

reminder before the sight of glory which they were about to witness. They were not to be leisurely wielders of irresistible physical and worldly force, but the depositaries of spiritual powers too great, as it were, for their handling, in comparison with which they were but as "earthen vessels." They were to be witnesses passing from land to land with toil and pain, spending themselves and being spent, in a weighty service full of weariness and painfulness and "watchings often," leading at length, indeed, to a Crown, but that one which human nature shrinks from: the crown of martyrdom. That was the charge, and after the charge a Blessing. As they stood before HIM in serious and rapt attention, "HE lifted up HIS hands and blessed them," and as HE blessed them HE passed away from them, and a cloud received HIM out of their sight. S. Chrysostom calls this cloud "the Royal Chariot." It swept around HIM, and hid HIM from their eyes; and says, S. Mark's Gospel, "He was received up into Heaven." That longing gaze, with which the first spectators of so wondrous a sight followed the passing of their Master from the conditions of the earthly life to those of the heavenly life, has ever since been shared by the whole Church. Year after year, as Advent and Ascensiontide return, the continually growing company of the faithful look stedfastly towards Heaven, awaiting with faith and longing the second coming of CHRIST in the flesh. To the eye of faith all the centuries which have passed since that summer morning on the heights of Olivet are a mere episode in the one "increasing purpose" of the ages, and the prophetic hearts of Christians dwell in the thought upon the Life behind the Veil, and feel, as it were, the beatings of the heart of JESUS coming to them in mystic waves of momentary union with HIM when the Altar lights burn calmly, and the hush of deepest awe greets the Ineffable Presence. This is "till He come" back into the phenomenal life in which human existence has its place, and out of which HE passed at HIS Ascension. Meanwhile "HE ever liveth to make intercession." Though the government of the universe falls like a Royal Mantle upon HIS shoulders, yet HE is always Mediator between the Uncreate and the creature, and in HIM finally all intercession, whether of men on earth, or saints in Paradise, or angels in Heaven, unites and is summed up. Through HIS hands, because HE is the Great High Priest of all creation, pass the prayers of all the faithful; in HIS Name they are offered; to HIS Cross and Passion all their efficacy is due; He stands at the head of all who pray, and HIS Hands, that still bear the marks of HIS Passion, present the prayers of the human race, as it were incense in a golden censer, before the GOD and FATHER of all.