THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

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BY

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etc.

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PREFACE

WHEN the Portuguese traders, following the trail of the great explorer, Vasco da Gama, settled on the south coast of China, they built a massive Cathedral on a hill-crest overlooking the harbour. But a violent typhoon proved too severe, and three centuries ago the great building fell—all except the front wall. That ponderous façade has stood as an enduring monument, while high on its triangular top, clean cut against the sky, and defying rain, lightning and typhoon, is a great bronze cross. When Sir John Bowring, then governor of Hong Kong, visited Macao in 1825, he was so impressed by the scene that he wrote the famous hymn beginning:

"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

The builders of that ancient cathedral are forgotten, but the cross they reared in memory of the Crucified remains. China has seen stupendous changes, old institutions have crumbled and dynasties disappeared, but the Cross still stands. "A great ruined wall on a misty hill-top; birds nestling on its hideous gargoyles; the sea and the mountains and the sky of China seen through its gaping doors and windows; and over all the Cross,

changing desolation to majesty." So has it been in all lands and in all ages.

The missionary among Moslems (to whom the Cross of Christ is a stumbling-block and the atonement foolishness) is driven daily to deeper meditation on this mystery of redemption and to a stronger conviction that here is the very heart of our message and our mission. The secret of the missionary passion.

If the Cross of Christ is anything to the mind, it is surely everything—the most profound reality and the sublimest mystery. One comes to realize that literally all the wealth and glory of the gospel centres here. The Cross is the pivot as well as the centre of New Testament thought. It is the exclusive mark of the Christian faith, the symbol of Christianity and its cynosure.

The more unbelievers deny its crucial character, the more do believers find in it the key to the mysteries of sin and suffering. We rediscover the apostolic emphasis on the Cross when we read the gospel with Moslems. We find that although the offence of the Cross remains, its magnetic power is irresistible.

The following chapters are the result of meditation on the passion of our Lord and His Death on the Cross in the midst of men who deny the historicity of the crucifixion and the necessity of the atonement. But the Moslem is not alone in his denial. The message of the Cross has always been an outrage and a scandal, a superfluity or foolishness to the worldly-wise. Yet it is Christ on the Cross who will finally draw all men to Himself. Under the shadow of the Cross is rest and peace. The Glory

of the Cross is as real as its Shame; and to meditate on the shame is to see the glory. The Cross interprets sin and righteousness and love. It is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Its shadow is the longest shadow in the world, because it fell even on the Resurrection morning. "He showed them His hands and His side." Did He ever show them to you? Then were the disciples glad when they saw the scars of the Risen Lord. "Far be it from me to glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world."

"There was a knight of Bethlehem,
His wealth was tears and sorrows;
His men-at-arms were little lambs;
His trumpeters were sparrows.
His castle was a wooden cross
On which He hung on high;
His helmet was a crown of thorns
Whose crest did touch the sky."

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"*As there is only One God so there can be only one Gospel. If God has really done something in Christ on which the salvation of the world depends, and if He has made it known, then it is a Christian duty to be intolerant of everything which ignores, denies, or explains it away. The man who perverts it is the worst enemy of God and men; and it is not bad temper or narrow-mindedness in St. Paul which explains this vehement language (Gal. i. 8), it is the jealousy of God which has kindled in a soul redeemed by the death of Christ a corresponding jealousy for the Saviour. Intolerance like this is an essential element in the true religion. Intolerance in this sense has its counterpart in comprehension; it is when we have the only gospel, and not till then, that we have the gospel for all*." — JAMES DENNEY in *The Death of Christ.*

CHAPTER I

" FIRST OF ALL . . . CHRIST DIED "

"I DELIVERED unto you first of all," says St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthian Church, "that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." The attentive reader will note from the context (as Dr. Moffatt does most emphatically in his translation) that this is the heart of Paul's message, the centre of his teaching, his one and only gospel. In the translation mentioned, the word *gospel* is repeated four times in introducing the statement of what the good news really is. Paul says he received it not primarily and only from members of the primitive Church, but by direct revelation (Gal. i. 15-19). That Church, therefore, as well as Paul himself, believed that the first and fundamental truth of Christianity was the death of Christ for our sins; and Paul must have received and taught this truth within seven years—according to other chronologies, within even a shorter period—after the death of Jesus.

The Greek word translated "first of all" can also be rendered "before all," or at the forefront of all truth. The same phrase is used in the Septuagint where Jacob places the two maid-servants and their children in the first rank (Gen. xxxiii. 2) and where David promises a high reward (2 Sam. v. 8) to "whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first."

The death of Christ on the Cross is to Paul of the

first importance and the weightiest article of his faith. It is fundamental. It is the keystone of the arch, the cornerstone of the temple of truth. That this is true is evident from the place the death of Christ occupies in the Scriptures, in the apostolic message, in the liturgies of the two sacraments as administered by all branches of the Church, and in the earliest as well as the latest Christian hymnody. The evidence is cumulative and overwhelming. The Cross is not only the universal symbol of Christianity, it is its universal and unmistakable message. It is the very heart of the gospel—the word quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword; for nothing convicts of sin like the Cross. *There* we can see "our secret sins in the light of His countenance" whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Listen to Bishop Lancelot Andrewes as he pours out his heart in private devotion before the Cross:

"Thou who didst deign that Thy glorious head should be wounded:
Forgive thereby whatsoever by the senses of my head I have sinned;
That Thy holy hands should be pierced:
Forgive thereby whatever I have done amiss
By unlawful touch, or unlawful act;
That Thy precious side should be opened:
Forgive thereby whatever I have offended
By lawless thoughts in the ardour of passion;
That Thy blessed feet should be riven:
Forgive thereby whatever I have done
By the means of feet swift to evil;
That Thy whole body should be extended:
Forgive thereby whatever iniquity I have committed
By the help of any of my members.
And I too, O Lord, am wounded in soul;
Behold the multitude, the length, the breadth, the depth of my wounds;
And by Thine heal mine."

The Cross of Christ is the searchlight of God. It reveals God's love and man's sin; God's power and man's helplessness, God's holiness and man's pollution. As the altar and propitiation are "first of all" in the Old Testament, so the Cross and the Atonement are "first of all" in the New. There is a straight line from every point in the circumference of a circle to the centre. So the Old Testament and the New Testament doctrine of salvation in all its wide circumference and with all it includes of a new heart and a new society, and a new heaven and a new earth, leads back in a straight line to the centre of all—The Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world.

Consider the place the story of the Crucifixion occupies in the New Testament. It is mentioned in' every book save in three short epistles, Philemon and the Second and Third of John. The synoptic gospels devote more space proportionately to it than to any other aspect of Christ's life or teaching. Matthew (not to speak of the many passages where Christ's death is foretold) relates the tragedy in two long chapters of one hundred and forty-one verses. Mark gives one hundred and nineteen verses to the story; two chapters and they are the longest out of sixteen. Luke also devotes two long chapters to describe the arrest and crucifixion. Nearly one half of John's Gospel deals with passion week.

In the Book of Acts all the preaching centres in the death and resurrection of our Lord. This is the "Good News." "He showed Himself alive after His passion" (i. 3). The climax of Peter's sermon at Pentecost was Jesus "delivered up by the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God,"

crucified and slain "by the hand of lawless men." "This Jesus whom ye crucified God hath made both Lord and Christ" (ii. 36). Again, in the temple, Peter has the same message: "Ye asked for a murderer . . . and killed the Prince of Life." "All the prophets," Peter claims, "foreshadowed that Christ would suffer," but "God raised up His servant and sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (iii. 18, 26). The next day he came back to the theme, "Jesus of Nazareth whom ye crucified" (iv. 10). In the first ritual prayer of the early Church (iv. 27) there is again reference to the passion and death of "Thy holy servant Jesus." The result of such a message is expressed in words that leave no doubt as to its content: "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us" (v. 28). But the apostles answered, "Jesus whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree . . . God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." Stephen's defence had for its peroration the death of Jesus; followed by his own swift martyrdom (vii. 51-54). Philip opened his mouth and, from Isaiah liii, he preached the death of Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch as the good tidings (viii. 35). Cornelius received the same message about One "whom they slew, hanging Him on a tree, whom God raised up the third day" (x. 40). Paul at Antioch tells of Jesus "who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried and on the third day rose again from the dead" (Acts xiii. 28, 29). At Thessalonica for three sabbaths Paul reasoned from the Old Testament Scriptures "that it behoved the Christ to suffer" and rise again (xvii. 13). At

Athens he preached the death and resurrection of Christ (xvii. 31); at Corinth he "determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He uses as synonyms for the gospel, "The word of the Cross" (1 Cor. i. 18) or "the word of Reconciliation" (2 Cor. v. 19). Festus describes Paul's message as being concerned about "one Jesus who was dead and whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts xxv. 19). In his defence before Festus, Paul says that he has no other message, "to small and great, and saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come, how that the Christ must suffer and how that He first, by the resurrection of the dead, should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles" (xxvi. 22, 23).

In the Epistles of Paul we are embarrassed by the wealth of evidence and the abundance of proof that his one message was the Cross and the Atonement. He had been preaching this good news for fifteen years before any of his New Testament epistles were written. We cannot discover any change of emphasis between the earliest and the latest epistles in this respect. It is the heart of his message to the Romans as to the Thessalonians. To the Galatian Church he mentions in his prologue that "Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins," and (after a few sentences) he bursts out with indignation: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you contravening the gospel which we preached let him be anathema." That Calvary and not Bethlehem is the focus of Paul's gospel is evident from all his epistles. The incarnation was in order that there might be an atonement. The Cross is supreme and crucial to God, to man, and

to the universe. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us all." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." "We preach Christ crucified . . . because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." "The Church of God (is) purchased by His blood." All Christians when they drink the Cup are "to proclaim the Lord's death till He come." "Far be it from me to glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world." Christ is "the Beloved in whom we have our redemption through His blood." This is the mystery of the ages, the manifold wisdom of God, and revealed to principalities and powers through the Church. Those who are "the enemies of *the Cross* of Christ," Paul tells us with tears, glory in their shame and their end is perdition. In all things Christ must have the pre-eminence because He is our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins (Col. i. 18) through the blood of His Cross. The Cross is the centre of the universe and of history. It will yet witness the reconciliation of all things upon the earth or things in the heavens through His blood (Col. i. 20).

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the death of Christ (Himself the priest, the victim and the altar) is so prominent that we need give no references. He is the great high priest "once at the end of the ages manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The blood of Jesus is the blood of the covenant. Jesus is the author and the finisher of our faith because He endured the Cross. His blood of sprinkling speaketh better than that of Abel—it is

the blood of an eternal covenant, shed by the great shepherd of the sheep.

Peter's epistles echo his earliest preaching and are full of references to the sufferings of Christ "who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree . . . by whose stripes we were healed" (1 Pet. ii. 24). Finally, in John's epistle and in the Revelation, the Cross is still supreme. Through it Jesus Christ is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." "He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins by his blood . . . be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever, Amen." "Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him."

The two sacraments that are accepted by the Eastern and Western Churches both have direct reference to the death of Christ for our sins. This is evident not only from the words of their institution in the New Testament but from the many liturgies used in their administration. Here, again, we may say that "first of all" they teach Christ's atoning death. Baptism is the rite of initiation into the Christian Church. The New Testament nowhere speaks of unbaptized Christians, and these primitive believers knew what Paul meant when he said that all those "who were baptized were baptized into His death." The remission of sins and baptism were closely associated in their minds with the water and the blood that flowed from Christ's riven side. Both sacraments were intended to convey the message of the gospel in unmistakable symbolism. As long as they hold their place in the

Church they are, in spite of all that has been added by ritual and superstition, a witness to the saving significance of Christ's death, its vicarious nature, its necessity, and its crucial character. The early Church "continued steadfast in the breaking of the bread" because by it they desired to proclaim Christ's death and the forgiveness of sins through His blood. It is the communion of His body and blood (1 Cor. x. i6), the sharing of His spirit (1 Cor. xiii. 13), the remission of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28), the blotting out of debts (Col. ii. 14.), the cleansing of all stains (Heb. ix. 14). This made the breaking of bread so precious to the early Church and to all the Churches for nineteen centuries.

When we turn from liturgy to hymnology we have the same testimony. In the earliest Latin and Greek hymns, in those of the Coptic and Armenian Churches, as well as in those of the Churches of the Reformation, the Cross is "first of all," and the passion of our Lord the inspiration. It is in the hymns of the Church that we find a unity and a depth of theology that is sometimes absent even in the creeds.

"Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." The Lamb is in the midst of the throne. Every created thing joins in the Hallelujah Chorus.

Little children in many lands and languages sing the very heart of the gospel:—

"Jesus loves me, He who died
Heaven's gate to open wide.
He will wash away my sin,
Let His little child come in."

It is the same message that the great mystic, St. Bernard, put in glorious lines:

"Propter mortem quam tulisti
Quando pro me defecisti
Cordis mei cor dilectum
In te meum fer affectum."

What a large proportion of the hymns of the Church are passion hymns or an interpretation of the atonement made on the Cross! Who can forget the rendering into so many languages of "*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*" or the pathos of its melody as sung by German Christians? The *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* belongs not to the Latin Church but to all true believers who have stood beside Mary at the Cross. "Just as I am without one plea," "When I survey the wondrous Cross," "There is a fountain filled with blood," "Rock of ages cleft for me,"—and many others familiar to us all, make Christ's death the great theme. "Jesus paid it all," "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

If Jesus of Nazareth were merely man and not, as He is, the Son of God and our Saviour, His tragic death would still be the greatest event in human history. The wealth of detail given in the contemporaneous records of His suffering and crucifixion; the dreadful accompaniments in the realm of nature; the seven words from the Cross;

the effect on those who saw it and on all ages and all nations,—all these clearly indicate its universal and cosmic import. We must not shift the emphasis. The supreme event in the life of Jesus, and to Jesus Himself, was His death on the Cross for sin. The words of James Denney are none too strong: "If the atonement, quite apart from precise definitions of it, is *anything* to the mind it is *everything*. It is the most profound of all truths and the most creative. It determines more than anything else our conception of God, of man, of history, and even of nature. It determines them, for we must bring them all in some way into accord with it. It is the inspiration of all thought, the key in the last resort to all suffering. The Atonement is a reality of such a sort that it can make no compromise. For the modern mind, therefore, as for the ancient, the attraction and the repulsion of Christianity are concentrated in the same point. The Cross of Christ is man's only glory or it is his final stumbling-block."

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"The Christian religion is a matter of living, not of mere intellectual knowledge; and 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet it is not without its value to have the truth of the concomitant circumstances demonstrated. One must remember that Christianity did not originate in a lie, and that we can and ought to demonstrate this, as well as believe it. The account which it gives of its own origin is susceptible of being tested on the principles of historical study, and through the progress of discovery the truth of that account can be, and has been, in great part proved. There is, however, more to do. The evidence is there if we look for it." — SIR WILLIAM M. RAMSEY in *Recent Discovery and the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*.

CHAPTER II

"WE DID NOT FOLLOW CUNNINGLY DEVISED FABLES"

THOSE who believe the record God gave of His Son in the Gospels do not doubt the facts there related. They have the witness of the Spirit that the record is true. They know with Peter that all the incidents given of the passion and death of our Lord and His glorious resurrection are not "cunningly devised fables." Peter was an eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ, and Mark was His disciple. John tells of what he heard and saw and witnessed and touched with his own hands (1 John i. 1). Matthew was one of the twelve. Luke tells us how carefully he sought out eye-witnesses for his account "that we might know the solid truth."

