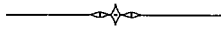


This volume brings the Bishop's life down to the year 1846, and we shall look with great interest to the conclusion, which we trust he will live to finish. We have no space to notice the very interesting review of the Oxford movement, and especially the keen analysis of John Henry Newman's changes. Bishop Wordsworth has always been in a position of remarkable independence. From his father he inherited a true love for the great giants of English theology. He is now, in his old age, anxious to discover points of contact with those who do not accept the service and discipline of the Church of England. He longs for the reunion of England and Scotland in one united communion, and his earnest labours, though not productive of immediate fruit, will tell, and are telling, on many who are panting for reconciliation and longing for peace. We commend this volume with its varied contents most heartily to our readers. It is the work of a strong intellect and a firm faith.

G. D. BOYLE.



ART. V.—NOTES AND COMMENTS ON ST. JOHN XX.

II.

IN the previous paper mention was made of the "three days" which came between the Lord's death and His resurrection, the silent interval referred to in the $\delta\epsilon$ of our ver. 1. Let us so far return to that point as to remind ourselves of the extreme importance to us of that interval from one particular point of view. "The third day I will rise again"; that promise of delay was pregnant with many mercies. Putting aside all thought and question (never by us on earth to be answered with certainty) what the Lord Jesus Himself might have to do in that mysterious time, we see at once that the interval was momentous, not only for our greater assurance of His literal death, but—this is the point here in my mind—for our better appreciation of the real state of mind of His followers. Their blank surprise, their despair, their mistakes, their broken faith but not broken love—all are before us now, for all had time to come out. And thus we are able to estimate better the massive solidity of the evidence of the resurrection, looking at the absolute contrast between the former and after states of the disciples. The disciples between Friday and Sunday—the disciples after the Sunday, thenceforward for ever—what a difference! Before, all is misunderstanding, bewilderment, helplessness; after, all is one strong consistency (if we except a passing check in the case of one person, Thomas) of holy certainty, peace, energy, and joy.

But now we draw near the scene of resurrection.

Perhaps it was soon after midnight, the vernal midnight, that the Lord arose. Indeed, as soon as the sun of Saturday had set, and the first moments of the First Day had come, the letter of His promise permitted Him to return; for the *πρωθήμερον* could be represented by ever so small a fraction of its course. But, as a fact, the Revival took place not long before the discovery of its occurrence. In one place (Mark xvi. 9) we read distinctly that "Jesus rose early" (*πρωί*), in the early morning, on the first day of the week. It was probably a very silent resurrection. It was not till the great Angel, afterwards, came down that the stone was rolled fairly away, and the earth shaken around the place of burial. It may be that, in a way unknown to us, and unknowable, the Body of the Resurrection was made able to pass through the stone which as yet lay unmoved in the doorway.¹ But, however, It passed out from the cell. He stood up, in His veritable, immortal body, dropping aside, so that they lay on the floor, just as and where they had been worn, the long linen cloths which had so recently pressed "an hundred-pound weight" of spices round His lacerated limbs²; and so He reappeared, "in the power of an indissoluble life," "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

In that resurrection life "He dieth no more." The human form, flesh and bones, which stepped forth in the light of dawn into Joseph's garden that wonderful morning, was alive eternally. Identical in continuity with the body of His birth and His death, it was in a state infinitely new, "a spiritual body." For it, time was, as it were, no more. Eighteen centuries have not worn it into age, nor shall the coming æons do so. In it, He is "this same Jesus," yesterday, to-day, and when He comes again. And every moment of its holy permanence is proof both that we are accepted in His death and are being saved for ever in His life.

So the Risen Saviour triumphed in the deep silence of that

¹ I own to a greater unwillingness than formerly to admit this theory, which *seems* to put an essential difference between the Lord's Risen Body and our body. Yet it must be observed that the theory does not suppose the contradiction of any apparent necessary law of thought. It does not suppose any ubiquity, or practical ubiquity, of the Body, nor that the same space would be occupied by the atoms of the stone and of the body; but that the sacred material of the Body was so subtilized by the action of the Lord's Spirit that the dense stone became, relatively to It, a network of large interstices. But the hypothesis is, perhaps, too far-fetched.

² Where had the spices gone? Had they been, as it were, consumed by that contact?

early morning. Meanwhile the disciples were weeping and groaning because of His death, and were coming to bid His remains the last farewell.

