



**UNVEILED GLORY**  
by Hannah Hurnard

Author of the  
**OPEN UNDERSTANDING**  
and many other books

**RISEN + HE IS RISEN**



*The*  
*Unveiled Glory*

*By*

**HANNAH HURNARD**

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THE UNVEILED GLORY

Rahamah  
Box 135  
Lowell, Mass. 01853

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE VEIL OVER THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION VICTORY

In this chapter, which is really an introduction to the glorious Truth unveiled to us by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, I feel that it may be helpful to relate the chain of circumstances which gradually led up to the unveiling in my own understanding of the indescribably glorious truths about which I am trying to write. The things which I see now are so astonishingly and blessedly unlike some of my earlier conceptions of certain truths, and the revolution has been so great in heart and soul and mind, and is the outcome of such a long and hidden process, that it really seems necessary to give some explanation of how such a revolution came about.

The first clear link in this chain of events goes back to a certain night during the years of terrorism in Palestine. I was staying with two women missionaries in a remote Moslem town in the Jordan Valley amongst wild Bedouin tribes and a few scattered and isolated pioneer settlements of the Jews. There was not a single doctor, nor a fully trained nurse in the town, and that night, just before sunset, word came that a young Moslem woman was desperately ill and would certainly die before the morning unless she could be taken to a hospital.

Those were perilous times and every evening at sunset there was a curfew. To be outside the house during the curfew hours usually meant that one was about unlawful business and it was generally a case of shoot at sight before being shot yourself. Rumour had reached us that very day that more raiding tribesmen had crossed over from Jordan, and there might well be another battle that night, no one knew where, out in the dark loneliness of the valley.

But here was this poor Moslem woman desperately needing medical help, and we decided to break curfew, steal away under cover of darkness and try to get through to the Mission Hospital away on the hills of Nazareth, trusting that we would meet none of the marauding gangs and would avoid being sniped at or driving over a road mine.

It was a strange, tense drive. I dared not use the headlights for fear of attracting attention; the road for several miles was lonely and full of potholes, and yet the midwife was urgent that we must make all possible speed. Never in my life before, I think, had I been quite so vividly conscious of the Presence of the Lord Himself. It was as though He sat beside us in the car saying "Be of good cheer! It is I, be not afraid." A wonderful peace filled my heart, almost entirely driving away the natural fear and panic, so that, instead of wondering all the time just when, and from where, a sniper's bullet might be fired, or whether we would pass over a road mine, my mind was garrisoned with quiet assurance.

As the moon at last rose over the great shoulder of Mount Tabor, the woman became unconscious. I turned on the light and we went rushing as speedily as possible up the hairpin bends of the hills, until, at last, we reached the Mission Hospital. Then, just as the stretcher bearers gently carried the unconscious woman into the operating theatre, she died.

That night, alone in my room at the hospital, as I thought of the desperate drive which had been all in vain, I found myself really confronted for the first time in my life by a question which I had never fully faced up to before.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH to those who never in their lifetime have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel and who die knowing nothing at all about the Saviour?

Here was this young Moslem woman, not more than twenty years old, whom we had tried so desperately to save from death. She had never heard the Gospel and we hoped she might have had the chance to hear it in the Mission Hospital. Now she had died. What *was* happening to her?

The teaching upon this matter in which I had been brought up was most emphatic. *All such were lost*—lost eternally. For there could be no chance anywhere nor at any time except during this life on earth, for anyone to hear the Gospel. That was why it was so supremely important that there should be missionaries who would go to the ends of the earth to make known "to every creature" the Good News, the glorious news of the loving Saviour Who died for everyone; the message of the One true God "Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—unless, alas, they were born and lived where they never had the chance to hear about Him and so could not believe on Him.

A God and Saviour, in fact, who was all love and forgive-



ness and willing to receive the worst and most ignorant sinner until the very last flicker of their breath and earthly consciousness, but Who, one moment after they died, would turn away—for ever turn away—saying sadly, "Too late. There is no further chance now. I can no longer undertake to save this lost soul for whom I died."

When I got to that point in my thoughts, alone there in the hospital room, and thought of how I myself had been so infinitely privileged and blessed to be born in a Christian home in a Christian land, I looked up into the face of the Lord Who so loved me and that Moslem woman also, I remembered that He had died for us both, and I said to Him:

"Lord, help me to understand. Have You really ceased to love this ignorant Moslem woman, my sister human being, and yet so terribly less privileged than myself? Can You really do nothing for her now? We had no chance to tell her even one word about You. Does this mean that she must really go out into the darkness and be lost for ever and ever? Then, Lord, why did You let her be born, and all the countless other billions of such ignorant men and women and children around the world in all ages, who never heard the Gospel? They began by being 'lost' and they end up by being 'lost eternally' and here, as in other Moslem and heathen lands, they suffer horribly all their lives because of brutally cruel and crushing customs, and then, when they die unsaved, they must suffer even worse torments forever and ever".