In an age of doubt and historical criticism, however, we must face those who deny the gospel records, both their authenticity and their reliability. Some tell us Jesus Christ is a myth and the incidents of His life story are literally "cunningly devised fables" which have their origin in the earlier and rival superstitions of Rome and Greece and Egypt. The early Gnostics denied the actual death of Christ for dogmatic reasons. The Koran categorically states that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified: "God hath stamped on them (the Jews) their unbelief for their saying, Verily we have killed the

Messiah Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Apostle of God; but they did not kill him, they did not crucify him but a similitude was made for them" (iv. 156). Basing their unbelief on this passage and its interpretation by Moslem theologians and commentators, orthodox Islam has always denied the historicity of the crucifixion of Jesus. The common belief is that it was Judas Iscariot who suffered the penalty and that God delivered Jesus from this cruel death by casting a spell over His persecutors. There are many differences of interpretation but all Moslems agree that Jesus did not die on the Cross. He did not die for our sins. He never arose from the dead. His exit from this world to the next was not by way of the Cross.

The theory of Strauss and other rationalists that Jesus' body was taken from the Cross before actual death took place and that He revived from the spices in the tomb was eagerly adopted by the modern sect of Ahmadiyas in the Punjaub. Their leader, Ghulam Ahmed of Qadian, found the same theory of a resuscitated Jesus the Nazarene, who travels to India and becomes a teacher there, in a book called "The Unknown Life of Christ," by the Russian novelist Nonovitch. Later he discovered the tomb of Jesus in Kashmir and proclaimed himself the new Messiah! By eager and clever propaganda this sect has filled the whole Moslem world with this new gospel of an Anti-Christ. The Irish novelist, George Moore, in "The Brook Kerith," imagines that Jesus did not really die on the Cross but only swooned—to recover and carry on a wider ministry of social service. So these theorists at home, and millions of the followers of

Mohammed abroad, the latter indeed on the authority of Allah's revelation, deny that which we believe is primal and supreme in our message. How shall we be prepared to give them an answer for the faith and the hope that is in us? We were not eye-witnesses.

"We did not see Thee lifted high
Amid that wild and savage crew,
Nor heard Thy meek imploring cry,
Forgive, they know not what they do:
Yet we believe the deed was done
Which shook the earth and veiled the sun."

Why do we believe it? Faith must rest on evidence; and the evidence is overwhelming. It will strengthen our faith to study this fact.

To begin with, the death of Jesus on the Cross was not unexpected but had been clearly foretold in Jewish prophecy and the fate of such "a righteous man" hinted by Plato. The suffering servant of Jehovah in Isaiah, the great Messianic psalm portraying the death of Jesus, the details of Christ's betrayal and of His death in other prophecies—all these are commonplaces to the student of the Scriptures. The great coming event had cast its shadow long before. "Behold the Lamb of God," said John the Baptist; and in these words he sums up all the significance of the Old Testament teaching that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin and that the Lamb of God must be slain for the sin of the world. The key to the Old Testament is lost when we deny that "Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Nay, the key is lost to the mystery of Blood-sacrifices as a propitiation for human sin among all races and in every age.

"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; by His stripes we are healed." Those words were written only a little earlier than the time of Plato, 429 B.C. In his *Politia* (Vol. IV., p. 74) he tells us of such a sacrificial redeemer as the world needs to restore righteousness: "The perfectly righteous man, who without doing any wrong may assume the appearance of the grossest injustice; yea, who shall be scourged, fettered, tortured, deprived of his eye-sight, and after having endured all possible sufferings, fastened to a post, must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness."[1] It is immaterial to ask whence Plato got his idea of a just man suffering for the unjust to bring them back to God. The idea is there, almost as distinct as in Isaiah's divine message. No one could live a perfectly righteous life without being a man of sorrows, despised, rejected, crucified.

The death on the Cross was not an unexpected tragedy to Jesus Himself. It was not a disappointment and an eclipse of His hopes. On the contrary He saw that it was inevitable and repeatedly announced the certainty of the dread event. From the outset of His ministry He saw the approaching shadow. At His baptism, He who knew no sin, numbered Himself with the transgressors. He defined discipleship at the outset as cross-bearing. After the confession of His Messiahship and "from that time, Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go up to Jerusalem and be killed." "The Son of Man is delivered up into the hands of men and they shall kill Him, and when He is killed, after three days He shall rise again." That which

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[1 See also, "What they will say is this, that such being his disposition the just man will have to endure the lash, the rack, chains, the branding iron in his eyes, and finally, after every extremity of suffering, he will be crucified, …". Plato's Republic II discusses the problem of the *truly* just (or righteous) man versus the *apparently* just man. In this non-ideal world a *truly* just man could experience extreme sufferings while a *seemingly* just man may experience many blessings, adulation, and occupy a high place of authority. In a sinful world, the righteous often suffer and the evil prosper. The quotation is from **The Collected Dialogues of Plato**, Edited by E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 14th printing, Republic II, 361e, p. 609.

characterised the last months of our Lord's life, according to the synoptic gospels, was a deliberate and thrice repeated attempt to teach His dull disciples the certainty and the significance of His approaching violent death.

The details of the crucifixion recorded by those who were, in some cases, eye-witnesses, leave no doubt of the actual death. They certify to it in the most solemn way as if to anticipate any future unbelief of the fact. "Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up the ghost . . . and when the centurion who stood over against Him saw that He so gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God " (Mark xv. 37). John relates how "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and straightway there came out blood and water." Then he adds, "He that hath seen hath borne witness and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he saith true that ye also may believe." These are not the words of one who is credulous or self-deceived. The centurion officially reported the fact and confirmed Jesus' death to Pilate (Mark xv. 44). Joseph of Arimathea laid the dead Christ in the tomb and there Mary Magdalene and Mary, His own mother, saw Him, dead (Mark xv. 47).

Not a single writer in the New Testament but tells of the actual death of Jesus; not a single voice is heard in all the record of the Book of Acts raising any doubt that Jesus was crucified. Not until the lapse of centuries had men the audacity to doubt this historic fact and teach their cunningly devised fables. After relentless criticism of the documents, a scholar such as Rabbi Joseph Klausner, in his recent book on Jesus of Nazareth, concludes that the

synoptic gospels are reliable records and that Jesus lived and died as they relate.

Some years ago Samuel E. Stokes collected the evidence of Jewish and Pagan writers to the authenticity of the Christian records and possibly there are those who will give ear to Pliny, Tacitus, Lucian, and Josephus, or even to Celsus, because they are all outsiders, in corroboration of the gospel which they doubt. Tacitus in recording the burning of Rome (A.D. 64), and of how Nero tried to turn suspicion from himself, says: "So to stifle the report, Nero put in his own place as culprits, and punished with every refinement of cruelty, the men whom the common people hated for their secret crimes. They called them Christians. Christ from whom the name was given, had been put to death in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate, and the pestilent superstition checked for a while. Afterwards it began to break out afresh not only in Judea, where the mischief first arose, but also in Rome, where all sorts of murder and filthy shame meet together and become fashionable. In the first place, then, some were seized and made to confess, then on their information a vast multitude were convicted, not so much of arson as of hatred of the human race. And they were not only put to death, but put to death with insults, in that they were dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish by the worrying of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and when the daylight failed, to be burnt for use as lights by night" ("Annales" xv. 44).

Lucian of Samosata (born A.D. 100), in his "The Death of Peregrinus," states: "The Christians

still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine because He introduced into the world this new religion. . . . These wretched people have persuaded themselves that they are absolutely deathless, and will live for ever, for which reason they think slightly of death, and many willingly surrender themselves. And then their first lawgiver has persuaded them that they are all brothers one of another, when once they have transgressed and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worshipped that crucified Sophist of theirs, and live according to His laws."

The two famous passages in the "Antiquities" of Josephus are well known and are probably genuine. In any case the whole history of Josephus corroborates the historical setting of the gospel. "Herod the great, Archelaus his son, Herod Antipas, Herodias, her daughter Salome, John the Baptist, Annas (Ananus), Caiaphas (Caiphas), Pontius Pilate, Felix, and his Jewish wife, Drusilla, Porcius Festus, Herod Agrippa, Bernice, Pharisees and Sadducees, all appear in the history of Josephus, and appear in the same relations to each other as we find them holding in the narrative of the New Testament."

Celsus, the Epicurean, was one of the most bitter opponents of Christianity, about A.D. 170. In his book entitled "The True Discourse," as quoted by Origen in his reply, Celsus "scoffingly alludes to the agony of Christ, and quotes him as saying: 'Oh Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me'; He calls Christ 'the crucified Jesus,' and speaks of those who slew Him as 'those who crucified your God.' He attacks the Christian

belief that Christ 'endured these sufferings for the benefit of mankind' and attempts to disprove the reality of the Resurrection of Christ. He refers to the angels who appeared at the tomb of Jesus and speaks of the angel rolling away the stone from the tomb. He tries to show the foolishness of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body and laughs at the Christians for saying, 'The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.'" This testimony to the death and resurrection of our Lord from an enemy of the gospel is very significant ("The Gospel According to the Jews and Pagans," by Samuel Stokes, p. 48).

We cannot help conclude that if there is evidence for any event in human history it is for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Corroborative testimony is also found in the institution of the Lord's Supper and in the observance of the Lord's Day. The breaking of the bread and the partaking of the cup go back to the night in which Jesus was betrayed. He Himself instituted this sacrament, and its universal observance by the whole Christian Church, in spite of the diversities in liturgies and in interpretations of the rite, is indirect but convincing proof of the death of Jesus. Such an unbroken tradition is a species of historic evidence that cannot be gainsaid. Just as we might use the celebration of the Muharram day tragedy in Islam as proof for the death of Hussain, the martyr of Kerbela, were historic documents absent.

Jesus said He was "Lord also of the sabbath," and proved it by the fact that after His death and rising again the Church immediately began to observe the first day of the week instead of the

Jewish seventh day; so the Lord's Day itself is proof of the Lord's death and resurrection. Every one of the great non-Christian religions has its distinctive symbol, the lotus bud, the swastika, the crescent, etc. The Cross is the symbol of Christianity. How did that which was a sign of degradation, shame, reproach, guilt, and the agony of helplessness, become the symbol of honour, valour, mercy and compassionate helpfulness? There is no explanation except through Him who hung on the Cross for us and redeemed us and it from the curse.

Finally, if there be any who still doubt the historicity of the central fact of the New Testament teaching, we have the witness of the catacombs and of the earliest Christian monuments. These stones with their symbolism and references to the Cross cry out that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

In the correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson we read that the latter on one occasion recalled some words spoken by Carlyle at their first interview: "Christ died on the tree: *that* built Dunscore Kirk yonder: *that* brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence."

What need have we of further evidence for faith? The credulity of unbelief could go to no greater length that in the theories it has advanced to deny the historicity of Christian teaching on the life and death of our Lord and His resurrection.

Jesus died and rose again according to the Scriptures. The prophets foretold His death. The apostles recorded it. All Scripture converges upon the Atonement. To a dying Saviour and a risen Lord bear all the Scriptures witness. The funda-

mental and omnipresent theme that is at the heart of the Bible message is the answer to the question, how shall a sinful man be righteous before God? And the answer is, through the atoning death of Christ. There is no other way. There is no other gospel. If this be false, our faith, that is our whole Christianity, is vain: because the only good news we have is that Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

"We stood not by the empty tomb
Where late Thy sacred body lay,
Nor sat within the upper room,
Nor met Thee in the open way;
But we believe the angels said,
Why seek the living with the dead?"

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"*By Thy sweat bloody and clotted! Thy soul in agony,*
Thy head crowned with thorns, bruised with staves,
Thine eyes a fountain of tears,
Thine ears full of insults,
Thy mouth moistened with vinegar and gall,
Thy face stained with spitting,
Thy neck bowed down with the burden of the Cross,
Thy back ploughed with the wheals and wounds of the scourge,
Thy pierced hands and feet,
Thy strong cry, Eli, Eli,
Thy heart pierced with the spear,
The water and blood thence flowing,
Thy body broken, Thy blood poured out
Lord forgive the iniquity of Thy servant
And cover all his sin."

LANCELOT ANDREWES.

CHAPTER III

"AND THEY BLINDFOLDED HIM"

(*Luke xxii. 64; Mark xiv. 65; Matt. xxvi. 68.*)

HISTORICALLY speaking, the passion of Christ is entirely in the past. He died for sin once and dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. But mystically the passion of Christ is ever present. Mystically it takes place in the core of humanity over and over again. We crucify Him afresh. Jesus Christ is constantly being betrayed, forsaken, denied, blindfolded, spat upon, scourged, mocked, and then crucified.

Every incident in the story of His suffering is typical. In a mystical sense we were all there when "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

"I was crucified with Christ." Horatius Bonar speaks truly for each one of us:

"'Twas I that shed the sacred blood,
I nailed Him to the tree;
I crucified the Christ of God,
I joined the mockery.

Of all that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude
I recognize my own.

Around the Cross the throng I see,
Mocking the Sufferer's groan;
Yet still my voice it seems to be
As if I mocked alone."

"And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and beat him. And they blindfolded him and asked him saying, Prophesy: who is he that struck thee?" "And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to buffet him and to say unto him, Prophesy. And the officers received him with blows of their hands."

The great painters have put on canvas every detail of the story of the Passion week save this. Yet the scene is so typical and so terribly tragic that one wonders why no artist's brush has made the attempt to portray its deep and lasting significance. It is in the courtyard of the palace of Caiaphas, very early before the morning dawn. Full moonlight floods the scene and the blaze of an open fire that has been kindled throws fitful lights and shadows across the court. The blindfolded Christ seated in the midst of a group filled with blind hatred. The servants of the Sanhedrin, the hirelings of the high priest; and all of them probably were Jews of Christ's own race. Some knew Him and had heard His words. They had witnessed His miracles. In the garden they shrank from His glance. Now they blindfold Him and mock Him. What darkness brooded over hearts that could do this or endure seeing it done! What insensibility to love and truth; what blindness to the beauty of holiness; what reprobate minds and seared consciences! And this they did to Jesus of Nazareth who in Jerusalem had opened the eyes of one born blind. They blindfolded Him. Was Malchus among them? Did Caiaphas take part? Did Peter see anything of it before he went out and wept bitterly? Afterwards he wrote of that terrible night when he stood

and warmed himself—but his soul shivered—by the fire:—

"Christ suffered . . . neither was guile found in his mouth . . . he was reviled and reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously . . . by whose stripes ye were healed." Yes, Peter must have seen it, at least from afar; the shame and agony of it smote his heart. The last look of Jesus before He was blindfolded was on Peter, who also had denied Him before these very servants.

However brief the record, we can read between the lines the cowardice, the cruelty, and the unreasonableness of their hatred toward the Saviour. Why did it occur to them to blindfold Jesus? Was it not because His eyes were filled with such a holy wonder at their unbelief, eyes full of compassion for their ignorance and yet flashing with a light that smote their consciences like a flame of fire. They could not bear to look Him in the face and so, as Mark says, when "some began to spit on him," others "covered his face and began to buffet him." Their cowardice was only matched by their hatred. They smote Him. They mocked Him. "And many other things spake they against him reviling him." And their hatred was unreasonable. They demanded evidence where no evidence was needed. They thought to degrade prophecy to the level of mind-reading and by blows inflicted on the helpless and blindfolded prisoner have Christ point out the individual guilt of their corporate blasphemy. "Who is he that struck thee? Prophesy." It was not an individual that smote Him, it was the race; it was humanity. "He was smitten of God and

afflicted and we hid as it were our faces from Him"—or, when we could not hide our faces we covered *His* face and blindfolded Him.