Verse 1. *On the first day of the week, τῆ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων.* The Greek plural σαββάθᾱ is a transliteration of the Aramaic *shabbāthā*, and has no plural meaning. *Μιᾷ* for *πρώτῃ* is Hebraistic.

Cometh Mary the Magdalene, Mary of Magdala, or Migdol, a place (probably) near Tiberias, and still perhaps to be identified. This much-favoured disciple is mentioned fourteen times in the Gospels, and always (except only Luke viii. 2, where she is seen, along with "many other women," accompanying the Lord through Galilee, and assisting Him with her personal means) in connection with the story of the Passion. There is no real evidence to identify her with the "woman that was a sinner." From her (Mark xvi. 9) Jesus had "cast out seven devils." But this tells us nothing of any special impurity in her life. All it does is to account most instructively and nobly for her deep, devoted, energetic love. That love began with this simple but mighty motive—gratitude for immense blessings, profoundly certain to her consciousness. She had been a tortured, perhaps a terrible, demoniac; now she was at rest, and Jesus was the cause. So she came to the sepulchre early, in the dusk, earlier than the Apostles; brought by no superhuman courage, but by special grateful love.

She did not come alone. "The other Mary," wife of Clopas, mother of James the Less, and very possibly sister of the Virgin,¹ was with her; and other women came to the same spot about the same hour, Johanna and Salome among them. But, with one minute exception, which we shall notice as it comes, their presence does not appear in *this* narrative. In it we have the whole scene from *Mary's* point of view; and deeply truth-like it is, when we remember Mary's condition of feeling, that that point of view should have regarded herself and her own experiences alone. As she told the sacred incidents over, when she went to the disciples with the message that "she had seen the Lord," she would speak as one whose whole being had been concentrated on what He had said to *her*.

She came *early, while it was still dusk, to the sepulchre*; finding her way to the walled garden whither she had seen Joseph and Nicodemus convey the body, and there deposit it, within the mass of linen-folded spicery, inside the chamber

¹ See Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," s.v. *Mary of Clopas*.

cut in the rock, at the back or the side of the enclosure. The sun was near his rising; but it was dusk still in the nooks and corners of the place.

And now, *she sees the stone taken out of the sepulchre.* This view, very probably, was not from the garden itself. A glance as she approached it would be enough to show her the black void recess. And perhaps, accordingly, she did not now go up to the tomb at all, but hastened on alone, leaving whoever might have come with her, or have met her, to follow or not as it might happen.

However, the stone was moved. "*The stone,*" says St. John, though he had said nothing about a stone before. To be sure, the definite article may be accounted for by the fact that every rock-tomb would have *its* stone. But knowing as we do from the other Gospel narratives how large a part "the stone" did play on that momentous morning, I cannot help seeing here one of the many details in which St. John, in his Gospel, *takes for granted* the main Evangelic narrative, and passingly and without anxiety uses his reader's knowledge of it.

Verse 2. *So Mary runs.* How much eager speed there was that hour! The holy woman, the two Apostles, all *run*, from the sepulchre, or to it, in the self-oblivion of great grief or of great hope.

And she comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved; so John describes himself, with a naïveté inimitable, and altogether unlike a fabricator (when we have regard to the literary conditions of the early generations of Christianity¹), about fourteen times.

So she found Peter and John in company; perhaps in the same house, though the repetition of the *πρὸς* before *τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν* slightly suggests that she needed to call at two doors. Very beautiful is the sight of this special intimacy of the two Apostles. We seem to see it first when they go (Luke xxii. 8) to prepare the room for the Last Passover; then, when they stand together at the door of the Palace of the Priest; again in this incident; again in the following chapter, and again and again in the early passages of the Acts. How different was each from each—how helpful each to each manifestly became! And we may specially note how "the disciple whom Jesus loved" had learnt in that wonderful friendship to "love his brother also." John had never actually denied his Lord; Peter, probably in John's hearing, had denied Him. Many a

¹ It cannot be too often remembered, when we study the inner marks of the authenticity of the Scripture narratives, of both Testaments, that anything like finished and really deceptive personation of the past (if I may say so) is a very modern literary phenomenon. Is it much older than Sir Walter Scott?

"saint" of later days would, I fear, have thrust Peter away from all fellowship with himself. But not so John. At once, before the Resurrection, before the hope of it, while there was yet no joy in his own heart, John has joined himself to Peter; has taken him to be his brother as well as Mary to be his mother.

