

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD INTO HEAVEN

By REV. PAUL O'DEA, S.J.

(1) The Fact. The Ascension is the last mystery of our Lord's life on earth, and the first of His glorious life in Heaven. In the Apostles' Creed, after professing our faith in our Lord's divinity, His Incarnation, passion, death, burial, and resurrection, we profess our faith in this mystery also; "He ascended into Heaven." The fact is briefly stated by St. Mark (Mc. 16:19); it is frequently alluded to in the Gospel of St. John (Jo. 6-63; 14-13; 20-17) : and in the epistles of St. Paul. (Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 3:1-3; Hebrews 4 and 9) : but is most fully narrated by St. Luke, in his gospel (24:46-52) : and in the Acts of the Apostles (4:1-12).

From him we learn that forty days after the resurrection (Acts 13), our Lord was present in Jerusalem with the apostles whom He had chosen; that eating together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, that being strengthened and enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them, they should be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the uttermost part of the earth. Having so spoken He led them out to Bethany, to the Mount of Olives still conversing with them on the way, and there lifting up His hands He blessed them, and while He blessed them, He departed from them and was carried up to heaven, He was raised up and a cloud received him from their sight. Thus, as St. Mark briefly states (Mk. 16:19), "the lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up to heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God."

(2) Explanation of the Fact. By His Ascension our Lord withdrew from us His visible bodily presence. In order to enter; as far as we may, into the meaning of this mystery, it will be helpful to say something of the various ways in which our Lord is present to His Father and to us; and we to Him. Our Lord is both God and man, He has a divine nature and a human nature. As God, He always was and is most intimately present to the Father, by that most intimate presence, which consists in the oneness of His divine nature with that of His Father. For as there is only one God there is only one divine nature; and since the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are each of them singly that one God, that one divine nature is the nature of the Father, and the nature of the Son, and the nature of the Holy Ghost. So there is a most wonderful mutual indwelling of the three Divine Persons, inseparably and indivisibly united in the unity of the one Godhead.

Further, God, as the catechism tells us, is present everywhere; therefore our Lord as God by reason of His Divine nature is present everywhere with, the Father and the Holy Ghost. But we must not think of this presence of God as being like the presence by which our bodies are present in a place, for instance, in a room. Our bodies are present in a room inasmuch as they are contained within the surface of the four walls of the room. And the place in which we are present would be still more accurately defined if the surface of our bodies actually touched at every point the surface of the four walls containing us. But this is a kind of presence that belongs only to bodies. For, first, only bodies have a surface spread out or extended, so that one part of the body is outside another part and next to it, and the whole body is spread out over a certain space which it occupies, so that the whole body is not present at any one point. But God is a pure spirit and has no body. His being has no parts; it is not so spread out that one part is outside and next to another, and that one part occupies one portion of space and another part another. No He is perfectly simple, without parts; He is so present everywhere that His Being, whole and entire, is present at any one place and at any one point; and yet His Being, whole and entire, is present everywhere. Somewhat as in our bodies, the soul, which is a spirit, is present whole and entire in the whole body giving life to the whole body and yet is present whole and entire, in each part of the body, giving life to that part. A second point of difference is this; our bodies are contained within the four walls of the room in which we are; even our souls are in a sense contained within our bodies inasmuch as they are not present outside our bodies. But no place can contain God, because He is infinite; the heavens themselves cannot contain Him; He is so present everywhere that if there were an infinite number of other places besides those which now exist, He would, without any change in Himself, be present whole and entire to each of them, and to all of them together. And if there were no places, if He had never created a world in which there are places, He would, absolutely unchanged, be present to Himself, in the infinity of His own being.

So our Lord as God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost is present everywhere. We can, therefore, always adore our Lord, ever present with us as God with the Father and the Holy Ghost; we can thank Him and pray to Him.

But there is another mode of God's presence. The catechism tells us that though He is present everywhere, yet He is present in a more special way in Heaven, where He manifests or shows forth His glory, and is seen and enjoyed by the blessed angels and saints. This special kind of presence is explained thus. In the souls of the blessed in Heaven there is, of course, the great gift of sanctifying grace, which we can also have in this life; there is also the great gift of charity, which makes them able to love God with a supernatural love : that also we can have in this life. But there is furthermore a wonderful gift which is called the light of glory. This gift so raises their minds or intellects above their natural condition, that they are able to see God face to face, not as now in a glass darkly, they are able to see Him not with the eyes of the body but with the eyes of the spirit. And it is this vision, this sight of God as He is in Himself with the eyes of the spirit, that makes the substance, the essence, of the happiness of Heaven. Hence it is called the beatific vision.

