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to convey similar teaching perhaps with that of Jn 12²⁴, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.'

The edition provides plates, a diplomatic transcript of the text, the full Greek text as it can probably be supplied or restored, a list of the texts of the Gospel parallels, translations, and a commentary with discussion of the problems involved. The editors expressly state that the latter lays no claim to be exhaustive or expert: as in the case of the Chester Beatty Papyri, they feel it their first duty to make the text of these fragments available as quickly as possible; but we have already here some careful and minute study, a sure touch and shrewd insight, much of which the Biblical expert will probably endorse.

The other early Christian papyri give fragments of two leaves of an early third-century commentary, a third-century leaf from 2 Chronicles, and a leaf from a fourth or fifth century Liturgy. The text of the 2 Ch. fragment seems unimportant (in one place it shows that an obvious error in Cod.

Alexandrinus, *Ιούδα* for *Ιδοῦ*, may be nearly two centuries old). The commentary is unknown, but may come from the pen of Irenæus or Theophilus of Antioch, or Heracleon. A mystical interpretation of the Holy City is a central theme, and though there is here no Gnostic teaching, it may well come from Heracleon. It contains nine Biblical quotations, including three from S. Matthew, three from S. John, and one from 2 Timothy, only one of these gives a variant (grammatical only) which supports the Textus Receptus against the great Uncials and 'Cæsarea.' The wording of the Liturgy is largely that of Biblical Greek, though it contains only one actual quotation, 'the sheep of thy pasture'; but it has also a number of unusual epic words, e.g. *ἄφθιτε* for Immortal. This bit of the liturgy is chiefly a prayer of penitence; the appeal in Wis 11²⁸ to *δέσποτα φιλόψυχε*, may be recalled by *φιλόανθρωπον ἔχοντες δεσπότην σε . . . ἱκετεύομεν*. Among the restorations of the text, here is a happy one:

Thou art the only physician of our ailing souls:
Keep us in Thy joy.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

A JUBILEE ADDRESS.

The Threefold Secret.

BY THE REVEREND CHAS. M. HEBURN, B.D., MOULIN,
PITLOCHRY.

'And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.'—I S 10²⁴.

THAT was a great day in the story of Israel. They had never had a king before, and they wanted one badly. That day their wish was gratified. Saul was anointed king by Samuel. And when he stood up tall and handsome, head and shoulders above all around him, all the people shouted, and said, 'God save the king.'

That was what our people were saying twenty-five years ago to-day, before any of you smaller folk were born. It was the day on which our present King, King George V., ascended the throne. Unlike King Saul, our King has a long royal line

behind him. But our nation has never had a king who was so much the People's King, so greatly respected by one and all, or of whom we have had better cause to be proud.

There is a story told of another king, a King of Belgium. In some ways perhaps he was a great king, but no one could call him a noble king. He did not win his people's regard. Once at Antwerp at a great festival he was driving through the crowd, when a few onlookers raised a shout of 'Vive le Roi,' 'Long live the King.' When the King heard it he turned with rather a twisted smile to some one beside him in the carriage and made the remark, 'I seem to have heard that cry once before.' Such a welcome, it seems, was somewhat unusual. Generally arrangements had to be made to give him a cheer. But the cheers were hollow ones, for they did not come from the hearts of the people. That is not the case with our King. To-day when he goes through the streets of London on his way to St. Paul's, they will be lined with eager crowds saluting him as he passes

by with a great shout in all sincerity of 'Long live the King.'

Long live the King!
 Don't you hear them singing?
 Don't you hear them singing
 As the King goes by?
 Long live the King!
 That's the song they sing:
 Long live the King!
 Is the nation's loving cry.

There is a reason, though, why we really mean what we say or sing. We don't pay that tribute merely because King George is a king, although he has been a most excellent one. Something deeper is behind it. Our admiration, and love, and loyalty go out to him because above everything else he has been a good man. That is the real 'Divine Right' by virtue of which he reigns over us and holds our affection. And this is the secret.

1. Behind the King there was a great mother. We sometimes say 'Like father, like son'; but quite as frequently it turns out to be like mother, like son. Behind most great men we discover great mothers. In one case it is certainly so. A party of little girls one day were playing at a wishing game, the idea being each was to wish what she would like. One chose wealth, one beauty, and so on. But there was another who simply said, 'I would like to be loved.' She became later on Queen Alexandra, who was both lovely and beloved. It was she who was our King's mother. Is it any wonder he has been a good King?

2. Beside the King there is a great Queen. And the Queen has played her part, too. When we say 'God save the King,' we should also add 'God bless the Queen.' There was written some time ago, a book with an unusual title, *We Two*. It was about Lord and Lady Aberdeen, of whom we could say, just as it was said of Saul and Jonathan, 'they were lovely and pleasant in their lives.' We don't think of one without the other. So we cannot make mention of the King without the Queen. She has been his home-maker first of all, and that has mattered, for being happy at home makes a big difference. In his duties, too, she has been his true helper. At this time of rejoicing we can be certain he will want all that is owing to her to be recognized. When that Belgian King, whom I spoke about, was making his first speech from the throne he refused to have his wife standing beside him beneath the canopy: he had to have

her placed well to the side, for he alone was king. But King George, I am sure, is different, and proud to acknowledge and to share any honour with his Queen.

