news to the poor before; and *such* good news had never been brought to any one. It was His joy on earth to scatter blessings as He went, to enter a house of pain and despair and leave it echoing with praises to the Father. But those whom His touch had healed must suffer again some day, and faces now wreathed in smiles would be stained with tears once more. The Good News was the greatest of all His works; for it told that God is always and only good, that sorrow and death may tarry for a night, but joy cometh in the morning—the morning of a day that shall never fade into darkness, for ‘there is no night There.’

This is what we mean by the Easter message—that Jesus of Nazareth was dead, and lo! He is alive for evermore. Not alive only as we believe all good people are living after death, in that larger and brighter world that He has revealed to us, who is the Resurrection and the Life. Good men and women do not die even to the world wherein they served the will of God in their own lifetime. They are truly ‘immortal dead who live again in lives made better by their presence.’ Never is ‘the good interred with their bones’—as well try to bury God as to bury goodness! But the influence of the greatest and the best of them fades swiftly as time passes by. Saints like Buddha and Zarathushtra are still lovingly remembered by multitudes, and we can still rejoice in the good that they left behind. But how dim is the light that shows us their figures, and how distorted their ghostly outline as we peer at it through the mists of the years! Abraham, Jeremiah, Paul, still live for the world. But it is not their own light that reveals them to us. They are like ‘the great old saints of other days’ who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, borne on a cloud of glory. It is *His* glory, not theirs; and when the cloud is passed, Jesus is found alone. For all experience tells us that our Dead have truly ‘gone away.’ They are ‘with God,’ and when we are walking with God we can feel that we are with them. We love to think that He sends them on His errands to us, but we could not catch their voices if they tried to speak to us. They are busy for God in a world whither we may not follow now, though we shall join them there one day and work by their side again.

Is that all that the continued life of Jesus means to the world to-day? Does He live only in the vivid pages of the Gospels, much as old letters and a

portrait are treasured by us as the pitiful substitute for a human presence ‘loved long since, and lost awhile’? From the whole wide world comes back a thunderous No! Was it only a page of ancient history that a missionary took to an island of savage cannibals, and in seven short years they were tamed? Was it an Avatar of Vishnu that laid hold of poor scavenger thieves in the metropolis of Hinduism, and left them honest, cleanly, and ready for education! Truly the world would not contain the books that could be written if all these stories were told. Let those who boast of other religions, or the power of science and culture, tell their story if they can! Where have they laid hold of human rubbish and turned it into pure gold? The power of Jesus has been doing it all the world over, among savages and cultured races, in East and in West; none are out of His reach. So have the later volumes of that Divine Library come to be written, though not with human pens, and already they fill the world. There are Gospels to tell us where Jesus has been to-day, Acts of twentieth-century Apostles of the Redeemer, ‘living Epistles, known and read of all men,’ true messages from the Father in heaven, and many a revelation of the ways of God to men. We cannot take them down from the shelves of a library, but every one of us may read them if we will. And all of them together heap up the proof that the Jesus who died is alive and among us for evermore.

But ‘the Books that are being written’ come even closer to our own lives than anything I have said yet. There is a Book being written now about every one of us. It tells not of our deeds and words alone, but of our thoughts. And it tells everything, with a completeness and a truth we could never match if we wrote about ourselves. Each day there is something new set down in that record. And what is written, is written. As the grim old Persian, Omar Khayyam, says:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

And the Day is coming when before the Great White Throne the judgment will be set and the books opened, and the dead will be judged by the things written therein. What will the record be for us? A story of wealth, pleasure, learning, success? We shall have little use for such things then. The one question will be whether our story is a

new volume of 'the things that Jesus did.' For if it is, there will be many another yet to be written that will be 'burdened with his name,' and our lives will thus be blessed beyond all thought for evermore. But if we knew of Him and left Him out of our lives, we had better never have been born.

There are many millions of records which angel pens are writing to-day, telling the story of human lives in India that daily go to their account. In them Religion takes no small part, and in a great number of them sincerity and deep belief is written on every page. But what are the pictures of God that are drawn therein? Far-off and terrible, cruel and blood-stained and propitiated with bitter tears, lustful and foul—such is what they see of Him whom Jesus brought near to us as our Father in heaven. How little help can such religion give towards covering those pages with beauty and

kindness—with the 'things which Jesus did,' even if they never knew that His was the light that lighted them! How mighty is the debt we owe them, we to whom the Name of Jesus has been familiar since our infancy! Remember, the one thing that the Judge will demand of us is what we did for His brethren, even for the least—the savage, the outcast, the despairing. And as we 'did it not' unto them, as we forgot to care, to love, to help, we 'did it not unto him.' That and nothing else will determine our destiny in the Hereafter, even if we never heard His Name. God give us grace to receive the Presence into our hearts whereby we may do only the things that Jesus does, till like Him we are 'received up' out of human sight to do them still in Him for ever!

*Kotagiri, Nilgiri Hills,
Easter, 1916.*

The Mysticism of Rome.

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ROMAN mysticism need be only very briefly noticed. There is very little of it in genuine Roman religion.

'Of the frantic type of diviner, the *ἄρθεος*, so common in Greece, we hear nothing in the sober Roman annals: the idea of a human being "possessed by a spirit of divination" seems foreign to the Roman character' (W. Warde Fowler, *Religious Experience of the Roman People*. London, 1911, p. 297).

Craving for mystic and emotional worship came in at times of trouble when the old State religion could no longer satisfy. The earliest sign of this tendency was the Sibylline influence, which can be first detected about the beginning of the 5th cent. B.C. We have seen that prophetic Sibyls were an offshoot of the religion of Dionysus. Some wandering Sibyl seems to have penetrated to Italy, and stirred the inhabitants to consult her oracular sayings. In obedience to her advice, banquets were spread for the gods (*lectisternia*) and *supplicationes*, or solemn prayers, were offered at the temples in the city, by a procession of men, women, and children. The first introduction of *lectisternia* was during the siege of Veii, when a

pestilence had filled the people with fear. The stress of the war with Hannibal, coming at a time when the pontifical and augural colleges had well-nigh buried the old religion under a mass of formalism, greatly increased the longing for some more personal union with the deity, and the true Roman religion, consisting in the careful discharge of ritual duties, broke down. Foreign gods had to be introduced to meet the need. In 205 the Sibylline oracle was said to announce that Hannibal would be driven out of Italy if the Great Mother of the gods were brought from Asia Minor to Rome. Scipio Africanus, himself a mystic, was sent, as the best man in the State, to receive her, when she arrived in the form of a small black stone (Livy, xxix. 10-14). Scipio was accompanied by all the Roman matrons, and amid prayers she was carried to a temple on the Palatine. Thus an Oriental deity was for the first time brought to Rome. Her orgiastic cult is no part of Roman mysticism, for it was entirely foreign, though the goddess was allowed her own Roman priests. Twenty years later Dionysus was introduced, through Etruria, a district that had a fatal tendency to corrupt all Greek influences. In Greece