

reader. In 1856 the Dean of Carlisle was summoned to one of the hardest tasks in the English Church. To succeed an illustrious prelate like Bishop Blomfield, might, indeed, make a brave heart quail. Tait, however, felt that the post was none of his own seeking, and he began his new life with cordial good wishes, and prayers of many friends who believed that his episcopate would prove a real blessing to the Church of England.

The work of Canon Benham and Bishop Davidson has been, on the whole, admirably done. A little more compression would be perhaps desirable, but the aim of both writers has been to give a fair and distinct portrait. They have attained success.

G. D. BOYLE.

(To be continued.)

ART. VI.—THE WATCH AT THE GRAVE.

The Cavil of the Author of the "Fragment of Wolfenbüttel."

FROM the day when the writer of the "Fragment of Wolfenbüttel" ("Über die Auferstehungsgeschichte") endeavoured to disprove the narrative of the watch at the grave of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 62-66, and xxviii. 1-8, 11-15) until Strauss renewed his work and embellished it with the accessories of a greater ingenuity and a more extended learning, this most signal of the proofs of the crowning doctrine of our faith has been the principal point to which the attacks of infidelity have been directed. "All we believe," writes St. Nicetas, "we believe because of the resurrection."¹ To deprive us of this firm hope has been the great object of the disbelievers in our faith from the beginning—and as the most fruitful countries have ever been the most liable to invasion, so this most precious of the possessions of our faith has been exposed to the fiercest assaults of the enemy.

The passage relating to this incident in the celebrated "Fragment" runs thus:

"How can it be reconciled with the truth of this history that, with the exception of Matthew, no single evangelist in his narration, no single Apostle in his epistles, makes the remotest mention of it? How can it consist with the truth of this history that not one Apostle or disciple, either before Jewish or heathen tribunals, or before the people in their houses or

¹ "Totum quod, credimus, propter nostram credimus resurrectionem."
—Expl. Symboli.

synagogues, makes use of it for the convincing of the hearers or for their own defence? . . . Yet in the whole of the Acts of the Apostles, in the frequent defences they make before the Church while testifying the resurrection of Jesus, they make not the slightest allusion to so remarkable a circumstance. They speak only this: 'We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,' 'We are his witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost.' . . . Why did not the Apostles dismiss all these false and idle *petitiones principii*, and avail themselves instead of so advantageous a point as this, which the very consciences of the judges would have made credible to them, and which alone was able to move, to convince, and to shame them? How else can we conclude, than, that either the narrative must be untrue, or the Apostles would have necessarily made use of it here, where it was the only strong proof that remained to them, and all others could effect nothing?"

Such is, in the main, the contention of the writer of the Fragments, which were published anonymously under the editorship of Lessing as "Fragmente des Wolfenbüttelschen Ungenannten" (Berlin, 1788, pp. 225-6). Much is added by the writer on the lesser points of the incident, but it will be enough in these few remarks to meet its chief contention. In the admission that this history is of the greatest importance the believers in the truth of the resurrection of Jesus will entirely concur with its adversaries. But their respective views regarding the silence of the other evangelists and of the Apostles at a later period will be in complete divergence. The difficulties presented by the author will be seen on closer examination to involve assumptions which are absolutely inconsistent with the relations in which the followers of Jesus were standing in regard to their adversaries. It is assumed that they were standing before the world in a perfect equality with their opponents—that they rather resembled the parties in a civil suit involving no religious issues, than in a criminal cause in which they were already prejudged. They are supposed to have possessed means of defence which are absolutely incompatible with their utterly helpless condition. Had they ventured to assert the truth of the resurrection on such a ground we may well conceive the storm of indignation and of ridicule with which they would have been overwhelmed. It is utterly forgotten, moreover, that during the only season in which an appeal to the consciences of the judges could have been made—that at the only period at which it was capable of corroboration, the Apostles were scattered everyone to his own; that not until some time afterwards was the truth of the resurrection, far less the doctrine, fully known to them; and that when it was known they naturally rested

more fully upon that personal evidence which made them the actual witnesses of its truth, than on a fact which depended upon the evidence of men they were unable to produce, and whose testimony, even if capable of production, would be ever liable to dispute and contradiction—"Ye are witnesses," said our Lord, "of all these things."