3. Above the King there is One Greater. One of our kings had to be reminded by good Andrew Melville that he was not the only king. 'Sir,' said Melville, 'there are two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland, Jesus Christ the King and His Kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a king, but a subject.' But all his days King George has tried to be a humble and dutiful servant of the King of kings. And this among many other things proves it. A long time ago a mother asked her little boy to read a portion of God's Word every day, and he promised. Queen Alexandra was the mother, the boy our King, who, moreover, has kept his promise.

That, then, is the threefold secret of a good man and a great King. That is why we have reason to sing 'with heart and voice':

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Belisha Beacons.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR JONES, M.A., D.LIT., OXFORD.

'The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding.'—Pr 21¹⁶.

If you live in London, you know all about Belisha Beacons. If you live somewhere else you have probably heard of them, or, perhaps, seen them, on a visit to London. They mark the places where you may cross the road in reasonable safety. Where they are, the traffic in the street has to give way to you, so that, for a minute or two, you are a very important person indeed. But you are expected to be considerate, too. I read in my newspaper one day about a man who was fined, because he had not behaved properly at one such crossing; he had not, apparently, thought enough about the rights of others.

That is the first thing these Beacons tell us. We must all pull together, to make life go as it should. If you are one of the people who go through life in a car you must be ready to stop, although it would be much more amusing to keep going on, in order not to hurt some one who has no car. And, if you are one of the sort who have to jog through life on foot, you may take your rights, but must not think you are entitled to make a nuisance of yourself. By going through life in a car, I mean having such things as a good strong body, or a clever brain, or that thing which we

call good luck. You may be thankful that you have these things, but you must not use them to do harm to people who have not. Some people, for instance, who have a lot of money, use it to take from other people, who have only a little, the little that they have; rather like the Parable of the Ewe Lamb which Nathan told David. But that is wrong; it is like a man in a car saying that *he* is not going to stop for pedestrians; let them look out for themselves. Of course, all that is very wrong. But the pedestrian, too, has his duty. He must not be needlessly long on the crossing. He is not allowed to hold up the traffic for fun. The Beacons seem to me to say to the motorists, 'You must look out here for pedestrians, and, just at this place, you must think of them first and yourself second.' And to pedestrians they seem to say, 'We are making a place where you will be first in importance. But you must use the place with those in your mind who are not, for the time being, so important as you.' And that holds in life, as well as at these crossing-places.

These Beacons seem to tell us another thing, too. As we go along in life, we find many dangers which we cannot dodge, for they are there, like the traffic in the street. We have to meet them, and, sometimes, they are very big dangers. Temptations, for instance—you can't help there being such things in your way. Well, it seems that God, who knows all about that, has provided, here and there, places where we may get past them in safety. Prayer will get us over many a danger; so will a good friend; so will a good habit like going to Church. And just as some poor man, finding himself on one side of the road and wanting to get to the other, and conscious of the roaring traffic between him and that other side, may be cheered by seeing a Beacon a little in front of him, so we, having to meet some difficulty, and not knowing how in the world we are going to do it, may get a whisper from God, telling us to cheer up, because, see, there is a way over it, there!

Some boys and girls are so independent that they will not use the arranged crossing-places, but will try to cross just anywhere. Well, sometimes they get away with it, and sometimes they don't. At any rate, they run risks, not only to themselves, but to others. It is really rather a selfish, as well as a foolish, thing to do. And when people will not use the help that God gives to make it safe for them to get through the dangers of life, it may sound very brave and self-reliant, but it is really foolhardy and self-centred, because, if we give way to temptations, we are not only doing ourselves

positive harm, but we are actually hurting others, too.

Whit-Sunday Address.

BY THE REV. RONALD W. THOMSON, HEANOR.

'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak.'—Ac 2⁴.

I wonder what some of you boys would have done if you had been the engineer I was reading about the other day. He was building a bridge over a river. And just where one pier was to be they discovered a sunken wreck. Big, powerful tugs were brought, and they tried to pull the wreck away, but it would not move. The engineer in charge did not know at first what to do. And then at last he had an idea. He built a huge raft, and set it afloat at low tide right over the wreck. Then he fastened it with great chains to the wreck. Then he waited. And as the tide rose it lifted the raft, and the raft lifted the wreck.

It was something like that which happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. They had lived with Jesus, they had heard all the beautiful things He had had to say. They had seen all His miracles of healing. They had seen Him die, but then their sadness had been changed into joy, for He had risen again. He had told them to go out into all the world and tell men about Him. And yet they were afraid, afraid of themselves and of other people. And then it was that God sent His Holy Spirit into them, and it lifted them. As the tide lifted that wreck out of the mud, so God's Spirit lifted the disciples out of their fear and worry and dread. Just as the tide enabled the engineers to do what before they had not been able to do, so God's Spirit flowing into those men enabled them to go out, and with wonderful results, preach to all men in their own language.

