

Lift Up Thine Eyes.

A little while, and ye shall not see ME: and again, a little while, and ye shall see ME, because I go to the Father.—S. John xvi. : 16.

Touch ME not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father.—S. John xx. : 17.

"Alleluia! not as orphans
Are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us,
Faith believes, nor questions how:
Though the cloud from sight received Him,
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget His promise,
'I am with you evermore?'"

Christians of many differing opinions unite in celebrating our Lord's Birth, Death and Resurrection; how is it then that our churches are nearly empty on that other great day—forty days after Easter—which has for so many hundreds of years been set apart to commemorate His Ascension? Is it because people fancy that the crowning triumph of the Man Christ Jesus was of little consequence, or is it because they don't really believe His strange saying: "It is expedient for you that I go away?"

The disciples might well have felt that His going away would leave them "orphaned." How could they rejoice in the promise that "another Comforter" would be sent when their hearts cried out for the Master they knew and loved? But it is often true even with earthly friends that they are really nearer to us—nearer in the mysterious, invisible soul-union which is the reality of friendship—when their bodily presence is removed from sight. Although the disciples watched their Lord as He left them, the great parting promise could not be broken: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Though vanished from their bodily sight He would faithfully keep the tender promise: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." The promise of "another" Comforter was only a pledge of additional help. I can't help thinking that Zechariah foreshadows this twofold strengthening in his mysteriously beautiful parable about the seven-branched candlestick, which is perpetually supplied with oil from two olive trees, "which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves." The Angel said to him, "These are the two Anointed Ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." If the seven candlesticks are the seven churches, surely the inexhaustible supply of oil can only be obtained from God, Who pours grace continually into the souls of men through the Holy Spirit and the Man Who is His "FELLOW"—and ours. Certainly the church has not been left "orphaned." St. Augustine put into words a great truth when he declared that Christ so came into the world as never to leave the Father, and so went unto the Father as never to leave the world.

If you will look closely at the texts given above you will see that they each contain a grand Christian paradox. "Ye shall see Me," the Master says, "because I go to the Father," as though men could not really see Him while His bodily presence was, like a veil, hiding His Person. The second text seems to imply that only after the Ascension could loving hearts really "touch" Him. In many other ways the Ascension was "expedient," but I don't intend to dwell on those to-day; my object being rather to awaken in you a vivid realization of the glorious possibility of walking joyfully through life with our eyes ever on our Master's face, and His hand closely clasping ours. How the thought makes one's heart beat! To see always the face we love best, to be thrilled through and through with the touch of His hand! Think what it means to be clothed always with "St. Patrick's Coat of Mail":

"Christ as a Light
Illumine and guide me!
Christ as a Shield, o'ershadow and cover me!
Christ be under me! Christ be over me!
Christ be beside me
On left hand and right!
Christ be before me, behind me, about me!
Christ be this day within and without me!"



How could that be continually possible without the Ascension? We should then have been compelled to travel long miles to see Him, instead of simply having to lift up our eyes; we could hardly have got near enough to touch His garment, much less to clasp His hand, for the multitude would throng Him. Then even S. John could not always have leaned on His breast, as anyone whom Jesus loves may do now. Even in earthly friendship what we really want to see and touch is the soul rather than the body. If love were dead what possible satisfaction could there be in such an outward sign as the clasp of a hand or the sight of a face? It would give pain, not joy.

But the disciples who watched the Ascension might well think that the old saying had been literally fulfilled: "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head to-day?" Of what use was it to lift up their eyes, when they had watched Him go farther and farther away until a cloud hid Him from their straining sight? He ascended—where? "Into heaven," we say. But where is heaven? We stand on the earth, point into the sky above and say, "it is up there!" Yes, but at night, when our earth has turned round, if we still point into the sky and say that heaven is "there," we are declaring that it is in exactly the opposite direction. According to our ideas of space, the heaven to which we lift up our eyes is as far off from the heaven of an Australian

realities which lie above it, not in space, but in altitude of being? The 'everlasting doors' were 'lifted up,' and the proto-martyr was vouchsafed a glimpse into a world of unearthly splendour close to him, and saw his Divine Master standing to receive His brave and loyal servant."

It is not "telescopic" but spiritual vision that we need. Those who love God can find Him everywhere. What is nothing but a "common bush" to one is seen by another to be burning with Divine fire. The bush is the same, but the sight is different. Our Lord's counsel to one who lacks this spiritual sight is: "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