The silence of all the other evangelists in regard to so remarkable an incident might indeed at first sight occasion a feeling of surprise, and perhaps of desire that so important a circumstance might receive corroboration in the writings of the other witnesses of the risen Saviour. But this feeling will pass away when we have given due consideration to

I. The form in which the Gospel narrative is conveyed to us.

II. The development which the argument for the truth of the resurrection received in its later history.

I. Viewing the evangelists rather in the character of witnesses than mere narrators of fact, giving evidence of what they had seen and heard, we should be rather led to seek for a general agreement in the leading facts and truths of their narrative than for the perfect harmony and adjustment of every subordinate feature or unimportant detail. We should bear in mind the circumstance that they were regarding the same events from different points of view, and as independent, though not unassisted, witnesses of divine truth. The slighter discrepancies which are presented by the different Gospels, and the absence in several of them of that orderly course of narrative which distinguishes the Gospel of St. Luke, are justly regarded by St. Chrysostom as invaluable proofs of the ingenuousness and honesty of the writers, and of their freedom from collusion or fraud. Why should we fear to admit that in such lesser points the evangelists were left to the freedom and independence of witnesses who, from the different aspects in which they were viewing the same great facts, were not over-careful to bring the lesser lines of their picture into perfect correspondence? It would seem, indeed, that the sacred narrative was entrusted to four writers rather than drawn up in a single and absolute form, in order that it might the better commend itself to all alike, and present a concurrence of independent witnesses rather than an artificial unity and a systematic form. "What, then?" (asks St. Chrysostom), "was not one evangelist sufficient to relate all? He was assuredly. But if even four should write Gospels, not at the same time, nor in the same manner, nor yet meeting or conferring together, and yet should with one mouth declare everything, this would surely be the greatest proof of the truth. But you will say, perhaps, 'The very reverse of this has happened. They are

shown to be in disagreement on many points.' Even this, I reply, is the greatest proof of truth. For if they were in exact agreement in points of time and place, and even in their very words, no one of their adversaries would have believed that they had not associated themselves in some human confederacy and thus wrote what they have written. 'For such an agreement,' they would have said, 'does not belong to an ingenuous narration.' But now the very discrepancies that appear in slight matters preserve them from all suspicion of deceit, and clearly vindicate the sincerity of the writers."¹

To expect absolutely the same evidence from every one of the four witnesses, would be to render the testimony of three out of the four superfluous, and the entire evidence suspicious. The chain of evidences was to be completed and supplemented by every one in his appointed order, and according to his personal knowledge and experience. And if we mark the features which are peculiar to one or another of the Gospels, we shall find how singularly they contribute to prove at once the authenticity and independence of the narratives. Thus the incident of the watch over the tomb of Jesus is related by that very evangelist who was most likely, from his greater intercourse with the Jewish world, to obtain the knowledge of it, and by him alone. The entire history of St. Matthew would lead us to conclude that he was far better able to become acquainted with the course and proceedings of the adversaries of Jesus than any other of the Apostles. St. Mark, as the disciple of a later day, could only have derived it from St. Matthew, had he ever designed to record the incident. Here again the charge of collusion would have arisen, and the very repetition of the fact would have injured rather than promoted its credibility. Of every such instance of the silence of an evangelist we may say, as has been said of our Lord's teaching itself, "*Tacendo maxime docuit.*"

But while we are ready to admit, with the author of the "*Fragment,*" that this incident is of the highest value and importance in itself, we are by no means prepared to concede that an appeal to it in the earlier period, in which alone it could have been made, would have had any probability of success; nay, it would have been highly injurious and even dangerous to the little community of believers upon whom the truth and doctrine of the resurrection rose so slowly and gradually. At such a period as this, their own personal experiences outweighed every other evidence, and in a manner superseded it. "*The Lord is risen indeed,*" was their grand and only argument. And it was proved by His successive

¹ In Matt. Hom. I.

