

have not seriously displaced the findings of the pen—at least, of the responsible and moderate pen—yet there is no discovery that can be ignored; and sometimes the most minute discoveries open the way to important and direct critical results.

Take a single striking example. In the first chapter of Leviticus the sacrificial animals are named. They are the ox, the sheep, the goat, and two kinds of doves. Why these and no others? Because these were the animals used by the Hebrews for food. The laws regarding their preparation for sacrifice in the second chapter are the rules for preparing them for men's ordinary tables. And, altogether, it is evident to Dr. Peters that they simply used for sacrifice all the domestic animals they had. The Egyptians had ducks and geese. But Palestine was quite unsuitable for ducks and geese. The ox, the sheep, the goat, and the dove were all they knew of and could rear.

But where was the barn-door fowl? It had not yet been introduced into Western Asia. It is unknown to Egypt, as to Palestine, until the time of the Persians. A native of Central Asia, the hen was brought to Babylon and thence to Palestine and Egypt by the Persians when they came to

conquer. It is evident, therefore, that the Levitical Code was finally fixed before the Exile. Not devised merely, not merely promulgated, but accepted and sacred beyond alteration. For, otherwise, chickens would certainly have been added to the sacrificial list. There is a certain *extra* legal sacrifice, still made by the Jews on the day of Atonement, in which a cock is the victim. That sacrifice is traceable back perhaps to the very Exile. But the fact that it is not strictly legal, not in the Code, shows that already when the Jews and the Persians met in Babylon, the Levitical Code was beyond alteration.

Now in that first chapter of Leviticus, critics had already found a literary difference between the part referring to the doves and the rest of the chapter. Archæology bears them out. While oxen, sheep, and goats might be used for sacrifice and for food at any time after the Israelites entered the land east of the Jordan, doves belong to settled towns and villages. Before they were used, the Israelites had finished the conquest of Canaan and settled in their homes. That first chapter of Leviticus bears evidence of growth, as the critics say; but of growth that came to an end before the Exile—as critics that are extreme deny.

The Value of the Ascension.¹

BY THE REV. E. R. BERNARD, M.A., CANON OF SALISBURY.

THERE is in our day an influential school of theology which bids us find our evidence for the events of the Lord's life in the 'value' which they severally have for our individual souls. According to this school, the contents of the Christian faith are matter for what they call 'value' judgments, and only in a secondary way for historical investigation. The records of what Christ did and said can only be believed as true,

¹ Prepared at the request of the Committee of the Church Congress in Newcastle.

so they say, in proportion as they are felt to guide and illuminate the individual believer. From such a view I entirely dissent. I will not now stop to point out the danger which such a system incurs of disregarding altogether the historical character of the gospel, or, still further, the falseness of the philosophy on which such a theology is built. But the teaching of the school of Ritschl, erroneous as we believe it to be in important particulars, suggests a salutary lesson with regard to the subject which we have before us. There is no

meaning or value in a mere belief in the fact of the Ascension, unless we personally welcome its significance and its spiritual interest. You may defend with ability the narrative of the Ascension in Acts, you may explain satisfactorily its omission in St. Matthew, you may argue for the authenticity of the last paragraph of St. Mark, or the suspected words in Lk 24⁵¹; but all this avails but little if you cannot also feel the value of the Ascension in its place in the Lord's life, in the history of the Church, and in the relation of your own soul to Christ. After all, the theory of value judgments is little more than a scientific statement of the old popular distinction between faith of the head and faith of the heart.

What, then, is the 'value' of the Ascension which—along with historical evidence for it, but not independently of that—commands our belief in it? I will first mention two points briefly, and then deal more fully with a third.

i. The fitness of the Ascension in its relation to the purpose of the Incarnation.—The Ascension is too often regarded as belonging to the history of the Resurrection. Its true place is as the complement of the Nativity. So the Lord Himself places it: 'I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go unto the Father' (Jn 16²⁸). The purpose of the Incarnation was to unite earth and heaven, the seen and the unseen, the temporal and the eternal. The first step was the Nativity, which brought heaven down to earth; the second was the Ascension, which took earth up to heaven. Then the link was complete. He that descended is the same also that ascended. Like the other events of the Lord's life, we feel it to be indispensable for the completeness of the counsel of God.

ii. The Ascension is the exaltation of our Master and Saviour, and lifts us up with joy. That He meant it to do so we learn from Himself: 'If ye loved Me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father' (Jn 14²⁸). And when the time came they did rejoice: 'They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, blessing God' (Lk 24⁵²⁻⁵³). So we also rejoice, for we also love Him. The humiliation and the exaltation of the Saviour are long since past. But we follow them again in our devotions. They quicken our affections and enlarge our heart towards Him. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God. Do you recite

those words in the Creed as a mere profession of belief? No; you feel their triumphant power. You rejoice in Him, and your rejoicing brings you nearer to Him. 'The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now.'

