

is worthless; is the letter without the spirit. Faith in your own ideal to whom you owe your life is the only true spring of morals, therefore seek justification through faith in the incarnation of Amida (the great incarnation of Buddha). It is easy to see that this reformation of Buddhism, confined to the educated, fostered by foreign sympathisers with anything anti-Christian, and derived from a foreign education, is scarcely likely to breathe a new life into the dry bones of a dead faith; that, whether it be in Ceylon, or China, or Japan, the real resistance to Christianity is rather from the deep-seated superstitions of the old idolatries than from the trained and organised forces of historic Buddhism.

H. B. TRISTRAM.

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ART. IV.—NOTES AND COMMENTS ON JOHN XX.

No. IV.

OUR last study closed with verse 10. We watched the departure of Peter and John from the garden to the city, as they retired with the new-born belief in their hearts that Jesus was risen, while the light of prophecy broke in on that astonishing fact and turned it into a glorious truth of redemption.

How brief, how unadorned, is the notice in the narrative; *So the disciples went back to their own abode* (πρὸς ἑαυτούς). Its simplicity is one of the many notes of truth in the passage. No creator of an unreal scene (writing within the first two centuries) would have thought of sending them away so quietly, with so little apparent *effect* in the story. Such simplicity, meanwhile, is quite in the manner of the fourth Gospel. It is of a piece with the extremely simple sequel of the raising of Lazarus, and again with the noble brevity of verse 21 below: *So the disciples were glad, seeing the Lord.*

Here the narrator is already occupied, so to speak, with the next great fact in the chain of events, the appearance to Mary. Peter and John have done their part, they have borne their witness to the Resurrection by telling us what they found in the tomb; now it is time for Mary's witness.

Once more we pause to observe the holy carelessness of the Evangelist about his own apostolic prominence, or Peter's, apart from the relation which he and Peter bear to Christ. The two leading Apostles, and their new resurrection-faith, are in his view merely a fragment of the witness to Jesus. And if the solitary woman left weeping by the empty cave can serve as well, or better, for the next fragment of that witness, let Peter and John move away unnoticed, and let Mary fill the scene.

“ We preach not,” and we depict not, “ ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves your bondservants, because of Jesus;” such is the uniform spirit of the Apostles and Evangelists. For our little sphere, let it be always our spirit too. If we would have it so, we must be always learning their secret; we must have for ourselves the Lord Jesus as the one grand certainty, satisfaction, joy, and hope.

The quiet self-forgetfulness of St. John’s treatment of narrative (a spirit which, indeed, appears, though in different forms, far and wide in Scripture narrations generally) is a phenomenon full of importance. Certainly it is a literary paradox, this balance, this calmness, when we remember at the same time the prodigious character of the events related. The morning of the resurrection is described with the same simplicity and absence of effort as the conversation by Jacob’s Well. How does this simple and un-anxious manner tell as an inner evidence of truthfulness? Somewhat thus, if I read aright. Had the story of the resurrection, and the whole circle of Gospel miracles, been a creation of imagination, a result merely of mental and spiritual emotion, then the emotions and impressions (to produce the results which followed) must have been very vehement experiences of highly excitable minds. And if so, if this were all, then these same minds would have been left, on the hypothesis, to work out their emotions as they might, uncontrolled, uncorrected, by the word and power of a risen Redeemer. The issue of such conditions would surely be not only hopeless divergencies but wild exaggerations. But what we have as a fact before us is at least substantial consistency of statement and great calmness of manner. To anyone who watches carefully the ways of man this is good moral evidence, not that nothing extraordinary had occurred, but that the wonderful something which had occurred had come with amplest warrant of its reality, and had become a permanent and most powerful, while elevating and calming, factor in the minds of the narrators.

The Evangelist writes of the Resurrection with dispassionate calmness because the Resurrection was an objective fact, absolutely certain; and because the Risen One had come back not merely to be seen and vanish, but to teach, to control, and to abide with His disciples’ souls for ever.

This same quietness of manner, with the same explanation, may be traced back into the narratives of the Crucifixion-time, where the Evangelists display an altogether wonderful calmness and (if I may use the word) fairness of tone in describing the conduct of the enemies and murderers of their Lord.

But it is more than time to proceed in our study of the text, from verse 11 and onwards.