Then it seemed to me that very gently and quietly the Lord about Whom I had supposed that I must believe such things, said :

"Hannah, when you were driving that poor, ignorant woman to the hospital, you were absolutely certain that I Myself was with you, and that My love and pity and compassion were encompassing you all. Then can you really believe that one moment after she died, I, Who had constrained you to risk the snipers and the raiders, then withdrew from her My compassion and My love, and My power to save her? Must you not think that I, Who was with you, although unseen, would be the very first One whom that poor ignorant soul would see when she left the body? And that she, who had never heard of Me while she was living on earth, would find Me close beside her, offering her the love and forgiveness and the 'Good News' of the Gospel which she had never had the chance to hear?"

"Lord," I whispered, "it does not say so in the Bible, but just the opposite. It says that she and those like her, are lost — are lost for ever".

"It does not say so in the Bible!" said the Good Shepherd of the sheep. "Why, Hannah, have you never read of the Shepherd Who goeth after the sheep *until He find it?*" (Luke 15, 4.) "Have you never read the words which I myself spoke, 'This is the condemnation' (the only condemnation) 'that *light is come* into the world and men love darkness rather than light.' (John 3, 19.) "How can you suppose that anyone will ever be condemned or accused of rejecting that which they *never had a chance* to receive? Trust that woman on whom you had compassion enough to risk that drive, trust her to ME, for, far more than you do, I know how to have 'compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.' (Heb. 5, 2.) I have such love for her that I went to the cross for her."

Next morning, because even a poor Moslem woman may not, by Moslem law, be buried among Christians, the dead body of the woman was seated in my car and I drove her back to Beisan. Then, as I watched the young husband and the mourners carry away the pitiful, blanket-wrapped figure, to lay it, just as it was, in the grave, I found all my questioning sorrow turned into joy and thankfulness. For what we had been unable to tell her while she lay unconscious in the car, and what she had never lived to hear at the hospital, I was sure that she now heard in some way from the lips of the One Who was Himself her Creator, her Lover and her Redeemer. I thought with a new and lovely understanding of the poor beggar Lazarus who had died of hunger and sores at the gate of the rich man, who, when at last his body perished, found himself in that condition called "Abraham's bosom", where he, who in his lifetime had experienced only "evil things" (Luke 16, 25) was now "comforted". What could that mean except that after death *he had the chance* to know and experience, in some way, the grace and kindness and love of the Saviour about Whom he had heard nothing while he lived on earth? Yes, certainly it must mean that he had *a chance* to know what was offered to him in Christ, before being accused of rejecting it.

From that night I laid aside, once for all and with adoring thankfulness, the conception of a God Who so loved fallen sinners that He died for them, but Who, if they never heard about Him, allowed them to "perish" and to be tormented in hell and to be separated from Him for ever.

But I kept silent about the matter because, when on occasions I tried to tell some of my friends about this experience, they thought that it completely contradicted the Scriptures, and that even to suggest such a thing would be dangerous, as it would most likely cut the nerve of missionary effort. It was contended that if there was a chance for everyone who had not heard the Gospel while still on earth, to hear it after they die, there can be no urgent need for anyone to leave home and country and loved ones and to go forth, at great cost, to the ends of the earth in order to preach the Gospel to every creature. And why they asked should Christ have said, "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." (Mark 16, 16.)

I didn't then know the answer to those questions! I could only say "The Lord does command us to go and preach the Gospel to every creature because everyone must hear it sometime or other, before they can be saved by responding to Him. He also wants everyone to hear as soon as possible, so that those poor, ignorant and suffering multitudes who live in 'the dark places of the earth full of the habitations of *cruelty*' (Psalm 74, 20) may be saved and be rescued from all the horrors and abominations and unspeakable cruelties which sin produces in the world."

I didn't know the answer to that either and how thankful we ought to be that the Apostles did obey the Lord's command and went forth to preach the Gospel to every creature, for if there had been no missionaries to Britain surely we would still be sacrificing one another on stone altars and knowing nothing about the Saviour either. The Gospel does say that the Good Shepherd goeth after the lost *until* He find it (Luke 15, 4) and the love revealed to us on Calvary is a love which surely cannot cease to love a poor ignorant soul for ever just one moment after that soul leaves the body, simply because that person had been born in a place beyond the reach of the Gospel, or even, having heard it, fearing the cost of torture and death which would probably follow response to the Saviour, as is the case in Moslem lands, that one decides he dared not accept it.

That was as far as I could see in those days: just the simple certainty that no soul created by the "faithful Creator" would be lost eternally nor be sent to an endless hell, because, never having heard the Gospel, they had never "believed on the Lord Jesus Christ".

