

The Church Guardian

—: EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR:—

L. H. DAVIDSON, Q.C., D.C.L., MONTREAL

Address Correspondence and Communications to the
Editor, P. O. Box 304, Montreal. Exchanges to
P. O. Box 2186. For Business Announcements See page 15.

CALENDAR FOR MAY.

- MAY 1—St. PHILIP and St. JAMES. A. & M.
 “ 5—3rd Sunday after Easter.
 “ 12—4th Sunday after Easter.
 “ 19—5th Sunday after Easter. [Notice of
 Rogation Days and Ascension Day.]
 “ 20—
 “ 21— } Rogation Days. Fast.
 “ 22— }
 “ 23—ASCENSION DAY. (Pr. Pss. M. 8, 15,
 21. E. 24, 47, 108. Ath. Creed.
 Prop. Pref. till 30th inclu.)
 “ 26—Sunday after Ascension.

EASTER AND ASCENSION DAY.

(The Church Advocate, Boston.)

These festivals are twins, like Christmas and Epiphany. Christmas is the day which commemorates the first birth of our Lord into this world and this mortal life, to share with us, as one of ourselves, our earthly career from the cradle to the grave. Easter is the day which commemorates His second birth into the world which is to come and to the life everlasting, to prepare for us to share with Him and as His brethren, the bliss and glory of heaven.

Epiphany shows forth the omnipotence lodged in the Holy Child Jesus, and sheds upon Him the glory of the skies, in the shining of the star which guided the wise men to the place of His birth. The angelic choir of Christmas and the celestial light of Epiphany proclaim, as twins, to the two fold division of mankind—Jew and Gentile—the presence of the Saviour, the Word made flesh flesh in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, and God with us, receiving, as was his due, offerings and worship. Humility and exaltation are blended in the shepherds in their poverty and the wise men with their costly gifts—in the stable and the manger on one hand and the Star of Bethlehem and the gloria in excelsis on the other. These two festivals bring to us the Saviour, one of us, to go with us along the journey of life, poorer than the poorest of us, and yet the King “mighty to save,” “filled with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”—a child, a youth, a man armed with the mighty power of God.

Easter and Ascension too are twins. Easter replaces Christmas, and gives us the garden for the stable, the tomb for the manger, and the Resurrection for the nativity. Ascension replaces Epiphany, and gives us the Apostles for the wise men, the open heaven for the star, and the uplifted gates and doors (with the glory which is within) for the symbols of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Easter brings into view the beginning of the endless life. Ascension reveals the perfect consummation of that life at God's right hand in heaven. What would Easter be without Ascension? A beginning without a sequence a commencement and then a sudden stop. Our Lord risen from the dead, and life cut short, disappearing in mist and darkness. Without the Ascension we would be in doubt and uncertainty as to our Lord's fate, and in ignorance touching the end and aim of His birth, and death, and resurrection. What ac-

count could we give our Lord without the Ascension? If asked where He is what could we say? The Ascension tells us in heaven, at the right hand of God. If asked with what did He go up into heaven? the Ascension informs us with His resurrection body intellect and soul. If asked how does He appear in heaven, at the right hand of God? the Ascension points to the Mount of Transfiguration and says, “See your Lord in His glorified humanity in heaven.” And if asked what does the merciful Saviour do for us in heaven? the Ascension explains the statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that in heaven “our Lord ever to intercede for us.” Now we know what His perpetual intercession means—not only prayer, but the perpetual presentation to the Father of the one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice made for all mankind on Calvary. What would we do, what could we do, without the Feast of the Ascension? Without it you leave Christ upon the earth. The resurrection is not the end. Our Lord did not stop in His career of triumph with human nature (wedded in indissoluble union to His divine Personality) beside the tomb. He made our manhood worthy of glory and honor, and did not stop until He had ascended and seated Himself as man upon the throne of God.

The Ascension chronicles this fact, and is the only adequate explanation of the joy of Christmas Day. The beginning is explained by the end. You look off from the birth in Bethlehem to the King of glory passing through the everlasting doors. Calvary and the vacant tomb are not enough to satisfy the claims of Christmas Day. Where is our Lord in bodily presence now? Not on the cross; not within the closed doors, or on the lonely mountain, but in heaven, at the right hand of the Eternal Father, where St. Stephen and Saul of Tarsus saw Him. He went thither on Ascension Day, when He left the wondering disciples to go to His Father and our Father, and to His God and our God.