*But Mary was standing at the tomb, weeping, outside. So while she wept, she stooped from the side (to look) into the tomb, and beholds (θεωρεῖ) two angels, in white, seated, one at the head and one at the feet, where lay the body of Jesus. And they say to her, Woman, why do you weep? She says to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put Him. And with these words she turned backwards, and beholds Jesus, standing, and did not know that it is Jesus. Jesus says to her, Woman, why do you weep? whom do you seek? She, thinking that it is the gardener, says to Him, Sir, if you carried Him off, tell me where you put Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus says to her, Mary! Turning, she says to Him, Rabbouni, which means, Master (διδάσκαλε). Jesus says to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet gone up to My Father. Go to My brethren, and say to them, I go up to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God. Mary of Magdala comes, reporting to the disciples that she has seen the Lord, and that He said these things to her..*

Ver. 11. *But Mary was standing at the tomb. Είστήκει*, she had taken her place, and was now there. Probably she had followed the Apostles out from the city, but more slowly. She would be left behind naturally by the pace of the two eager men, young as probably they both were; and besides, she would hurry less, as she knew the fact, which they had yet to assure themselves of, that the tomb was empty. She entered the garden after them, perhaps unnoticed by them, and not much heeding their looks and words as they entered successively and saw what the cavern had to reveal. We need not wonder at the absorbed unconsciousness of one another which those disciples, men and women, showed that morning. After all these Christian centuries, and after our personal Christian education, it is hard for us, even when we have found the Saviour with joy for our own, to realize what was the first grief for His death and the first joy for His resurrection. Those were moments which to an unknown degree threw minds and hearts back on themselves.

So, for the time, Mary was to the Apostles, and they were to her, as if they were not. Was Jesus stolen away? was Jesus risen again?—that was all.

The loving and desolate Galilean woman remains, then, as she thinks, all alone. If she just noticed the silent departure of Peter and John, it only said to her the worst—the Lord was not in the tomb, the Lord's body was gone. So she "stood," seemingly as if paralysed: not kneeling, making no gesture of

misery; standing, just as she had come, *κλαίονσα*, weeping, alone. And yet, like other sorrowful disciples since, she was not alone. Angels were just in front of her, and the Lord was just behind her. And the very thing which caused her tears, His absence from the place where she sought Him, was soon to be her blessed surprise, her sudden and endless joy.

So *Mary was standing, at the tomb, weeping, outside*. Thus the words follow each other in the Greek.

Ver. 12. *So while she wept, she stooped from the side to look into the tomb, and beholds two angels, in white, seated, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus lay.*

Again detail follows detail with a peculiar and thrilling simplicity. While weeping, she bent her head and looked in; the look not of curiosity, but of bereaved love, which in a sad unreasoning way cares for the bare spot where the beloved has been. And now her wet eyes, gazing fixedly (*θεωρεῖ*), see two human forms in the dark place; for simply human in form, surely, all angels are in Scripture when they appear in intercourse with men; the winged aspect is seen only in symbolic or mystic surroundings. There they are, two youthful watchers, as we may suppose them to look (Mark xvi. 5, *νεανίσκοι*), seated, in quiet dignity, one at each end of the niche in the cavern-wall, where the holy body had lain in its linen folds. They were *ἐν λευκοῖς*, in white clothing, white and more than white, positively bright.<sup>1</sup> So we gather from Luke xxiv. 4, *ἐν ἐσθήσεσιν ἀστραπτούσαις*. We may compare the word *στίλβειν* used for the white raiment of the transfigured Lord Himself, Mark ix. 3. Such a radiance, or something like it, shone in that garden sepulchre, touching with light its rocky roof, and walls, and floor, and "the linen cloths" as they lay there. There, before this weeping disciple, this once possessed and miserable woman, sat revealed those two inhabitants of the heavenly home. And listen!—to reassure her, to tell her that it is no delusion generated by her glancing tears, they speak to her, perhaps one by one, in human words, and with gentle, I might almost say respectful, sympathy: *Woman, why do you weep?* *Γύναι*, as we all know, is a word of perfect courtesy, a word of as much possible respectfulness as *Κύριε* would be in an address to a man. Woman, lady, why do you weep?