The first sermon ever preached by the disciples had the Holy Spirit for its subject, and I do not think we to-day hear enough about this great subject. Yet we need to. For we all need lifting up out of our old ways, and habits, and fears. You all know how Paul said one day that it hurt him to think how he was always doing the things that he should not do, and leaving undone the things he knew he ought to do. Well, we all feel like that. We did not mean to laze away our time in school, and so earn a bad report—but somehow we did. We certainly meant to practise the piano while mother was out, we promised we would, but somehow we forgot to, and the time simply flew. We certainly do not mean to tell untruths, but some-

times when we get into a corner they just pop out. Well, we all need lifting up out of these wrong habits, we need lifting up into a better life.

The day on which the Holy Spirit lifted and filled the disciples we now call Whit-Sunday. We call it that because long ago all the Churches held important services in honour of the day, and all those who had recently come to love Jesus were baptized, and they were baptized dressed in white robes. And so it came to be called White-Sunday, which we shortened to Whit-Sunday. Now I wonder if we could count the days in our life which have been white days—days when we were kept clean in words, and thoughts, and deeds? Every day could be like that if we just asked God to send His Holy Spirit into us to-day, to cleanse us, and to lift us up out of our old ways, and to fill us with power. Most of our homes have just been spring cleaned. We do not always like it while it is being done. We clear out a lot of old rubbish that we feel we may one day want. But we do make things cleaner and lovelier. And I think sometimes that we all need to ask God to send His Spirit to spring clean ourselves. He will come into our hearts if we ask Him, and will clean them, and make them strong and beautiful. Shall we ask Him to, to-day?

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see;
O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
And worthier Thee.

The Christian Year.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

The Trustworthiness of God.

‘The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’—Ja 1⁷.

The saints have believed in the trustworthiness of God, ‘with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning’; the world has never believed it. Only now and then have men caught a glimpse of the great truth that God is changeless and that His changelessness is our peace. For the most part we have both believed and hoped that God might be capricious. We wish He might be at times more merciful, more full of compassion to us when we think we need it most; or more relentless and less pitiful to our enemies, who, we fear, may be besieging His throne of grace with their impious and unwarrantable petitions at the very hour of our own prayers.

Long ago, nevertheless, the caprices of God were

seen to be a source of trouble rather than of consolation. It seemed that in a moment of well-justified wrath He had decided to drown us all and have done with it. But in the end He was sorry and ‘repented him of the evil.’ Then comes man’s first glimpse of the great truth that it is not from a capricious but from a constant God that men may look for assurance and mercy. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. When the inspired writer added that the beauty of the rainbow was the pledge of this constancy, he had already perceived that Law was Love, for beauty is always the expression of love.

The idea, however, that Law is Love and the unalterable laws of God absolutely necessary to our development and freedom is one which we still find it very difficult to hold. Nature, we think, is Law, and all the universe is governed by Law so unchanging and unchangeable as (at least) to save us the trouble of trying to argue with, suspend, or change it. Christ, we think, revealed to us a very different God—One who is Love, and who will certainly yield to our prayers if we pray earnestly and faithfully enough.

We know now that a constant and lawful universe is one in which we can not only be free, but be masters. We know this, not by arguing about it, but by seeing it happen. We have watched the conquest by scientists of such terrifying forces as water, steam, gas, and electricity. We learn with interest but without astonishment that our voices can be broadcast round the earth or that some one has flown the Atlantic. We are moved to admiration by the courage of the fier, but we are no longer astounded that he should succeed. We have learned to expect success—if not to-day, to-morrow; if not to-morrow, next year.

We should, then, find it easy to believe both that God is unchanging and that His unchangingness is not terrible or relentless, but merciful. How could God, who is One, be changeless in a material universe and capricious elsewhere? In Him there is no uncertainty or caprice. Having once grasped this truth we shall try to understand His mind and make it ours. We shall in our prayers unite ourselves with His purpose. In doing so we shall find ourselves working mighty works, and our Lord’s amazing promise will come true for us: ‘He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.’

This amazing promise (which Christians have

rarely believed) is no promise of exceptional powers over natural or spiritual law. 'The works that I do shall ye do also,' using the same power in obedience to the same laws.

This is the attitude of the scientist, who never claims for himself the power either to break or to evade the laws of Nature. His assurance to us is in such words as our Lord Himself used, that 'he that believeth on us, the works that we do shall he do also'—and ultimately, without doubt, greater works than any scientist who yet has lived has done.