I know that there are many people reading this who will be horrified that such "terrible notions" about the God Who is Love allowing the ignorant heathen to go to hell, could ever have entered my head. But I was brought up in a circle of Christians in which these things were honestly and sincerely believed. And there are many Christians today who still sincerely believe them and fear to give them up because they are sure that the Scriptures *do* teach them that and it would be disloyal to the Word of God to suggest anything else.

The second link in this "chain of events", by which gradually the veil was drawn aside in my understanding, came through reading an article in an American magazine. It was written by a mother who had made the ghastly discovery that her only son had been snared by others into becoming a hopeless drug addict, while he was still only a boy at school. The magazine in which she told her dreadful story was lying on the table in the sunny sitting-room of the Mission doctor's house in Nazareth, the windows of which looked out over the very town in which the Lord of Love had lived and worked when He was here on earth. I never can forget the impression of horror made upon my mind as I read the account of that mother's heart-broken efforts to help her boy break free from his appalling slavery. She discovered that a number of his boy friends, all teenagers, were also in the same dreadful situation. Her son robbed her, he joined gangs who burgled, he went crazy whenever deprived of the dope, he took any dreadful risk just in order to obtain the daily allowance for which he so craved, from those who had snared him into that diabolical slavery before he had the least understanding of what they were leading him into. Each time that he was sent to an institution, and, nearly maddened by the craving, went through "the cure", as soon as he came out again he was waylaid at once by his old companions and led off to be given another injection of the dope so that he would be once again in their power. At last he ran away from his mother and home altogether, and it was then that the social worker, who had been specially trained to help in just such cases, was obliged to say to her:

"I am afraid it is not in the nature of mothers to do this, but I think there is only one thing for you to do now, *forget that you ever had a son.*"

"Forget that you ever had a son!" *Can* any true parent ever do that? How could that mother forget that her boy had once been an innocent little baby? and now, her own

child still, led by wicked men into the torment of such slavery. I remembered the heart-broken cry recorded in the Bible, of the father whose rebellious son had just perished, and how it is written of that father, "as he went up to the chamber over the gate he wept, and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son—my son Absalom. Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom my son, my son." (2 Sam. 18, 33.)

Does God forget that He is our *Maker*? That He brought us into existence and allowed us all to be born into a fallen race where untold multitudes would be corrupted even before manhood, and would become enslaved to terrible vices and evils of every kind, and who would, in their turn, corrupt others? When He looks upon such tormented souls, and upon so many little helpless children born into conditions where they must inevitably learn all manner of debasing evils, does it not seem to Him that He hears the cry ascend, from *all* fallen and sin-suffering mankind: "O Lord, Thou *art* our Father . . . and we *all* are the work of Thine hand . . . behold! see, we beseech Thee, we are *all* Thy people." (Isa. 64, 8, 9.)

Did not the Psalmist utter words that are true of every member of the human race, when he exclaimed, "*Thy hands* have made me and fashioned me." (Psa. 119, 73). And again: "My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret . . . Thine eyes did see my substance being yet unperfected, and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (Psa. 139, 15, 16.)

Is not the Psalmist here recording the fact that God knows all about the formation of the babe in the womb, the coming together of the parent cells and all that goes to produce and develop each individual in the womb of a godly mother and just as much so, in the womb of the alcoholic mother, of the mentally unbalanced, the tainted and the vice-enslaved? And if it is true that "Like as a *father* pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame and He remembereth that we are but dust" (Psa. 103, 13, 14) then surely we must suppose that it is upon all mankind that His pity is called forth, and not simply upon those that "fear Him", although of course those will be conscious of it, while all the other pitiful, wandering and ignorant souls will not be conscious of it.

"Forget that you ever had a son?"

"*Can* a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they

may forget, yet will I *not* forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." (Isa. 49, 15, 16.)

As I finished reading that terrible story of a mother's agony over an enslaved and lost son whom she was powerless to help, what a turmoil of new questions awoke in my mind! I thought of the multitudes all over the world, in this generation and in every past generation, born and doomed to grow up in haunts of vice and evil, influenced towards evil, taught to love it, and corrupted by others from their earliest years, so that they become bound to degrading and destructive habits from which they cannot even desire to break free. I remembered many of those verses in the Bible which speak of the wickedness of men becoming so great that the cry of it arises up before God and constrains Him "to come down" and intervene. And a glimmer of new light began to shine in my mind as I thought of the verses in which Our Lord speaks about the *last* judgment and said that for many such people it would be far more "tolerable" than for many enlightened religious people. I began to see that even those who were overwhelmed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as in the Flood, had not yet been judged to endless perdition but were yet to appear again before the Son of Man before final judgment was passed upon them. And the very first glimmering of the possibility of an intermediate condition during which *all* might have a chance to hear the Gospel which they had never heard upon earth or had heard too late, began to suggest itself to my mind.