Wherever in space the heaven may be into which His bodily presence ascended visibly, and from which He shall visibly come again on the Last Great Day, at least we know that He is most truly and vitally with us still. In a very real sense we cannot see any person with our bodily eyes, for personality is and must be invisible. When an earthly friend passes through the gate of death we never dream that to see and touch the lifeless body is to see and touch him. These outward things are indeed "dead" unless they are sacramental; unless, through the outward, visible sign, our souls can come into living touch with the invisible and spiritual personality which can never be really reached by our senses. If the touch of one hand be absolutely meaningless to you, while the

touch of another may have power to thrill you through and through, is it because of the difference in the actual flesh which your hand may be touching, or is the difference in the personality which only your spirit can touch? If the fantastic stories of souls stepping out of one body and inhabiting another could be carried into actual effect, we should soon find that the soul, far more than the body, was the person we had known; just as a person is the same though his body may be altered beyond recognition by time or some disfiguring accident. We may not be responsible for the outside, but we are for the inside—that is, for the real man. One person may, without effort on his own part, be as strong as Samson; while another may be a helpless cripple all his days on the earth. That is outside; but the real man inside may, in the first case, be weak and self-indulgent, and, in the second case, may have grown strong and beautiful through years of brave endurance. Wealth, physical strength and beauty, social position, etc., do not belong to the people to whom they are lent for a time. They may be taken



Joan of Arc, Hearing the Spirit Voices.

as the east is from the west. And yet the disciples beheld their Lord "taken up," and S. Stephen "looked up" when he said, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." MacColl's words on this point are very striking:—

"Where were the heavens into which the dying martyr gazed? Millions of miles away, beyond the starry firmament? Were his bodily eyes miraculously endowed with a telescopic power of traversing in a moment the planetary spaces and looking into a world of supersensuous glories behind them? Is it not plain, on the contrary, that his real self, his spiritual nature, with faculties intensified by the near approach of dissolution, was enabled to see through the integuments of the natural life into the world of unseen

away even in this life, they certainly must be left behind at death; but treasure laid up in heaven, spiritual strength, beauty and rank really belong to the soul, and neither accident nor death can take them away. The more closely we look into these things the more plainly we see that the invisible is the real substance, while the visible is only a shadow or picture of it. Let us then set our hearts and fix our eyes steadily on realities rather than on shadows. Christ is the Ladder linking earth with heaven through the Ascension, as He linked heaven with earth through the Incarnation. Although the law of gravitation may keep our bodies low on the earth, He will keep us company here; and, although His Body has ascended into the heavens, we may "in heart and

mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell." Surely that glorious stair was not placed in position only for the use of the angels. Just "because" our Lord has gone to the Father we may see and touch Him all the time.

Do I repeat myself enough to grow tiresome, in these quiet talks? How can one help telling over and over again such a glorious message? I don't want to tell you anything new, I only want to remind you at every possible opportunity of the reality and gladness of our living unity with God through Christ. The inspiring "Sursum Corda!"—the "Lift up your hearts!"—rings down through the ages; how instinctive is the glad response—"We lift them up unto the Lord!"—that is continually rising from multitudes which only God can number.

"Run the straight race through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His Face.

Faint not nor fear, His Arms are near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear."
HOPE.

Joan of Arc, Hearing the Spirit Voices.

Given to reverie, fond of solitude, holding somewhat aloof from the maidens of the village, though beloved by them all, Joan of Arc, the peasant girl of Domremi, on the banks of the Meuse, listened, as she tended her sheep upon the pastures, to the spirit voices which told her that to her it was to be given to be the deliverer of her native land, and thus she mused:

"I can deliver France! Yea, I must save the country! God is in me; I speak not, I think not, feel not of myself; and whither He shall send me I must go; and whatso He commands, that I must speak; and whatso is His will, that I must do; and I must put away all fear of men, lest He in wrath confound me."

Joan had been surrounded by mysticism from her birth. Tradition has it that the birds came down at her call, and that while she tended her flocks no wolf would come near to molest them. The very grass and flowers would sing to her, and the stars above would flash their messages into her listening ears. What wonder, then, to a mind so attuned, the shadows and imperfect forms of tree or shrub, as revealed by darkening twilight or cloud-draped moon, should take the shape of angel messengers, bidding her go on or come, in tones which must be obeyed. The girl heard the voices in the bells of the church, in the reveries of her youth, in the fountain, in the sighing of the winds, and in the rustling of the leaves—"Jeanne, Jeanne, go into France! I, Michael, the Archangel, bid you go and succor the Dauphin, for by you he shall recover his kingdom."

History gives us the sequel; tells us of that march at the head of ten thousand men to the relief of Orleans; of her brief triumphs, her later capture, her final martyrdom, and her most cruel death in 1431. On the spot where she died, in the market-place of Orleans, a statue stands to the memory of the gallant Joan, the Maid of Orleans.

H. A. B.

Recipes.

Lemon Patty Cakes.—Beat yolks of 3 eggs well; add 1 cup white sugar, and beat again. Now add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice and 1 tablespoon cold water; 1 cup "Five Roses" flour, into which 1½ teaspoonfuls baking powder have been sifted, and the whites of the 3 eggs which have been beaten. Beat the whole briskly, and bake in patty pans.

Molasses Cake.—1 egg, 2-3 cup sugar, 2-3 cup molasses, 2-3 cup sour cream, 1 teaspoon ginger, 2 small teaspoons soda, a pinch salt, and 2 cups "Five Roses" flour.