But 'law' and 'laws' are cold words to living, struggling, suffering men. We may know that there is Law and may try to understand and obey it; yet we fail. If a code of rules had been enough, the Ten Commandments would have sufficed; or if not, then the Ten Commandments explained and fulfilled by the Sermon on the Mount. But a code of rules is not enough; even the Sermon on the Mount is not enough. A book can tell us something, but not all. Our Lord therefore lived the Law for us, and we see that the Law is Love. It is noticeable, so little are words sufficient, that if we take Christ's actual words, so far as we know them, and lay them side by side, we find that they often contradict each other. 'He that is not with us is against us.' 'He that is not against us is on our side.' Which of these is true? 'If any man strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also'; but Christ, when struck on the cheek, remonstrated. 'Resist not evil,' said He who drove the money-changers from the Temple. 'Judge not,' said the unsparing Judge of the Pharisee and the Scribe. 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' . . . 'I come not to bring peace, but a sword.' Our Lord used the language of paradox and uttered Himself in seeming contradictions because He had to: the things He spoke of were too great for our human language. Christ therefore chose to speak in parable and paradox, knowing that we could never obey a law into which we had not entered in the spirit. In order to understand His law, we must mentally and spiritually labour and sweat. We must learn all we can. We must try to enter into Christ's mind. We must seek the meaning behind His words. How could we do this unless we had a life to illustrate the Law?

Christ, the great Master of life, moved among men as a conqueror. We believe that He both healed the sick and raised the dead, calmed the storm and rose on Easter Sunday from the grave; but even for those to whom these are mere fairy-

tales there remains the supreme miracle of the life of Christ—the change He made in the hearts of men. And this He did by no use of force or of wealth; neither the fear of armies nor of magic entered into His appeal. He achieved all by love.

It is useless to argue that Christ's laws can never be carried out, for He carried them out Himself; to protest that they are inconsistent with themselves, for the utter consistency of Christ silences the protest on our lips; useless to complain that they are unmanly, for no man ever was so gloriously and perfectly a Man.

And so it happens that nearly all men have loved Jesus, though not all worship Him. If God is Love, it is more important to love than to believe, for it is only love which has power to create us in its own image. God is Love.

Here, again, life is based on universal, immutable law. Not Eloi alone, four thousand and four years before Christ, created man in his own image, but Love (which is God) always and everywhere does this. We become, by irresistible compelling, like what we love. This is true of the least as of the greatest. So, loving Christ, we learn to live as He lived and to obey the laws which He obeyed. Law is no longer a dead and empty thing, serving only to condemn us for our failure to keep it: it is a living power, enabling us to obey.¹

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

In Another Form.

'After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.'—Mk 16¹².

It was not alone to two sorrowing mourners trudging homeward in the eventide that Jesus appeared 'in another form.' It was, indeed, one of His remarkable characteristics, that He was continually surprising the poor in spirit and the needy in soul by appearing to them 'in another form.' He was always discerning human need and meeting it out of His enriching fulness. Even opponents made this unwilling confession. They spoke it derogatorily—'a friend of publicans and sinners.'

On the first Easter morning, when the glorious tidings of the Master's victory over death raised the hearts of His disappointed followers as sunrise wakens the drooping fragrances of the garden, He showed that the glorified and risen Redeemer would continually appear to His own 'in another form.'

¹ A. Maude Royden, in *If I had only One Sermon to Preach*, 103.

Before the sun had kissed the brow of the highest Eastern hill, while Galilee was still in the grip of darkness, Mary Magdalene made her way to the sepulchre. The Roman seal had been broken and the stone was rolled away. At length, through her tears, the Saviour appeared to her, but she knew Him not. He appeared to her 'in another form.' She supposed Him to be the gardener—one who keeps beautiful a place that might be overrun with weeds. This cleansing work her Saviour-Friend was to continue in her.

During the evening of this very day the disciples met behind closed doors. Fear held them together. Into the assembled company, full of self-pity and lamenting the loss of their Leader, Jesus came. They recognized Him immediately, for He bore in His hands and side the wounds of crucifixion. Gladness filled their hearts. Peace fortified them to fulfil the marching orders of the returned Commander who inspired them with fresh courage. It was Jesus appearing to them 'in another form'—new, and more wonderful than ever.

A week later the disciple group was once more together, and Thomas was with them. Jesus again appeared in their midst. He came for the benefit of the odd man, for Thomas doubted the others who said, 'We have seen the Lord.' In helping the odd man He helps every man. What unexpected depths of tenderness they were to discover! To Thomas was given his opportunity, and he met its challenge by saying, 'My Lord and my God.' And so Jesus kept dispelling their doubt, removing their incredulous spirit, restoring their faith, revealing to them life's continuity. The Risen Christ was still wounded. The marks of His suffering remained visible in the radiant resurrection life. We shall bear in the future the marks of present experience. He appeared to them 'in another form.'

And the glorified Lord was not without interest in their more prosaic labours. Seven of the group had toiled all night and they had caught nothing. Beaten again, even at their old job! And Jesus hailed them from the shore. He directed their energies to a successful issue, and they returned laden with a bountiful catch. So the exalted Christ revealed His interest, and surely the Father's interest, in the work of common days.

But Peter would not be allowed to give up the new fishing for the old. Three denials and some big failures don't discourage God's confidence in men. Peter would yet catch men. Thus the disciples were learning more and more of their Master. He had continual surprises for them.

They found Him ever ready to meet their pressing and peculiar need. And they would yet go out to win the world for Him.