All the age-long cowardice of infidelity and unbelief is typified in this incident. Some men have always been afraid, and therefore unwilling, to look Christ in the face. Men try to escape Jesus in history by declaring that the story is a myth; or they refuse to look Him full in the face. How many popular histories and school text-books blindfold Jesus by an apologetic paragraph utterly inadequate to the subject.

Unbelief blindfolds the Bible by closing its covers, preventing its message from reaching childhood or abandoning it on the shelf, a "classic which every one talks about but no one reads." Men blindfold Christ in the pulpit or in the press, and then mock His prophetic office and Messianic glory. When infidelity and agnosticism have blindfolded the Saviour then they strike Him in the face. Voltaire, Nietzsche, Renan, Bebel, Paine, Ingersoll, and others, like them in mind and heart although not in notoriety, all agreed to first blindfold Jesus before they denied His deity; to hide His face before they smote His glory.

Theguir, the birthplace of Renan, is an old monastic town with an earnestly religious population. It stands on a hill overlooking the river Jaudy. On the quay, visible at once to every traveller, is a white Calvary in stone with life-sized figures and the words in three languages at the foot of the central cross: "Truly this was the Son of God." The Calvary, we are told, was erected as a protest against the honour conferred on Renan

when *his* statue was erected in the cathedral square of his birthplace.

It is painful to read the gospel record of this blindfolded Christ, but more of how men have blindfolded Him again and again for nineteen centuries and then mocked Him. What could be sadder than the words of Nietzsche and more blasphemous: "The gospel died on the cross," said he, "that which thenceforward was called gospel was the reverse of that gospel which Christ had lived. It was evil tidings, a dysangel." Although Nietzsche is at times very indulgent toward Christ and rarely hurls his invectives against "this founder of a little Jewish sect," he hates the very name of Christianity and of Paul as exponent of its gospel.

The hatred of unbelief is as evident to-day as it was in the judgment hall of Caiaphas. Men cannot leave the Christ alone. His face rivets attention. His eyes are a flame of fire. He draws or repels men; as He did then, so now.

"Is this the Face that thrills with awe
Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the Face without a flaw,
The Face that is the Face of Love?
Yea, this defaced, lifeless clod
Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
This Face, the Face of Jesus Christ."

The Old Testament saints longed to see God's glory in the face of His anointed. This was Moses' prayer and David's hope and Isaiah's longing. "How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" [Psalms 13:1] "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant." [Psalms 31:16] "Turn

not away the face of thine anointed." [Psalms 132:10] "Hide not thy face from me lest I become like them that go down into the pit." [Psalms 143:7] When Isaiah saw His glory and spoke of His suffering he foretold the tragedy of this awful day. "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." [Isaiah 50:6] "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised." [Isaiah 53:3] "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you." [Isaiah 59:2] "They blindfolded Him" [Luke 22:64]; thus the word perhaps is fulfilled that was spoken by Isaiah, "Who is blind but my servant or deaf as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is made perfect and blind as Jehovah's servant?" [Isaiah 42:19]

When we meditate on such words we begin to realize what it meant for Jesus to be blindfolded and so to experience on Himself and in Himself all the unreasonableness and blindness of wilful unbelief, toward God and His messengers. The incredulity of unbelief is not of yesterday. All down the centuries men have demanded proof from those who witnessed for God such as they demand for nothing else under heaven. Have faith in Christ:—Where are His miracles, what signs does He work? Why should we believe His word? When have His prophecies been fulfilled? "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" [Isaiah 53:1]

We turn our faces away from Christ or blindfold Him; and remain unconvinced and unconvicted. The servants of the high priest saw nothing. But Peter was smitten in his conscience by one glance.

He could repent because he did not blindfold Jesus. And so it has always been. As Jeremy Taylor wrote in his sermon on the Faith and Patience of the Saints:—

> "He died not by a single or a sudden death, but He was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; for He was massacred in Abel, saith St. Paulinus; He was tossed upon the waves of the sea in the person of Noah; it was He that went out of His country, when Abraham was called from Charran, and wandered from his native soil; He was offered up in Isaac, persecuted in Jacob, betrayed in Joseph, blinded in Samson, affronted in Moses, sawed in Isaiah, cast into the dungeon with Jeremiah; for all these were types of Christ suffering. And then His Passion continued after His resurrection. For it is He that suffers in all His members: it is He that endures 'the contradiction of all sinners'; it is He that is 'the Lord of life and is crucified again and put to open shame' in all the sufferings of His servants and sins of rebels and defiances of apostates and renegadoes and violence of tyrants and injustice of usurpers and persecutions of His church. It is He that is stoned in St. Stephen, flayed in the person of St. Bartholomew; He was roasted upon St. Lawrence's gridiron, exposed to lions in St. Ignatius, burnt in St. Polycarp, frozen in the lake where stood the forty martyrs of Cappadocia. The sacrament of Christ's death, said St. Hilary, is not to be accomplished but by suffering all the sorrows of humanity."

We need not be surprised, therefore, if men blindfold our Saviour, buffet Him or put Him to open shame in our day. Mohammed's mission, whatever else it may have been or done, was a blindfolding of Jesus, an eclipse of the Sun of Righteousness by the moon of Mecca.

Every new religion and philosophy that draws men away from the gospel can only succeed by blindfolding the Christ. Those who look into His eyes need no other light; those who have seen His face will follow no other leader. "If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish; in whom the

God of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should not dawn upon them. For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord and ourselves as your servants for Christ's sake. Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." [2 Corinthians 4:3-4]

Those who walk in the dark with blinded minds have often themselves put out the light by first blindfolding the Christ of God. Whatever the phrase "god of this world" may mean, it surely includes that power of the Evil One which prevents men from seeing the glory of our Saviour. That spirit of the times which includes such floating opinions, worldly maxims, clever speculations, impure impulses and aims at any time current as create an atmosphere of doubt and unbelief in which all faith is strangled. Blindness precedes unbelief and is the cause of it. The blindness is effected by covering up the gospel, by mystifying God's clear word, and by closing our eyes against the truth.

"For judgment," said Jesus, "came I into the world; that they that see not may see and that they that see may become blind."

Look again at the pitiful picture of the blind-folded Christ in the midst of the group of ruffians of the Sanhedrin. Gaze on that face, illumined by the early morning sun and by imprisoned divinity—bleeding, buffeted, blindfolded. "Look upon the face of thy Christ," said the Psalmist—and here we see that face as the true image of a suffering Saviour.

"Behold the Man!" Bound, exhausted, bruised, insulted, and yet silent with the silence of suffering love. "Prophesy, who is it that struck thee?" We must surely find the answer in our own consciences.

"Clear, Lord, the brooding night within,
And cleanse these hearts for Thine abode;
Unlock the spell of sin,
Crumble its giant load."

But Jesus suffered for us not only to redeem us from sin and its curse, He also "suffered leaving us an example that we should walk in His footsteps." In every incident of the passion the great Cross-bearer of the universe cries in our ears, "Follow Me. Live boldly, dangerously, completely, without fastidiousness. Accept the mud and the slime, the heat and the misery, the odious rebuff and the stinging rebuke. Be silent before your accusers. Endure and dare for My sake and the gospel. Do not refuse to drink with Me the cup of failure which is often more bitter than the cup of death—the agony of mockery which precedes the agony of the Cross."

When we remember the judgment hall and the blindfolded Christ who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, we shall not grow weary nor faint at rebuke or contumely. "Blessed are ye. when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

It is the last and greatest beatitude. The beatitude of those who follow Christ all the way

to the end. From Gethsemane to Gabbatha and Golgotha.

"There is no gain but by a loss,
You cannot save but by a Cross—
The corn of wheat to multiply
Must fall into the ground and die.
Wherever you ripe fields behold,
Waving to God their sheaves of gold,
Be sure some corn of wheat has died
Some soul has there been crucified;
Some one has wrestled, wept and prayed,
And fought hell's legions undismayed."

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"It is the first condition of our initiation into the secret society of the Friends of God, that we take our place with Him before the judgment seat of the world; and are with Him mocked, patronised, and misunderstood by the world's religion, the world's culture, the world's power—all the artificial contrivances that it sets up as standards by which to condemn Reality. In the very moment in which we declare that it cannot give us that intangible Kingdom to which we aspire, we alienate its sympathy, insult its common sense. It goes up into the judgment seat, prepared to deal wisely with the rebel in us, tolerantly with the fool. Then ignorance, idleness, and cowardice condemn us at their ease, as they once condemned the First and Only Fair."—JOHN CORDELIER in *The Path of the Eternal Wisdom.*

CHAPTER IV

"THEY BOUND HIM" . . . "AND THEY SPAT UPON HIM"

I

JESUS carried the Cross as Isaac carried the wood up the holy mountain. Jesus was bound even as Isaac was bound before he was laid on the altar. "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood" (Gen. xxii. 9). Not without reason has the Jewish mind in the *Mishnah* seized upon this incident in the sacrifice of Isaac as of the greatest significance and made it the centre of their solemn annual commemoration of the event that took place on Mount Moriah. The "*Akedah*" (Binding) prayer, as used by orthodox Jews, is found in the New Year's Day ritual and is as follows:

"Remember in our favour, O Lord our God, the oath which Thou hast sworn to our father Abraham on Mount Moriah; consider the binding of his son Isaac upon the altar when he suppressed his love in order to do Thy will with a whole heart! Thus may Thy love suppress Thy wrath against us, and through Thy great goodness may the heart of Thine anger be turned away from Thy people, Thy city and Thy heritage . . . Remember to-day in mercy in favour of his seed, the binding of Isaac."

Dr. Max Landsberg says: "In the course of time ever greater importance was attributed to the '*Akedah*.' The Haggadistic literature is full of allusions to it; the claim to forgiveness on its account was inserted in the daily morning prayer; and a piece called '*Akedah*' was added to the liturgy of each of the penitential days among the German Jews."

Was this prayer already in use at the time of Christ? Sacrifices were often bound to the horns of the altar (Ps. cxviii. 27), and special rites were observed in such binding of the victims. Whatever may have been the custom in regard to the temple sacrifices it may have occurred to some of the disciples when Jesus was being bound in the garden of Gethsemane that the Lamb of God was being led to the great sacrifice of which Isaac's deliverance was the type.

Three of the evangelists make special and repeated reference to the binding of Jesus in the garden and before Pilate. John tells of the earlier event. "So the band and the chief captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him and led him to Annas first . . . Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." There Jesus was mocked and buffeted and spat upon, and later, "when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor" (Matt. xxvii. 1-2). Mark says: "The whole council held a consultation and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him up to Pilate."

First, therefore, our Lord stretched His hands to be bound under the shadow of the olive trees in Gethsemane. The appearance of resistance made by Peter's awkward sword blow was enough for the guard. The very hands whose last unfettered task was the healing of Malchus' ear, were fastened, probably behind His back, with cords. Then the disciples forsook Him and fled. So ended the first scene in the terrible drama of that night.

It was not a long way that the bound Christ was hurried forward; by the same gate through which He had gone with His disciples after the Paschal supper, they took Him to the palace of Annas, the ex-high priest. There the soldiers left Him, unbinding His fetters, and returned to their quarters; for no further reference is made to the Roman guard. It was then that Christ before Annas and Caiaphas experienced all the pent-up envy and hatred of "these bold, licentious, unscrupulous, proud and degenerate sons of Aaron" whose names were uttered by their contemporaries with whispered curses. Here Jesus received the first blow in His face from one of the servile attendants with the palm of the hand or a rod. After the mock trial, before suborned witnesses, and the prearranged condemnation to death, as we learn from Luke's Gospel, revolting cruelties and injuries were perpetrated on the helpless prisoner by the ruffian guards and servants of Caiaphas. Yet these insults, taunts and blows which fell upon the Lonely Sufferer, "not defenceless but undefending, not vanquished but uncontending, not helpless but majestic in His voluntary self-submission for the highest purpose of love," exhibited humanity at its lowest depth of

sin and curse but also removed both by letting them fall on Christ the Son of God. All through this agony of His rejection by His own people, their cruel contempt and the spewing out of their hatred,

Jesus stood bound. No hands like these were ever tied with cords or fetters since the world began. The story of the bound hands in the Old Testament Scriptures was vivid to the mind of Jesus. Was it to His persecutors? Were Simeon's hands willingly offered when Joseph bound him as a hostage in order to see his brother Benjamin once more? Samson, the strong, was bound again and again but he mocked those that bound him, with new ropes and with withes, and broke them "as tow is broken when it toucheth the fire"; only when he forsook God did God forsake him. Jeremiah, tied with cords, was cast into the dungeon of mire, but the Lord delivered him. He also delivered the three friends of Daniel cast bound into the fiery furnace. All these had their hands bound, but their hands were only human hands.

Jesus was like the fourth One in the furnace, "a son of the gods," nay, the Son of God. Look at the hands of Jesus! Charles Bell, in his celebrated "Essay on the Human Hand," as proof of design in nature, tells of its wonderful anatomy and its marvellous adaptability to all the creative skill of man as distinguished from the paw of the highest brutes. But who can describe the hands of Jesus—on which as on every human hand could be read not only perfect individuality but a perfect character. These bound hands, as an infant's, once rested on Mary's bosom. With these hands Jesus toiled as carpenter making the yoke easy for sturdy oxen or

fashioning the village plough for the husbandmen of Nazareth. These were the hands stretched out to heal the lepers, the lame, the blind. Hands of tenderness and compassion—hands laid on little children whom He gathered in His arms—fingers that fondled their cheeks and dark tresses. These were the hands that in the temple court made clay and put it on the eyes of one born blind, awakening the envy and hatred of those who continued spiritually blind in spite of all Christ's words and wonders. These were the hands that twisted the cords and lifted them in holy indignation against those who had made His Father's house a house of merchandise and a den of thieves. These were the hands that gave the sop—the tit-bit of oriental hospitality—to the traitor Judas at the last supper. With these hands Jesus, "knowing that the Father had given all things unto his hands and that he came forth from God and goeth unto God," took a towel and girded Himself and washed the disciples' feet. Also the feet of Judas.

These hands were folded in prayer on lonely mountain tops and last of all clasped in the agony of intercession in the garden. Now they were bound—soon they would be nailed to the Cross.

These were the hands that broke the bread and lifted the cup of thanksgiving when He said: "Take eat; this is my body . . . Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins."

Now was to be the fulfilment of this last great prophecy. His body soon to be broken and His blood of the new covenant poured out for sinners.

"And they bound Jesus." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The military tribune knew, when the mob shouted against Paul, that it was not lawful to scourge a man who was a Roman uncondemned and he "was afraid because he had bound him" (Acts xxii. 29). But these men were not afraid. The writer to the Hebrews had heard this story of the binding of Jesus from eye-witnesses and wrote of the men and women of his day who were led captive for their faith: "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." But there was no one that remembered Jesus. Even Peter was ashamed of His bonds and said, "I never knew Him."

Who was it bound the hands of our Saviour, first in the garden and then in the court? Was it the Roman guard? But they were doing their duty as soldiers under orders. Did Judas add this touch of fear to his dark treachery? Or did Annas suggest its necessity? We read that afterwards "Annas sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest." Was Pilate guiltless in leaving this Prisoner bound and scourging One who had not been tried legally, nor condemned, and in Whom he found no fault?

Ecce Homo! Here is a new Prometheus bound—One who has brought fire and life and light from heaven without deceit or cunning—One who re-creates man and confers on him the richest and most valuable gifts of heaven.

"What was their tale of some one on a summit
Looking, I think, upon the endless sea, —
One with a fate, and sworn to overcome it,
One who was fettered and who should be free?