Now in this vision God is present to them in a special way. For He who is present everywhere is then present to them in such a way that they can see and enjoy Him face to face. This does not mean that any change has taken place in God. No, the change is in them. If we do not see God face to face in this life it is not because God is not present to us, close enough to us as it were; but because our minds are not able to see Him. When, therefore, the souls of the blessed, by receiving the light of glory, are made able to see Him, God, who is substantially present everywhere, begins to be present to them and in them as One whom they can see and love and worship face to face; and in the vision and love and worship of whom they are eternally happy. Now what is true of God is true of each of the Divine Persons, for they are one God; therefore in this way our Lord, the Second Person, is also present in Heaven.

This special mode of presence of the three Divine Persons in our souls, as the object of supernatural knowledge and love is not entirely reserved to the next life; we can have a certain imperfect beginning of it here below whilst our souls are in the state of grace. To explain this fully would take us too far from our present subject, but we may say this much. Sanctifying grace makes our souls holy and pleasing to God and raises them to a new supernatural life. With it we also receive the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now, by these gifts, we enjoy a special presence of God. We have said already that the three Divine Persons, who are one God, are present everywhere and therefore in our souls. But when we are in the state of grace, they are present in our souls as in a temple made holy and pleasing to God by grace. They are also present as the objects of our faith, hope and charity, so that by using these gifts, we can enjoy a supernatural union with them, and can have intercourse with them. It is not of course as perfect as the union of the beatific vision; but it is a, supernatural union, and a preparation for that of heaven. It is of this presence our Lord spoke when He said at the last supper. "If any man love me he will keep my commandments, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him (Jo.14, 23). It is of the same presence St. Paul speaks when he so often tells us that we are temples of the Holy Ghost, or temples of God. Know you not that you are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1. Cor., 3, 16). This spiritual but real and substantial presence of our Lord as God in His divine nature, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we always have whilst we are in the state of grace, and we can lose only by mortal sin.

(3) Hitherto we have spoken of our Lord's presence as God, as Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. We must now speak of His presence as man. We know that He is both God and man; that He took to Himself a human nature and so united it to Himself that it is the human nature of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. So from the moment of the Incarnation He is by His human nature a true and perfect man, while remaining always by His divine nature, God. As man He dwelt on earth for thirty-three years. During that time He was present on earth, and at different times in different places, just as we are. His body was contained within the boundaries of the places where He was; His soul was present in His body, and not outside it, in the way we have explained above. Even after His resurrection, He continued in His glorified human nature to dwell on earth for forty days. But on the day of the Ascension that presence was withdrawn; He left this earth and ascended to His Father, as He had said to Mary Magdalen, when He appeared to her by the tomb : "Go to my brethren and say to them; I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God, and your God."

Let us reflect on the meaning of this event. Was our Lord then absent from His Father, before He ascended? No. As

God He was always present to the Father and Holy Ghost, and they to Him by the oneness of the divine nature, and the consequent mutual indwelling of the divine Persons of which we have spoken before. But the Father and the holy Ghost were always present to His human nature also and that in many ways. There was first that general presence, by which God is present in every created thing, and therefore in the human nature of our Lord. Secondly, our Lord Himself was God the Son. In Him the divine nature and the human nature were united in the unity of one person; therefore because of this union the divine nature was present to His humanity in a most special way. Now where the divine nature is there are all Three Divine Persons, Who are one God. Therefore by reason of the Incarnation itself, the Father and the Holy Ghost were most intimately present to our Lord as Man.* Thirdly we have spoken above of the special way in which God is present to the souls of the blessed, and to the angels in Heaven, by reason of the beatific vision, and the life of glory. In this way, also, but in a far higher degree, the Divinity was present to the human soul of our Lord. For, from the first moment of the Incarnation our Lord's human soul possessed in the highest degree that supernatural divine life of grace, and not in that first imperfect stage of it which we have when our souls are in the state of grace, but in its full and perfect development in the face to face vision of God. This was due to God the Son, that when He deigned to take a human nature, that human nature should have all the holiness, the sanctity, the supernatural perfection of which a human soul is capable. If then our souls in the state of grace are spiritual temples of God; if the angels and the souls of the blessed in heaven are still more perfect temples, then the human soul of our Lord, even when He was on earth, was the most perfect possible temple in which God received from the God-man, Jesus Christ, praise and worship and love of infinite value.

