

The last years of the life of this remarkable man were years of sadness. His spirit was unsubdued, and his interest in all his pursuits unabated, but the task of writing his "Biographies of Good Men" was almost too much for him, and the old fire and fun of his character only appeared at intervals. The account of the closing scenes is full of mournful pathos, and the gathering round his grave was a wonderful tribute to the beauty of his character. We have often wished that Dean Burgon had permitted himself to indulge more freely in what we may call the general field of literature. There are passages in his writings which show that as a poet and a critic he might have won a higher place than as a theologian, but we know how indignantly he would have brushed away any such expression of opinion, for of Burgon it may have been said emphatically that the desire of his life was to give himself and all he had to God.

G. D. BOYLE.

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

No. VI.

IN our last study we were able only to touch the narrative of the Saviour's appearance to the gathered company on the Resurrection evening. We now return to that narrative to consider it more in detail. And may He of whom we think approach us and speak to us through our meditation. In the evening shadows may He bring us His light. Even so come, Lord Jesus Christ. In the nightfall of change, of grief, of the sense of sin, and in spite of the doors which our ignorance or unbelief would shut, unwittingly, against Thee, come and speak to us that peace which the world, even at its best and purest, cannot give. Show us Thyself, and breathe into us Thy Spirit.

Verse 19. *οὔσης οὖν ὀφίας*: *So when it was evening.*¹ The exact hour must be left uncertain, but probably it was an hour, or perhaps two hours, after sunset. The word *ὀφία* does not necessarily denote late evening. Indeed, in Mark i. 32, *ὀφίας, ὅτε ἔδυ ὁ ἥλιος*, it is explicitly connected with the sunset. So again, in Matt. xvi. 2, *ὀφίας γενομένης, λέγετε, Εὐδία, πυρράζει γὰρ ὁ οὐρανός*: there the ruddy splendour of the sunset sky, with its afterglow, the sign of "a glorious morrow," is connected with the *ὀφία*. But, on the other

¹ In the CHURCHMAN for March, p. 371, last line but one, please to cancel the word "late."

hand, to fix within some limits the time reference here, we must remember that St. Luke supplies us with a note in his narrative of Emmaus. There the two disciples plead with their Stranger Friend to "abide with them," because it was "towards evening (*πρὸς ἑσπέραν*), and the day had declined" (xxiv. 29); and then followed the meal, and the revelation of Jesus, and their hurried return to Jerusalem, which could scarcely have taken less than an hour and a half in any case. Then came the Lord's appearance in the midst of the company at Jerusalem, an appearance certainly identical with that now before us. If Emmaus had been reached at sunset, or say an hour before it, the arrival in the Upper Room first of Cleopas and his friend and then of the Risen One may be placed at a time ranging from one to two hours after the sun had gone.

This, in Palestine, with its short twilight, would mean, of course, that it was now quite dark—very dark indeed, no doubt, in the byways of Jerusalem and in the courtyards and on the stairs of the houses. Through those deep shadows of the vernal night, if not already in the late afternoon, the Galilean disciples had found their way from their Passover-lodgings here and there to the central meeting-place. Not the apostles only had entered; there were "those that were with them" (Luke xxiv. 34). Perhaps it was a company of twenty or thirty. The holy women, probably, were of the number, just as we find them in Acts i. 14; the two from Emmaus made part of the group at the last moment; and there had entered also, very likely, several more of the large inner circle of adherents. Not that a really large number, however, would be there on that first day of mingled hopes and fears. Thomas, we know, was absent, and many another less conspicuous disciple would naturally have felt and acted like him, in helpless grief, not to speak of positive fear for limbs and life.

We are not to think of the company as silent, in solemn expectation of the coming joy. The room, we gather from St. Luke again (xxiv. 33-35), was a scene of conversation, of exclamation, of excitement. During the day now over Jesus had been appearing at intervals to one and another of His followers; Mary, the other women, Peter (Luke xxiv. 34), Cleopas, all had seen Him. Each might fail at first to convince all the rest, but the concurrence of witness would of course, above all when Peter joined it, begin to tell. So it had done, even by the time that Cleopas and his friend reached the city.

