

## The Ascension in the Fourth Gospel.

WHEN our Lord appears in the Garden to Mary Magdalene on the Resurrection morning (Jn 20<sup>11-18</sup>) she is expressly ordered not to touch His person (*μή μου ἅπτου*, v.<sup>17</sup>). These words present a serious difficulty, since eight days later there appears to be no objection to any one touching our Lord, when St. Thomas is clearly ordered to reach forth his hand and put it into his Master's side (v.<sup>27</sup>). Surely this discrepancy is sufficiently glaring, and would not without reason have been admitted by a careful writer like St. John. We should expect that some change of state has occurred in our Lord's Person between the appearance to Mary and that to Thomas. Is there any evidence of this?

If we turn again to v.<sup>17</sup>, we shall find that the reason why Mary is not to touch our Lord is that He has not yet ascended to His Father (*οὐπω γὰρ ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα*). And further, she is ordered to tell the disciples not, as would naturally be expected, that their Master has risen from the dead, but that He is ascending at that very time (*ἀναβαίνω*—present tense) to His Father (*ἀναβαίνω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου*). The use of the present tense *ἀναβαίνω* is certainly striking. Can it be that St. John intends us to understand that the Ascension is actually taking place at this time? If so, all the subsequent appearances would be after the Ascension, that is, after a definite and important change of state had taken place in our Lord's Person.

There is some little outside confirmation of this view. St. Paul in 1 Co 15<sup>5-8</sup> clearly equates the post-ascension appearance of our Lord to himself on the Damascus road with the appearances to the Apostles. He uses the same verb (*ᾤφθη*) in each case. The explanation that here St. Paul is deliberately magnifying the appearance to himself seems very doubtful in view of what immediately follows. If we follow the view stated above, all the appearances, being post-ascension, would be parallel.

Again Lk 24<sup>51</sup> (*καὶ ἀνεφέρετο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν*) would seem to place the Ascension much nearer to the Resurrection than his account in Acts. Indeed, if Acts had not been preserved, no one would have assumed a lapse of as many as forty days. The explanation that at the end of his Gospel St. Luke is intentionally abbreviating seems unsatisfactory. May he not be following one tradition in his Gospel and another in Acts?

Further, in St. John's account the Holy Spirit is clearly given on the Resurrection-Sunday night (Jn 20<sup>22</sup> *Δάβετε Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον*); and this most naturally follows after our Lord's complete glorification, *i.e.* after the Ascension.

The evidence is of course far from convincing. But the view here put forth may be interesting to a wider circle than our study-circle at Cuddesdon, which discovered it. If it has already appeared in print, I should be glad to know the reference; and I should welcome any comment or criticism on the matter.

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## Entre Nous.

### The Loving Bishop.

Henry Luke Paget, Bishop of Stepney, and later Bishop of Chester, died on 26th April 1937. Mrs. Paget has just written his biography, and it has been published by Longmans (8s. 6d. net). It is a most distinguished memoir, written in a finely objective way, and showing outstanding literary quality.

In her first chapter, Mrs. Paget gives an estimate of the Bishop's character: 'There is a cryptic and traditional saying of Bishop Ridding's, when Head-

master of Winchester, that a certain boy "knew less than he didn't," and of Henry Luke Paget it might well be said that "he was more than he wasn't," yet, none the less, he wasn't a lot of things.

'He was not in the least eager for sweeping reforms, except such as are personal and within the heart. He was not an eminent confessor or director, neither was he a very zealous evangelist; . . . Nor was he a mystic or ascetic. . . . Henry Luke Paget was in a succession—the pastoral succession as

contrasted with that of the scholar or the administrator. . . . Tradition has it that even the eager disciples who sought St. John in old age, only found an old man who could say nothing but "Little children, love one another." Very much the same thing was said of Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln; it might also be easily said of Luke Paget. But it marks the succession and other names come to mind—George Herbert, Thomas Ken, John Keble, among many. It does Paget no disservice to place him in such company, and even if it were proved that he fell short of the line, it is there that we must look for him, that is his species and genus; and his life does afford evidence that love is an actual force.'

Henry Luke Paget was the fourth child of Sir James Paget, the famous surgeon. He was born on 18th October 1852, and soon after his birth the family moved into the spacious house in Harewood Place where they spent many years of great happiness, and which became a centre of culture and enriching friendships.

Among frequent guests were the Gladstones, Browning, Tennyson, Holman-Hunt, Pasteur. A number of good stories are told. 'Luke always remembered that they had met Robert Browning and his son and sister in the Dolomites. Once a donkey brayed at them all over a hedge. "Spare me!" cried Browning, "surely I have had enough criticism for one lifetime." Another day, "Pen" Browning was painting a little peasant child with a pretty, wistful expression, while his father tried to keep her amused. Sir James Paget joined them: "A pretty expression?" he queried. "Long tonsils, that's the matter," and made the little girl open her mouth that he might see and he was proved right.'