Thus our Lord as God and Man was never separated from His Father. And so He could say of Himself at the last supper : " Believe you not that I am in the Father and the Father in me . . . The Father Who abideth in Me He doth the works." (Jo. 24, 10). And a little later foretelling that during His passion the apostles would be scattered and would leave Him alone, He added, 'And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.' (Jo. 16, 32). Yet, it is also true as we have said that up to the time of the Ascension, in his human nature, as man, He dwelt on earth, not in Heaven; His humanity was not everywhere but only on earth. And so during His public life, and especially at the last supper, He so often spoke of His going to the Father. "I am come forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and I go to the Father." (Jo. 16, 28). Again; "Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go to Him that sent me." (Jo. 7, 23). At the Ascension, He went as He had said.

Whither did He go? Let us accompany the apostles to the Mount of Olives on that first Ascension Thursday, and see our Lord ascending. As He raised His hands in blessing over them, He departed from them, He was raised, up, and a cloud received Him from their sight. He was raised up, He ascended by His own power: first by His divine power as God: secondly as St. Thomas explains, by the power of ascending which belongs to His glorified body. For the body in the state of glory which follows the resurrection is so perfectly obedient to the glorified soul, that it will instantly be where the soul wills it to be. And the cloud which received Him from their sight was a sign of the divine glory into which as Man He entered, just as in the time of the old Testament the glory of God was signified to the people of Israel by the cloud which appeared over the tabernacle.

Dare we try to follow Him in thought beyond that cloud, to ask where is the glorious abode of heaven to which he has ascended? Our faith, as expressed in the Creed and in the Gospel, tells us that He ascended into heaven, and that undoubtedly means that He ascended into or above the material visible heavens that we see above the earth. (Suarez de Mysteriis. D.57. s.1). But where in heaven does He dwell? Perhaps God has not revealed this, to us. "We believe that He ascended into heaven," says St. Augustine (De fide et Symbolo, c.6); "but where and how the Lord's body is in heaven, it is unnecessary curiosity to inquire. For it does not belong to our weakness to discuss the secrets of heaven, but it belongs to our faith to "think noble and sublime things of the dignity of the Lord's body." There is indeed a text of St. Paul, in which he says of our Lord; "He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens that he might fill all things." (Eph. 4, 10). But the words "above all the heavens" are explained by commentators as meaning that our Lord in His human nature was raised in dignity and glory high above every creature so that no created thing can sufficiently express the greatness and sublimity of that dignity and glory. (Comely). However, great

**Though, of course, the human nature was hypostatically united only to the Second Person; it was the human nature of God the Son only, not of the Father, or the Holy Ghost. For only God the Son became man.*

theologians like St. Anselm, St. Thomas, and Suarez have been in them also a proof that He ascended above the highest of the material visible heavens, this ascent to the highest place being a sign and fitting accompaniment of His supreme dignity. "He ascended," says St. Anselm,, "not only, above all material heavens, but above all the orders of heavenly spirits, surpassing all creatures, both in place and dignity." We need have no difficulty .in accepting their opinion, though their ideas about the material heavens differed from those we have learned from modern astronomers. For however vast is this material universe of stars and planets and nebulae of which astronomy tells us, it is not infinite. However, unimaginably distant from our earth are the furthest of those heavenly bodies, yet there is a limit beyond which there are no more of them. We may believe that the glorified body of our ascending Lord passed beyond that limit. But there we must pause. To picture to ourselves the mode of presence of our Lord's glorious body beyond that limit, where as yet and until the final resurrection on the last day, there are no bodies but those of our Lord and our Blessed Lady; to picture to ourselves also the mode of presence of the angels, and of the blessed souls now in heaven, not yet, reunited to their bodies, that surpasses our power. More profitable to us would it be to read those passages of the Apocalypse in which we are given, in a way adapted to our feeble human minds, some glimpses of that heavenly city, that abode of bliss in which our Lord dwells, with our Lady and with the angels and saints, that city of which the glory of God is the temple, and our Lord, the Lamb of God, is the lamp. "And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb. And the city hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." (Apoc. 21, 22). And of the happiness of those who dwell therein he tells us: "They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall rule them and shall lead them to the fountain of the waters of life, and God shall take away all tears from their eyes." (Apoc. 7, 16). That is the holy city, the new Jerusalem, "the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people, and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more for the former things are passed away'." (21, 3, 4).