Round him a robe, for shaming and for searing:
Ate with empoisonment and stung with fire,
He through it all was to his Lord uprearing,
Desperate patience of a brave desire."

Prometheus, however, was delivered by Hercules from his bonds and torture, after thirty years. Christ was bound by Annas and Caiaphas and Judas and you and me—and is suffering bonds and imprisonments—being crucified afresh these nineteen centuries.

The Christ with the bound hands is with us to-day. "With bound hands," says Robert Keable, "does Jesus of Nazareth walk still the streets of half the world. No little crippled child is born of sin into a world of woe in Hoxton, but Jesus drinks again of a cup that may not pass away—though in the end the will of the Father, that *not one of these little ones should perish*, shall be done, and that just because He drinks the cup. No maimed and half-blind soul is made to stumble somewhere off Piccadilly, but a Judas has betrayed his Lord again for a few pieces of silver. No boastful but frightened disciple sits by a fire in Mayfair when Jesus is called in question, and denies Him at the test, but once again that Master is wounded more deeply than by Roman or by Jew, *in the house of His friends*. And even more, nowhere is deliberate sin planned and plotted and performed, but some one has ridden by the Cross on Calvary and stabbed Jesus mockingly to the heart."

II

"*And they spat upon Him*." They spat not on Him but at Him. The Greek word gives that

dreadful added emphasis. A different word is used in all the gospel passages where Jesus used spittle for healing the sick or the blind (Mark vii. 33 viii. 23; John ix. 6). Spitting is one of the oldest and most universal forms of insult. There are animals that may have taught primitive man the horrible lesson—the toad, the cat, the viper, the deadly cobra.

One of my colleagues in Arabia laboured for many years as a medical missionary and won the respect and friendship of the Arabs. One day he was sitting in his clinic when a fanatic Wahhabi from the desert came in, not for treatment, but to spit in his face. With righteous indignation and the approval of all the patients who saw it, he gave the man a well-deserved lesson in muscular Christianity. There is no deeper insult to an Oriental than this. Instances are found in the Old Testament: "And the Lord said unto Moses, if her father had but spit in her face should she not be ashamed seven days?" (Num. xii. 14). "Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from his foot and spit in his face and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto this man that will not build up his brother's house" (Deut. xxv. 9). "They abhor me, they flee far from me and spare not to spit in my face" (Job xxx. 10).

To this we must add the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the Messiah who, full of grace and truth, bears the reproach and scorn of His people: "The Lord hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary. He wakeneth me morning by

morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear and I was not rebellious neither turned away backward. *I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting*" (Isa. l. 4-6).

Did not Jesus Himself refer to this prophecy when He foretold the dreadful tragedy? "Behold, we go to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered to the chief priests and scribes . . . and they shall mock him and shall scourge him and shall spit upon him" (Mark x. 33-34).

Here we see the most degrading insult offered to the majestic person of our Saviour. "There are terrible things in man," says Stalker; "there are some depths in human nature into which it is scarcely safe to look. It was by the very perfection of Christ that the uttermost evil of His enemies was brought out. As He now came into close grips with the enemy He had come to destroy, it exhibited all its ugliness and discharged all its venom. The claw of the dragon was in His flesh and its foul breath in His mouth. We cannot conceive what such insult and dishonour must have been to His sensitive and regal mind."

Who was guilty of this repeated horror? The record seems to show that it was first the Jewish priests and their servants and afterwards the soldiers of the guard (Matt. xxvi. 67; xxvii. 30). Aryans no less than Semites spat out their fury and contempt in the holy face of Jesus, Europe as well as Asia, "that every mouth might be stopped and all the world made guilty before God." Yet it was done first by His own, by those who knew Him best and

knew the significance of the insult from their own Scriptures.

What a revelation it was of how sin and unbelief degrade human judgment and debase character. To spit is to show spite. The poison of their hate came from their own darkened hearts. The scene that is indescribable is drawn in few words; like in some of Rembrandt's pictures the background is dark as night—the blackness of the human heart, its desperate wickedness, its cowardly hatred of the good and the pure.

They could not spit on His face until they had bound Him and blindfolded Him. So has it ever been. History affords many examples of those who spat in the face of Jesus or in the face of His disciples. Not cruelty only, but insult and contempt are found on every page of the red book of the martyrs. Paul felt it when he wrote, "We are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things even until now." While Bernard of Clairvaux was singing:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast,"

others were making men blaspheme the name of Christ by the cruelties of the Inquisition and the Crusades. How many apostates, atheists and infidels have spewed out hatred and scorn against the Nazarene. There is no enmity like that of an apostate, from the days of Judas. Nero was cruel in shedding the blood of Christians, but he showed nothing like the intensity of rage displayed against the followers of Jesus by the apostate Julian, who once professed Christ and then renounced Him. Gibbon, who had in turn been a member of the

Protestant and the Roman Catholic Church and then in turn forsaken them, is another illustration. Nietzsche fell so low that he speaks of Christ in terms that can only be described as spitting: "The Christian concept of God, as deity of the sick, God as spider—God as spirit is one of the most corrupt concepts of God that has ever been attained on earth. Maybe it represents the low-water mark in the evolutionary ebb of the godlike type. God degenerated into a contradiction of life instead of being its transfiguration and eternal yea. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground and too petty—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind." Could human hate go farther?

"Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper, that confound,
Reproaches which are free, while I am bound.
Was ever grief like mine?"

But we notice also in the scene of the insulted Christ the utter impotence of such Satanic malice and the triumphant self-consciousness of the Divine Saviour, His certainty of victory. "Blessed are ye," *said* He (did He not *feel* it too?), "if men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Ecce Homo! He suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should walk in His footsteps. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.

Think of Him who when He was reviled, reviled not again.

"Quis patitur?
Christus Verbum
Sapientia Patris
Quid patitur?
Spinas, verberas
Sputa, crucem.
Sic patiente Deo
Tu quoque disce pati."[1]

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[1] Who is it that suffers? Christ the Word, the Wisdom of the Father. What does He suffer?—the thorns, the scourge, the spittle and the Cross. Since God so suffers learn thou too to suffer.

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"*This which is here shown us is the essence of Eternal Wisdom, the Secret dwelling at the heart of life: this is that Word which is through all things everlastingly. Behind the vesture of nature and of art, behind religion, knowledge, beauty, love in its myriad forms—we are in the last resort, to see this Creative Chivalry, enduring to the utmost: wrung with agony, reduced to weakness in our interest: sparing itself nothing, if thereby our errant souls may have more light. Unsearchable and Absolute Godhead within whose thought we dwell, stripped of His vestments and exhibited before the uncomprehending eyes of all His creatures, loving and loveless, evil and good alike*." — JOHN CORDELIER in *The Path of Eternal Wisdom.*

CHAPTER V

"THEY PARTED HIS GARMENTS AMONG THEM"

(*Ps. xxii. 18; Matt. xxvii. 28, 35; Mark xv. 24; Luke xxiii. 34; John xix. 23, 23*)

THE stripping of the Christ! This terrible experience of Jesus our Saviour is referred to by all the four evangelists. By Mark, who himself fled naked from the mob in the garden, and by Matthew, who observes that this incident was a direct fulfilment of the Messianic Psalm, "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." John also refers to this Psalm which gives the most detailed and accurate description of the whole agony of crucifixion in all literature. "They pierced my hands and my feet." "They look and stare upon me." "I may count all my bones."

This experience must have been one of the most harrowing to the feelings of the Christ because of His purity and the dignity of His manhood. "They stripped Him," says John. Naked He came from His mother's womb and naked He hangs on the tree.

The first Adam experienced physical and moral nakedness in Paradise by his transgression. The second [last] Adam took upon him the likeness of sinful flesh and therefore the shame of our nakedness was His also.

The Word was made flesh and men beheld His

glory—and stared on His shame—yet this, too, was His glory. The Christ of God was stripped. This was His utmost humiliation. Stripped that we might be clothed with white raiment, with His righteousness, and when unclothed by death not be found naked.

All Roman writers on the method of crucifixion agree that the victim nailed to the cross was stripped naked. The Jews, we are told, granted a loin cloth to their culprits, and conventional art has done the same in portraying the dreadful scene. Nevertheless, we must add to the piteous picture this last and most horrible of all humiliations. The stripping off of the veil of privacy and modesty which the very saints have feared in their martyrdoms and from which some shrank in agony—this Christ endured for us. What Christian women suffered in the Armenian massacres included this bitterness also, more bitter than death. Godiva of Coventry "all clad in chastity" still felt each crevice in every wall gazing at her. So Jesus suffered. And we who have ourselves put these lurid tints in the painting must not pass it by with indifference.

"When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drave great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the wintry rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary."

There are two aspects to the horror of crucifixion, physical pain and mental suffering—the agony of the body and the agony of the soul. The merciless scourging, the nailing of hands and feet, the thirst of fever, the throb of tortured muscles bearing the weight of a broken body and longing for release. Rejected of His own, reckoned with sinners, stripped of His raiment, cursed of men, mocked by His companions in suffering, a great supernatural darkness closing in on the scene.

His bitter cry proved to all, and for all time, that the sufferings of His soul were the soul of His sufferings.

"Ye that pass by, behold the Man!
The Man of Grief condemned for you,
The Lamb of God for sinners slain,
Weeping to Calvary pursue.

His sacred limbs they stretch, they tear
With nails they fasten to the wood;
His sacred limbs exposed and bare,
Or only covered with His blood."

Three thoughts challenge our attention as we meditate on this aspect of Christ's death. He was unveiled to the uttermost on the Cross; the world still strips Jesus Christ and then divides His garments, casting lots; the Christian too must be stripped on his cross as we once stripped Him. A penetrative thinker once said, "You cannot love Jesus with impunity; you cannot meet the Cross

with impunity; whether you accept it or shirk it the encounter leaves a wound." Surely this is the result of meditating on this unveiling of Jesus.

The deepest meaning of the Incarnation is seen on Calvary. To St. Paul this was the climax of Christ's humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross." [Philippians 2:8] Here is one answer to the question of the righteous on the great Judgment Day, "Lord, when saw we *Thee* naked?" [Matthew 25:44] He hides nothing. Job in his misery said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." [Job 13:15] But Jesus says, Though they crucify Me, yet will I show them all—My hands, My feet, My bleeding side. "I may count all my bones; *they* look and stare at me." [Psalms 22:17]

The King is here not in His glory but in His nakedness. To all alike, the soldiers, the rabble, the priests, the beloved disciple, the women, and His mother—God made manifest in the flesh, but not in ineffable glory and honour. Only one who witnessed it could have written the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "They crucify the Son of God . . . *and put him to an open shame*." No wonder that the curtain fell in the midst of the tragedy.

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glory in,
When God the mighty maker died
For man the creature's sin."

In His helplessness and agony, Jesus endured the Cross not only, but for the joy that was set before Him He despised the shame.

At this moment, according to Luke's gospel, it was that Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Above His head Pilate's mocking superscription, KING OF THE JEWS. A King without the purple, His throne a Cross, and beneath it soldiers parting His garments and casting lots over His vesture.

How can any one after this be ashamed of Jesus, or crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame?

The scene was also prophetic. For over nineteen centuries Christ has been crucified afresh and put to an open shame

"This thing; a multitude of worthy folk
Took recreation, watched a certain group
Of soldiery intent upon a game,—
How first they wrangled, but soon fell to play,
Threw dice—the best diversion in the world.
A word in your ear—they are now casting lots,
Ay, with that gesture quaint and cry uncouth,
For the coat of One murdered an hour ago!"

What are the garments of Jesus? "O Lord, my God, thou art very great. Thou art clothed with honour and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." The visible universe is the robe of God's majesty. The heavens are the curtain that hides His glory. The clouds are His chariot. Because Jesus is very God of very God, John does not hesitate to say, "Without him was not anything made that hath been made."

All the marvellous beauty of nature, therefore, is His creation—His seamless robe of splendour and majesty. Science and art can only discover and contemplate or imitate the beauty and order which were in nature from the beginning because Christ put them there. Every red sunset is "the coat of One murdered an hour ago."

There is not a single fine art—painting, sculpture,

music, architecture—that is not finer because of the influence of the life and death of Jesus. Yet how often the artist and the musician have stripped Him of His robes for their own inspiration and then left Him hanging naked and despised. Darwin's "Origin of Species" tries to explain man's origin and place in nature but ignores the Son of Man. How about the origin of Jesus? There is a world beyond the visible and tangible to which science has no key and no access. When we have stripped creation from the Creator by explaining all its laws without Him, are we the richer or the poorer? There goes the man, they may have said in Jerusalem, who wears the seamless robe of the Nazarene! But did he know the way to His heart?

Pure science has no place for moral values. "If we adopt sincerely and wholly the popular conceptions of science," says James T. Adams, "we really destroy all values in human life. The arts are already beginning to show this deteriorating influence. In fiction, for example, of what use to write of character if there is no such thing, if personality is a myth, if freedom of action is a dream, and if all we are is merely a succession of states of mind having as little significance as a glow of phosphorescence over decaying wood?"

And philosophy, too, has stripped Jesus. The philosophers, wisely or unwisely, discuss the very questions He came to answer and to which He is the answer, and then leave Him out of their discussions. A recent text-book widely used in American colleges is entitled "Problems of Modern Philosophy," and the book in its 575 pages makes no reference whatever to Jesus Christ. Yet He came to answer the fundamental questions of philosophy:

whence are we, why are we here, what is our true nature, whither is our goal, what is life, what is death, why the mystery of pain, and what is the hope of humanity? Spinoza, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kant, Huxley, Spencer, Bergson and the rest, are they not casting lots over His seamless robe?

Modern ethics strips Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, but refuses to climb Calvary. Those who have never entered Gethsemane and witnessed its agony speak glibly of an Elder Brother and a universal Fatherhood. They know not its cost. The new Theology, Modern Hinduism, the new Islam and Modern Judaism all eagerly covet and claim the ethics of Jesus but they deny His Deity. All that is beautiful and true and noble found in these new religions and philosophies are after all the borrowed garments. "The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part."

Sociologists preach a social gospel and forget that the social gospel was born at Bethlehem and the rights of humanity were sealed with blood on Golgotha. The Cross, once a symbol of shame and guilt, has become through Him who hung on it the symbol of compassion and peace and love, of courage and devotion and martyrdom. How can we speak of social service and leave out Christ? When one visits Red Cross hospitals, asylums, homes for the friendless or welfare centres, where the Christian spirit is manifest but the Christ and His message are not in evidence, the soul cries out with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." The symbol is there but He is left outside. There is no room for Him. We send out our Christmas greetings in ever

more lavish forms but one misses a distinctively Advent message on the cards that tell of His birth. The garments are there but not the Christ. Men cast lots for His vesture while He hangs alone, naked and forsaken. "And when they had mocked him they took off from him the robe" (Matt. xxvii. 31). No wonder that the Fathers of the Greek Church in their liturgy of the Passion, after they have recounted all the particular pains of our Saviour and by every one of them called for mercy, close with this petition: "By Thine *unknown* sorrows and sufferings felt by Thee on the Cross but not distinctly known by us, have mercy on us and save us."