I found myself obliged to begin asking many, many questions which, until then, had never occurred to me, but which now took on the most tremendous importance. One of the greatest of these questions concerned the argument of theologians that all men have free will and therefore, being rational and responsible creatures, they alone are responsible for the choices which they make and for their love of evil.

As I thought and prayed about it I found myself obliged to ask in all honesty, *Arc all human beings really free to exercise their free will?* Certainly man was created a free-willed creature, entrusted by his Creator with this greatest of all gifts, for the use or misuse of which, he was responsible. *But were not our first parents, while still in an unfallen condition, the only two human beings who in actual fact were fully and perfectly free to exercise their own free will without any bias whatsoever towards sin and evil?* When they chose to turn away from God in disobedience, they did so without the

slightest pressure or influence of inherited self-will upon them.

And when they fell, did they not, at least in part, lose full freedom of will? for they became the slaves of sin and its over-mastering desires. The glorious thing which the Saviour of mankind undertakes to do for all men, is to restore to them the liberty of an unfettered free will which was lost to the human race by our first parents. For until they are "born again" of the Spirit, what individual can be said to possess a free will in the full sense in which our first parents possessed it? We are "conceived in sin, born in sin" and so biased towards sin and with the love of self so strong in each of us, that from our earliest years we are its helpless slaves. I thought of multitudes in heathen and pagan lands who, if they hear the Gospel, know that to accept it will mean for them death by poisoning or beating, or if not that, at least the loss of all that they possess and the bringing of reproach and agony and loss upon all those whom they love most. Can it really be called a *free*, unbiased choice if they decide that the cost is too great and the reward promised in the "hereafter" too remote and unreal to prevail? Must it not be called a *forced* choice, rather than a free one, when men and women under torture deny their faith in Jesus Christ, because they were still such undeveloped Christians that their flesh proved stronger than their spirit? Did not Our Lord Himself say that men must "strive" (*agonize*) to enter in at the strait gate and admitted that the broad way is so much *easier* for men to follow?

As I thought about that dreadful article, it broke upon my understanding in an almost overwhelming way that, though all human beings potentially possess free will, the actual fact is that multitudes of them are born into conditions where they will not be free to exercise that "free will" because they will be the slaves of sin even in childhood. Whereas I, like others, was born into an environment in which it is infinitely easier to choose good and to respond to the Saviour. Had the environment been different, in all probability I should not have done so. I would not have DARED to choose aright.

Then I thought of the verses in the Scriptures which do seem to suggest that we are all responsible for our choices. For there is that verse which says, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." (Josh. 24, 15.) If men and women are challenged to *choose* whom they will serve, then surely they must have the power to do so?

But when I turned to the context I made an intensely

interesting and suggestive discovery. For these words were spoken by Joshua to the people of God already *inside* "The Promised Land". This was a challenge to people who had already been delivered from bondage. They were no longer slaves, but had been "saved" by the Lord and had been given power over all their enemies. Therefore they were the perfect example of all those who have been delivered by the Saviour and have had restored to them a *freed* will, and they *are* responsible for the choices which they make. It is such people to whom this challenge is addressed. Do they desire to continue following and serving the Lord, or do they choose to turn back again into the old life of bondage to self from which they have been delivered? As far as I could discover all the verses in the Bible which challenge men to make a *free* choice, are addressed to the people of God. The message for all others, for the multitudes of weary, sin-sick souls both in heathen and so-called Christian lands, is the *Good News* of a Saviour Who is able and willing to deliver them from all the tormenting and debasing and hurtful things which spoil their lives. It is the message of the Great Physician Who is able to heal us all of the frightful disease of Sin; of a Redeemer Who at infinite cost to Himself is able to redeem, and restore to us the freedom and liberty which were lost to mankind at the Fall.

I saw that what the Scriptures everywhere assert is that what we all need most of all is a *Saviour* Who can set us free from our slavery to sin and death. The Apostle Paul wrote so clearly in Romans 8, 20: "*The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope.*" So that, through suffering this awful slavery of sin for a time, all men may learn to hate it and to long for freedom. And again he wrote, "*It is not of him that willeth . . . but of God that sheweth mercy.*" (Rom. 9, 16.) Surely this must mean that until a sinner has been saved and liberated by the Saviour, he is not called upon to choose goodness but only to recognize his own suffering and need and to cry out to God for help—yes, perhaps even to "the unknown God".

Then I began to look up and study various passages in the Scriptures which until then I had read quite carelessly and unthinkingly, and I discovered how heavily this same problem had weighed upon the hearts of God's people—the prophets—until they came to see the real truth.