One can readily understand how writers of hymns have been led in this frame of devout exultation to dwell on the entry of the Lord into heavenly places, and to describe its pomp and splendour. But, surely, they miss the spirit of the event and go beyond what is written. Ps 24 is not a sufficient justification for their flights of fancy. The character of the Ascension scene, like that of the Nativity, is retirement, quietness, and apparent simplicity. As He came, so He went away. The task of the Christian poet is rather to help us to perceive what great things underlie those brief words and that tranquil farewell.

iii. I have tried to show how the exaltation of Christ has power to stir our love to Him, to enlarge our heart, to make His chosen people joyful. But we are seeking for a more direct 'value,' for something in it which bears constantly and immediately on all our spiritual life. What is the direct effect of the act of Ascension upon us? It is the beginning of that relation between Christ and the believer in which we now stand. Even after His Resurrection He could only be at one Emmaus at a time; since His Ascension He is at a thousand, and at each of them men's hearts burn discerning His presence. St. John had heard, and seen with his eyes, and his hands had handled. The Ascension closes that manifestation of the Word of Life, and the apostle rises to another stage of fellowship to which he can invite those to follow him who have not known Christ in the flesh (1 Jn 1³). The apostles passed from fellowship in the flesh to fellowship in the spirit—an easy transition, and one which seems to have cost them no effort. We have to rise at once to the higher level without the help of the intermediate step. For us it is not easy. It does cost efforts—not one, but many. This, then, is the meaning of the Ascension for us. It is not so much a withdrawal or an end; but rather a beginning, the beginning of a life which is to be lived with and in One whom we have never seen.

May we not say that, thus regarded, the Ascension is the most difficult to respond to of all

Christian commemorations? Our Master withdraws Himself from the reach of those means of communication with which God has furnished us. Yet He bids us not only to find Him without them, but to live closer to Him than the men who followed Him in the days of His flesh. Only those who are really doing this can give the Ascension its true place and worth. They know that the demand which it makes is great, but that the recompense which it gives is greater. May we not see an ascending series in the events of the Lord's life as they lend themselves to spiritual appropriation? All can rejoice in the Nativity. Most Christians can realize what the Cross has done for them. There are fewer who know the power of His Resurrection. There are fewer still whom the Ascension raises to the joy and privilege of a constant spiritual union.

How can we rise? It is a frequent complaint: 'I want to be lifted up, and I hoped to find help to lift me up here or there, from this person or from that, but I have found none.' It is the Ascension which will lift you up, if you enter into its teaching.

1. As the first step for doing so, we must follow the apostles. Through them and their records we must first know the historic Christ as the condition of rising to union with Him now. What He was then, is what He will be to us. Every trait of character which is recorded of Him should be in our memories all through our present spiritual communion with Him. It is a delusion to think that in a mystical way we can learn anything fresh about Christ and His will. But reality, power, personal appropriateness can be added by our experience to what we have read. His tender compassion to the woman in the crowd, His plain rebuke to St. Peter's counsel of affection, His patient bearing with slowness of apprehension, His revelations of Himself after He had risen, in accordance with the needs and moods of His disciples—all these we recognize over again in His dealings with ourselves. Our secret lives illustrate the Gospel story, though they can add no new feature. Let me repeat, the first requisite is to know the historic Christ. At once look back and look up.

2. Then, knowing Him thus, we are to associate ourselves with Him in a plain, practical way; that is to say, in our work. Our task is the Kingdom of Heaven, and there is no lawful occupation, no

relation of life in which the building-up of that kingdom on earth may not be pursued. It is not limited to charitable undertakings, church work, missionary enterprises; but every act or word by which men seek to live together in peace, love, and unselfishness is an effort for the Kingdom of Heaven. In all these, in all that we do, we are to associate ourselves with Him, and Him with us.