We need that prayer. The Christian, too, is stripped on his cross, as He was on His. The disciple is not above his Master. Men always see us as we are when we mount our cross. Tribulation worketh experience. Over that awful bridge of death nothing but the naked personality can pass. Carlyle portrays mankind all one, and startlingly alike, when stripped of clothing and ornament—the tags of honour and office and the pride of place that make our distinctions. Now there is nothing that reveals inner character more than suffering. Fire separates. Crucifixion reveals. There they hang; Jesus, Gestas and Desmas, each on his own cross and side by side. One dead in sin, one dead to sin, the third the death of sin. A blasphemer, a believer, a Saviour. One died and lost his life, one found his life, One gave His life. On the Cross God and men see us as we are. Death strips us of everything but our inner soul. All self-hiding drapery is gone. When we stand before the judgment seat we stand naked. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb,"

said Job, "and naked shall I return thither." "All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do," when we pass over the bridge of death.

Therefore gazing at the Saviour on the Cross we long to be "clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked." "Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame" (Rev. xvi. 15). This is the most neglected of the seven beatitudes in the Book of the Revelation.

"There is no place for the verb to *have* in heaven; it is annihilated by the verb to be." We shall no longer possess but be an everlasting possession. Who are these in white robes? They are clad in righteousness not their own, and at the centre of the great white multitude stands One who was stripped on the Cross, but is now "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle."

The painter, G. T. Watts, asked Frederick Shields to tell him the correct colours for the draperies of Faith. He replied: "She is the assurance of heavenly things to mortals shut in by sensuous things, therefore the sky's hue is hers—her mantle and her wings—but her robe is white, unspotted. And this because they who seek righteousness by works fail of that which only Faith gives." Robed in the King's white we shall understand at last the spiritual and prophetic meaning of the words, "They parted His garments among them."

"The Psalm of the Cross begins with 'My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me?' and ends, according to some, in the original with 'it is finished.' For plaintive expressions uprising from unutterable depths of woe we may say of this psalm, 'there is none like it.' It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of His dying words, the lachrymatory of His last tears, the memorial of His expiring joys. David and his afflictions may be here in a very modified sense, but as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, he who sees Jesus will probably neither see nor care to see David. Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this psalm."

— CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

CHAPTER VI

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

THIS is the only one of the Seven Words on the Cross recorded by both Mark and Matthew; the same words occur in the opening sentences of the Twenty-second Psalm, yet neither evangelist refers to them as a fulfilment of prophecy. After six hours of agony in body and soul on the Cross this cry escaped our Saviour's lips. His first word was: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—a prayer for pardon. His second word a promise of peace; "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." His third word one of tender solicitude to and for his mother: "Woman behold thy son . . . Son behold thy mother." Then the thick darkness fell. And before the three last words followed in rapid succession: "I thirst," "It is finished," "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit"—there was the cry of anguish. "My God, my God, why? ... "

"For none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere He found the sheep that was lost."

That there is something of singular force and feeling in these words of Jesus on the Cross is evident from the fact that the two evangelists have

studiously, and only in this case, given the very words of the language our Lord used: "*Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani*." Nowhere else, moreover, in Scripture do we find this repetition of the words save in the Messianic Psalm. The cry expresses suffering that was never at any other time felt in this world and never will be again.

There is a tradition, referred to by Ludolf the Carthusian, as early as the fourteenth century, that our Lord, hanging on the Cross, began repeating the words of the Twenty-second Psalm and continued His meditation until He came to the fifth verse of the Thirty-first Psalm: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Aside from this fancy, there is no doubt that in the Psalms, which were in Christ's heart and often on His lips, we find an interpretation of His life and His Messianic consciousness as in no other book. It is true that we have in this Twenty-second Psalm a description of the crucifixion in language that makes one ask is it history or prophecy? Strauss and others indeed say the gospel account of this incident is therefore obviously mythical, and it never took place but was dragged in to prove the fulfilment of another Old Testament passage!

To the believer, however, this cry is a revelation of the deep suffering and anguish our Saviour bore, and a proof of His infinite love for sinners. It challenges us, with all the saints, to be strong to comprehend "what is the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God which passeth knowledge."

If the Cross is the central Truth of the New Testament, this cry is the heart of this truth and its

deepest expression. This is the holy of holies to the reverent reader of the story of the passion.

Spurgeon rightly says: "We must lay emphasis on every word of this saddest of all utterances. '*Why*?' What is the great cause of such a strange fact as for God to leave His own Son at such a time and in such a plight? There was no cause in Him, why then was He deserted? '*Hast*,' it is done, and the Saviour is feeling its dread effect as He asks the question; it is surely true, but how mysterious! It was no threatening of forsaking which made the great Surety cry aloud, He endured that forsaking in very deed. '*Thou*': I can understand why traitorous Judas and timid Peter should be gone, but Thou, My God, My faithful friend, how canst Thou leave Me? This is the worst of all, yea, worse than all put together. Hell itself has for its fiercest flame the separation of the soul from God. '*Forsaken*': if Thou hadst chastened I might bear it, for Thy face would shine; but to forsake Me utterly, ah! why is this? '*Me*': Thine innocent, obedient, suffering Son, why leavest Thou Me to perish? A sight of self seen by penitence, and of Jesus on the Cross seen by faith will best expound this question. Jesus is forsaken because our sins had separated between us and our God."

To understand what suffering of body and mind and soul were in that cry of anguish we must recall the circumstances. Crucifixion was the most hideous torture devised by the old world and the extreme penalty of Roman criminal justice. It included physical agony and disgrace. The former due to the unnatural posture of the body, the throbbing pain of nail-pierced hands and feet,

feverish thirst and gradual exhaustion and death. The disgrace was doubly so to one of the Jewish race, for the Cross was an object of horror and typical of God's curse (Gal. iii. 13; Deut. xxi. 23). Add to all this the awful contrast between Christ's holiness, innocence and divine dignity and the brutal jeers, mockery and contempt hurled at the helpless victim by those that stood beneath the Cross and even by those who hung at His side (Matt. xxvii. 44; Luke xxiii. 39). The chief priests led in mocking Him: "He saved others, himself he cannot save. . . . He trusteth in God, let him deliver him now." And for answer there came gloom—a supernatural darkness, over all the scene from the sixth to the ninth hour. After these three hours of darkness and out of the darkness of His lonely agony Jesus cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why? ...

Melancthon and other Reformers explain this cry as evidence that Christ experienced in His human soul the divine wrath against sin. Others say it was an indication that His political plans had failed, the cry of a deeply disappointed patriot. Others, including Schleiermacher, say it was the opening sentence of the great lamentation psalm with its sublime conclusion, that Jesus uttered as proof of His Messiahship. Meyer says that because of the agony of being rejected of men "His *consciousness* of union with God was for the moment overcome." Olhausen speaks of "actual, objective, momentary abandonment by God." Dr. Philip Schaff sees in this experience of Christ an intensified renewal of the agony in Gethsemane and the culmination of His vicarious sufferings: "It was a divine human

experience of sin and death in their inner connection and universal significance for the race by one who was perfectly pure and holy, a mysterious and indescribable anguish of the body and soul in immediate prospect of, and in actual wrestling with, death as the wages of sin and the culmination of all misery of man, of which the Saviour was free, but which He voluntarily assumed from infinite love in behalf of the race."

Surely it was not, as Moslems often tell us, due to Christ's fear of death and lack of moral courage to face the issue. Even the infidel, Jean Jacques Rousseau, knew better and exclaimed: "If Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus of Nazareth died like a God."

Without the belief that Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree, without the acceptance of the vicarious element in His death, the cry on the Cross is inexplicable. But if Jesus was the Lamb of God and God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, we have a key to the mystery of such suffering.

If the death of Christ was only that of a great martyr for the truth the cry is strangely out of place. But if He died, the just for the unjust, if "He was made sin for us," then our own sins and the sins of the whole world wrung from our Saviour the cry of anguish and loneliness. What is the Atonement? "It is the satisfaction rendered to the justice of God for man's sin by the substituted penal suffering of His well-beloved Son."

If we dislike such a theological definition we may find the same great truth expressed in the liturgies of the Church used at the Lord's Supper, when we commemorate His death. What could be

more beautiful than the interpretation of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands: "We believe that He suffered His blessed body to be nailed on the Cross that He might affix thereon the handwriting of our sins; that He also took upon Himself the curse due to us that He might fill us with His blessings. And humbled Himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the Cross when He cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken of Him."

In the last stanza of Mrs. Browning's poem on the grave of Cowper, we have the same thought:

"Yes, once Immanuel's orphan cry His universe hath shaken,
It went up single, echoless, My God I am forsaken.
It went up, from the holy lips, amid the lost creation,
That of the lost no son should use those words of desolation."

"He hath laid on him the iniquities of us all"—the guilt, the stain, the hurt, the remorse. All our failings, shortcomings, falls, offences, trespasses, transgressions, debts, sins, faults, ignorances, pollutions, unrighteousness. We must not shrink from the awful implications of this fact. We shall never "pour contempt on all our pride" until we realize that we can only be reconciled to God because "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in him." "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." It was not for our sins only but for the sins of the whole world that He was forsaken of God. All the sin and shame of the ages in some sense passed over Him,

all its waves and its billows; deep calling unto deep. The crude lusts and darkness of ancient races back to primeval time; the long waywardness of Israel; the pride of Nineveh and Tyre; the cruelty of Egypt and Babylon; the injustice of society; the crimes of the market, the brothel and the battlefield; the betrayals of Judas and the denials of Peter and all who ever forsook Jesus; of Pilate, of Herod and of Caiaphas, the sins of humanity past, present and future. In some mysterious way all this pressed upon His soul and gave birth to the cry of anguish. The mind which was the very tabernacle of God was haunted in the garden and on Calvary by the awful spectre of a world of sin. So dark, so absolute, so real, was the torture of the Cross. The sufferings of Christ's soul were the soul of His suffering.

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glory in,
When Christ his mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's, sin."

"The death and suffering of Christ was something very much more than suffering," says Forsyth; "it was atoning action. At various stages in the history of the Church—not the Roman Catholic Church only but Protestantism also—exaggerated stress has been laid upon the sufferings of Christ. But it is not a case of what He *suffered*, but what He *did*. Christ's suffering was so divine a thing because He freely transmuted it into a great act. It was suffering accepted and transfigured by holy obedience under the conditions of curse and blight which sin had brought upon man according to the holiness of God. The suffering was a sacrifice to God's

holiness. In so far it was penalty. But the atoning thing was not its amount or acuteness, but its obedience, its sanctity."

Yet one shrinks from analysing the cry on the Cross. After all has been said that men can say to throw light on its significance it remains a mystery, the mystery of the Atonement. In what intelligible sense could the infinite and loving Father forsake His only begotten Son, leaving Him alone in darkness and dire need? There are some who are quite ready, too ready, to speak of Christ as the object of Divine wrath; and yet without careful qualifications this remains a thought painful beyond expression. Surely never for a moment can this Divine sufferer have been the object of the Father's displeasure—He that came from heaven to do His will, to execute the purpose of infinite love in the redemption of a ruined world at whatever personal cost. Never, on the contrary, was the thought of the Father fixed on the Son with more unqualified approbation and intense affection: "Therefore my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life in order that I might take it again." Never can He have been more thoroughly conscious that He was doing the Father's will and must be approved and could never be wholly forsaken.

Also, there was summed up in this cry of anguish all the loneliness of Jesus in the days of His flesh, a loneliness which culminated on the Cross. "I have trodden the wine-press alone."

Lonely at His birth, lonely in His silent years at Nazareth, lonely in the desert and on the mountain-top. His was the loneliness of misunderstanding, the loneliness of leadership, the loneliness of

temptation, the loneliness of prayer. He was lonely in the crowd, and lonely on the Mount of Transfiguration; lonely in His grief and tears over Jerusalem; most of all lonely and alone when in Gethsemane, at Gabbatha and on Golgotha. "Then they all forsook him and fled." "They hated me without a cause." "Although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; He hath put him to grief." It was therefore Christ shared in the hiding of the Father's face which is the essential and the final horror of sin. "For he *was* made sin for us."

"I believe," says Robert Keable, speaking of this loneliness on the Cross, "that in a real sense He was voicing the experience of His life, an experience borne hitherto by the Man of Sorrows in the silence of His heart. No doubt it was intensified on Calvary, but the Lonely Man, who is rejected by earth because He is sinless, is rejected by God because He is sin. Oh, unutterable paradox of love! Oh, triumph of the wonder of His loneliness. At that ninth hour Jesus our Lord is unutterably alone in the wide range of all that is."

"Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depths be praise;
In all His words most wonderful
Most sure in all His ways.
O generous love! that He who smote
In Man, for man, the foe,
The double agony in Man
For man should undergo."

"*Among the ancient inscriptions and paintings on the tombs of the kings of Egypt one sees everywhere the symbol of the Key of Life. Strangely enough it is in the form of a cross. As we sat in our Round Tables we felt again and again, as in a flash, that the cross is the Key of Life, that here at the cross we saw into the depths of things; we felt that here the Heart of the Universe showed itself, and that if we could catch the Passion that beats here we would catch the meaning of Life itself.*

"The riddle of Christ is to be found in His sacrificial spirit culminating in His Cross. To understand this is to understand Christ, to understand Christ is to understand God, and to understand God is to understand the meaning of the universe and of life. The Cross, then, is the Key. If I lose this Key, I fumble. The universe will not open to me. But with the Key in my hand and heart I know I hold its secret." — E. STANLEY JONES in *Christ at the Round Table.*

CHAPTER VII

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"

AN exile for Christ, who has laboured long among Mohammedans and poured out her soul for them, writes from her lonely post in Central Asia: "We are learning here to put first things first and steer cautiously but persistently to our one aim. And I think we must do so in silence as to the outer world, in order to be able to do something in this inner world into which the Lord has placed us. We now have the freedom to witness for Christ, but it may any moment be taken from us, and so we must be careful to use it aright." May we not ask, as witnesses for Christ, what is that one aim, what is the heart of our message, the one indispensable truth which we must press home? What is our distinctive, supreme, impelling message to the non-Christian world? Is it not expressed in the words of John the Baptist, that harbinger of a new dispensation to Israel—the Israel with which Islam has so much in common? That voice crying in the wilderness had one message: "Behold the Lamb of God."

John's freedom to witness for Christ was soon taken from him. Herod's cruel sword did its work; but while John had freedom, he put first things first. It was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar; Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod ruled Galilee; Philip and Lysias had

their tetrarchies; Annas and Caiaphas controlled the temple worship and the daily sacrifice. The Roman world was in revolution. There were many sects and parties and philosophies, but they held out no living hope. Therefore the word of God came to John in the desert, and what he heard he cried: "*Behold the Lamb of God*."

The words, Lamb of God, as a title of our Saviour, occur twice in the Gospel of John and once in Peter's First Epistle. But John uses the same title, although the word for lamb is in diminutive form (a little lamb) in the Book of the Revelation, no less than twenty-eight times. A study of these passages will help us to understand how much this title meant to him who leaned on Jesus' bosom and knew the secret of His redeeming love perhaps better than any of the twelve apostles. It is in the witness of John the Baptist to the Christ that mention is first made of Jesus in these words: "On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The next day again, at Bethabara or Bethany beyond Jordan, "John was standing with two of his disciples and he looked upon Jesus as he walked and saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"

Peter does not use this title directly, but in speaking of our redemption from sin he says it was not with corruptible silver or gold "but with precious blood as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."

In the vision of John on Patmos we are suddenly introduced (Rev. v. 5, 6) to the Lion of the tribe of Judah who is also the Lamb of God. "And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living

creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb, standing as though it had been slain." The four and twenty elders fall down before this Lamb (v. 8) and sing a new song in which ten thousand times ten thousand voices join: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." All creation joins in the antiphonal response of glory to the Lamb.