Ascension Day is the correlative of Christmas Day. They stand at the beginning and the end of man's career. The one explains the other, and alone explains the other. All that comes between, the life, the death, the burial, the resurrection of our blessed Lord, are steps in a progress which has its grand consummation in the exaltation of man to glory and honor in the Ascension. That is the stupendous result of the birth of Jesus of His Virgin Mother on Christmas Day. The light of the great white throne shines down upon the manger. The angels' “gloria in excelsis” fills the depths of earth's misery and destitution with hope and joy, and “Merry Christmas” leaps from the lips of all as they hail the new born Babe, and see in Him the real Elijah, who will ascend into Heaven first Himself, to make ready a place for us, and then come back again for us, and take us with Him to our home in our Father's house with many mansions. How senseless is it to keep Christmas day, when our Lord was born, and Good Friday when He died, and Easter when He rose from the dead, and not keep Ascension when He consummated His triumph and went up into heaven. How inexplicable is it to go within one step of the end and then stop! To go with our Lord from Bethlehem to the open tomb, and then refuse to accompany Him to Bethany, where He ascended. We plead for a better observance of this glorious Festival. We beg you to remember that we have more to do with the Ascension as a fact, than any other festival. Christmas and Epiphany, and Easter are past and gone, and the original facts which they commemorate will never again enter into human experience, but the Ascension will come back to us all. Jesus will come again with power and glory from heaven to judge both the quick and the dead, and every eye shall see Him, yours and mine. We did not see Him when He entered in, but we shall see Him come forth. Let us then keep the feast: let us train our hearts to love our Ascended Lord, and our

eyes to look for Him, and then when He comes we shall rejoice to behold Him, for we shall be like Him, and ascend with Him to glory.—
Adapted from Bishop Seymour.

MAY.

The month of May brings us to the great feast of ASCENSION which comes this year upon the twenty-third day. The four days preceding Ascension Day are called Rogation or prayer days. They were instituted in the year four hundred and sixty, by Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, at a time when his diocese was in great distress from the effects of the last eruption of the volcanoes of Auvergne. Afterward they were continued as days of prayer to Almighty God for fruitful seasons and a prosperous harvest. There was originally a special Litany for these days, and the present American Prayer Book contains a collect “to be used on Rogation Sunday and the Rogation days,” which will be found in the “Prayers upon Special Occasions.”

Ascension Day comes forty days after Easter. We have no distinct history of these forty days after our Lord's resurrection. St. Luke tells us that Jesus was seen of the Apostles forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. We are told by St. Paul that He was also “seen of above five hundred brethren at once” of whom the greater part were still alive when the Epistle to the Corinthians was written (I. Cor. xv. 6). In fact there is no event of history more clearly proved than our Lord's resurrection.

It seems from St. Luke's account of the great event that the Apostles were the only witnesses of the Lord's Ascension, which took place from some point on the Mount of Olives not far from Bethany (St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9). We are told that after giving to His faithful followers His last counsels, and comforting them with the promise of the Holy Ghost, “He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.” Our Lord's resurrection body was carried up into Heaven, where He still remains at the right hand of the Father to intercede for men, where He will remain till He shall come again in glory accompanied by hosts of angels to judge the living and the dead.

For the Lord Jesus has not gone forever. His going was with the promise of His coming again. He had Himself spoken of His second coming more than once. He foretold it to His Apostles (Matt. xxiv. 30). He declared it to His enemies boldly at the time of His trial (Matt. xxvi. 64). And now while the Twelve watched with straining eyes the disappearance of their beloved Master, they received a new assurance. “Two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts i. 10, 11).

Yes, the Lord will come again, not as at the first in humility and lowliness, but in His glory and all the holy angels with Him; not in the manger, but on the throne of His glory; not to suffer and die for the world, but to judge the world; not unknown and neglected, for every eye shall see Him. There will be no ignoring of His claims then. It depends upon our choice now whether that great day shall be to us a day of unutterable woe, or of joy unspeakable and full of glory. Reader, which shall it be to you?—*Parish Visitor N. Y.*

We read in the first chapter of Acts that during the ten days which passed between our Lord's Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles “continued with one ac-