Plain and practical as this way to union is, yet again let us say how difficult! Perhaps few would ever have attempted it if Scripture itself had not given us an almost perfect example. Our doctrinal and ethical debt to St. Paul is indeed great, but we owe him something else—the record of his experience, of a life in Christ; or, to use his own frequent mode of expression, in Christ Jesus—that is to say, in the glorified, ascended Saviour. How otiose and superfluous as a matter of style is the constant addition of 'in Christ' to all that St. Paul has to say of his thoughts, desires, and efforts! So says the cold, external critic. But to the Christian, in this constant phrase the very heart and secret of the life of the apostle is disclosed—a disclosure which stirs and fires him to make the same experience his own. Even St. Paul had once known Christ after the flesh (2 Co 5¹⁶); that is, he had but recognized His historical character and His past work. But later he had come to learn the true lesson of the Ascension, to know Christ Jesus in the Spirit, an ever-present Saviour, in whom the life of His servants is to be lived.

To realize this aspect of the Ascension as the beginning of life in Christ, we have but to set side by side the last discourse in St. John's Gospel, and Plato's record in the *Phædo* of the last hours of Socrates. Socrates is leaving his disciples 'orphans,' so one of them says, using the very word which our Lord employs (*Phædo*, lxx.). And Socrates has no consolation for them. Socrates does not say, 'I will come unto you' (Jn 14¹⁸). Again that other great teacher—for so, surely, we may speak of him—believes that it is well for himself that he is leaving the world, and calls on his disciples to rejoice on his account. But he cannot add, as Christ does, 'it is expedient for you that I go away.' The one departure is pure loss for those who are left; the other is gain.

It is by this union with individual believers, and with the Church in its broad sense, that the Lord continues His work in the world, not merely by a

legacy of recorded words and example, but as a living power through living men, carrying on without break His ministry of Redemption. In the biography of one who in his time did much for the Kingdom of God, there is at the close of it a touching expression of sadness at having to leave the world with so much misery in it (*Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, vol. iii. p. 513). We see why no

such thought could attach to the Ascension. St. Matthew, who does not record the actual event, is nevertheless the best interpreter of its meaning. His equivalent for the Ascension is: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.' That is what the Ascension really means. It is rather the festival of Christ's presence in the world than of His departure from it.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

I. BY PROFESSOR A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., OXFORD.

THE first-fruits of the important excavations carried on by M. de Morgan on the site of Susa have just appeared. Dr. Scheil has published the Semitic texts found among the ruins of the ancient Elamite capital (*Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse: Textes élamites-sémitiques*; première série, Paris: Leroux, 1900). It forms the second volume of the work in which M. de Morgan will give an account of his excavations, so far as they have yet gone, the first volume, which is about to appear, containing a detailed history of them, while the third volume will be devoted to the 'Anzanite' or native Elamite inscriptions which have been disinterred. That Semitic texts should be discovered at all at Susa is a surprise; what is a still greater surprise is that they go back to the very beginning of Elamite civilization. Our whole conception of early Elamite history has been revolutionized; and it turns out that the tenth chapter of Genesis is right, after all, in making Elam a son of Shem. Once more archæological discovery has confirmed the statement of an Old Testament writer, and this time in a most unexpected manner.

Susa, it would seem, was originally included in Babylonia. It was the capital of a district called Barahsi in the early inscriptions, which was distinct from the land of Elam properly so-called. In course of time, however, Barahsi was absorbed by Elam, and Susa or Shushan thus became an Elamite town.

The earliest rulers of Susa, whose records have come down to us, were high priests who acknowledged the sovereignty of the Babylonian kings. Naram-Sin (3800 B.C.) reigned over Elam just as

he reigned over Babylonia, and Susa was on the same footing in regard to the dominant state as was Tello or any other of the subject Babylonian cities. At first the high priests of Susa bore Semitic names, but a time came when the names became 'Anzanite,' though the inscriptions continue to be in the Semitic language of Babylonia.

The land of Anzan was from the first non-Semitic, and its inhabitants spoke an agglutinative language. At some period before 2300 B.C. its kings made themselves masters of Susa and Elam, which from henceforward came to be synonymous with Anzan. They even carried the war into Babylonia, and for a time that country had to submit to Elamite—or, more strictly speaking, Anzanite—supremacy. This is the period to which Chedor-laomer belongs. Babylonia, indeed, under Khammurabi or Ammurapi, succeeded in shaking off the Elamite yoke, but Elam remained independent, and the Semitic element which had once existed in it was absorbed or driven out. Naturally, however, the memories of the Semitic past long survived in the country; Semitic deities continued to be worshipped there, and it was remembered that the chief sanctuaries of Susa were of Semitic foundation.

Dr. Scheil's volume has been brought out with all that sumptuousness of type and paper which we are accustomed to expect in the publications of the French Government. The facsimiles of the inscriptions given in it leave nothing to be desired. They are headed by the long inscription of Manistusu (or, as Dr. Scheil prefers to read the name, Manistu-irba), the early king of Kiš, whose existence was first made known to us by the