Then we read that the Lamb opens one of the seven seals and God's judgments follow in swift succession, until men cry in terror, asking the very mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb (vi. 16). But the redeemed, an innumerable multitude, stand before the throne and before the Lamb arrayed in white and sing His praise; for the Lamb in the midst of the throne is their Shepherd and God wipes away every tear (vii. 10, 17).

A little later we read how they overcame in the fight, against the accuser of the brethren, through the blood of the Lamb (xii. 11) and because their names were written in the Lamb's book of life (xiii. 8). Again we see the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (xiv. 1) and the undefiled follow Him because they are the first fruits purchased from among men unto the Lamb (xiv. 4); but those who worship the beast are tormented in the presence of the same Lamb (xiv. 10). The victors sing the song of the Lamb (xv. 3) but the rebellious war against the Lamb (xvii. 13) who also overcomes them, for He is the Lord of lords and King of kings. After this we hear the voice of a great multitude in heaven singing hallelujahs, for the marriage of the Lamb is come (xix. 7). "Blessed are they that are bidden to the

marriage supper of the Lamb." In the final chapters all the glory is given to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The holy city is "the bride of the Lamb"; the apostles are "the apostles of the Lamb"; the Lamb is the only Temple (xxi. 22); and the Lamb is the only light of the city of glory (xxi. 23). None can enter that holy place save those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (xxi. 27). The river of the water of life proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb, for God's throne is the Lamb's throne (xxii. 1—3); they shall see His face, and His name (the name of Jesus) shall be on their foreheads." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins."

Who can resist the cumulative evidence from these passage that Jesus as the Lamb of God is the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer of the world, the King of Glory, the Supreme Judge, the Ruler of the nations, one with the Father, in the essence of His being, the attributes of His power and the majesty of His dominion.

And all this was latent in the words that the Baptist first used by the banks of the Jordan when he saw the sinless Nazarene, numbered with the transgressors at His baptism, but crowned with glory and honour in the voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

John surely did not use the words without being conscious of their significance to those who heard him. He was not speaking in riddles but alluded to the Messiah of type and prophecy; most probably to the Servant of Jehovah, in Isaiah liii., who bears

the iniquity of us all and is led as a lamb to the slaughter. To make the words refer to the gentleness and meekness of Jesus (as some modernists attempt to do in recent writings) without reference to His atoning sacrifice is doing violence to all the other parallel passages. As Godet remarks: "No doubt it was this contrast, vividly felt between himself and Jesus, which, amid all the Messianic designations which the Old Testament might have furnished him, led him to prefer this: 'The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' It is remarkable that this title Lamb, under which the evangelist learned to know Jesus for the first time, is that by which the Saviour is designated preferentially in the Apocalypse. The chord which had vibrated at this decisive hour within the very depths of his being continued to vibrate within him to his last breath."

And the music of that chord was in harmony with Christ's own and earliest teaching; namely, that He came to give His life a ransom for others and that even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so the Son of Man would be lifted on the Cross for our redemption.

No other name of Christ occurs more frequently and repeatedly in the liturgies of the Churches:

"O Lamb of God: that takest away the sin of the world
Grant us Thy peace.
O Lamb of God: that takest away the sin of the world
Have mercy upon us."

In Dante's *Purgatorio*, voices are heard in unison chanting the same prayer for pardon:

"Only Agnus Dei were their preludes:
One word there was in all and measure one,
So that all concord seemed to be among them."

John the Baptist rivets attention to the person of Christ, "Behold!" using the singular number although many were present. Each one of us must look to Jesus individually for the removal of his own guilt, although He taketh away the sin of the world. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Jesus of Nazareth had no regal robes or royal crown. He was the carpenter's son. But John beheld in Him the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is the Lamb *of God*. It is the genitive of origin and of possession. God sent the Son and God loves Him. In this sacrifice it is not man who offers; it is God who gives His own, His very best.

Ecce Homo! said Pilate pointing to Jesus crowned with thorns, and the bruises of the scourging covered with a purple cloak. *Ecce Agnus Dei*! said John of Jesus just after his baptism and at the opening of His ministry. Behold the man who is the Lamb of God!

The world has beheld Him ever since; for He fills the horizon of history. He cannot be hid. But men gaze on Him and turn away, or gaze on Him and follow Him to the end. It is with deep insight that Studdert Kennedy describes Jesus as He appears to the modern world:

"He looks as contemptible as ever with His ragged rabble of a Church that shouts Hosanna on Sunday and runs from the Garden of Gethsemane on Friday; that protests like Peter and then betrays, that disputes who shall be greatest and thinks it is extravagant to wash men's weary feet; with His crowd of wretched parsons, poor human fools like

me, who preach the gospel and cannot live it, who try to be loving and are not even amiable. He is as ridiculous as ever, just the same Christ that sat with a dirty purple horse-cloth on His bleeding back, and a crown of thorns set sideways on His head, with a mock sceptre in His hand, and the spittle of a drunken soldier rolling down His face, just the same Christ, but I am afraid of Him, as in his heart of hearts, I believe the modern man, the fiercest of the beasts of prey, is frightened of Him. He is disturbing, unnerving. He saps self-confidence and murders pride. He makes men want to go down upon their knees, and no strong man should do that except to the Almighty."

Christ is the Lamb which God provides as propitiation and sacrifice for sin. In Jesus, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches so distinctly, we have fulfilment of all the Old Testament teaching concerning the blood that atones for sin. Here is the great antitype to all the sacrificial ordinances and rites of humanity. The Lamb of God who is the desire of all nations.

Contrasting the glory of Mount Sinai and the giving of the moral law with the greater glory that is found for us in Mount Zion, the writer to the Hebrews comes to an astonishing climax. "Ye are come," he writes, "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to *THE BLOOD* of sprinkling."

How does the shedding of blood give remission

of sin? What is the origin of sacrifice? Whence its universality? Not only in the religion of the Semites but in the sacrificial rites of all nations we find three fundamental ideas in the propitiation, namely, substitution, satisfaction and sufficiency. The same is true of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Christ died in our stead just as truly as the ram was the substitute for Isaac on Mount Moriah. Christ's death gave satisfaction for sin, appeased justice, purchased pardon, more than the blood on the lintel did when the avenging angel slew Egypt's first-born. Christ's death is sufficient. He dieth no more. He made on the Cross by His one oblation "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

Trumbull, in his interesting study of the "Blood Covenant," gives an excellent summary of early Semitic teaching, with many parallels from the Old Testament, to show that to these people "without the shedding of blood there was no remission of penalty and no peace of reconciliation." To understand what John meant when he called Jesus the Lamb of God, we must read the Old Testament Scriptures that are at the basis of all New Testament thought.

To take a single example from this wide realm of Semitic religious thought, we find in Islam a primitive custom, approved by Mohammed, and called the '*Aqiqa* sacrifice. It is well-nigh universal, from Morocco to China, and is based on orthodox tradition. We read in tradition that Mohammed made the '*Aqiqa* sacrifice not only for his two grandsons, Hasan and Husain, but for himself ('*Aqiqa* '*an nafsihi*). The prayer used to-day in this

propitiating sacrifice of lamb or kid presented for the seven-day old child reads:—

> "O God, this is the 'Aqiqa sacrifice of my son so-and-so, its blood for his blood, its flesh for his flesh, its bone for his bone, its skin for his skin, its hair for his hair. O God! make it a redemption for my son from the Fire, for truly I have turned my face to Him who created the heavens and the earth, a true believer. And I am not of those who associate partners with God. Truly my prayer and my offering, my life and my death, is to God, the Lord of the Worlds, who has no partner, and thus I am commanded, and I belong to the Moslems."

Among Moslems, as in the case of the Paschal lamb, not a bone of this sacrificial victim must be broken! It is John who refers to this detail in the fulfilment of prophecy at the time of the Crucifixion (John xix. 36) for again he saw on Calvary "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The gospel for the Moslem and for the non-Christian world is contained in that one short sentence. The Cross of Christ is indeed the missing link in the Moslem creed. The death of Christ, its necessity, its historicity, its implications, its results, its pathos and its power—these things are hidden from the wise and prudent in the world of Islam, but God reveals them unto babes. When the inquirer comes to the Cross and sees the Crucified, he finds an answer to all his difficulties. Mysticism in Islam at its best always failed to reveal the mystery of the Cross. This is the tragedy of many a soul's pilgrimage, ever pressing on without reaching the goal. Ghazali, Sha'arani, Jala-ud-din-ar-Rumi, Ibn-al-Arabi, and many other seekers after God, travelled a long and steep way. Their teaching on sin and repentance, forgiveness and the vision of God, contains much that may be used as a preparation

for the gospel, but it never rises to Calvary. Here the Prodigal Son of Arabia utterly *missed the road*—and in consequence led many astray. We too shall miss the road unless we follow the blood marks all the way from the earliest promise in Genesis to the foot of Calvary.

"The apostles," says Principal Forsyth, "never separated reconciliation in any age from the Cross and the blood of Jesus Christ. If we ever do that (and many are doing it to-day) we throw the New Testament overboard. The bane of so much that claims to be more spiritual religion at the present day is that it simply jettisons the New Testament and with it historic Christianity. The extreme critics, people that live upon monism and immanence, rationalist religion and spiritual impressionism, are people who are deliberately throwing overboard the New Testament as a whole, deeply as they prize it in parts."

When men speak of redeeming the old order of society or transforming life from sordidness into sainthood, *without the Cross*, they follow a forlorn hope. We may well be optimists when we see God's purpose of grace for the world being accomplished. When we face new eras and new opportunities. But when John came preaching repentance, the fullness of time was also at hand. Revolutionary changes were taking place in the whole Roman Empire and in the Jewish Church. There had been much preparation. There was great expectancy. There was deep despair of the old order. But John ushered in the new epoch by proclaiming a new Redemption: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

It is a redemption of the old order that we desire, but it must be redemption by the Blood.

The Cross of Christ is the only hope of the world. Our constant danger is that we cry, Behold this new opportunity. Behold our new methods. Behold our human-brotherhood, and forget to cry, Behold the Lamb of God!

There is a remarkable painting of Christ on the Cross as the only hope of the world; it startlingly depicts in vivid colours something of the universality and efficacy of the atonement in a way that cannot be forgotten. The story of the picture is as follows:— Blater Heroni, who was president of the Mixed Court at Adis Ababa in Abyssinia, received his education in a Swedish mission school. He also prepared a version of the New Testament in Amharic and rose to prominence during the war. He was sent to Paris, representing Abyssinia, at the time of the Treaty of Versailles. Meditating on the future of world peace the thought occurred to him that only through the sacrifice of Christ was this possible and his Abyssinian mind conceived the idea of representing this in symbolism. He sought out a Paris artist and gave him his ideas. The result is the famous painting of the Crucifixion so weird in its conception, so real in its symbolic significance, strangely attractive and compelling in its message. The Saviour is hanging on a Cross which rests between two globes of the eastern and western hemispheres against a cloudy and lurid sky. A halo of coming victory already rests above the thorn-crowned head of the Sufferer who looks down upon two worlds for which He died. Blood-drops from His pierced hands colour every continent and island red! It is a

vision of the whole world redeemed by the blood of Christ. Underneath the painting one can read in three languages: "*FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE*."

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"The best work is to preach Christ crucified, whether amidst calm or the sounds of controversy, assured that this alone makes way, healing the wounded conscience and cleansing the saint from all remaining sin; and the victory is to that Church, in the old world and the new, in the homes of our ripest Christianity and in the darkest outfields of our missions, which shall most earnestly, unswervingly, devoutly renew that ancient confession: 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all,' and shall turn it most gratefully and jubilantly into song, the song alike of earth and heaven: 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'" — PRINCIPAL JOHN CAIRNS.

CHAPTER VIII

"THEY . . . CRUCIFIED THE LORD OF GLORY."

PAUL realized that the preaching of Christ crucified is to them that perish foolishness (1 Cor. i. 17); that it was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Cor. i. 23), and yet he determined not to have any other message, although it caused him searching of heart, weakness, fear and much trembling, than Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 3). This message of the Cross is so great a mystery, although it revealed the wisdom and the power of God, that it is revealed only through the Spirit who searches all things even the deep things of God (1 Cor. i. 10). In this connection of thought Paul uses the startling expression regarding the rulers of the world, ignorant of God's wisdom, that "*had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*" (2 Cor. xxii. 8).

In his address to the elders of Ephesus, Paul uses words that are even bolder and more arresting: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). We shrink from such bold and startling implications, the Lord of Glory on the Cross, the blood of God—but when we try to soften down the words, we find that the Greek text leaves no alternative.

It is true that in the American Revised Version

we have "Lord" substituted for God in Acts xx. 28, but it is wholly unwarranted. Stokes, in the Expositor's Bible, says, "Some have read Lord instead of God, others have substituted Christ for it, but the Revised Version, following the text of Westcott and Hort [we may add Nestle], have accepted the strongest form of the verse on purely critical grounds."

Ignatius wrote to the Ephesians, fifty years later than Paul's letter, that believers were "kindled into living fire by the blood of God." Tertullian, a hundred years later, uses the same expression "the blood of God." In the other passage also the Greek text is undoubtedly genuine and the words were written by Paul twenty-seven years after the event—before the gospels themselves were current—"Had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

"Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory" (Ps. xxiv. 10). Both in the Old and New Testament the Lord of Glory signifies He whose attribute is glory (Ps. xxix. 1; Acts vii. 2; Eph. i. 17, and James. ii. 1), the Lord to whom glory belongs as His native right. The expression is theologically important because it implies the deity of our Lord. In passages like 1 Cor. xi. 20, "The Lord's death," and 1 Cor. xi. 27, "the body and blood of the Lord," the import is similar but the language less startling. Even in the days of His flesh, the Saviour was to Paul the Lord to whom all glory belongs as His native right. To him, no less than to John, the Word who became flesh, was "in the beginning with God; and the Word was God."

There is no mystery in heaven or earth so great as this—a suffering Deity, an Almighty Saviour nailed to the Cross. Yet this is what the words imply. It is at the Cross that we see in Christ the fulness of God's love and mercy bodily. It is at this point, in the last resort, that we become convinced—as the Centurion was—of His deity. It is a work that only God could do, which Christ works there "and the soul that is won for it is won for God in Him."

Christ is to Paul, through His death and resurrection, manifested as the very centre of the universe. He is the primary source of all creation, its principle of unity, its goal, and the explanation of all its mysteries (Col. i. 13-18). No one can read this passage and deny that it teaches Christ's equality in glory with God.

In reference to this same passage on the essential deity of "the Son of God's love in whom we have our redemption," the Roman Catholic mystic, John Cordelier, says: "If the Cross be anything at all it is the ground-plan of the universe. It stretches from Nebula to Nebula linking the furthest limits of the worlds, holding out to them the wounded hands of Love. All progress is born of that clash of love and pain which is the secret of its heart; its mysterious torment lies at the root of all our joy. It is odd indeed that any biologist can be other than a Christian, since he finds on every hand Christianity's sternest symbol scored deep in the very foundations of the House of Life; finds pain, struggle, and the sacrifice of the individual to be as essential to the diurnal processes of reproduction as to the slow-growing perfection of the type. Turn to the heights,

turn to the deep, turn within, turn without; everywhere thou shalt find the Cross."

The same thought occurs in Studdert Kennedy's poem, "The Suffering God":—

"Father, if He the Christ, were Thy Revealer,
Truly the First Begotten of the Lord,
Then must Thou be a Sufferer and a Healer
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword.

Then must it mean, not only that Thy sorrow
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely tree,
But that to-day, to-night, and on the morrow
Still it will come, O Gallant God, to Thee.