I seemed to hear the very heart of Isaiah crying out to God as he exclaimed :

"We are *all* as an unclean thing, and *all* our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we do *all* fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And *there is none that calleth upon Thy Name*, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee . . . But now, O LORD, THOU ART OUR FATHER; we are the clay, and Thou our potter, and *we all are the work of Thine hand* . . . behold, see, we beseech Thee, *we are all Thy people.*" (Isa. 64, 6-9.)

I noticed the prophet made the claim that God was the Father of *all*, even though at the same time he admitted with heartbroken sorrow that none were calling upon God nor stirring up themselves to take hold of Him. Yet in spite of that he insisted that God is the Father of *ALL*, that all men are the work of His hands and therefore He has a responsibility towards them.

It is difficult for me to describe the almost overwhelming impression of astonishment and thankfulness which this discovery made upon me. You see, all my Christian life I had been taught to suspect the term "The universal Fatherhood of God". No, He was the Father only of such as "stirred themselves up to call upon Him" in penitence and faith. Not until we are born again of the Spirit have we the right, I had always supposed, to call Him Father. Yet here was Isaiah the prophet stating exactly the contrary. And with, as it were, a gasp of astonished realization, I saw that though it is true *we do not know* that we have the right to call Him Father as long as we wander in self-will and trespasses and sins, though we have no consciousness of that lovely relationship, yet it actually exists! It is true that the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders that they were of their "father the Devil". But that was because in actual fact they were acting according to the nature of evil and thus were really acting as though the Devil were their father. They were acting contrary to the nature of their heavenly Father and therefore had not the right to call themselves His sons in nature and character.

Then, as I pondered on this passage in Isaiah 64, I asked myself if it were possible that Isaiah was referring to the Jewish nation only. Did he mean that anyone who had been privileged to be born a Jew and to be circumcised as a baby, had the right to call God their Father because that outward fact gave them a special claim upon Him? If so, did it not mean they had been born into "a chosen nation", all

of whom He meant to save, even though they rebelled against Him, and that He had no such loving and gracious purposes for the rest of mankind unless they were fortunate enough to be born within reach of hearing about the Jewish religion and joining the Jewish Church?

Ah, no! I saw how impossible that was! Sin and rebellion cannot mean one thing in God's sight if they are found in a "Jew", and something else in a Gentile. And anyhow, for what was Israel "chosen" except to be the "representative nation" shewing forth the lovely and gracious redemptive purposes of God for *all nations* of the earth? Everything that is promised to Israel, is promised to them as the representative people through whom God reveals His love, His FATHERLY LOVE to all mankind.

No, when Isaiah called upon God and made the claim, "We are ALL Thy people and the work of Thine hand," even though we are not calling upon Thee nor stirring up ourselves to take hold upon Thee, he was not stating a special prerogative of the Jews; but he was appealing to the God Whom he knew and loved; and he based his appeal upon what he knew to be the responsibility which the Creator Himself fully accepted—the responsibility to save and bring to perfection *all* the creatures whom He brought into existence, Jew and Gentile alike, and that in spite of, or rather because of, the awful condition into which their misuse of the gift of free will had brought them.

As these things began to take clearer shape in my mind I wondered more and more at the strange fact that, though I, as a Gentile Christian, had always seen how mistaken the Jews were when they supposed that the "faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4, 19) predestinated to salvation only such as belonged to the Jewish Church and were made members of "The Chosen People" by the rite of circumcision, while He allowed all other Gentile peoples to perish, had never seen that I had fallen into the same error by supposing He was such a Creator that He would permit all who were not privileged to be born within "sound of the Gospel" and to enter the *Christian* Church, to perish endlessly also. Yet, when this began to dawn upon me, and I saw how the Christian Church was following so closely in the steps of the Jewish Church in these matters, and repeating exactly the same error, it was still almost impossible for me to admit to myself such an overwhelmingly new and revolutionary idea. It was indeed a terrific challenge with which I was confronted that sunny day

at Nazareth, and it seemed to bristle with problems which continued to haunt my mind and conscience increasingly. There was more, however, much more, to follow, before the veil was at last drawn aside from my understanding of the glorious thing revealed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection from the dead.

Soon after this experience there came a third link in the chain of events leading up to a great revolution in my understanding of the things unveiled to us by the Lord and Saviour.

I had already been living for sixteen years in "The Holy Land" and for twelve out of those sixteen years there had been incessant terrorism in the country and ever-increasing hatreds between the peoples of the land. Things came to a terrible climax during the last two or three years of the British Mandate, when the hatreds and acts of violence were so dreadful that sometimes it seemed as though we must be living at the mouth of hell.