What a conversation it must have been, as all thronged together to hear more from each! And all the while they would be also listening, lest the gate of the court and the door

of the room should be thrust open, and Roman guards or temple officials—the στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ and his men—should break in upon them.

So they mingled their joys and their fears in the large dimly-lighted room. (Lighted it was of course in some measure, or they could not afterwards have *looked* so intently on their Master's scars; but no more light than was needful would be used in that anxious hour.)

But now there came a sudden hush. For while they were in full conversation (St. Luke tells us this) then, says St. John, JESUS came and ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον—stepped into the midst, and there took His stand. Such is the brief account; we shall gain little by striving to realize every detail. What would we not give to see, as if in living presence, through the glass of a pictorial narrative, the RISEN ONE as He was? To gaze on the very body of His resurrection—the “flesh and bones” which He literally had, and in which the scars were visible and palpable? To see the sameness and yet difference in the frame and form of the Great Shepherd brought again from the dead? But we cannot—we must not. The wonderful narrative strikes us alternately by its details and by its silence. Notes of time, place, and individual character are given in abundance, but gratifications of mere curiosity, especially about the aspect of our Redeemer, are with equal care withheld. It is as it ever is with Scripture; the nature, the glory of Jesus Christ we have given us, for this we need. We do not really need a photograph of His form. Enough to know that the sacred body was real, was human, was identical—that it had been slain, but was now alive for evermore.

So we are constrained to look not upon a picture, but upon the fact—Jesus there, in the midst of them.

How had He entered? St. John does not tell us. Possibly the simple reason of his silence is that he did not know. He knew that the doors (of courtyard and of room) had been fastened, and yet that Jesus now stood in the room. But whether with mysterious speed and silence He had opened those doors, or whether without opening them He had willed that the material of His risen body should pass through their material, probably the Evangelist could not tell. Only, it is plain that he intends us to think that there was *some* mystery in the matter.

We may incline to either of the two alternatives. The secret opening of the doors may seem the more in harmony of the two with the perfect simplicity otherwise of the narrative of the Resurrection visits. It would be mysterious, and, indeed, miraculous; for the doors were well fastened, mani-

festly, from within. But it would be, so to speak, the more conceivable, the more simple act of power.

On the other hand, the possibility of the second alternative must not for a moment be denied as if it were (what no Scripture miracle will ever be found to be) a contradiction to the laws of thought. One plea for it is that it seems as certain as anything can be, without a distinct assertion, that the Risen Lord left the sepulchre *before the stone was moved*. Was *this* a contradiction to the laws of thought? It would be so were we called on to believe that the stone and the body quite precisely filled the same space at the same moment; the particles of the one coinciding with those of the other. But is there not open to us a different theory, to be held with reverent modesty? Grant to the risen body a mysterious subtlety of material (and, remember that even the least subtle body is not really solid, not really without interstices between particle and particle), and we can surely see the line of abstract possibility in which the supposed miracle would run.

I make these somewhat obvious remarks just because it seems to me that no *other* miracle, recorded or predicted, even tempts us to doubt it on *this* ground, the ground of apparent abstract or mental impossibility. The raising of the dead presents no such difficulty when the Lord of life is the Agent, directly or indirectly. But the conception of two bodies occupying really, atom for atom, the same space, is a contradiction to the laws under which the Creator has bid us think and know. And so it is worth while to notice that at least one known fact, the fact that no material body is in the strictest sense solid, shows us that such a conception is not demanded by the view that the doors that night were not opened.