It is a moving thing to observe the sympathy of angels with men and women, as Scripture so very often brings it out. "These things" (the salvation of sinners by the Son of God) "angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. i. 12); and indeed we find it to be so with them whenever the veil is lifted. They are

<sup>1</sup> See Trench on the word *λευκός* in his commentary on Rev. ii. 17.

no mere official dignitaries of the court of heaven, just stooping to hand a message of reprieve to pardoned rebels of an alien race. They come as brethren to brethren, as servants to fellow-servants, as lovers and worshippers of the Son of God to those who, in the midst of sin and death, yet love and worship Him also. Aye, they come as to those whose nature He has taken, and who do not grudge sinful man that inexplicable and inexpressible privilege, but love man for it. So Mary, this weeping child of a sinful race, all weakness, all mistake, is to these heavenly ones an object of holy sympathy. To them she is one whom Jesus Christ loves, and who loves Him, and it is enough. *Why do you weep? Whom do you seek?*

Ver. 13. But for Mary all this is, for the present, nothing. In her then state of thought and feeling, the appearances and the voices were to her as things of everyday, commonplace, indifferent. She just answers, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put Him.*

Nothing could be more curiously truth-like and truthful than this indifference of Mary of Magdala. It was quite different from the startled fear of the women when (Matt. xxviii. 5, 8) the angel appeared on the stone. That was a shock, a sudden sight, on their first arrival. Here grief had had time to deepen, and to fix itself on the absorbing fact of the absence of Jesus. And such was the bitterness of that absence, the absence (to her mind at that time) of the body which was so soon to be dust—such was the grief of its absence, because He was her Lord, that the sight of two angels, and their audible voices, were to her, wonderfully yet naturally, as nothing.

What would it be to us if our Lord, as we have learnt to know Him, were removed? What if Jesus were found absent from our heart, our life, our earth, our heaven? If He—not the slain, but the slain and living, Lamb of God, our Lord, were found to be non-existent, or existent no more for us? Would not our souls so fail as to find no rest, no remedy anywhere else? Should we not really feel that heaven itself and its inhabitants, without Him (*per impossibile*), would be blank, unsatisfying, even formidable? Yes, for heaven is not the cause of our pardon, nor the source of our life, nor is the angelic race our Saviour and King.

And if indeed He is, as He is, such that nothing can ever possibly take His place for us, what a place should His be in the heart! Henceforth we will more than ever watch and pray against even the transient pain, so heavy and so paralysing, of even seeming to find Him absent, sin having taken away our Lord, and we know not where He is gone.

Ver. 14. *And with these words she turned backwards, and beholds* (θεωρεῖ) *Jesus, standing, and did not know that it is Jesus.*

She turned backwards, bent her stooping head towards the garden, not the cavern. It is vain perhaps to ask what made her turn. Chrysostom gives a singularly beautiful explanation—that as the Lord appeared the angels did obeisance, and Mary turned to see *to whom*. Or, as some have guessed, she felt that subtle consciousness of someone near her which we have all probably felt at times. But was it not simply the aimless movement of a new disappointment? The long look into the cave has told her that Jesus is not there, and now she will look away, and go away.

St. John, we may be sure, is here recording exactly what Mary told him. “So I turned my head, and there behind me stood, as I thought, the gardener.”

*And she sees Jesus, standing.* The word θεωρεῖ is again used. Even here, though certainly at first sight it is less easy to read than usual, we read its distinctive meaning, the “seeing” of a deliberate gaze.<sup>1</sup> The look she gave was but sidelong, for see below, ver. 16, where she “turns herself” again more completely. But it was steady. She deliberately and distinctly saw someone there.

Whence the Lord had come we do not know. How long He had been there, whether up to that moment He had been visible to anyone, whether He now appeared in His familiar form—we are not told. But He was there, none the less because Mary did not know Him and so little realized all that He was.

There stood the Lord of death and life, fresh from bearing that disciple’s sins and ours, from those unfathomable and unknown sorrows of His soul (ἄγνωστα παθήματα) which went to make the ransom of our souls; just come from the unseen world “in the power of an indissoluble life” (Heb. vii. 16). There He stood before her. And He was “the same Jesus” still; the same in corporeal and spiritual identity, the very body which had been torn by the Roman scourges and nails, the very soul which had been exceeding sorrowful unto death; the same humanity under the same Personality, glorified but identical. And He was the same, too, in moral identity, the unalterable Lord Jesus in faithfulness, patience, and love. He dies for His doubting and mistaking followers; He rises for them, and finds them mistaking and despairing. They, if I may say so, are themselves, and more than themselves, in their imperfections; He is Himself, and more than Himself,

<sup>1</sup> See this meaning at once unmistakable, and spiritually most important, in John vi. 40.

in His perfections. He is about to deal with Mary, and with the two, and the ten, and Thomas, as, indeed, "the same Jesus," as we shall see in due time. There is strong consolation in this picture of the moral identity of the risen Lord.

