

to the independence of the Pope. But history contradicts him, and shows that it was never anything but a cause of dependence and servility. As to the "personal liberty" of the Pope, does any one, this writer asks, "regard as serious the legend about the captivity of the successor of St. Peter?" And as to the independence of the Roman Church, he says, "we are obliged to repeat for the hundredth time, that never has the papacy been more free, more arbitrary, more violent, more domineering, than since it had no longer to take precautions respecting its temporal possessions." These remarks may seem very convincing, but the writer has evidently left out of his consideration the dictum of Cardinal Manning, that "an appeal to history is heresy." The living voice of the Church must be paramount in its authority, or the Roman claims would be nowhere.

ROGATION SUNDAY—

THE Fifth after Easter—the Sunday preceding the three Rogation Days, days of special prayer to Almighty God, immediately before Ascension Day. The origin of the practice of setting apart these days may be enveloped in some obscurity, as far as regards prayer for deliverance from some calamity, or in connection with the exercise of God's Providence in securing the fruits of the earth in their season; but the peculiar appropriateness of the custom is apparent in its connection with the Ascension of the Lord, because it was when he was declaring the necessity of His departing to the Father that He so particularly urged upon His disciples the duty of prayer, and especially of prayer in His name: "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." The practice of prayer in itself supposes the existence and exercise of God's Providence; and a providence can be of no service to the Christian man unless it is a particular providence. And the reason why a belief in God's providence is of the very essence of the Christian life is that it sends us to God's feet in prayer. The very breath of the Christian life, the spiritual movement which shows, like the action of the lungs in the life of the body, that the Christian lives, is prayer; and prayer is impossible when there is no belief in a Providence. Prayer to a destiny, prayer to a soul of the world, prayer to a hierarchy of laws, prayer to an intelligent force, or to an impotent intelligence, or to a capricious omnipotence—such prayer is impossible. Prayer is the expression of love and trust in a personal Being Who is at once all powerful and all good. Deny His freedom or deny His benevolence, the result is the same: prayer is useless. And when men cease to pray, they cease in any spiritual sense to live. They may still obey a certain social and moral code with exactness, even with enthusiasm; but of the One Being, Who is alone on His own account worth knowing and loving and living for, and in Whose knowledge and love and service is eternal life, they know alas nothing, or they imagine something that is worse than nothing. Belief in

a providence is the very soil in which the Christian faith naturally takes its root. Of such belief the truths of the Christian creed are the highest, the consummate expression. The one culminating proof of God's loving care for man in the whole course of human history, is the incarnation, the birth, the life, the example, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension into Heaven, the perpetual intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (that is the proof of it), "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." And therefore, to us Christians, providence is no mere abstract attribute: Providence is a living Person. Jesus Christ Himself—God and man—is the Providence of the Christian Church; and He is the Providence of the Christian man.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

THE Messiah of the New Testament was not only a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief: He was the triumphant Conqueror of sin and death; and to complete the manifestation of His triumph He ascended from the scene of His earthly pilgrimage far above all heavens to the throne of the universe—that He might fill all things. Indeed, even during the whole period of His abode on earth there were abundant rays of glory continually spreading themselves over and among His lowliest humiliations. No sooner was He humbled in a manger than the meanness of the locality was removed by the glory of the attendance, in the ministrations of angels. His submission to circumcision was ennobled with the public attestation of Simeon concerning Him. His fasting and temptation had another ministrations of angelic beings. His baptism was attended by a voice from the Excellent Glory in the heavens. When He underwent the infamy of crucifixion and death, then did the universal frame of nature give testimony to His divinity—the temple rending, the sun darkening, the earth quaking, the whole creation sympathizing with His passion. And when afterwards he seemed to be for ever bound in the kingdom and dominion of death, he soon confuted and destroyed the dishonor of death by an astonishing resurrection; and now at last most abundantly and in the most glorious manner, proved the divinity of His Person and the truth of His claims in a miraculous ascension.

St. Paul tells us that He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens—in which passage he doubtless refers to the Divine nature of Christ which descended, not by a local motion, but because it united itself to a nature on earth; in regard of which union to an earthly nature, it might metaphorically be said to descend to the place where that nature resided. St. Paul's statement unmistakably shows the union of the two natures of Christ; since the two several actions are ascribed to the same Person, both of which, it is evident could not be performed by the same nature. His human nature could not descend from heaven,

for that received its first existence upon earth. His Divine nature only could be said to descend, just as the omnipresent God is said to move from one part of His vast dominions to another, by the peculiar manifestation of His Presence in different places; and His ascending was clearly in His human nature, properly and literally; so that the statement that it was the same Christ who both ascended and descended, is a proof of the union of the two natures in one Person.

Christ, by His ascension received from the Father unspeakable honor and dignity in His human nature, which was elevated to the Throne of the Universe and sat at the right hand of God. The Man of Sorrows now wields the sceptre of heaven and earth, and wears the imperial crown of the universe. Heaven is His Throne and the thrones of kings are his footstool. He shines at the head of that glorious army of martyrs; and wearing the trophies of conquered sin and death, He possesses the kingdom of the Universe by the unquestionable titles of conquest and inheritance. The whole train and retinue of nature are subservient to his pleasure, and instruments of His purposes. The stars fight in their courses under His banner, and subordinate their powers to the dictates of His will. By His elevation to the Throne of the Father, His human nature also is said to fill all things; for otherwise it could not be said that He ascended in order that He might possess that attribute. It was His prerogative after His ascension, not before, while His omnipresence having always belonged to his Divine nature, could not be said to have been conferred upon it on His ascension—it having always been inseparable from it: so that one great result of His ascension, in fact, the one result which intimately concerns us, as well as the gift of the Spirit, is that His local presence has become changed for the universal presence of the Man Christ Jesus. The union between the two natures is intimate and indissoluble. There is a commensuration of the one to the other, so that wheresoever the Divine nature is present His human nature holds the same relation to it, as a thing joined with it in one and the same subsistence. And more especially in the celebration of the mysteries of the Lord's death we are taught to believe that then most emphatically is the human nature of Christ present, that it may be communicated in all its fulness, to the faithful recipient of these holy mysteries.

KEBLE COLLEGE.

THE London Times has sometimes been spoken of as the fourth estate of the realm (perhaps by mistake, because itself had spoken of the press in that way). It is doubtless, as our neighbors would say, a great institution; but notwithstanding this, it makes blunders as great, adopts as narrow a line of thought, eats its own words as much and as often as any institution the world has ever yet seen. Only a short time ago, it wrote of the celebrated Keble as a man "who had produced by accident a certain quaint, odd book, full of faults, but curiously

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