We may linger a moment or two longer over this question, because the passage (on this latter hypothesis) has been made use of very naturally in the search of arguments for the subtle tenet of transubstantiation. It has been almost assumed that if we can believe that the Lord's resurrection body passed through a "solid" door, we can believe *anything* about it; we can believe it to have nothing to do with laws of space; we can believe it to be everywhere, or practically everywhere, and to be present in, with, under anything.

But, in the first place, such reasoning begins (does it not?) with a neglect of "*the proportion of the faith.*" For one proof which Scripture gives of mysterious qualities in the Lord's blessed body of the resurrection, it gives many proofs of, so to speak, simple qualities in it. And not one incident—not *this* incident, most certainly—can be adduced to show that it was ever in two places at the same time. Bodily, He was in

Emmaus and Jerusalem, not at once, but successively, so far as anything goes that we know. "He came," and that one expression, used so often and so familiarly, denies the ubiquity of His body. Subtlety of particles and organization, mysterious speed, mysterious invisibility, these are wonderful things, but not at all (in the strict sense of the word) inconceivable. The presence of a human body in more than two places at once is strictly inconceivable. And is it not the case, as I said above, that *never*, unless in this case alone, does Scripture miracle imply what is strictly inconceivable? And, if so, is not the ubiquitarian theory, or anything like it, out of proportion with the faith?

Is not that "faith," taken as a whole, in this matter of Christ's presence as simple as it is divine? The Lord our Saviour is indeed ubiquitous as God, as God the Son. And His Divine Nature is united to His Human Nature. So He is everywhere present as God, who is also Man. But the Lord our Saviour is *corporeally absent* in the main aspects of Scripture doctrine; as to His blessed body (His "natural" body, as the last rubric of the Communion Office calls it, that is His non-mystical body, His mystical body being the Church), He is markedly withdrawn from us for a season; with the promise of a glorious return of that body to the range and ken of our senses when He shall "*come*."

With deep and tender reverence toward God, and sympathy towards man, let every discussion about the nature and work of the Sacrament of the Table be carried on. There is nothing more perfectly irreligious than bitterness in religion; assuredly there is nothing which more effectually shuts out from the heart the joyful presence of Him who vouchsafes to dwell in it by faith. But to avoid a bitter eagerness does not mean either to be indifferent to objective truth, or to go on the principle that a vague uncertainty is ever *in itself* a spiritual gain. If, for instance, it is the fact, as I think it is, that the New Testament indicates that "the body" of the blessed Communion is not the body as now glorified, but the body as once crucified,¹ it cannot be a gain to us to think quite indistinctly about it, or not to be of one mind with Scripture about it. And surely it is happily possible to combine distinctness of Scriptural conviction with that gentleness and sympathy which the Scriptures, and which the ordinance of the Holy Supper, so pressing and delightfully enjoin on the Christian, and which the Christian who "abides in Christ" shall find supplied out of the fulness of His Lord.

But now let us come back from this excursion. Let us fix

¹ See at large Dr. Vogan's book, "The True Doctrine of the Eucharist."

our glad and worshipping eyes on the Risen One standing there in that room in the midst of His followers. However He had come, HE WAS THERE; that was the point. Let us thank God if we can humbly say the same of our hearts: However my Lord came in, He is here now, dwelling in my heart by faith, manifesting to me His death for me, saying to me, It is I; thy sins be forgiven thee; receive the Spirit. However He came, whether He passed through the door, or softly opened it, or broke it down; whether my conversion to Him was a lightning-like burst of day in night, or a calm sunrise hour, or a slow clearing of a misty sky into the blue; one thing I know, the sun shines now; JESUS is here. He has come into the midst, and I am glad, for I see the Lord.

ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον. What a place was this for the Risen Lord to take. He, so holy, so triumphant, comes "into the midst" of that throng of unworthy sinners! It is indeed a wonderful sight, Jesus Christ come back "into the midst of them." Yet it is His chosen stand, willingly taken, with the willing joy of love. They have grieved Him, but, with a conquering Saviour's love, He loves them, and so their company is sweet to Him.

And what He was, He is.