(4) It remains to consider the reasons for the Ascension and its meaning for us. And first we may consider the reasons, on our Lord's side, for which it was becoming that He should ascend into Heaven. After the resurrection, our Lord's human life was a glorified life. His human soul was flooded with the full joy of the beatific vision. His body was a glorified body, free from even the possibility of suffering or death, radiant in beauty and glory, freed from all dependence on or need of food and sleep and other such natural necessities of the body: freed also from those restrictions in regard to place and distance and movement, to which a body in its natural state is subject. Now this earth, as we know it, is not the proper or suitable dwelling-place for such a life of glory. We see all things here below subject to change and decay and corruption. Some things are coming into being, others perishing; plants grow, and wither; animals and men are born and die. It is not the dwelling-place of that unchangeable, everlasting life of glory in the vision of God. And so, says St. Thomas, it was not suitable that Christ after His resurrection should 'remain on earth, but that He should ascend into heaven. Not, adds the saint that anything was added by the Ascension, to the essential glory and happiness of our Lord's human nature; that He had entered on fully by His resurrection, but only that He should enter into the region which is the suitable dwelling-place of that life of glory.

From this consideration we may learn at once the first great lesson which the Ascension teaches in regard to ourselves. For us also this earth, is not and cannot be a permanent abode; it is a place of preparation and trial, not the goal; we have not here a lasting city but seek one that is to come. For we also are destined to that life of glory in body and soul. God created us, as the Catechism tells us, to know, love, and serve God here on earth, and to see and enjoy Him for ever in heaven, to see and enjoy Him in that everlasting life,, that, eternal life of the beatific vision. We shall receive that reward if we so love and serve God as to preserve to the end that life of sanctifying grace, which we received in our baptism, by which we became children of God and heirs to the kingdom of heaven, and which we can lose only by mortal sin. Yet if we have had the misfortune to lose it, we can by God's mercy and through the merits of our Lord, recover it by sincere repentance, and by going to confession. Clearly then the one important thing for ourselves and for those we love, our relatives, our friends, our countrymen, all men, is, that we should so live, so serve God as to gain that eternal life, to save our souls. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth : where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where

thy treasure is there is thy heart also." (Matt. 6, 19). These are the words of our Lord, and St. Paul echoes them. "Therefore if you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear Who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3, 1-4).

This is then a first advantage to us of our Lord's Ascension, a first reason on our part why He should have ascended, that it helps us to detach the affections of our hearts from earthly things and fix them there where our true treasure is. But, some one may say, would not a continuation of our Lord's visible bodily presence here on earth, so that we could see and hear Him, be a great advantage to us? A moment's reflection will make us doubt this human reasoning and enter more fully into our Lord's designs. When our Lord was on earth there were many who saw Him with their eyes and heard Him with their ears to whom such knowledge was of no profit but rather a source of greater condemnation. Such were the unbelieving Jews who seeing His miracles did not believe in Him. Such, at least for a time, were those neighbours of His in Nazareth, who had seen Him grow up amongst them from childhood, and who refused to believe in Him when He revealed Himself as the Messias. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" they said, "Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude. . . . And they were scandalized in His regard." (Matt. 13, 55). It is not such knowledge according to the flesh that is profitable to us, but to know Him by faith, by which, we believe that He is the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour. So it was when St. Peter declared his faith saying : "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God," that our Lord declared him blessed or happy; saying to him; "blessed art thou Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee but my Father who is in heaven." Now this faith we have by His grace, and we have it all the more purely that we do not see Him with our bodily eyes. For faith is "the evidence of things which appear not" (Hebw. 11, 1); and our Lord Himself declared those blessed "that have not seen and have believed." (Jo. 20, 29). And that faith is also the foundation of our hope, by which we hope to see Him with the Father, and the Holy Ghost in heaven. Let us then pray that we may always be amongst those who, as St. Peter writes, "by the power of God are kept by faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein you shall greatly rejoice, if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers 'temptations. That the trial of your faith (much more precious than gold which is tried by fire) may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom not having seen you love: in whom also though you see Him not you believe, and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1, 5-9).

Furthermore, though his visible presence is withdrawn from us, He is always present to us in His divine nature, as we have 'explained above; both by that natural presence by which God is present everywhere, and by the supernatural presence by which the blessed Trinity is present in our souls by grace. Yet more wonderful, even in His humanity He remains present with us in the blessed Eucharist, so that we can pray to Him in the tabernacle, and receive Him in holy communion. But there also He can only be seen by faith. See therefore the wonders of our Lord's wisdom and love : He has departed from us inasmuch as it was for our good that He should go, and yet has remained with us in the ways that are most profitable to us..

There is another reason on our part why our Lord should have ascended. It strengthens our hope. At the last supper when the time of His departure was at hand, He said to His apostles : "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you also may be." (Jo. 14, 1-4). When will He come again? For each of us at death if we die in grace. He will receive our souls, and will take them with Him, after they have been cleansed from the last stains in purgatory, to the mansions of heaven. But He will come publicly and in glory on the Day of Judgment, when the resurrection of our bodies will take place, and all His faithful servants, all those who have died in His grace will ascend with Him body and soul into heaven.

