

"HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN."

The Church of England has wisely provided that year by year the great doctrines of the Christian Faith shall be taught in regular order. And she has preserved the ancient custom of setting apart certain particular days for that purpose. Thus at Advent we commemorate our Lord's first coming in humility, and our thoughts are then also directed to His coming again in Glory. At Christmas we celebrate the mystery of His Incarnation; on New Year's Day we are reminded of His obedience to the Law; on the Feast of Epiphany we are taught to rejoice that the Gentiles have been made fellow heirs with His chosen people of old in the hopes and promises of the Gospel; in the forty days of Lent we are reminded of our Blessed Lord's forty days fast in the wilderness; on Good Friday we commemorate His death and passion; on Easter Day His glorious Resurrection. So on Ascension Day our thoughts are directed to that article of the creed in which we profess our belief that "He ascended into Heaven."

The Feast of the Ascension is the triumph-day of our Incarnate Lord. It is the crown and completion of the Easter triumph. Easter Day contains, indeed, in germ, all the glory of this festival; the victory was then won, but it is to-day that the conqueror triumphs gloriously; to-day that He ascends amid the glad acclaim of the adoring hosts of Heaven higher and higher still to the very throne of God; to-day that the work of our Redemption is finally sealed and completed by the return of the Eternal Son in human flesh to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. And surely, if no other motive called on us to observe Ascension Day, gratitude and love to our Divine Lord would not suffer us to turn away in coldness and neglect from His Triumph. Alas, it is to be feared that the love of many has waxed so cold that they have not cared to share in a joy which they falsely imagined was His only, not their own. And even if it were so, what could be baser than such a feeling? Shall we love Him simply for His gifts, and not for Himself? Shall we welcome His Incarnation at Bethlehem for our salvation, shall we adore Him bleeding and suffering for our sins on Good Friday, shall we rejoice in the victory which He has won for us at Easter, and then when Ascension Day comes round, and that life of patient love and suffering is at last to be crowned by his return in glory to Heaven, turn aside, each to his business or pleasure, and forget Him on this His Triumph-day? Ah, surely, if for no other reason, we will keep Ascension Day for love of Him who first loved us.

But it is not true that Ascension Day is nothing to us except in so far as we sympathize in our Lord's triumph with an unselfish joy, because:—

I.—Jesus ascends to the Father in our human nature. Here is subject enough for exultation and thanksgiving to us creatures of earth. Is it nothing that this nature of ours is for ever inseparably joined to the Godhead in the person of the Eternal Son; that He has exalted to the right hand of the Father that flesh and blood which He took in the womb of the Blessed Virgin; that the human form which once trod this earth of ours and lived as one of us, which hungered and suffered, which still bears the marks of the nails and the print of the spear, is now seated far above all principalities and powers; that in Him our common nature is raised above all the hosts of Heaven; that His presence in that nature in Heaven is the pledge and earnest of our future exaltation; that angels adore Him in that nature which yet He shares with us?

II.—And again, is it nothing that CHRIST has entered into Heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us; that He ascends to plead before the Father the merits of His infinite sacrifice, as His Church pleads them at the altars of earth; that He extends those wounded hands in prevailing intercession for all our weaknesses and all our wants, and by His perpetual Mediation streams continual benediction upon His people on earth. Yes, He ascends to Heaven that He may "receive gifts for men," that the LORD GOD may dwell among them. Has He not Himself said that He leaves us only that He may send us "another Comforter," to abide with us for ever.

Truly Jesus displays as much love for us when He leaves us in His Ascension, as when He descends to us in His Incarnation.

It is for us that He goes away, that He may prepare a place for us, that He may plead for us, that He may pour out on us the grace of the Holy Spirit. Shall we not then rejoice in this glorious day, which gathers into itself such rich treasures of Divine grace and mercy,—shall we not celebrate with gladness the day of our Lord's entrance into heaven, the day on which He commences that ascended life through which His Church on earth receives all its grace and power, in the strength of which multitudes have lived, and are living at this hour, and which will continue to be the support of His people until He return to judge all men at the last last day? The Ascension is not so much a past fact as a present and abiding mys-

tery, in which we live and move and have our being. The fact that Jesus is now on the right hand of God is the fact which gives a clue to all our life, and which, if truly realized, will lead us safely to the throne of God.

O, if we have neglected past Ascension Days, if, in compliance with an evil custom, we have let them pass by as other days without special devotion or love, let us, by God's grace, resolve this year to make a beginning; let us celebrate with gladness and thanksgiving this day, to be so much remembered to the LORD; let us join the faithful who are glad to go up to the house of the Lord, and join with them in acts of holy worship; let us as much as possible abstain from worldly business and employments; let us, like the first Apostles as they gazed after the receding form of Jesus on Mount Olivet, worship Him with great joy; and let us resolve to live henceforth in closer union with Him that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming when this "same JESUS, who is taken up from us into Heaven, shall so come in like manner, as we have seen Him go into Heaven."

WOMAN'S MISSION AID.

"Send forth laborers into His Harvest."—S. Luke x. 2.
"The laborer is worthy of his hire."—1 Tim. v. 18.

We sometimes hear these passages read, and sometimes they meet the eye as we read the Bible for ourselves. Does the question ever occur to us, What am I doing to send forth laborers into Christ's Harvest-field? What am I giving to support those who are laboring in that field?