For hours at the Louvre one stands transfixed before the breathing canvases of masters who sought to portray worthily their conception of Jesus whom their eyes had never seen. The Infant Redeemer has been a favourite subject. There seem no Jewish lineaments in the amazing variety of portraiture. Artists see Jesus even as a babe overcoming the barriers of racial physiognomy. The Lad in the Temple, the robust Carpenter, the attractive, fascinating Teacher, the Good Shepherd, the Friend of little children, the compassionate Physician, the Sufferer on the Cross, the Conqueror of death, the Resurrection and the Life—all true portrayals of Jesus, in each of which the artist is telling of the Saviour's personal appeal. To all of them He is Jesus Christ the Son of God, and to each of them He has appeared 'in another form'; Handel writes 'The Messiah,' and Stainer 'The Crucifixion,' each emphasizing the form in which Jesus has appeared to him. Jesus Christ is ever beyond definition.

That we have not learned Christ fully is self-evident. Constantly new light is breaking forth from Him who is at once the inspiration and the despair of humanity. Yet our minds can be curiously hospitable to ideas that are untenable, together with a living conception of Jesus Christ the Son of God. During the days of the Inquisition, torture was practised by men who thought they were doing God service. France could then boast of an ancient castle at Avignon where the Court of the Inquisition sat in judgment on men and women whose crime was that they had seen and accepted Jesus 'in another form.' On the wall of the room where travesties of judgment were pronounced there was a life-size painting of the Good Samaritan! To us it seems incongruous and incredible that things so utterly incompatible could dwell together. Yet a later age, that has still more fully learned the mind of Christ, will be no less surprised that we guarded rights of property and possessions but were careless of the life of many persons exposed to perils in mines and manufactories. Christ still has many things to say to us. He overtakes us on some sorrowful path where every step is heavy and the heart is burdened; and lo! He gives us new visions.

The two who were walking toward Emmaus did not recognize Jesus until His self-disclosure after the night was far spent. We never can have in Jesus more than a mere memory until we express a

sincere, earnest desire that He should remain with us. Jesus did not appear after His resurrection to a single person who was not interested in Him. Wesley sings :

Thou, O Christ, art all I want ;
More than all in Thee I find.

And this is the experience of every person who has met and accepted the Saviour's gift of life. Yet the experience may never be exactly alike for any two persons. There is but one way into the Kingdom of God, and Christ is that Way. But we cannot enter by battalions. We must enter one by one. And the entrant passes into the Kingdom through One who has searched and known him and is acquainted with all his ways. We make His love too narrow by false limits of our own when we would confine the saving power of Christ to channels of experience known only to ourselves. In 1924, when leaving Paris to visit Fontainebleau, we passed through a vast upheaval ; dust and din of builders' tools filled the air. 'What is going on here, guide ?' we asked. 'That is the old fortification wall of the city. It was erected many years ago as a strong defence to shut out the enemy. But the city has grown now, and it is shutting in ourselves. The great wall is being taken down, and with the stones houses are being built.' It was a parable. How often have we tried to shut out error, only to find that we have shut ourselves in to a limiting and cramping conception of Christ and the Father ? And in short-sighted anger we complain when our wall of defence is broken down, when our experience is transferred to its place in the larger purposes of the Love of God. The aspect of Christ's perfect revelation of God that appeals to us will be determined by our experience. Our experience necessarily affects our view of Christ, but it does not affect His view of us.

Jesus, my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King,
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End.

In a south of England holiday resort a visitor with his four-year-old boy was walking toward the beach. Outside a house on a side-street the child suddenly stood still and exclaimed, 'Daddy, see ! A wooden man making a windmill go ever so fast !' But the father replied, 'Nay, sonny, it is not the man who is making the windmill go. It is the windmill that is making the man go.' 'No, no, the man is bending up and down, and his hands are going ever so fast,' said the child eagerly. And the father explained that the hands

of the man were attached to the windmill, through which the power of the wind was transmitted to otherwise lifeless limbs. Jesus had done great things for His followers during three years of earthly fellowship. They could not measure their loss when cruel hands nailed Him to the Cross. Their very life seemed to ooze away. Their faith almost died. But into their listlessness He came. And the listless men were energized. They were indeed recreated. Soon it became necessary for critics to find an explanation of the mysterious power that manifested itself in them. They found it in this, 'They had been with Jesus.'¹

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

Christ Present.

'I leave the world.'—Jn 16²³.

'I am with you always.'—Mt 28²⁰.

1. 'When I feel age creeping on me,' so said one who had done good service to his generation, 'and know that I must soon die—I hope it is not wrong to say it—but I cannot bear to leave the world with all the misery in it.' To some these words may appear to savour of self-confidence, but the life's work which the speaker had done makes them, from his lips, simply truthful and natural.

No such saying is recorded of our Lord. He dwells with calm joy on His return to the Father. There are indeed sad anticipations of what must come after His departure, and affectionate care and prayer for those whom He leaves behind. But all this has narrow limits. It has regard to a small body of personal friends. We indeed have a right in virtue of our common faith to press into that body, and claim participation in every word of comfort, especially in the promise of the Spirit. But as to the vast misery of the world He says nothing, and nothing of any reluctance to leave it.