If for us, in our day, the sense of our Redeemer's love, our rest upon the bosom of His forgiving friendship, does anything, it will make us condemn and renounce the spiritual self-righteousness which shuts up sympathy. It will make us feel how wonderfully welcome to the Lord is "whosoever cometh," even if he comes fresh from some grievous fall, some denial of the blessed Name. It will make us so far like Him who loved us, that while we shall see and feel sin, as sin, more and more keenly and painfully (and not least, the sin of not loving the Lord Christ, and submitting the whole being to Him), we shall more and yet more truly love, and seek to help, others for whom our aid may avail, however strange the case, however great the fall.

So, to Peter and to John, Mary of Magdala comes running.

And she says to them, They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we do not know where they have put Him.

I turn the aorists by perfects; not, of course, forgetting an important grammatical difference, but remembering that the genius of Greek places an act or event in the complete past more promptly than the genius of English. Accordingly we have often, for the sake of English, to represent the Greek completed past by the English past connected with the present.

"*They have taken.*" The expression is quite indefinite. It appears to be fairly equivalent to the *on* of French; *on a enlevé le Seigneur*; Joseph, Joseph's servants, anyone, had done it. Mary may have thought of the soldiers, who had already left the place pell-mell. But probably she did not even know of their having been there, nor of the seal upon the stone. The guard had not been sent to the place till the Sabbath; and the women had kept the Sabbath most strictly (Luke xxiii. 5, 6¹), moving about very little, probably.

"*They have taken away the LORD*"; wonderful word! It was only the corpse; yes, but to Mary that was JESUS. And she was right. The body, as much as the soul, is an integral part of perfect man; it is so with the Christian, it was so with Christ. We are amply justified in mourning, loving, honouring the precious bodies of our departed dear ones; *they are* a part of *them*. And truly we are justified in longing, in praying, for the Resurrection hour when they shall actually and eternally be part of them again.

"*And WE do not know where they have put Him.*" Here,

¹ Their Master, it appears, had taught them no neglect of the "Commandments."

surely, we have a distinct, though minute, indication of the presence of other seekers along with Mary. Some even devout scholars (I think Dr. Sanday is among them) say that we cannot argue thus; that the memory of the aged Apostle could not charge itself with the presence or absence of a mere syllable (a mere *μεν*, if she spoke Greek). But it seems obvious to remark that to recall a syllable may mean much more than merely to recall the sound. The word is bound up with the thing. Not so much the sounds spelt *οἶδαμεν* cling to the mind as the represented idea of the more-than-one who "did not know."

Anywise, St. John has carefully written *οἶδαμεν*, and (to speak of no deeper considerations) it is in harmony with his whole style to imply details which he leaves unrecorded, because recorded otherwise already. I take it that he makes Mary here conscious of having approached the sepulchre with her friend, and now refer to their united thought.

"*We know not where they have put Him.*" What strange words, at such a moment! What a sublime *ειρωνεία* about them! Let us try to enter into the anguish and bewilderment of this blessed forerunner of our faith and lover of our Lord. Intensely devoted to the Person of Jesus; bound to Him by ties of the tenderest gratitude, by her knowledge that reason, and rest, and friends, were all the special gift of Him who had disencumbered her soul of the seven foul spirits; bound to Him also by longing hopes, cherished visions (in the light of true prophecy) of His passionless triumph and world-wide glory and fame; longing, no doubt, for all this wholly for His sake, and not at all for her own; she now saw Him murdered, buried, and—stolen from her. And her only resource was to run to two poor men, as hopeless and helpless as herself, and even more paralyzed. And yet, she loves. She is energized by love; she will still do anything for "the Lord."

How shall it be with us? We know immeasurably more (it is strictly true) about Christ Jesus than Mary at that moment did. We know Him as the Eternal SON given for our sins, according to the Scriptures. We know Him as the Risen One, according to the Scriptures, living at this hour—and for ever—for us, with us, in us. He is revealed to us as the Ascended One, our Mediator and Head at the right hand of Eternal Love. Ah, what should be our thanksgiving as we contrast it all with the anguish and despair of Mary at that moment? What should be our gladness, as we come daily and hourly to Him, and receive, instead of deserved condemnation, HIMSELF, and all the fulness of our salvation in Him? It is for us to be strong with a strength greater than that of the Magdalene that hour; for hers was a love full of darkness and distress, ours is a love which is full of joy.

H. C. G. MOULE.