One day, right at the end of the Mandate, just a few weeks before Great Britain withdrew her forces from the country, circumstances made it necessary for me to make a long round-about journey from Jerusalem to Gaza and back. In those days even the shortest journeys meant going incredible distances in order to avoid, as far as possible, passing from Arab territory to Jewish territory and *vice versa*. This particular journey involved driving for miles along a main road in the Arab territory, which road, however, was also the only one which could be used by heavily armed Jewish convoys which had to travel back and forth carrying food and other supplies to their settlements on the fringe of the Negev desert. The road had already become a kind of "death trap" as every convoy of armoured cars was a target for Arab attack, and the convoys defended themselves by firing as they passed along the road at any group of people visible, because, being Jewish, they were driving through enemy territory where they must expect to be attacked.

On my lonely journey home from Gaza I ran into the aftermath of one such attack between a Jewish convoy and an Arab ambush. The things I saw and experienced on that horrible drive so sickened and terrified me that the prospect of having to continue driving alone along such a deadly highway was almost more than I could bear. When, therefore, a few miles past the dreadful sights of the ambush, I saw two

of our own British armoured cars drawn up at the side of the road for repair work, the relief and thankfulness in my heart were almost indescribable. Here were some of my own countrymen close beside me in that wilderness of hate and horror. I would stop and speak to them, just for the relief of hearing my own language and speaking to fellow human beings who would not hate me, and who could be trusted to take compassion on one of their own countrywomen driving all alone. Also I hoped that they would be able to warn me if there were further ambushcades ahead.

I drew up behind the armoured cars and went thus eagerly to speak to the soldiers. One of them was bending over the engine, hastily making some adjustment; the other, with a bayonet in his hands, swung round to face me as I spoke in English behind their backs.

I had been through many frightening and grim experiences in that land of fierce hatreds, but in all my life I have never known anything so terrible as that experience.

It was the form of a man in a soldier's uniform which stood before me, but it was a devil who looked at me through that man's awful eyes. A devil of lust—not just to kill, but to torture and rend in pieces. Then the man's mouth jerked open and a torrent of words poured out in a voice which was not, could not, be human; words telling me just what those hands itched to do to my body with that bayonet—what they would do if I did not flee at once; what I verily believe they might have done if some angel of the Lord had not stood by me and stayed those hands.

I do not know what things had just happened; or what looking on at, or sharing in bloodshed, or fear perhaps of surprise attack, had temporarily turned that ordinary and perhaps normally cheery and kindly soldier into a *devil* lusting to run that bayonet into any body that came within reach. The thing that looked at me out of those eyes was something which would certainly have found pleasure in nailing me to a tree or fence and leaving me there crucified at the wayside.

I remember what a *Christian* policeman once said to me in Palestine, after seeing a truckload of his friends drive over a roadmine which blew them all to pieces, and after it had been his dreadful task to help gather up those pieces later. "I tell you, Miss Hurnard, a madness of hell comes into your mind and you can think of only one pleasure, to do to someone else that which you have just seen done to your friends."

Every time the memory returns to me of standing there,

shivering and paralysed by the thing that looked at me out of the eyes of a fellow-human being, I seem to see a picture of other human beings in concentration camps and secret prisons, *helpless* in the power of men who have literally been changed into devils, with nothing, nothing whatever, to hinder those devils from satisfying their lust for cruelty.

Not for a long time could I bring myself to speak to anyone of that experience at the roadside when I faced a man who had temporarily become a devil. The one to whom I spoke of it at last, an ex-army doctor, said, "Yes, that is what often happens to men on battlefields, to ordinary nice, humane men, loving husbands and fathers and devoted sons. They *are* changed into devils."

Over and over again after that experience, every time that I read of fresh atrocities committed by human beings, I found my heart crying out in anguish:

"Why?—why, O God our Maker? why did You ever create human beings in *Your own image* capable of becoming devils, and that for ever? How can You allow them to be born, countless millions of them, into a world where conditions are such that multitudes of them will become so brutalized and debased that they will grow into devils; while countless others will be forced to be the victims of their devilry?"

Can it, can it ever be possible, I wondered, that the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ can feel it worth while, can even feel it right or just, to secure for all eternity a family of glorified and happy sons and daughters redeemed out of such a fallen world as this *at the expense* of millions more who, because they were born into such a world, have become fit company for devils only and for the torments of *an endless hell*. And, worst of all, *to be fixed in a state of hopeless evil for ever?*

How could the Bible possibly speak of the perfect victory of God our Creator Who loves righteousness and cannot bear evil, *if that victory really means that He cannot bring His own creatures at last to hate evil as He hates it, but must confirm multitudes, indeed the majority of them, in their choice of evil for ever and ever?*

Surely the only thing which perfect Love and perfect Righteousness can consider worthy of the name of victory is to be able to win *all* to hate and forsake evil, for ever beyond the reach of any temptation to return to it again? What sort of a victory is it to be able only to subdue evil and prevent it harming any but those who choose it, and to be *unable* to

bring human souls to abominate it and desire to forsake it, so that evil itself ceases to exist?