There is, of course, a sufficient answer to the contrast which has been suggested. It lies in the exultant words of St. Paul: 'He ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things.' He departed, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He could depart in a different frame from that of His servants who leave the world. It seems a trivial, hardly a reverent comparison to compare Him with them, but it is worth making, in order to bring out the greatness of the contrast. We carry out our little schemes, found our societies, pass our Acts of Parliament, or, at best, influence for good the shifting transitory opinion of the day. He departed, having obtained eternal redemption

¹ W. E. Blackburn, *Invincible Love*, 195.

for us, not a thing to be superseded by the lapse of ages, but to be worked out by and through the ages, to grow in significance as it is growing to-day. He left the world with all the misery in it, but He left something else.

This is a sufficient answer. But there are answers which, though sufficient, do not satisfy. They produce outward silence, but there is still a voice complaining in the heart.

'Here is One who had virtue, wisdom, and influence enough to govern the world, even setting aside His Divine omnipotence, who might have restrained a thousand evils, and changed unspeakably the course of history. According to the belief of His followers He had an immortal life, a body raised above the touch of suffering or death; and yet—He leaves the world.'

We must confess at once that there is an element of mystery in the answer. The value of freedom for the development of human character is clear enough. But it is accompanied by such risk and loss, that it appears to us fitting that the Divine scheme should minimize it. But this is exactly what does not happen. Jesus leaves the world to remove from men the overmastering influence of His presence in the flesh.

The Ascension of the Lord, being the Divine plan, seems to teach that the free development of human character is of such essential importance that it must be had at any risk.

Precisely the same difficulties face us, and precisely the same answer must be given when we consider the withdrawal of the Lord's visible presence from the Church and the world.

If the individual is left, at any rate a Church is provided for him, and that Church might look for visible, unmistakable guidance. Yet it is not so. His personal directions, so far as we know them, were scanty and, humanly speaking, unsystematic, and for lack of His visible guidance, so, we are ready to say, the Church was split by schisms.

Here again the only explanation is that freedom of development was essential, and that freedom of development could not have been had if the Lord had sat in the midst of His Church as its visible Head, while it could be had if His guidance was given through the Holy Spirit. It needs strong faith in Him, and His dispensation, to believe that the final result will be worth the tremendous cost, but we do believe it.

And what we believe of the Church, we believe also of the world. This is harder still, even for an optimist. But we cannot think that Christ, leaving the world, was leaving it that it might grow worse

and worse. 'I leave the world' is not a sentence of rejection.

This, then, is one side of the matter, one of the thoughts of this Ascension season, the necessary divinely ordained forsaking of the world, the Church, the individual, by One who had apparently come to share permanently all the fortunes of man, a forsaking too at the very moment when He seemed qualified to carry out His great plan, and establish the Kingdom of God.

2. But there is another side of the matter, an absolutely contradictory statement—'I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' We bring these conflicting statements forward together not merely to arrange an antithesis, but to realize the conditions under which our life is to be lived.

It seems as if spiritual dependence on the Lord must be in great measure voluntary, a dependence of choice. He alone can adequately supply spiritual needs. In that sense all are dependent on Him potentially. But there is no actual dependence till the needs are awakened—till we seek to have them supplied. There is a state of actual spiritual dependence, but it is only reached gradually by effort and surrender. The work of life is the voluntary transformation of independence into dependence. That which is ignoble politically and socially is noble in the spiritual sphere and towards the Lord. It is the voluntariness of the surrender, the faith involved in it, the effort that it requires, as towards One who is unseen, which make it the means of perfecting our nature. Our freedom is freedom to surrender. God made us free, the Ascension leaves us free, for this.

Let us examine the matter in actual experience. Here is one who is absolutely ignorant of Christ in everything, except in name. The Eternal Word fills all things, sustains the universe, but *he* sees nothing but the laws of His action. As to spiritual guidance, help and support, he has none of it, except in an indirect way. Worldly, or may we rather say cosmic motives and hopes, human friends cheer or fail him. For him Jesus has left the world. He is allowed to think so, if he chooses. Here is another whose whole soul rises up against such an assertion. The Lord is with him all the days. More than this, he is living a life of which Jesus is the motive and the support. He has come by grace to be absolutely dependent on Him. He knows it is a precariously enjoyed dependence. He trembles lest he should lose it. But as it is, he is the bond-servant of Jesus Christ. Yet the commonest case lies between these two. A man feels the great presence near him at times, but

his experience is one of alternating nearness and separation. He is still liable to fall back into the illusion of a life without God, a world without Christ.

This season, then, is the Festival of the Unseen. In it we assert against detractors the power of human nature to know and live by what no eye beholds. And not merely that human nature can do this, but that it is the way of its perfection. For some, no doubt, this is a harder task than for others; so much so, that there are times when, in spite of our assertions of the universality of Christianity, it seems open to the old charge against the philosophies which it supplanted, the charge of being a religion for the few.

But the gospel has more than one aspect. That is a profound truth with regard to it, capable of a hundred illustrations. Let us close with one of them. There is the retrospective view. Some minds are ever turning back to the past facts, the solemn, glorious, reassuring facts of the Lord's life. They live by these. There is also the expectant aspect—waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian watches, labours, occupies till His Master come. Both these are looking on things which are not seen, and eternal.