* * * * *

Give me, for light, the sunshine of Thy sorrow;
Give me, for shelter, shadow of Thy cross;
Give me to share the glory of Thy morrow,
Gone from my heart the bitterness of loss."

It is not only that we see in Christ's death the supreme manifestation of God's love, but also of His infinite sorrow and compassion. "Like as a Father pitieth his children," is in the same Psalm that tells us that "as far as the East is from the West so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." "Sorrow and love flow mingled down," on the Cross—the sorrow of God and the love of God.

The whole Christian doctrine of the Atonement is rooted in the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Our belief in the latter determines our faith in the former. No mere man can pay the penalty of another man's sin. All objections to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ disappear before the tremendous fact of the majesty of the Person of Jesus. "It is perfectly true," says Dr. Gresham Machen, "that the Christ of modern naturalistic reconstruction never could

have suffered for the sins of others; but it is very different in the case of the Lord of Glory. And if the notion of vicarious atonement be so absurd as modern opposition would lead us to believe, what shall be said of the Christian experience that has been based upon it? The modern liberal Church is fond of appealing to experience. But where shall true Christian experience be found if not in the blessed peace which comes from Calvary? That peace comes only when a man recognizes that all his striving to be right with God, all his feverish endeavour to keep the law before he can be saved, is unnecessary, and that the Lord Jesus has wiped out the handwriting that was against him by dying instead of him on the Cross. Who can measure the depth of the peace and joy that comes from this blessed knowledge? Is it a theory of the atonement, a delusion of man's fancy? Or is it the very truth of God?"

When Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as suffering on the Cross in such terms as we have quoted, he deals with facts so sublime that he calls them "the depths of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10). These matters are so deep that they are unfathomable to human philosophy. So high that they elude the most piercing gaze of the intellect. In parts of the great Pacific ocean deep-sea sounding apparatus fails. There are stellar spaces and nebulas that will not yield their secrets to the largest telescopes. "Things which the eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man." But God reveals them even unto babes by His Holy Spirit, and although we cannot understand it, we can fall down in utter gratitude and humility.

"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride."

There was no separation of the two natures of our Lord on the Cross. His real humanity and His real deity were not mixed, nor confounded, but distinct and actually, both, wholly present. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The sacrifice was not the human Christ pleasing God; it was God in the Christ reconciling man and in another sense reconciling Himself. It was not the death of a heroic man in obedience to God's will; it was the death of the Son of God for the sins of the world. Here, if anywhere, in the gospel story Christ manifested His glory—a glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. The atonement was an act of the whole Godhead. For God, the Father, so loved the world that He gave; God the Son laid down His life for others; God the Holy Spirit filled Jesus with His presence and power to endure such a death, and overcome it by His glorious resurrection (Rom. i. 4).

Not only at Bethlehem but on Calvary we may sing with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and goodwill to men."

"Therefore," says Forsythe, "we press the words to their fullness of meaning: God was in Christ reconciling, not reconciling through Christ, but actually present as Christ reconciling, doing in Christ His own work of reconciliation. It was done by Godhead itself; and not by the Son alone. The old theologians were right when they insisted that the work of redemption was the work of the whole

Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and we express it when we baptize into the new life of reconcilement in the threefold name."

We must, however, go deeper still if we would know something of this mystery. It must not remain a mere doctrine but become an experience. *We* crucified the Lord of Glory. *We* were purchased by His blood.

Hear St. Anselm meditating in the night watches before the crucifix: "What hast Thou done O most sweet Jesus, O friend most dear, to be entreated thus? . . . I am the blow which pained Thee; I the author of Thy death; I that laboured to torture Thee." And then he turns to us with the words that still ring clearly in our hearts: "Put all thy trust in His death once for all: have no confidence in anything else: confide wholly in that death: cover thyself wholly in that alone, wrap thyself wholly up in that death." Hear the learned and scholarly St. Bernard: "My highest philosophy is to know Jesus, and Jesus crucified." For "Calvary is the meeting place of lovers." Listen to the prayer ascribed to St. Francis: "O my Lord Jesus Christ, two graces do I beseech Thee to grant me before I die; the first that, during my life-time, I may feel in my soul and in my body, so far as may be possible, that pain which Thou, sweet Lord, didst suffer in the hour of Thy most bitter passion; the second is, that I may feel in my heart, so far as may be possible, that exceeding love whereby Thou, Son of God, wast enkindled to bear willingly such passion for us sinners."

The death of Christ differs, we know, from the death of prophets, patriots and martyrs in many

respects. It was foretold in prophecy; it was for the propitiation of sin; it was accompanied by manifestation; it was followed by supernatural victory over death and resurrection. But the real point of difference is in the Person who died. "This was none other than the Son of God." In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The Word was made flesh and crucified for us.

"The blood of God out-poured upon the tree!
So reads the Book. O mind receive the thought;
Nor helpless murmur, thou hast vainly sought
Thought-room within thee for such mystery.
Thou foolish mindling! Dost thou hope to see
Undazed, untottering, all that God hath wrought?
Before His mighty 'shall' thy little 'ought'
Be shamed to silence and humility.
Come mindling, I will show thee what 'twere meet
That thou shouldst shrink from marvelling and flee
As unbelievable—nay wonderingly
With dazed but still with faithful praises greet;
Draw near and listen to this sweetest sweet,—
Thy God, O mindling, shed His blood for thee!"

On the Cross of Calvary is manifested the greatest thing in the world, LOVE; the darkest mystery of the universe, SIN; and the highest expression of God's character, HOLINESS. "He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This manifestation is the atonement.

In a recently published life of Dr. Kali Charm Chatterjee, for forty-eight years one of the leading preachers of the Punjab, and a prince of the Church of India, we read the testimony:—

"It has often been asked why I renounced Hinduism and became a disciple of Christ. My answer is, that I was drawn almost unconsciously

to Christ by His holy and blameless life, His devotion to the will of God and His works of mercy and benevolence toward suffering humanity. The excellence of His precepts as given in the Sermon on the Mount and His love of sinners won my admiration and my heart. I admired and loved Him. The incarnations I have been taught to worship, Rama, Krishna, Mahadeo and Kali were all incarnations of power—they were heroes, sinful men of like passion with ourselves. Christ only appeared to me as holy and worthy to be adored as God. But the doctrine which decided me to embrace the Christian religion and make a public profession of my faith was the doctrine of the vicarious death and sufferings of Christ. I felt myself a sinner and found in Christ one who had died for my sins—paid the penalty due to my sins. 'For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' 'Not of works lest any man should boast.' This was the burden of the thought of my heart, Christ has died, and in doing so, paid a debt which man could never pay. This conviction which has grown stronger and stronger with my growth in Christian life and experience has now become a part of my life. It is the differentiating line between Christianity and other religions. I felt it so when I became a Christian, and I feel it most strongly now."

It is not only the vicarious death of a Saviour for sin that is the distinguishing mark of Christianity compared with all other religions, but the death of *such* a Saviour. Everything depends on the nature and character of the Being who renders the substituted satisfaction. Anselm in "the most profound, clear and logical tract of the eleventh

century," *Cur Deus Homo*, remarks that "the life of the God-Man is so sublime and so precious that it is greater incomparably than those sins, which are exceeded beyond all power of estimation by His death; . . . I would sooner incur the aggregated guilt and misery of all the sins, past and future, of this world, and also of all the sin in addition that can possibly be conceived of, rather than incur the guilt of that one sin of killing the Lord of Glory." Only Deity, so he teaches, can satisfy the claims of Deity; but man has sinned and must render satisfaction for man's sin; consequently the required and the adequate satisfaction must be rendered by a God-man. This may sound like mediæval scholastic reasoning, but we find the same profound truths embodied in the creeds used in public worship, and in the hymns of the Christian Church.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He, only, could unlock the gate
Of heaven and let us in."

The average man rebels at a doctrinal statement, but there is nothing that will so deepen our devotional spirit and save us from superficiality in prayer as meditation on these great truths. The theology of the creeds and catechisms when rightly understood appeals to the heart quite as much as to the head, to the imagination as well as to the understanding. Meditation on "the depths of God" in the Scriptures is inevitably difficult and may at first seem dry. But it is like practising scales in music; sooner or later the notes of dogma will become spiritual harmony and he who perseveres

will know something more of "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

So we come back to Paul's words (nay to the inspired word of God): "They crucified the Lord of Glory"; "the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

In the person of Jesus Christ there are two natures. The true Deity and true humanity are united but there is no mixtures of natures. God suffered on the Cross, not in God's nature but in man's nature. "When the apostle," remarks Hooker, "saith of the Jews that they crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. ii. 8), we must needs understand the whole person of Christ, who, being Lord of Glory, was indeed crucified, but not in that nature for which He is termed the Lord of Glory. In like manner, when the Son of Man, being on earth, affirmeth that the Son of Man was in heaven at the same instant (John iii. 13), by the Son of Man must necessarily be meant the whole person of Christ, who being man upon earth, filled heaven with His glorious presence, but not according to that nature for which the title of Man is given Him."

Just before He was condemned to death, Jesus Christ Himself before the high priest made the strongest possible confession of His essential humanity and Deity. The account is given in each of the synoptic gospels (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62; Luke xxii. 70). "But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest stood up and said, Answerest thou nothing? . . . I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the

Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said* [in Mark's account, *I am*]; nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments saying He hath spoken blasphemy ... He is worthy of death. Then they did spit on His face . . . What further need have we of witness, for we ourselves have heard from His own mouth."

None of them, wrote Paul, understood, "for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." "Two natures met together in our Redeemer," says the great theologian, Leo the Great, "and while the properties of each remained, so great a unity was made of either substance, that from the time that the Word was made flesh in the virgin's womb, we may neither think of Him as God without this which is man, nor as man without this which is God. Each nature certifies its own reality under distinct actions, but neither disjoins itself from connexion with the other. Nothing is wanting from either towards the other; there is entire littleness in majesty, entire majesty in littleness; unity does not introduce confusion, nor does propriety divide unity. There is one thing passible, another impassible, yet His is the contumely whose is the glory. His is the infirmity whose is the power; the selfsame Person is both capable, and conqueror, of death. God did then take on Him whole man, and so knit Himself into him, and him into Himself, in pity and in power, that either nature was in the other, and neither in the other lost its own property."

So in the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross the

human agony and disgrace is converted into a truly divine suffering by reason of the divinity that is united with the human soul and body in the unity of one self-consciousness. The passion is infinite because the Person is infinite. The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. God purchased the Church with His own blood.

"Lord, when I am weary with toiling,
And burdensome seem Thy commands,
If my load should lead to complaining,
Lord, show me Thy Hands,
Thy nail-pierced Hands, Thy cross-torn Hands,
My Saviour, show me Thy Hands.

Christ, if ever my footsteps should falter,
And I be prepared for retreat,
If desert or thorn cause lamenting,
Lord, show me Thy Feet,
Thy bleeding Feet, Thy nail-scarred Feet,—
My Jesus, show me Thy Feet.

O God, dare I show Thee
MY hands and MY feet."

— BRENTON THOBURN BADLEY.

CHAPTER IX

"HE SHOWED THEM HIS HANDS"

(*John xx. 19-29*).

IN his Epistle to the Philippians Paul refers to three stages in the growth of his friendship with Jesus. A knowledge of Christ came first, and came through many troubled sources from friend and foe. Then he saw Christ on the road to Damascus and experienced "the power of His resurrection," for him to live was Christ. Lastly he speaks of the "fellowship of His suffering" as the final goal of his friendship—to become identified with Him in a life of sacrifice and drinking the cup of His passion and death for others.

So the lover of Christ finds the shadow of the Cross the longest shadow in the world. It stretches across the ages and all lands, and falls even on the Resurrection morning.

"Peace be unto you, and when He had so said He showed unto them His hands and His side." Jesus Christ never hid His scars to win disciples. He bears in His glorified body the marks of His passion. They prove His identity, proclaim His victory and are the badge of His authority as Saviour and King. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again,

Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me even so send I you."

Thorwaldsen, the great Danish sculptor, portrayed this scene in marble. In the *Vor Fruhe-Kirke* at Copenhagen stands his statue of the Risen Christ with outstretched hands bearing the print of the nails and sending His disciples on their errand of peace. On each side of the church are six figures representing the twelve apostles, in which group Paul takes the place of Judas. To see the group as here presented makes a deep impression on the mind and heart. A Protestant Christ, not on the Cross but ready for the throne and yet scarred. The twofold message from his lips according to John's Gospel is caught by the artist's skill. "Peace be unto you"; "As my Father hath sent me even so send I you." The Cross is not only expiatory but exemplary. It whispers peace within but calls for struggle without. It has a motive as well as a message for the sinner. Those who have once had a vision of the Cross in the scars of Jesus can never be quite the same again. "Christ died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again." We have peace through His blood, and apostleship through His example.

It is remarkable that His scars were the only thing Jesus showed His disciples after His resurrection. By His scars they knew Him in the breaking of the bread at Emmaus even when they failed to recognize His form and face and speech. By His scars He convinced the ten disciples of His identity and His resurrection life. By His scars Thomas was convicted of his unbelief a week later and cried,

"My Lord and my God." His scarred hands and side are the token and seal of our peace with God and an irresistible call to service and sacrifice.

The German poet, Heine, pictures the gods of the ancient world sitting in their banqueting-hall, throned and triumphant over a subject-world. To them enters one poor peasant staggering beneath a Cross. He casts it thundering on the table, and all the gods of lust and wrong despair and die. The gods of the ancient world are the false values of the new. And when Christ casts His Cross into a man's life, all the old false values die, and a wonderful new life based on eternal values springs into being.

In the gospel records we have a fourfold world-commission from Christ's own lips. St. Matthew gives the reason *why* we are to disciple all nations. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth, Go ye." St. Mark tells *where*, "Preach the gospel to the whole creation." St. Luke emphasizes the *order* of procedure: "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations beginning from Jerusalem." But St. John touches a deeper note, and reveals the *spirit* that is to dominate and control us: "As my Father hath sent me so send I you." The servant is not greater than his Lord. We are to share the same task, under the same authority, with the same message, and endure similar suffering. "As He laid down His life for us," says John so simply and so startlingly, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

The Cross is the supreme dynamic for devotion. Jesus only needs to show His scars to win martyrs for His cause. God pours upon all the spirit of sacrifice "when they look upon Him whom they

have pierced." "And one shall say unto him what are these wounds in thine hands. Then shall he answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 6).

When Jesus Christ appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus he, too, must have seen the print of the nails and the mark of the spear in Christ's body by the celestial light that streamed from heaven. "Why persecutest thou me?"— "Jesus whom thou persecutest" . . . "I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."

No wonder that Paul uses a strange word when he speaks of his apostolic ministry and of Christ's suffering. It is used only once again in the New Testament. In Luke's Gospel we are told of the widow who cast into the treasury all she had out of her *penury*. Paul uses the same Greek word. "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part the *penury* of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the Church." The penury of Calvary!

To the Jew suffering was a problem to be solved. To the Christian it became a privilege to be shared. Saul, the Jew, faced the problem of suffering in the spirit of Job and his three friends, and it was an insoluble problem. Paul, the Christian, saw the scars of Christ and realized that the Servant of Jehovah was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Therefore he writes: "I take pleasure in weakness, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."

The glory of the Risen Christ for us is to recognize the scars; to put our hands with Thomas

on the print of the nails and say: "It is enough. Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation"— "My Lord and my God." Will this not be the supreme delight and the deepest experience of the saints in glory, to kneel and see the scars? Even Mary when she anointed His feet had no scars to kiss. These things the angels desire to look into, but they veil their faces when they behold this mystery of redeeming love.