Sweet indeed is the sound of His first utterance to them: *He says to them, Peace be to you.* It is no mere salutation, but a divine reality. The Speaker is also the Reason. "He is their Peace." "The God of Peace has brought Him from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," shed three days before.

St. Luke, our welcome supplement to St. John in this whole scene, tells us how much they needed that word. Their *first* sight of Him was full of alarm; they thought that they were gazing on a disembodied spirit (xxiv. 37). So mysterious had been His coming, so sudden was His visible manifestation. And to have seen "a spirit," however it might have resembled the living Jesus—yes, even to have seen *His* bodiless human "Spirit" (observe this as a perfectly incidental witness to the *intelligence* of the disciples in their faith in the Resurrection of their Lord), would not have been, properly, to see THE LORD. It would not have meant any victory over death. It would not have been, in the least, a Resurrection.

So also—let us think, as we pass on—with the soul now. He who can and does speak Peace must be a living not a visionary Saviour. He must be the Christ, not of fancy, not of aspiration even, but of both history and revelation; literally risen, living, coming. Not "a spirit," but the Lord.

And now, "this same Jesus," Reality not Vision, speaks peace to these frightened and troubled hearts. What a peace

it was! "Peace, peace," as the prophet says (Isa. xxvi. 3), a double peace; the peace of the finished work and of the living presence.

Absolute, indeed, was the *gift* of such peace. They had learnt effectually that He must and could give it, and only He. Nothing of their own could do so. The moment they lost (as they thought) Him, what comfort had they from themselves? They had worked miracles, they had preached a sublime message, they had been centres of spiritual influence. But all these things, divorced from Him "in the midst of them," could only by the contrast intensify their gloom. The fire and energy of Peter, the intense affection of Magdalene—were these sources of peace, on the supposition that Jesus was gone? No; each fine characteristic of the disciple would become only the side which felt the loss most bitterly; which felt most deeply that there is "no peace" apart from Him.

But now He came to give peace; to speak it as His gift, and to prove its validity as such.

For (verse 20) *τοῦτο εἶπὸν*, as He said so, with the words, He showed them His hands and His side. The holy body was robed, and so as to hide the hands and side. Now He drew back, He lifted up the raiment, and they saw the certificates of His agony. He showed the "glorious scars," no doubt, partly for *identification*. As they gazed in the lamplight at those deep clefts (the narrative of Thomas's doubt and conversion shows they were still deep hollow wounds), bloodless, we must suppose, and with none of the fever of wounds about them,¹ yet still wounds indeed; as they examined with their eyes (and fingers? Luke xxiv. 39) the rent side, and saw, as it were, the light through the sacred hands, they knew Him in truth for "this same Jesus." And that by itself was sweet indeed, even as it is now when the disciple's soul realizes that, after all these ages, it is dealing still with the identically same Person who died for us and rose again.

But also, surely, He showed them His wounds for a further purpose; to bear in upon them the thought of *the way in which* He had brought them that peace which now was theirs. There He stood before them, their living Lord, immortally living. But He was also now what before He had not been, their living Lord who had for them been slain. Such was to be "His name for ever, His memorial to all generations" now. What a paradox! Never through the eternal ages will the Lord of life be parted from the remembrance of His death, and

¹ The Risen Body is nowhere described as "flesh and blood."

from the praises of His people because He died. And never let Him and His death be parted in our thought and love now. While we realize with joy that He lives, that He is beside us and within us, let Him be ever to us still "the Lamb that was slain," "the Shepherd brought from the dead," "the Lord who, that He might indeed be Lord," be Master, "died and revived" (Rom. xiv. 9). When we use Him, in His indwelling power, as our life, and our one way of victory over sin, still let Him be to us the Lord who "loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

He shewed them His hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced (ἐχάρησαν, a definite act of joy) seeing the Lord. THE LORD; that name by which more than ever now they loved to call Him.