In the religion of Paget's early home there was a marked Tractarian element. Sir James Paget had among his friends Newman, Pusey, and Manning, and it was the Tractarian movement that had provided the religious books that Luke Paget was brought up on. He speaks of reading the *Pilgrims' Progress*, but in an edition with explanatory notes by J. Mason Neale: 'It is wonderful how elaborately Neale guards you against the dangers he sees in unmitigated Bunyan.' Nonconformist literature never came his way. 'Looking back on those early years, I am surprised to remember how untouched our religion was with influences from other quarters.' The biography gains in vividness from the full quotations from the Bishop's own reminiscences, written for the *Chester Diocesan Gazette*.

After some years at Shrewsbury, where education-

ally he did not make much mark, Luke Paget went on to Oxford. A delightful picture is painted of the Christ Church of those days. He read with Nettleship, and he loved that, and the free, stimulating life of the University. He made many friends and there was much good talk.

It had always been understood that Luke, like his elder brother Francis (afterwards Bishop of Oxford) was going to be a clergyman, and so it seemed the most natural thing that after Oxford he should be ordained. There was no dramatic conversion, we are told. His desire grew and developed as quietly as any other natural growth. It was curious that Paget, who was never at a Theological College himself, was for a time Vice-Principal of Leeds Clergy School. His years in Leeds were not among the happiest. It was the first time he had come into contact with theological opinions opposed to his own. He began to 'discipline his own eager intolerance.' Yet Canon Wylde who knew him then declared that 'every thought of him is redolent with a sense of a life entirely devoted to the loving service of his Master.'

Paget soon moved to East London where he was in charge of a mission started by Christ Church. There he was in his element. He loved the colour, the noisy life of the streets, the people with their cheerfulness and wit. When he came back to it later as Bishop of Stepney he felt that he had come home again.

In 1887 Paget was offered the living of St. Pancras. Writing at Chester nearly forty years later he says, 'the offer and acceptance made some stir. There were severe attacks in some of the Church papers. . . . The strong and honourable traditions of St. Pancras were Evangelical, and grave injury would have been the result of any attempt to ignore or discredit them.'

The ministry which began under some suspicion ended nineteen years later on the note of love. 'The thought I would leave with you to-day,' said Paget, 'is this: that here, in a large London parish, here by God's mercy, there has been drawn together a group of people, young and old, rich and poor, who have been taught of God to love one another.'

After St. Pancras, Paget was offered work as Bishop Suffragan of Ipswich. This lasted three years, and then he came back to his beloved London as Bishop of Stepney. He was in Stepney during the war. This part of the biography contains many striking pictures of his East London friends, of their wit and courage during air raids, their frequent expressions, 'mustn't grumble,' and 'I couldn't help laughing.' The Bishop himself is

pictured as a quiet figure travelling here and there, by bus, saying his office and with a kindly word for every one.

There were many Jews in Stepney, and while some work was done among them conversions were not numerous. 'I am not sure that we were confident with regard to our line of approach; nor am I now. I have always had in my mind those words of St. Paul: "To provoke them to jealousy," to present our Faith in a form so appealing, so convincing, so plainly excellent that they will come to see its beauty and desire it. The faith of Christ, illustrated by the life of close and affectionate Christian fellowship, and by something like beauty and splendour and reality in Christian worship, seems to me the most likely way to "provoke" them.'

At the age of sixty-six Paget was appointed Bishop of Chester, and he remained there from 1919 until 1932. The chapters on the work at Chester are impressive. Had there been success in the episcopate? 'There is no estimate, fortunately, by which this can be measured. There had been succession, the grave receiving, the responsible handing on of an ordered trust. Paget, in committing that trust to his successor, could, at least, offer a diocese that, like the Jerusalem of the *Psalms*, was builded "as a city that is at unity in itself." And his successor, recognizing the contribution that Paget had added to the trust, was able to say: "He was a man shaped by the love of God, who lived by love and inspired it."'

Paget drew people together because he drew them nearer to God. His attitude was one of reverent love and obedience. It was on Transcendence rather than on Immanence he laid stress. The Fatherhood of God and the Transcendence of His love carried with them the realization of the brotherhood of man. 'Luke Paget, being a man of simple and humble heart, presented an example of goodness within reach, and men and women finding it so attractive and so attainable, stretched out their hands to reach it. "Mais, quoi, Seigneur! est ce donc si simple de vous aimer."'