"Crown Him the Lord of Love:
Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above
In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright."

"He showed them His hands." Did He ever show them to you? St. Francis of Assisi spent such long hours of contemplation on the scars of Jesus that he finally bore in his body the marks of the Saviour. But far more significant than the stigmata on his hands were the evidences of Christ's cross-bearing in his daily life.

When Bernard of Assisi desired to follow St. Francis, it was decided that they should go to the bishop's house, and have mass said. "After that," said Francis, "we shall remain in prayer until terce, beseeching God that by our three times opening the missal, He will show us the way which it pleases Him that we should choose."

At the first opening appeared these words, which our Lord said to the young man who asked about

the way to perfection: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and follow me" (Matt. xix. 21). At the second opening appeared the words which Christ spake to the apostles when He sent them to preach: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor scrip, nor bread nor money" (Luke ix. 3). At the third opening appeared the words of Mark viii. 34: "If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." Then St. Francis said to Bernard, "Behold the advice which Christ gives: go then and accomplish what you have read; and blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, who has deigned to show us the way to live in accordance with His Gospel."

He and his mendicant brothers devoted themselves to rigid asceticism, living in a deserted lazarhouse, visiting the abodes of sickness and poverty, preaching the gospel to an ever widening circle which finally included heretics and Mohammedans. In Egypt before Sultan Kamil, Francis gave fearless proof of his readiness to suffer for his faith. His freedom from worldly care, his joy in service, his humility and child-like confidence, his love of nature and his intense passion for men—these, too, were the stigmata, the marks of the Lord Jesus.

"Touch with Thy pierced hand
Each common day,
Making this earthly life
Full of Thy grace,
Till in the home of heaven
We find our place."

I once met a Moslem St. Francis. He belonged to one of the Sufi orders of mystics, lived in poverty,

and as I entered was earnestly counting his ninety-nine rosary-beads, each one representing one of the beautiful names of Allah. When we spoke together of these attributes and their significance to the seeker after God and how Al Ghazali and other mystics taught that we were to meditate on God's character in order to imitate His mercy, compassion and kindness, he turned to me and said: "After all, one does not need a rosary to count the ninety-nine names; they are graven on our hands." Then he spread his palms and pointed to the Arabic numerals ٨١ (eighty-one) and ١٨ (eighteen) the deep marks in every left and every right hand—the two making a total of ninety-nine. And, said he, "that is why we spread our hands open in supplication, reminding Allah of all His merciful attributes, as we plead His grace."

Then I told him of the scars of Jesus and how He bore our sins on the tree. "I will not forget thee . . . behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

They pierced His hands and His feet. The scars remain in His glorified body. They are the call to discipleship and the test of apostleship to each of those who profess to call themselves Christians. It is hard to be a follower of Christ. His demands are inexorable. Except a man forsake all that he hath he cannot be Jesus' disciple. No cross, no crown.

Jesus did not say He was the true oak or olive or cedar, but the "true vine." It is the only tree that is tied to a stake and that bleeds to bless. Every branch needs the pruning-knife, and only where it cuts deep is there promise of a cluster of fruit.

We are called to Christ's fellowship, but it is a

fellowship of suffering. Earth is the chosen battle-ground, from all eternity, for the final conflict between the powers of light and darkness.

"For when God formed in the hollow of His hand
This Ball of earth among His other balls
And set it in His shining firmament,
Between the greater and the lesser lights,
He chose it for the Star of Suffering."

The fellowship of His suffering is the real apostolic succession. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church in every land and every age. "Henceforth," said Paul, "let no man trouble me. I bear in my body the brand-marks, the scars, of the Lord Jesus."

"Christ the Son of God hath sent me
To the midnight lands;
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the pierced hands."

The life story of David Livingstone, Henry Martyn, Mary Slessor, James Gilmour, and Keith Falconer, all bear the print of the nails. When our plans are frustrated, our hopes disappointed, our visions melt away, our decisions cost blood, our pleasures become pain and we are in the agony of a Gethsemane or a Golgotha, what is it but the bearing of our Cross after Jesus? The patience of unanswered prayer, the hidden self-sacrifice, the loneliness of leadership, all these are part of the chastisement whereof all are partakers who are not bastards but sons. "Always bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Approving ourselves as ministers of God in stripes, in

imprisonments, in tumults, in watchings, in fastings."

"He who ne'er broke his bread with blinding tears,
Nor crushed upon his pillow in the night,
Wrung out his soul and fought his bitter fight,
He knows not truly joy that conquers fears."

Heaven has twelve gates and the twelve whose names appear on the foundations of the Holy City all bear the scars of the Master. Every gate is a pearl—a pearl of sacrifice.

It was a missionary in Kashmir who wrote this collect on the human body wholly surrendered to Christ. Can we make the prayer our own?

"Master, here for Thy service we render to Thee, flesh, bone, and sinew, the physical frame Thou hast given. Teach us to use it aright for Thy glory; teach us to treat it for Thee as a good machine which we hold in trust to be tended and kept for Thy purpose. Teach us to use it remorselessly, sternly, yet never misuse, and as it slowly or swiftly wears out, grant us the joy of the knowledge that it wears out for Thee. Amen."

"Christ our Forerunner conquers Death, pushes open the double doors which shut us from Eternity, and lets the soul pass through. The Eternal Wisdom, going by way of Cross and grave into the atmosphere of Reality, showed us this path, this secret: and confided to us the Cosmic Word of Power, the 'Open Sesame' of the spiritual world.

"The Light of the World had done little for us had it failed to illuminate the darkness of the grave, to sanctify the horror of contact between the wonder of flesh and the inexorable tomb. 'Venite et videte locum'*: come, see the place where Perfect Love has lain*.'" — JOHN CORDELIER in the *Path of Eternal Wisdom.*

CHAPTER X

"THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION"

THERE is a wonderful painting by Eugene Burnand, entitled *Le Samedi Saint* (Holy Saturday). It represents the eleven disciples gathered together with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, but there is no light of gladness, no smile of hope on their faces. It is the evening of the darkest day in their lives.

Jesus lies in the tomb. Their hopes lie buried with Him. "We trusted," they are saying, "that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." "We trusted—but now our trust is gone. In Galilee, beside the Lake, we saw His power and His glory. On Golgotha we heard His bitter cry and saw His dying agony. Then Joseph of Arimathea took His body and we laid it in the tomb. Jesus is dead."

Peter sits with his head in his hands, and John, his face a study of conflicting emotions, is trying to comfort him but can find no words. Disappointed discouraged, perplexed, baffled, bewildered as they think of the future, each face in the group is an individual expression of their common experience. Jesus is dead. "We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel . . . "

Thanks be to God! the gospel story does not end with the death of Christ. It does not close with

His triumphant cry, "It is finished." Nor does the apostolic message. Christ's death was followed by His resurrection. Jesus was "of the seed of David according to the flesh," but was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead." He died for our sins and was buried and "hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Such is Paul's concise statement. He bases his belief in the resurrection of Jesus, first, on the prophecies and promises that He *would* rise, and then on the appearances of the living Redeemer because He *did* rise. He catalogues those appearances in order, appeals to his own vision of the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, and then draws his conclusion: "If Christ hath not been raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most pitiable."

It is with keen insight into the character of all evidence, and especially of this evidence, that Sydney Dobell wrote: "The anxiety of Paul to rest the whole value of his preaching on the Resurrection is a grand evidence. It makes the brain of Paul an evidence. He is surety for a world of unknown facts. So of the other apostles. And the *unbelief* of the apostles compared with their after-belief and the selection of the Resurrection as the master-fact, is inestimable testimony also to unknown evidential facts."

One of the most remarkable things about the story of the resurrection as given in the four gospels is that all the accounts of these eye-witnesses emphasize the *doubts* of the Lord's followers. They

were in a sceptical frame of mind and not ready to accept hearsay evidence. The women "said nothing to any one for they were afraid" (Mark xvi. 8). When Mary Magdalene told them of her vision of a living Christ "they disbelieved" (Mark xvi. 11). When they saw Him on the mountain in Galilee some worshipped Him "but some doubted" (Matt. xxviii. 17). The apostle Thomas kept his doubts for a whole week and then he was convinced.

The faith of the apostles in the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ, therefore, was not a blind faith but open-eyed and built on accumulative and irresistible evidence. "He showed Himself after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days," and the number of those who thus saw Him alive and recognized Him was more than five hundred (Acts i. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 6). None of the apostolic band had the shadow of a doubt left after Christ's ascension and the great Day of Pentecost. They were changed men because Christ was alive for evermore. His resurrection was their living hope. It was the dynamic of their message, not only, but of their daily experience. "Him, God raised up the third day," said Peter, "and showed Him openly. Not to all the people but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead" (Acts x. 40). "Though He was crucified through weakness," writes Paul, "yet he lived by the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 4). "Jesus Christ," says John, "is a faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead." He is alive for evermore. Death can have no more dominion over Him, for He hath abolished death and brought life and

immortality to light in the gospel This is the power of the new life in Christ. He is *in* every believer the hope of glory and the secret of victory over sin. Crucified with Christ, dead and buried with Him, but now alive in Him and for Him.

The resurrection morning sheds new light—the light of eternity—on all things mundane. Everything and every man is different because of this living Hope, this manifestation of God's power and God's victory at the empty tomb. If any man is in Christ he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, all is new in the new light of the Resurrection morning.

"Light of Eternity, Light divine,
Into my darkness shine,
That the small may appear small,
And the Great, greatest of all:
O Light of eternity shine!"

When men realize the presence of the living Christ, all life's values are determined by a new standard. "Henceforth I will put no value on anything I have or possess save in relation to the Kingdom of Christ," said David Livingstone. We read in John's Gospel that "in the place where He was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a tomb." That garden still awaits us. It blossoms red with sacrifice. All the fruit of the Spirit ripens there. The power of His resurrection enables men to face the world's deepest sorrows and needs confident in Christ who knows and cares and can supply that need.

The human heart hungers for two things, redemption from sin and life eternal. The most remarkable fact in the comparative history of

religions is the universal belief of mankind in a future state of existence after death and the universal attempt to appease the gods, or God, by all manner of sacrifices and offerings. Christ is the fulfilment of both these needs. Although the notions of the future life are crude among primitive races they are real and have a dominant place in their thoughts. The very term *animism* connotes the superiority of the soul to the material world. Not only all primitive religions but all the great ethnic faiths teach immortality and have an instinct for eternal values.

Men believe in immortality because of the intrinsic incompleteness of the present life, because they have observed that character often grows even when the faculties begin to decline, and because of the imperative clamour of our affections. Love is stronger than death. Something within us echoes to this voice of the universe, and souls are drawn forward irresistibly on this one path to their eternal home. All things turn towards the heart of God, their source and also their end. "He who proclaims the existence of the Infinite," said Louis Pasteur, "and none can avoid it—accumulates in that affirmation more of the supernatural than is to be found in all the miracles of all the religions; for the notion of the Infinite presents that double character, that it forces itself upon us and yet is incomprehensible. When this notion seizes upon our understanding, we can but kneel. I see everywhere the inevitable expression of the Infinite in the world; through it the supernatural is at the bottom of every heart." Science speaks of infinite space, infinite time, infinite numbers, infinite life and

motion. "He hath set eternity in their hearts" (Eccles. iii. 11).

Death is not more universal than the longing of the human soul for life, more life, abundant life, such as Jesus brought to light through His glorious resurrection and ascension.

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Hath ever truly longed for death.

'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
'Tis life, not death, for which we pant,
More life, and fuller, that we want."

This truth is proclaimed in the beliefs of the ancient Etruscans; in the Book of the Dead (which was really a book of life) by the ancient Egyptians; in the last book of the laws of Manu on transmigration and final beatitude; in the elaborate popular eschatologies of Islam; even in the interpretation of Nirvana by the best Buddhist scholars.

The desire of all nations for life eternal is fulfilled in Christ and in Christ alone. Because Jesus has brought life and immortality to light by His death and resurrection, He has given us a unique message, one that is suited to the sins and sorrows of humanity.

Earnest seekers after truth in all nations see an invisible world, hear inaudible voices, and try to lay hold of intangible realities; therefore they will never be attracted by a missionary message that is not other-worldly. It was at the grave of Lazarus that Jesus preached the Gospel of the Resurrection.

"I am the resurrection and the life: whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

This was the heart of Paul's message. He preached Christ and the resurrection. He knew no other gospel. "Now, brothers, I would have you know the gospel I once preached to you, the gospel you received, the gospel in which you have your footing, the gospel by which you are saved—provided you adhere to my statement of it—unless indeed your faith was all haphazard. First and foremost, I passed on to you what I had myself received, namely, that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures had said, that He was buried, that He rose on the third day as the Scriptures had said .. . If Christ did not rise, then our preaching has gone for nothing, and your faith has gone for nothing too. Besides, we are detected bearing false witness to God by affirming of Him that He raised Christ—whom He did not raise, if after all dead men never rise" (1 Cor. xv. 1-3, 14, 15; Moffatt's Version). Jesus was victor over death. He removes the terror of the tomb. He has brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. If in this life only we had hope in Christ, our message, and we ourselves, would be most pitable. But we are ambassadors of the Conqueror of Sin and Death, the immortal King of Glory. Our gospel is not for this life only but concerns eternity, and is therefore of infinite value. All our Christian institutions, organizations, equipments, resources and methods are only means to an end. After all they are but the scaffolding for the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The social gospel has its place and its power, for Christ came to heal the broken-hearted and give liberty to the captive. We dare not neglect the ethical content of the gospel message, and its severe demands. But nothing so appeals to the individual as the gospel of the resurrection.

The gospel is not, as Bolshevists allege, an opiate for the poor and miserable, forced down their throats by the rich and arrogant. The gospel is the proclamation that the things that are seen are temporal and that the unseen things are eternal. Now in a world full of injustice we may have to partake of the fellowship of Christ's suffering; but by faith in Him we shall attain unto the resurrection of the dead. "He will change our vile bodies, fashioning them like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 10.)

The eternal values, latent for all who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, were the joy and inspiration of the apostles and saints and martyrs of the early Church. They won the world for Christ because they despised the world. They founded a spiritual kingdom in every land because their citizenship was in heaven. They laid the foundations of the Church in every city because they were "pilgrims and strangers" and looked for "the city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

There is no aspect of Christian truth that needs emphasis to-day more than this. Indeed we are progressives in theology if we carry this message of the Risen Christ and of eternal life to the non-

Christian world. "For the last thirty years or so," says Dr. Deissman, "the discernment of the eschatological character of the Gospel of Jesus has more and more come to the front in international Christian theology. I regard this as one of the greatest steps forward that theological enquiry has ever achieved. We to-day must lay the strongest possible stress upon the eschatological character of the gospel, which it is the practical business of the Church to proclaim. Namely, that we must daily focus our minds upon the fact that the Kingdom of God is near, that God with His unconditioned sovereignty comes through judgment and redemption, and that we have to prepare ourselves inwardly for the *Maranatha* — "The Lord cometh."

This is indeed our missionary message, the everlasting Gospel of One who came, who died on the Cross, who arose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and who is coming again. From Bethlehem and Calvary, from the empty tomb and from the clouds that hide Him from view, there streams the light of eternity. The great ellipse that includes the content of our faith and of our message to the world may be drawn as widely as possible, but it always has and always will have two foci—the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and their relation to man's sin and his eternal destiny. This is the gospel of the Resurrection.

"This hath He done and shall we not adore Him?
This shall He do and can we still despair?
Come, let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,
Cast at His feet the burthen of our care.

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
Glad and regretful, confident and calm;
Then through all life and what is after living,
Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."