The two great blessings flowed together, in His presence; *Εἰρήμη Χαρά.* Showing His wounds, He spoke the peace. Seeing Him, they knew the joy.

Verse 21. Jesus now speaks again. The outbreak of untold joy was, as to its expression, over; what a scene of tears, and wonder, and shame, and recognition, and worshipping praise it must have been! But now He speaks again, and the word again, calm and articulate, is *Peace be to you.* Their very joy, in its deep agitation, needed this—a clear, definite assurance of the strong *basis* of such gladness, a certainty that it was caused from without, *His* gift, the issue of *His* work.

Speaking peace, He gives them at once, bound up with it in love, Duty. *Even as the Father has sent Me out, I too send you.* Even so. As I was to be His Representative in My work on earth, so you are now to be Mine. As I was His Ambassador in "the days of My flesh," you are to take My place. *Ἐπεὶ Χριστοῦ πρεσβεῦτε,* be ambassadors in Christ's stead (2 Cor. v. 20). And be so in Christ's spirit. Your duty, your obedience, is to be your sphere of joy, as His was.

That duty, let us observe, was not given them till they had seen in Him their joy. "They rejoiced, seeing the Lord"; "Now send I you."

Such was our Lord Jesus Christ's commission to His true flock, His true Church. Assuredly it was not to the Apostles only, however specially; it was to all that "blessed company of believing people." "Even so send I you." Every believer is to be a messenger under that commission, and with the Risen Lord for his message.

Then, with an act of divinely simple symbolism, He "conveys" to them (makes over to them, as by an act and deed of gift, a physical visible action at once to instruct and strengthen their faith) the Holy Spirit. Their embassy, their

message-bearing, their representation of Him, was to be done only and truly "in the Spirit," if it was to be rightly done at all.

He breathed a breath towards them, and says to them, Take the Holy Spirit.

Are we to understand that this action of the Lord's, with His spoken word, did literally then and there infuse the Spirit's power into them? I dare not say not. But do not the circumstances rather favour the view that the incident was divinely symbolical, and was rather a prophecy of Pentecost than a part-gift before Pentecost? His mission of His people into the world was in a sense not to take actual effect till Pentecost. Was not the same the case with this quasi-sacramental "gift" of the Spirit to His people? Was it not a guarantee rather than a then-and-there infusion? If so, the case is instructive in the study of sacramental truth.

But now, how does He proceed? Verse 23: *If you remit the sins of any, they are remitted to them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*

On these profound words I only lightly touch in a few brief paragraphs, calling attention to some leading considerations about them.

(i.) They are a commission to the Church—to the Church as the representative and witness on earth of the risen Lord Jesus; not to Apostles only, but to all true believers. We have already seen this, as we have recalled St. Luke's evidence to the fact that other disciples were present with the Apostles.

(ii.) There must therefore be a sense, and that a very important and conspicuous sense, in which every true disciple is called upon to act on the Easter commission. Whatever remitting and retaining means, it has something to do, as God shall show the way, with every Christian's life and work.

(iii.) This consideration interferes not at all with the conception of an ordered, ordering, specially commissioned Christian pastorate. The pastoral office is as old as Christianity. The same Risen Lord who, when He ascended on high, "gave some as apostles," "gave some also as pastors-teachers, to equip the saints for (their) work of service, for the upbuilding of Christ's body" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). And the Christian pastorate, despite all the defects and sins of Christian pastors, has assuredly proved itself, in fact, to be a mighty and salutary factor in the Church. To put only one most simple side of the matter forward: the fact that a host of Christian men year after year are solemnly, by chosen representatives of the Church, separated and dedicated for their whole lives to special thought, special labour, special guiding function, special speech, and particularly public speech, for Christ, has certainly had an effect beyond calculation in the coherence and point of the work of the Christian Church.

But to say that it is the special office of a class or order to proclaim the message of our Master is not to say that that message is not to be proclaimed by all who belong to Him.