But there is a third aspect which tries the spiritual sight still more, though lying nearer; yet perhaps when habitually attained it has more power to govern life. It is to see now and here, between the faces of the crowd, Jesus everywhere present, to feel, to live by His presence. This is no matter of the imagination, no property of an emotional nature. It comes by the plain matter-of-fact way of regular habits of devotion, and in no other way. Those who attain it can understand the words which He spoke: 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.' They can follow Origen's splendid misinterpretation of St. Paul, and say that already they walk not by faith but by sight.¹

WHITSUNDAY.

The Availableness of the Holy Spirit.

'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'—Ac 2³⁸.

1. There are scenes in the New Testament which all of us would love to have shared. When our

¹ E. R. Bernard, *Sermons and Lectures*, 44.

Lord took the children in His arms, when He sat at peace in the friendly home of Bethany, when He came unannounced to His friends on the evening of the Resurrection Day—each of us would give much to have been there. But at this Pentecostal experience? Do many of us, speaking quite honestly, feel that we have missed much by our absence?

Ecstasy was there, joy brimming over, such as we rarely experience on earth and most of all rarely in a religious gathering. It was joy that demanded expression, joy of satisfaction and expectancy, transfiguring both past and future.

There was a wonderful feeling of fellowship too. The 'many tongues' were the sign of it. All understood the common language of the heart. There was a fusing together of strangers and aliens and comrades. Most marked of all, a sense of new energy pervaded the one hundred and twenty. There was a remarkable release and expansion of personality, which people often seek in foolish and material ways.

But there is a thought which chills us. This wonderful thing did happen in the early Church, but it is past. One of the most impressive sights as one nears Rome from the south is the long lines of ancient aqueducts, borne upon successive arches across the Campagna. In the channel borne high above these arches a stream of pure water used to flow from the springs in the lonely hills to the homes of the crowded city. But now they are just a memorial, rather a pathetic memorial, of a past achievement. Some of the arches are broken, some have vanished, where the channel exists it is dry. When we let our minds run their own way, we tend to think in that fashion of the first great outflow of the Spirit of Life, symbolized by the wind and the fire, and by the water, too.

If that be our mood, this text speaks to it. 'This promise is unto you, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off.' At least St. Peter thought that there was here implicitly the promise of an abiding experience as precious to the individual as to the Church.

Many feel that this commemoration of the outpouring of the Spirit is somehow different from Christmas or Easter. Those concern the individual, this is more important for the Church and its ordained ministers. It has to do with the inspiration of the few rather than with the enrichment of the many, with preachers rather than with the rank and file of the Church. We have clericalized Whitsunday.

To St. Peter, Pentecost was full of significance for

all his hearers, shamed and baffled as they felt themselves to be, crying out, 'What shall we do?' He was sure that this experience—'what ye both hear and see'—might affect them profoundly, and was meant to cover a wide area. 'All flesh,' 'your sons and daughters,' 'young men and old,' 'slaves as well as freemen'—these were the prophetic words for which he claimed fulfilment at that moment. His eyes followed the successive generations—'your children'—and looked to the far horizons—'all who are afar off.'

It is quite true that the aqueducts are only melancholy noble reminders of the past with their broken arches and intermittent waterless channels. But Rome to-day is a city of fountains. That is one of its features. Just as in London we say there is not a street from some part of which one cannot see a tree, so in Rome there is scarcely a street from which one cannot at some point see or hear the plashing of a fountain. Yes, the aqueducts are broken and useless, but the springs on the hills still flow and the conduits, largely out of sight, bring the water unceasingly to the city.

A like truth is taught us by our text concerning the outflow of the Holy Spirit. Long vanished the gift of tongues—our missionaries have to toil with grammar and dictionary like any man of commerce. Far past the flashing of the celestial fire—no leaping flame rests upon the preacher's head. Gone the days of widespread healing by a touch, and swift cures by a prayer—surgeons and physicians must toil for knowledge and skill if they would heal and save. None the less, the Church of Christ is still a city of fountains, the Spring in the Eternal Hills has never failed since it first burst forth. If Pentecost cannot be repeated, it can be perpetuated. The Pentecostal era is continuous as the stream from a new-born spring becomes continuous through the centuries.

2. It would, indeed, be untrue to deny that there have been repetitions of Pentecost in individuals. There is no more striking example than that of Blaise Pascal. This exceptional genius, who died when he was only thirty-nine, invented the wheelbarrow and the omnibus, investigated the highest reaches of mathematics and advanced its bounds, wrote one of the most brilliant and finished satires in the world ('The Letters of a Provincial') and one of the most fertilizing books on Christianity (his 'Pensées')—this man had such an experience of which he has left a record. When twenty-five years of age, he turned decisively to religion, but it was not till six years afterwards that he received a baptism of the Holy Spirit. His record of it

was found sewn in his doublet. Somewhat condensed, it runs as follows:

The Year of Grace, 1654, Monday, November 23rd.
From about half-past ten at night to about
half-past twelve.