The clearer these things presented themselves to my mind, the more plainly I saw that any supposed interpretations of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures which taught otherwise, must be mistaken interpretations, because they are totally at variance to the revelation of a Holy God Who loves righteousness and hates evil, and Who only permits its existence temporarily that all creatures may learn to hate it and turn from it for ever.

Then my thoughts turned to all those verses in the Bible which I supposed did teach these very things which now seemed utterly impossible, verses speaking, for instance, of "vessels of wrath fitted only for destruction," and yet "marred in the hands of the Potter" Himself! I studied again Romans 9, especially verse 20:

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"

Yes, in the light of the glory of love in "the face of Jesus Christ," the Son of God Who hung upon the cross and was put to death by just such cruel, dehumanized men; in the light of the revelation of God which He has given, every man and woman must have the right to say to their Maker,

"Do You really want us to believe such things about You after the revelation You have given to us in the Lord Jesus Christ? We are told by earnest and devout men that the Scriptures declare these things, while others equally earnest and devout declare that they teach the very opposite. Do Your Scriptures really teach that You will allow evil to exist for ever and ever and that You will give up to their choice of evil, multitudes of creatures whom You created for Your own glory?"

The more I prayed over Romans 9, the more surprised I became! First I discovered that the passage in Isaiah from which the Apostle Paul took this very quotation, certainly cannot be made to confirm any interpretation declaring that many, or even a few, of God's creatures will have to be confirmed in evil and be lost to Him for ever. Just the opposite, as a study of the passage will show quite clearly.

Isaiah 45, 9-12: "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! . . . Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it What makest Thou? Or Thy work, He hath no hands? Woe

unto him that saith to his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What has thou brought forth?"

v. 11: "Thus saith the Lord, The Holy One of Israel and His Maker, *Ask me of things to come concerning my sons* and concerning the work of My hands . . ." v. 18: "Thou said the Lord that created the heavens, God Himself that formed the earth . . . *He created it not in vain*" . . . v. 21: "There is no God else beside Me, *a just God and a Saviour*" . . . v. 22: "Look unto Me and be ye saved *all* the ends of the earth . . ." v. 23: "*I have sworn by Myself*, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness . . . that unto Me *every* knee shall bow; *every* tongue shall swear" . . . v. 24: "Even to Him shall *all* men come, and *all* that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed."

What does all this mean? Is it not a complete contradiction of the reproach which many level against God, without even realizing what they are doing, when they maintain that the Scriptures teach that for multitudes of God's creatures His creation of them and His redemption of them also, *will have been in vain*, because He will be obliged to allow them to be lost to Himself for ever, endless rebels against His love; just as though the Saviour had never died for them? No, these verses assert the very opposite of that which I had for so long believed! Here we have God Himself declaring (the language of Scripture is so vehement it says *swearing*) THAT HE HAS NOT CREATED ANYTHING IN VAIN, and that even though multitudes have fallen into such evil that it looks as though they are marred beyond the possibility of repair, this will *not* prove to be the case. Therefore, says the Scripture, no creature has the right to blame their Creator or to say to Him, Look what a failure You have produced! None can justly accuse Him of having failed in their case by allowing them to become spoiled beyond His power to reclaim and remake. None dare assert that anything He has brought into being will turn out useless for ever and ever, for His answer is: No don't reproach Me. *Wait until you see the final results* of My glorious purposes for you all. "Ask Me of *things to come* concerning My sons and the work of My hands." Wait until you see the end of the whole process of My creative working before you begin to accuse Me of failure. For I have sworn by Myself that in the end "*every* knee shall bow," *every* tongue confess allegiance to Me and to Me shall *all* men come.

I had always supposed that this verse meant there would be a *forced* submission to God in the end, and that all His

enemies would be obliged to bow before Him, although at the same time still hating and fearing Him, but no longer able to express their evil desires in action.

But what sort of a victory could that be to the Father heart of God, the God Who is Holy Love? Surely any father must consider it the most tragic of all failures if they are only able to bring about a forced submission while the hearts of their own sons still love evil and hanker after it and long to flee the father's presence, and to be *separated* from him for ever? No! St. Jerome gave the perfect comment when he said, "All God's enemies shall perish; not that they shall cease to exist, but *they will cease to be His enemies*". They will become His willing sons and lovers. Anything else must be an impossible distortion of the unutterably glorious truth revealed to us by the Son of God Himself.

