

of that Form in which the Lord appeared to them upon the mount, recalling afterwards the supreme moment when the words "Lo, I am with you," entered into his soul, in language such as this :

"Then did the Form expand, expand—  
I knew Him through the dread disguise,  
As the whole God within His eyes  
Embraced me"—

an embrace in which he remained, when the Form had vanished.

The Ascension is all in that wonderful "I am." It is not the first time we have heard it. Among His last words in Capernaum, when the Saviour was thinking of His Church in the ages to come, gathered together in companies in all the lands where disciples should meet in His name, the great thought takes Him for the moment out of the limitations of His earthly life; it carries Him back, or rather lifts Him up, to the eternal sphere from which He has come to earth, so that He uses not the future of time, but the present of eternity: "*There am I* in the midst of them" (xviii. 20). A still more striking example has been preserved by St. John. When on one occasion He spoke of Abraham as seeing His day, the Jews interrupted Him with the question, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" Recognising in this a challenge of His relation to that timeless, dateless sphere from which He has come, He promptly replies, "Before Abraham was,\* *I am.*" It is as if a foreigner,

\* The full significance of the original can scarcely be given in English. The Greek language, rich in the vocabulary of philosophy, has two verbs corresponding to our "to be," one indicating phenomenal, the other absolute being. It is the former which is used of Abraham; the latter is used by our Lord in speaking of Himself. There is, therefore, more than a difference of tense.