Fire. Fire. Fire.

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
not of the philosophers and the men of science.

Certainty, Certainty, Feeling, Joy, Peace.
God of Jesus Christ.

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.

This is a very remarkable document and records an experience answering to Pascal's deep sense of need and his unqualified surrender of himself. It was a repetition of Pentecostal blessing in a single soul.

It is fair to say, too, that there have been times in the history of the Church when the winds of God have swept across some portion of His people, bringing an immense renewal of religious life, like a second spring-time. For such a renewal of Pentecost some of us look steadfastly, having more than once felt the first breath of it in England, only to see it die away again.

3. But let us remember that in the absence of the dramatic manifestations of the power of the Spirit, we still live in the Pentecostal era and the 'promise is for us and our children' in its quieter manifestations. No one realizes rightly what the Christian life offers and ensures until he has come under the spell of this conviction. A good many of Christ's people have not acquired the habit of faith which relies on this outward supply of energy and force for all needs as well as for occasional emergencies. It is true that all Christian people possess a vague confidence that behind our own personality there lie the resources of God. But our temptation is to depend upon them only for the outstanding and sorest demands of life.

But God does not mean us to live in such a fashion. We are meant to live in daily commerce with the base of spiritual supply. The spring on the Eternal Hills still leaps and flows and overflows—it is the channels that are lacking, be they aqueducts above or conduits below the surface.

4. What does the availableness of the Holy Spirit mean? It means inexhaustible resources to supply all kinds of moral and spiritual need. Are we in the path of God's will, living where He has placed us, dedicated to all He commands us? That is the preliminary question. When it is answered

rightly, then we are justified in depending on the Holy Spirit to make us adequate to every demand, not only the sudden, insurgent demands, but also the repeated and continuous demands to which we so often respond with weary or laggard feet. We cannot exhaust our God. There is no anxiety in God. When we unite our exhaustion to His strength and our anxiety to His watchful wisdom, then in reliance on His resources things become possible to us which were impossible. What God wants us to do, He will enable us to do in the life within and the life without. This will not mean deliverance from all care, but it will mean deliverance from the most poisonous of anxieties, the fear that somehow God will let us fail in things essential to life. The Pentecostal era—which is simply another name for the Christian era in which we are living—means sufficiency of strength for every God-appointed task; and, in addition, wisdom to detect and courage to refuse the tasks unappointed by Him.

Further, the availableness of the Holy Spirit means reliable reinforcements. Which of us has not known some challenge of life which we could not refuse without dishonour, which yet demanded

more than we had to give? We mustered our manhood to supply the demand, and there was not enough manhood to meet the challenge. We mobilized the support of our friends, but, do what they or we could, their support was insufficient. Then, one of three things happened. We accepted dishonour and put aside the challenge, perhaps pretending it was not there. Or we answered the challenge hopelessly and half-heartedly and were beaten. Or we put our trust in God, standing as we were on the verge of despair; then something happened, reinforcements flowed in, there was a change in the converging circumstances or our own inward forces were steadied and strengthened, the accepted responsibility was rightly discharged, the arrogant temptation decisively overcome, the haunting shadows of failure dispelled. Nothing can convince us that it was merely hidden resources in ourselves which reinforced us. No, it was the gift of God. We had depended on the unseen reinforcements of the Heavenly Energy, and they came. The promise was for us; yes, for us. That is the experience we are meant to know right to the end. The Holy Spirit is available.¹

¹ R. C. Gillie, *The Gospel for the Modern Mind*, 45.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, D.D., GLENFARG.

MUCH has been written of late regarding the influence of the Egyptian religion on the Hebrews. There is little doubt that the Egyptians included monotheism among their dogmas, though we do not know when their theologians evolved it. Two forms of it existed, a higher and a lower. The higher was the monotheism of the priests of Memphis more than five thousand years ago, who proclaimed their belief in a self-created, self-subsisting, and eternal God, existing before everything else and creating matter by thought; and the lower was the monotheism of Rā of Heliopolis. The former, though not to be compared with the Christian conception, was a remarkable spiritual achievement, and is seen at its best in the inscription of Shabaka, the most important of all the Egyptian religious texts hitherto discovered. Moses, who was 'trained' (ἐπαίδειθη, Ac 7²²) in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, would certainly be acquainted

with these monotheistic views, and his teaching during the sojourn in the Desert may have been based on them (cf. his words, 'Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord,' Dt 6⁴). He must have spent the first forty years of his life in Egypt among temple officials, noblemen, government functionaries, and other Egyptians, and may have been a priest, as both Manetho and Josephus state. Aaron, too, was probably well educated, a skilled magician, and a member of one of the guilds of priests. It was his sympathy with the Egyptian cult of animals that led him to make the golden calf to gratify those who still clung to such beliefs. Miriam, the 'prophetess,' had probably been a singing woman in one of the temples, and it is evident that she knew well how to lead a choir of women, and to direct antiphonal singing accompanied by dancing and the beating of timbrels. At the same time, recent researches go to show