Surely the need is very urgent, for not half of the inhabitants of the world at this moment have ever heard the glad tidings of salvation. And "the Harvest truly is plenteous;" for no one can follow the course of events now taking place in different parts of the world—India, Africa, China—without being struck with the wonderful openings that are being made for conveying "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" to those who are now living in ignorance of it. Whilenearest home, in our own Canadian land, both among our fellow countrymen and among the Indians, there yet remains much to be done.

There are Missionaries in many of our Northern Townships, who, mainly through our indifference, are suffering severe privations, while doing the Lord's work: and there are many townships where there is no resident Clergyman. Besides, there is sore need of more Missionaries in Algoma and Muskoka. In the latter are many of our fellow-countrymen with no places of worship, and none to minister to them the Bread of Life. In the former are thousands of Indians without the glad tidings of salvation.

Shall we not do something for those—shall we not try and fulfil towards them "the law of Christ," which says, "Bear ye one another's burdens."—(Gal. vi. 2.)

Does not God expect every one who prays day by day, "Thy kingdom come," to try and help on the work of that kingdom, and the carrying out of our Lord's command to "preach the Gospel to every creature?" Does he not expect every one to do something, and to show some interest in the work?

If each Christian would do what he has it in his power to do, what great things might be done for those, for whom (as well as for us) Christ died; and what a good work might be "wrought" upon the Lord! (St. Mark xiv. 6, 7). What higher commendation can any Christian look for than "She hath done what she could?"

And who can read of the Widow of Zarephath, (1 Kings xvii. 18, &c.); or of the poor Widow, who cast "all her living" into the Temple-treasury for the support of God's ministers, (St. Mark xii. 14); or of "the beloved Persis," and Phoebe, and Priscilla, and Mary, (Rom. xvi. 1—4, 6, 12,) without being assured that a special blessing awaits those who minister to the Lord through his ministering servants?

And further, is it not clear from the above passages that women are specially fitted to "labour" in this work, and encouraged to look for God's blessing in it, while they deny themselves in order to carry it on?

The help therefore of every woman in this Christ-like work is confidently looked for.

Do you ask, "How can I help?"

These are some of the ways in which every one may help:—

1st.—By praying for Missions. This is the special command of Jesus, (St. Luke x. 2).

2nd.—By having a Missionary Box in your house, inviting others to give, and giving something regularly towards the support of Missions: remembering that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35).

3rd.—By devoting some of your time in soliciting and collecting subscriptions, or in work—(sewing, &c.). (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.)

Even children can help in this good work, either by saving some small sum each month, or by denying themselves in candies and such things. If it be given for Jesus' sake, He will accept it as He accepts the cup of cold water given in His Name.

Let no one think that his small gifts are of no value. It is wonderful how a large number of trifling sums mount up, even as "the drops which water the earth." Therefore the smallest subscription—from a few cents per month upward—will be gladly received.

As many as possible will be called upon shortly to ascertain if they desire to help in this good work. But as it will be difficult to reach all in this way, any who are willing to help, and desire further information, are invited to apply to the clergyman or visitors of the parish.

[The above is re-printed, and is intended to be distributed before the collectors make their personal appeal in behalf of the cause of Missions. It may be had for 25 cents per hundred, by applying to the secretary of the C. B. and T. S., Box 2654, Toronto.]

DEFECTS OF MODERN PREACHING.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE CLERICAL MEMBERS OF THE RURI-DECANAL MEETING, WINGHAM, FEB. 18, 1880, BY REV. E. J. ROBINSON, INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, EXETER, ONT.

In a necessarily short paper like the present, matter must take the place of style and elaboration; and if we are to suggest thoughts and to remedy defects which may be apparent in ourselves, our discussions will not be in vain.

The defective matter and manner of reading will serve as a general subject, containing, however, many particulars; and I may be permitted to point out the probable causes of the defects. It must be self-evident that, in a general way, the matter of preaching is of more importance than the manner: "What shall I cry?" is as Scriptural as "Cry aloud."

The matter of preaching should be *Doctrine*, that is, *Gospel*; that is again in one word, *Christ*. "Christology" is, perhaps, the best term ever coined to define the matter of all true preaching; but even this, like all good and beautiful things, may be abused. A certain author, no doubt a Christ-loving and a Christ-doing man, has written a book on "Christ, the Altogether Lovely;" and labors to prove this true, morally, spiritually, and physically, and on the latter head actually dissects the body of our Lord with all the skill of an anatomist and the zealous fervor of a learned physiologist. We question the good taste if we may not question the piety of this course; it is a glaring defect.

Perhaps a Scriptural definition of a minister and his office may serve as a key note to this subject. From the Scriptures we gather that a minister is one who serves, "as Joshua served Moses." So as Christ himself, as mediator, serves the Church, His ministers serve Him and the Church which he serves, and the office of the ministry is delegated by Christ to those whom he calls and by authority appoints for that purpose. Hence any other services not embracing these particulars must be false.

The subject matter of preaching must be the mind and intentions of Christ, learned from the Gospels, and the inspired Epistles of His own immediate and personal ministers, the Apostles of the New Testament. To know the mind of Jesus in this particular, must be the true preaching of the Gospel. In the present, the great age of preaching, I need not remind you that this is the object which the pulpit, in its widest sense, sets before it, but the real attainment of this object is that which marks the excellence or defects of modern preaching.

It is the custom in certain circles to decry the ancient or early preaching, and to exalt and eulogize unduly the modern, pulpit on the assumption that modern theologians are better versed in the knowledge