appearances—"He hath appeared unto Simon." They needed no other testimony at a moment like this. Their eyes had seen the risen Lord even as the eyes of the brethren of Joseph saw and recognised the brother whom they believed to be dead; but risen (as it were) to a life of power and glory. What need had they of other witnesses? Christ seemed to have said to them, like the Patriarch: "Behold, your eyes have seen . . . that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you." The evidence derived from the watch at the tomb in its own nature grew weaker from day to day, while, during the forty days of our Lord's risen teaching, an amount of personal evidence grew up with so increased a strength and influence as to render an appeal to any other proof unnecessary. The Jews, whose rulers the story of the robbery of the body of Jesus incriminated, could hardly be expected to accept the statement of it at second hand as an argument worthy of credit, while the Gentiles, who received the doctrine of the resurrection from the general and convincing arguments of St. Paul, would still less need to be reminded of a fact whose proof to their minds would be so far more remote. The idea of the exclusive importance of the evidence of the watch at the tomb was rather the afterthought of a late apocryphal writer than the conviction of those whose witness of the risen Saviour was personal and real.

The author of the spurious Epistle of Pilate to Tiberius, when he invented names for the watchmen at the tomb, set a value upon their testimony which could never have belonged to it in the day when the living presence of the Saviour was fresh in the minds of His disciples.

II. But a new and irresistible argument was growing up in the Church which daily tended to give less prominence to the earlier evidence of the empty tomb, and the lies of the authorities in their endeavours to explain a fact which they were compelled to admit. The doctrine and power of the resurrection, growing in the hearts of the disciples, and bearing fruits of life and holiness in the Church, had sprung up from the fact and truth of the resurrection of Jesus, giving a testimony to that crowning truth which its adversaries were unable to gainsay or to resist. The resurrection in the days of St. Paul, its last witness, had become not only a doctrine, but a "power"—"That I may know Him and the *power* of His resurrection," was the prayer of the great Apostle whose whole after-life gave such signal proof of it. The appearance of Jesus to the Apostle on his way to Damascus was the link which connected the actual fact of the resurrection with the evidence of it in the life of the disciple. Strauss, in his "Life of Jesus," endeavours vainly to employ this supernatural manifestation to the de-

struction of the historic truth. "Paul," he writes, "places the manifestation of Christ, of which he was the witness, in the same rank as the appearances of Jesus in the days of the resurrection. This authorizes us to conclude that in the mind of the Apostle, these earlier appearances were of the same nature as that which he had himself."¹

"Last of all He was seen of me," etc. (1 Cor. xv. 8). If he had carefully weighed the entire argument of St. Paul, instead of deriving a forced meaning from a detached passage of it, he would have seen that it rests upon the assumption, that the fact of our Lord's resurrection is so indisputable, that the doctrine of a general resurrection ought to be admitted as a natural consequence of it. The Corinthians did not doubt or dispute the truth of the resurrection of Christ, but only the deduction from it of a general resurrection. The appearance of our Lord, by the way, was the revelation of the truth of the fact, made not indeed on earth, as in the appearances of the great forty days, but from the scene of our Lord's glorified life, and was the token, not only of the reality of the resurrection, but also of that of the ascension. Hence we need not regard with wonder or incredulity the connection between the revelations of the risen Saviour to St. Paul, and those made to His first disciples during His risen life upon earth. They form necessary links between His bodily appearances and those spiritual proofs of the resurrection, which the faithful in every age have given in their own experience, as raised in His power to newness of life, and thus enabled to become themselves witnesses of the resurrection. In a single word, they are the points of union between the *truth* of the resurrection as a fact, and the *power* of the resurrection as a doctrine—between the resurrection to glory of the Master, and the resurrection through grace of the disciple.

The Apostle in the Ep. to the Corinthians has, as his object, to trace for us the progress of this great truth from the day when it had only a material evidence, to that in which it was spiritually revealed and evidenced in the lives of the disciples of Christ. In the course of this recapitulation he places, as the connecting link, the appearance of our Lord to himself, by which he became a living witness of its truth and the first proof of its power. This miraculous appearance was as true as those in which our Lord manifested Himself to His disciples after His resurrection, though it was the truth in a new form and in a still higher development. It rather derived from them the reality which they possessed, than threw back upon them the visionary features which surrounded it, and which necessarily belonged to the manifestation of the glorified Saviour.

¹ "Leben Jesu," Vol. II., p. 681.