But what mean the words, "I will prepare a place for you." Do they not seem to mean that it was for our sakes He ascended, and that His ascension is in some way a cause of our future ascension? Nor would this be surprising, since it was for our sakes, "for us men and for our salvation" that He descended from heaven, and became man, becoming a sharer in our humanity, in order to raise us, by grace here and in glory hereafter, to a share in His own divine life and

happiness. This does not mean that by His ascension He merited for us the right to enter heaven. No; it was by His passion and death that He merited for us all grace and glory of soul and body. But it was a cause of our ascension in other ways, which we may (in part at least) explain thus. The life of sanctifying grace which He merited for us is only communicated to us inasmuch as we become members of His mystical body, His kingdom. We so become members, since the coming of our Lord and the preaching of the gospel, by baptism (by baptism at least of desire, or of blood, in the case of those who through no fault of their own cannot receive the sacrament). By it God, "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we- have redemption through His blood, remission of sins." (Col. 1, 13). That baptism is a new spiritual birth in which, being "born again of water and the Holy Ghost" (Jo.' 3, 5) we enter on the new supernatural life of grace, becoming adopted children of God, and heirs to the. happiness of heaven. But it is only as members of our Lord's mystical body, in Him and through Him that we receive that life and that adoption of sons. It is only as co-heirs of Christ, as members of His body, admitted to some share in the heirship of the Head, that we are heirs of heaven. And as the life of grace in us depends on Him, so also our resurrection and our ascension depend on His. Because He, the Head, rose glorious and immortal from the dead, triumphing over death as our head and our redeemer, and entered, soul and body into the glory of heaven, so also shall we in our time, if we have persevered until death in the state of grace, living members of His mystical body. We may apply to the Ascension, what Father Prat, explaining the doctrine of St. Paul, writes of the Resurrection : "As soon as we are grafted into Christ by baptism, we begin to live His life, to participate in His privileges and His destinies, as a branch when grafted on to the trunk draws from it nutrition and sap. From that time on we acquire a right to a glorious resurrection. God owes it to Himself to raise us from the dead as members and an integral part of Christ. It is not merely a seemly act; it is a necessity in the existing providence of God, and an evident corollary of God's plan of redemption." (Theology of St. Paul, vol. 1, p. 135). In this way therefore His resurrection is a cause of ours, and His ascension is a cause of ours; where He our Head has gone, the members must follow; He ascended to prepare a way for us.

In yet another way his ascension is the cause of ours. He has entered heaven as our great high-priest, who offered Himself for us on Calvary in the great sacrifice of our redemption, and Who has now entered the heavenly temple, the holy of holies not made with hands, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us. (Hebr. H, 24), always living to make intercession for us. (Hebr. 7, 25). His very presence in 'Heaven is an intercession. "For," says St. Thomas, "His presentation of Himself in the human nature which He carried into heaven is a certain kind of intercession for us, inasmuch as God having so exalted human nature in Christ, has mercy also on those for whom the Son of God assumed human nature." (3 g 67, a 6.).

Finally "ascending on high, He gave gifts to men." (Eph. 4. 11). He has left us His church, and in it His sacraments. He placed in His church apostles and pastors, and their successors the Pope and the bishops, with the priests whom they call to some share in their ministry. That they might be able to do that work, He promised that. He would be with them "all ages even to the end of the world," "(Matt. 28, 18), by His divine power and help. And He sent upon them, as He had promised at the last supper, the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, to strengthen and enlighten them for their work of teaching and witnessing to Him and His doctrine, and building up his kingdom. Some measure of that special gift of the Holy Ghost is given to us all by the sacrament of confirmation, by which we are made strong and perfect Christians, soldiers of Christ, strengthened to profess boldly and courageously our faith in Christ, and so, in our measure and degree, bear witness to Him. But this is not the place to speak further of that great gift. We may therefore have a firm hope of one day entering heaven, where our Head and King is gone before us : a hope founded not on any strength of our own but on God's promises, His mercy, and His power. and on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ. But this hope must include the intention of serving God and keeping His law, by the aid of His grace., or if we, be in sin of repenting, by the aid of the same grace, and seeking pardon: for without this it would be presumption not hope. And that hope, notwithstanding our own weakness, can be so firm, that St. Paul does not hesitate to say, that by the Ascension of our Lord, God has already "made us sit together in the heavenly places" with Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ"; Who, being rich in mercy "for the exceeding Charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved). And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit

together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus. That He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace in His bounty towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves for it is the gift of God. . . . For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 1 and 2).