*But she did not know that it is Jesus.* Though essentially the same, He was to her now different. Partly, no doubt, it was simply a case of imperfect sight. She did not see Him full; perhaps she did not look *in His face* at all; she was in tears. But also we have here, surely, one of the many cases (Matt. xxviii. 17; Mark xvi. 13; Luke xxiv. 16, 37; John xxi. 4) where we trace a change in the aspect of the risen Saviour, and also that it was His pleasure sometimes not to be recognised, checking the message of the eyes to the mind.

In passing I see here again an evidence of truth. A fabricated narrative would hardly have gone out of its way to say that the Risen One, after forty hours' absence, was at first not recognised. It might even seem suspicious were it not true. *All* the Gospels record this inability of the disciples to recognise their Lord at once, and then go on to show how fully the doubt was removed. And how *permanently* it was removed! After Thomas' recovery to faith we detect in the first age of Christianity no trace of the least hesitancy, no whisper of a word of retraction or of uncertainty, on the part of any one of the professed witnesses of the Resurrection. No heretic, no pagan, has preserved the faintest tradition of any after misgiving in the Church of the witnesses.

Ver. 15. *Jesus says to her, Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek?*<sup>1</sup> Blessed inquiries, from that Inquirer. When Jesus Christ asks us about our sorrows their truest comfort is already begun; when He asks about our loss, our blank, He has already begun to fill it. Happy those who, like Mary, are found by Him, even if they are found grieving for Him and missing Him. We must not fear to tell Him all our fears. There is sure to be some element of sin, however recondite, in them. There was such an element in Mary's fears; she *ought* to have remembered His many promises better, and trusted them more firmly. She *ought* to have known that, come what might, He must conquer and reign. Yes, even a Mary at the tomb had sin somewhere in her unhelpfulness. Yet the Risen Lord came in person to dispel it. And to us He is ready to come as personally to help us, not because we deserve, but because we need; because in our guilty weakness we are so disappointing, if the word may be allowed, to Him. So we

<sup>1</sup> "This first word of the Risen Lord to a mortal is an inexhaustible text for the Resurrection, which it is the business of the preacher to unfold. He has risen again to comfort those who mourn" (Stier).

will come and speak out, keeping nothing back, telling Him our worst misgiving, as simply as if we could hear Him say, "Why do you weep? What do you want?"

But Mary is slow to see the light of joy. Perhaps already she had turned her eyes away again. She is so little conscious of supernatural glories and joys close to her that she thought that here was—Joseph's gardener! A very homely, unsentimental conjecture it was; certainly not the thought of a *femme hallucinée* such as Renan, hallucinated, supposes her to have been. She was quite sane, though very sad, when she said to herself, "It is the gardener." In great sorrow there is sometimes a cool, prosaic consciousness of trifling or common things around, as curious as it is real; the high wrought state of the mind leaves it open more than usual to the touch of even small impressions. So Mary would seem to have rapidly *calculated*, "It is the rich man's gardener; the Sabbath is past, and they may work. Joseph did not intend my Master's body to be permanently in his fine grave, only to rest there for a while, because it was so near; and now his servant has been told to take the body away to bury it somewhere else." And then, with the resolve of a love which felt as if it could carry mountains, she thinks she will take it into her own care, lift it, carry it, bestow it in some untroubled sepulchre, if she may but have it again. *Sir*, so the helpless mourner speaks, with the deference of helplessness, *if you carried Him off, tell me where you put Him, and I will take Him away.*

"Him:"—she uses no name; no need to do so occurs to her. Jesus, even slain and gone, fills her whole thought, and she assumes that it must be so with others too.

How truth-like again in every detail; the submissive sadness of the appeal, and, on the other hand, the blind energy of love, which undertakes, in the exhaustion of grief, to do the work of a strong man, removing and burying the body.

So she plans a second interment for Jesus, while the living Jesus is there, and just about to lift her in the embrace of His manifested power and love.