When the author of the "Fragment," taking his text from the argument of Celsus, asks "why the Passion should have been witnessed by the whole world and the Resurrection only by a few, whereof the contrary should have been the case," we may well reply that the manifestation of this supreme truth followed the ordinary course of God's Providence. The wonderful discoveries of the natural world have been revealed in the same manner to some one or few gifted minds. The great discoveries of moral truth have been thus disclosed to a few, though all were equally interested in their discovery. We may well, with St. Bernard, refer the caviller to the Supreme Authority, and reply, "*Ipsium interroga; mihi scire licet quod ita; cur ita, non licet.*" The religion of our Lord, like Himself in His human nature, was to "grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." It was not to strive or contend or to make its voice heard in the streets, but to spring up secretly and influentially in the hearts of men. It was not the faithless multitude or the empty grave which were to prove that the Lord was risen indeed, but the deep and solemn conviction and testimony of chosen witnesses, whose unbiased minds and freedom from every prepossessing influence gave them the best preparation for so great an evidence.

The author of the "Fragment" next asks, "How comes it that if the stealing of the body by the disciples of Jesus is a universal saying among the Jews, the tradition of St. Matthew is not also a universal saying among the Christians?" I reply, How can he prove that it was not so? The silence of the other evangelists at a later period is, as we have shown, no proof that it was not so. The mention of it by St. Matthew rather proves the early character and date of his gospel, and that it was written at a period when the lie of the watchmen was actually current, than that it was not denied by the Christians, whose refutation of it could only be uttered in secret and in fear of being themselves compromised. The attempt to prove the calumny of the Jews to be probable and credible, while the explanation of the evangelists is alleged to be absurd and contradictory, rests wholly upon the author's determined denial of the possibility of a miracle, a subject which opens too large a field for our present purpose. Christians are content to accept the conclusion of St. Augustine, "*Demus Deum aliquid posse quod nos fateamur investigare non possumus; in talibus rebus tota ratio facti est potentia facientis*" (ad Volusian., Ep. 3).

To conclude, let us not be disheartened or depressed at the renewal in our day, and amongst ourselves, of the attacks of an earlier infidelity upon this citadel of our Christian faith and

hope. For though the outward and material evidence of the resurrection can be produced no more to convince the doubtful, as in the case of St. Thomas, the proofs which converted and convinced the world are still before us in the testimony of those by whom the "power of the resurrection" has been proved in the Christian life. We cannot claim, at the same time, the gift of a visible manifestation of its truth, and the higher grace of those who, "not having seen, have yet believed."

We have still before us, not indeed the miraculous appearance of Christ which qualified the great Apostle to be His witness, but the continuous and convincing miracle of the life of faith, rising in the strength of God and in the power of the resurrection high above fear and loss, doubt and danger, pain and death, yea, and the very grave itself. Oh! that in our life and conversation we may be of the number of those who add daily in their lives to this great and cumulative evidence. As the outward evidence is removed farther and farther from us, and year after year increases the distance of the great event from our own age and life, the inward evidence increases in power and volume. It may be said that the Church, like the great Apostle, is "strengthened with might in the inner man," and that the "inward man is renewed from day to day" by the fresh evidence of the truth of the resurrection which is built up in the lives of the faithful. They "shall go from strength to strength" until the day when, in the joys of the resurrection to eternal glory, they shall "appear every one of them before God in Zion" (Ps. lxxxiv. 7).

ROBERT C. JENKINS.

Notes on Bible Words.

NO. XI.—"SANCTIFICATION."

THE word *ἁγιασμός*, *sanctification*, is found only in the Sept., N. Test. (in all but two places used by St. Paul), and in Ecclesiastical writings.

The verb is *ἁγιάζω*, to make *ἅγιον*. Matt. vi. 9: "Hallowed be Thy name;" xxiii. 17: "The temple that sanctifieth the gold;" John xvii. 17: "Sanctify them;"¹ 19: "I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified" (*ἁγιασμένοι*, cf. Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 18); x. 36:

¹ *Sanctify, i. e.*, consecrate, hallow: *in* the truth. The prayer is that the consecration which is represented by admission into the Christian society may be completely realized in fact.—Westcott.