#### Reverence.

'As St. Francis loved his Lady Poverty, Paget loved Reverence and treasured her praise. When his brother-in-law, Henry Thompson, as Vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford, persuaded Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) to break a long and diffident silence and preach at St. Mary's, Paget remembered with surprised pleasure that he chose as his subject

"Reverence." It pleased him to think that this was the attitude of the true *Alice in Wonderland* mind. He also used to tell how Lewis Carroll had changed the passion flower in the Wonderful garden to a tiger lily directly he learned the meaning of the passion flower's name. Trivial instances, perhaps, but remaining in Paget's memory as praise for the reverence he revered.<sup>1</sup>

#### Work in the Congo.

MR. H. L. HEMMENS' work among laymen, not only in his own Church but beyond it, is well known. As Secretary of the Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement, it was natural that when a tour of the Congo Mission stations was decided on, Mr. Hemmens should be chosen. He spent four months in 1938 visiting the sixteen Baptist stations in the Belgian Congo and three in the Portuguese Congo, and we now have his account of it in *Congo Journey* (Carey Press; 2s. 6d. net). Mr. Hemmens was tremendously impressed by what he saw, and there is no doubt that he will impress his readers. All the stations are working enormous areas—one is apt to forget that the Belgian Congo is at least fourteen times the size of Belgium, though it is, of course, in most parts sparsely populated. The only way in which the area could in any way be touched effectively is by native evangelists, and of these the Church has now trained two thousand. There is a very interesting account of a co-operative effort at Kimpese, where the American Baptists and the Swedish Missions Förbundet have joined in an institution for the training of teacher evangelists. This institution provides a three-years' course for teachers and for pastors, and native leaders are leaving it well trained in spiritual, moral, social, and educational matters.

Turning from the Lower to the Upper Congo, one might select the boys' school at Bolobo as an example of the very high standard of work done by the Mission. It is in the charge of a Belgian Protestant master who is an enthusiast, and the teaching is according to modern theories and methods. Several text-books, which the headmaster had written, have been adopted elsewhere in the country. When Mr. Hemmens visited Bolobo he found that the latter was on furlough, but he had left behind him a thirty-six weeks' programme prepared with detailed precision for every teacher, class, and lesson during this time.

'Theory and practice are combined in the classes. As far as possible, every subject is related to village

<sup>1</sup> *Henry Luke Paget*, 8.

life. Geography, for example, is taught with the life of the village and the land as a beginning and a background. By means of sand-trays the boys are stimulated to construct a model village and to understand, for instance, why washing and bathing places should be made below the village and not above it. Through the construction of other models, further talents are developed, and the making of things that will be of use in later life is learnt. A model village built by this school was among the exhibits that attracted general attention at the Diamond Jubilee Conference at Léopoldville. The same thoroughness that is given to other subjects is also paid to Scripture teaching, to singing and to physical exercises. This school is making a notable contribution to the uplift of the people along lines that are in accord with their special conditions, and it is producing lads likely to become leaders in their communities.'

#### Universalism.

The real objection to a universalism which declares that love *must* triumph is not that it cuts the nerve of moral activity, nor that it burkes the fact of sin's 'abiding consequences.' That determinism necessarily leads to quietism is manifestly untrue; and though sin's consequences are abiding, to hold that they are untransformable is to make the Cross of Christ of none effect. But dogmatic universalism contradicts the very nature of love, by claiming for it the kind of omnipotence which it refuses. Love cannot, because it will not, compel the surrender of a single heart that holds out against it. Without the symbolism of warfare, of struggle and victory, our picture of the Christian life would be incomplete. But the comparison breaks down at the crucial point, for all the fighting of this world is with the weapon of force. Love never forces, and therefore there can be no certainty that it will overcome. But there may, and there must, be an unconquerable hope.<sup>1</sup>

#### We Christians.

Writing in *The Christian World* for 19th January, Ludgate said: 'I heard the other day of an incident

<sup>1</sup> John Burnaby, *Amor Dei*, 317 f.

in a Chinese town blasted by war. General Chiang-Kai-Shek was there. He talked of what "we Christians" must do "to rebuild China"; and, later, he slipped in at the back of a little Christian mission, took his place quietly by the side of a coolie and joined with the rest in the ordinary devotions. . . . Do you ever feel uncertain about the worth of the Christian Faith? Then imagine the changed air the world would be breathing if the three supreme representatives of Germany, Japan, and China were now Martin Niemöller, Toyohiko Kagawa, and Chiang-Kai-Shek.'

Ludgate ends with this quotation from Thoreau. 'When a man marches out of step with his fellows it may be he hears another drummer.'

#### A Controlled Life.

'I personally do not think that any Christian Church is healthy unless there is among its members some touch of Puritanism, some renunciation which shows the spirit to be in active control of the body. A life so controlled, balanced between work and play, always so far as possible in touch with Nature's sunshine, the fresh air, the trees and the flowers, can be very happy, and it is for most of us possible.'—Bishop Barnes.

#### Theological Essay Prize.

The Principal of Overdale College, the Rev. William Robinson, informs us that a prize of £10 is offered annually for an essay of about 10,000 words.

For 1939 the subject of the essay is 'The Place of the Sacraments in the Christian Faith.'

The essays should reach him before the first Monday in June. The competition is open to all students in recognized Theological Colleges.

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