(iv.) This declaration, this commissioned declaration, of His message, with its alternative of condemnation or pardon, death or life, is, I am deeply convinced, the work here entrusted by Him to His Church.

That it does not mean, certainly at its heart and centre, a judicial sacerdotal absolution or its reverse, I am very sure. First, because the Scriptures, fairly interrogated, gave no clear evidence that such a function was claimed or exercised by the Apostles, or enjoined by them on even the earliest presiding pastors. Secondly, because such a delegation to man of the judicial power of God, if it is not to be a mere name, a something worse than useless, would necessarily involve the need that the absolver and retainer should be, as such, inspired, gifted with a special discernment both of the nature of the sin of the soul and of the sincerity of the soul, and not of its sincerity only, but of its self-knowledge, its truth or its error in estimating and in describing its sin.

I do not think that either Scripture or experience at all assures us that Christian pastors as such are by any means thus inspired; that they have, as such, any supernatural intuition into the self-knowledge of the human soul.

But if it be the duty of every Christian, in his or her path of intercourse and influence, to "retain sins" and "remit sins" in the sense of pointing out, as a living witness, the Scripture terms of pardon and peace to a sorely needing world—here is indeed an intelligible as well as most blessed commission; and it is a work as to which the Acts and Epistles are full of suggestions, while they are silent about a sacerdotal function of confession and absolution.

Of the special and adapted bearing of the words in the ordination of the Anglican presbyter, and again in the formula which he is directed to utter, under very special conditions, in the Visitation of the Sick, I scarcely speak at all here. But it may not be out of place to point out how clear the witness of Church History is to the fact that in such a connection the drift of the word is towards "remission" and "retention" from the point of view of the Christian Society; towards guarding the central hearth, so to speak, even the Table of the Lord, from unworthy intrusion. And even thus, it may be remembered, the formula was not introduced into the Ordinal for the Presbyter till the thirteenth century.¹

¹ See a learned sermon by the Bishop (Reichel) of Meath, "The History and Claims of the Confessional."

But this is a digression indeed. I recur to that view of the Lord's commission, which, alike for the pastor and the layman, is at once the simplest and the most sacred—the carrying to the world, as by a messenger who is also a living witness, of the message of the grace of God. Specially for my ministerial brethren I venture thus to point to it once more. May our idea of our ministry never be lowered from this; never allowed to sink into the idea of a merely administrative and ceremonial function, or into that of only philanthropic enterprise. May we live and labour as those who deal indeed with sin and with salvation, and in our Master's Name; as those who know in our own instance how the human heart needs remission, and how it must and does find it in Christ alone. May we minister as those who know their own souls and their own Saviour, so as to enable them to deal with the souls of others; above all, who can say, as those first disciples of the Chamber could, "We have seen the Lord, who was dead but is alive for evermore, and our heart is glad in the sight of Him; now then we are ambassadors in His stead; in His stead we pray you, be reconciled to God. For God hath made Him to be sin on our behalf who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

H. C. G. MOULE.

ART. V.—RICHARD BAXTER.

WHEN Professor Jowett, the distinguished Master of Balliol, occupied the pulpit of Westminster Abbey last summer, he took occasion to celebrate within its walls the honoured name of Richard Baxter. He reminded his hearers that two hundred years had almost elapsed since the great leader of the Nonconformists had been called to his rest. He then proceeded to give a brief sketch of the history of Baxter's life, dwelling especially on that singular narrative of his changes of opinion, which he drew up himself in his old age, and which may be said to be unique in English literature.

Following the example of Professor Jowett, we propose to consider a few points in the life and teaching of this remarkable man, which may not be devoid of interest to serious readers. It will be needless to dwell at length on the details of Baxter's long and troublous life, but a rough sketch of his career may be acceptable. I shall follow in part the admirable outline of the Master of Balliol. It will be noticed that the life of Baxter coincided with a long period of political trouble. He was born in 1615, and he died in 1691. Shortly after his