Ver. 16. *Jesus says to her, Mary.* The reading *Μαριάμ*, Miriam, is, on the whole, most probable here; the specially Jewish form of the name, not Maria, its Greek equivalent. It is interesting to remember that the same Voice, at a later day, spoke to another heart by its own home-name, *Σαούλ*, not *Σαῦλε* (so in all the narratives of the great conversion). It is observable, whatever inferences we may draw, that where the Evangelists record His utterance of an Aramaic word or sentence the occasion is almost always one where a specially close and personal appeal was needed. The Aramaic of the cry from



the Cross is scarcely an exception.<sup>1</sup> But this is a minor point here; the all-important fact here is that He used the woman's *name*. The personal appeal, the voice to the individual, to that mysterious personality with which, as a fact, man so intimately connects his *name*—it is this we are to notice. It is no longer *Woman*, it is *Mary*. Any voice might have said the first; the speaker of this last, then and there, must be no other than the Friend who had set her free.

*Turning, she says to Him, Rabboni*, or more precisely, probably (some think that we have here a *Galilean* form) *Rabbouni*. This St. John at once explains; *which means Master, Διδάσκαλε*, Teacher; but, of course, with the conveyed idea (in the Hebrew) of the greatness, the venerability, of the Teacher. The termination, it would seem (*Rabbouni*) may either be the possessive suffix (*My Master*), or an appellative (*Oh Master*). Either alternative gives much the same impression of intensity and reverent endearment (v. 17). With the word, she clasps Him as He stands. In that tumult of fear, love and joy, to assure herself of the objective reality of His presence, she lays her touch, the touch which *feels* (ἅπτομαι), on His sacred person, probably on the feet towards which she bent. Compare Matt. xxviii. 9.

Ver. 17. *Jesus says to her, do not touch (feel) Me, for I have not yet gone up to My Father. Go to My brethren, and say to them, I go up to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.* Ver. 18: *Mary of Magdala comes reporting to the disciples that she has seen the Lord, and that He said these things to her.*

The two verses, 17, 18, I thus merely translate. It would be impossible in this paper to dwell on v. 17, with its problems of reference, and its depth of truth about the Father, the Son, and the soul.

Let us for the present close with the delightful effort to place ourselves in thought beside those two persons in the calm, silent morning of that wonderful spring-time, in Joseph's garden. Looking on them we forget, as the Gospel forgets, the blessed angels close at hand; JESUS and Mary Magdalene have much more to do than they with our salvation and peace. It is indeed a place good to visit, and to visit at the moment we have studied. We stand upon the common earth; the ground of a garden near the walls of a still existent town, a garden whose last traces are, some think, still visible. We see the cavern-tomb, and its round door-stone rolled out. We look up to the common morning sky, through the garden trees. But in that quiet place and hour JESUS Himself is

<sup>1</sup> See this handled very ably in Dr. Alex Roberts' "Discussions on the Gospels."

making known, for the very first time, the success, the completeness, the glory of His salvation. It is HE who stands literally there, speaking to Mary, but now much more speaking to us, to you, to me, as we, too, "turn" to Him to hear His words about Himself. He points us to His own open grave; that is, to His accomplished victory for us, His finished atonement for our sins. He points us to His living Self, living immortally, eternally, living at this moment, and present with us, even when "we perceive Him not." He points us to the heavens above, and tells us that He is going thither, and that we, for whom He has died, and who have come to Him, and whose sins—including doubts and fears—He has wonderfully cancelled in His own blood, may be sure that that heaven is for us home. It is home for Peter, who denied Him; for the Eleven, who forsook Him; for Magdalene, who thought that His death was the end. It is home for us, unworthy; for He is there. Henceforth, the earth and the heavens are filled for us with light—the light of the redemption, the love, and the presence, of the sacrificed and risen Son of God.

H. C. G. MOULE.

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#### ART. V.—SOME PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

##### No. I.

*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*—PROVERBS xvii. 17.

IT has been well observed that the recognised ideals of a nation are a trustworthy index of its moral condition. If the public sentiment of a country demands, and its literature supplies, a high standard in the delineation of character, if its people expect and require nobility and generosity, purity and chivalry, uprightness and unselfishness in the objects of their honour and regard, if to be a hero in their estimation is to be a good man, we may safely conclude that the moral condition of that country is sound and healthy. If, on the contrary, splendid vices are admired, and a low moral type is tolerated, the taint of corruption has undoubtedly entered into the body politic.

Now, the presence of high ideals is a conspicuous trait in the sacred literature of the Hebrew people; and it serves in their case a double purpose. It is at once preservative and prophetic. Even in the darkest times of their chequered national life, the Jews were never suffered to lose sight of high and inspiring ideals of character and achievement. The heroes of their past history, the king, or priest, or prophet, who from time to time stood forth, a form of light in a scene