When I compared this 45th chapter of Isaiah with the 9th chapter of Romans, especially vv. 20-26, I discovered that the argument of the prophet and of the Apostle Paul are one and the same. They *both* tell us that we must never accuse God of creating anything in vain. The marred creature need never turn to the Creator and ask, "Why have You chosen to make me a vessel of wrath? You are to blame because You let me be born into a fallen world and to live in an environment where I was taught to love sin and had no chance to learn anything good. Why did You not do better for me than this? How could I help turning out hard and stubborn and evil?"

The true answer undoubtedly is, that though some vessels are responsive to the hands of the Great Potter and therefore He is able to make out of them lovely things to the praise of His glory here in this world, while others resist Him and appear to be marred vessels and no honour to the Potter at all, yet both fulfil His purpose, and, in the end, both are found to have glorified Him. By means of responsive lives God is able to demonstrate the lovely purpose for which all were created, and through the marred and stubborn lives he demonstrates the tragic results of evil and what must always be the result of resisting His loving plans and will, and the impossibility of human beings fashioning their own lives to any beauty or usefulness. Resistance to Him only results in hideous tragedy and failure.

But not for a moment does the Apostle Paul suggest in Romans 9 that "the vessels of wrath" will be kept as exhibits for ever! (see verse 25) and Jeremiah the prophet shows us



that God will certainly not permit any such thing, for he tells us that he saw the clay which was marred in the hand of the Potter "*made again, another vessel!*" (Jer. 18, 4.) The resistance was overcome, the ugly blemish removed, and another and perfect vessel appeared at last to the honour of the potter, yet fashioned out of the very same clay which at first had appeared so hopeless and useless.

There was yet a fourth link in the chain of events which led on to the unveiling in my understanding of the victory revealed to us through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After Great Britain gave up the Mandate in Palestine in 1948, and the country was partitioned, there were a few foreign missionaries left in the Jewish half of Jerusalem to go through the Arab siege with the hundred thousand Jews who were shut up there and completely isolated from the Israeli half of the country. In company with two missionaries of the Church Mission to the Jews, I lived all through the time of the siege in a house on the compound of the Mission Hospital. During the first weeks of the siege there was a poor man who worked for us, pumping water and doing other jobs. He had been, I think, a Greek Catholic, but had married a Jewish wife and himself now lived as a Jew.

One day, quite early on in the siege, when many people were being killed by shells and bullets from snipers and no one could tell whom the next victims would be, this man drew us aside and with childlike satisfaction, opened his shirt and showed us a little medallion which was hanging on a chain around his neck. On one side was a picture of the Virgin Mary, and on the other side the thorn-crowned head of the Saviour.

"This will preserve me," he said eagerly. "I pray to our Lady every day, and to the saints, and to the Christ, and I wear this wherever I go, and I am sure it will protect me from death."

Only a few days later a shell came crashing down on the hospital compound and afterwards, when we ran outside, on the path just beside our door, we found this man torn open by the jagged pieces of shell. He died as he was being carried to the operating table in the hospital close at hand.

Once again I found myself face to face with the same problem, though from another angle. What about the countless multitudes around the world who, like this man, have all their

life long been taught a different form of religion from the one which we Protestant Christians believe to be true? Those who, from childhood, have never doubted that they were worshipping the true God in the way which He desires; and have blessed Him for giving them the true light which, they suppose, we Protestant Christians so fatally lack. Or, and still more challenging, what of the far greater multitudes who have a completely different religion from the Christian one and yet are just as certain that it is the only true religion? What happens to all such people when they die, still sincerely believing the religious doctrines which they had always been taught to believe were the true ones? What happens to them if they *did* perhaps hear the Gospel, but with equal sincerity to that of the most convinced Protestant, believe that their own religion and ancestral worship is the true one? Do such when they die perish for ever because they have been taught and grounded in error?

How well I remember the answer to that question which I for so many years felt sorrowfully bound to accept, namely, it makes no difference to a person who drinks a deadly poison, if they supposed they were drinking a healing medicine. They will die just the same because it *is* poison and is not a medicine. For years that seemed to me unanswerable. Oh, how strange that for so long I never saw that though this is a perfectly true fact, the analogy *cannot* be a proper one in this case. For though it is true that it makes no difference to the fatal effect of a poison on the one who drinks it, because they imagined it was a safe remedy, yet it must surely make a *very great difference in our conception of the justice and love of God* and His righteousness, if we must believe that He allows (however sorrowfully) the sincere but ignorant and false beliefs of a person to condemn them to hopeless and endless loss and torment and destruction. Because they fervently believed what they had been taught by others, which, most unfortunately was quite false, how can it be just to allow them no further opportunity to discover their mistake? It is perfectly true that to imbibe false ideas about God does mean that we poison our understanding and are blind to the truth, no matter how sincerely the falsehood is believed. We have the classical example of this in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who later, as Paul the Apostle, tells us that "I obtained mercy because I did it *ignorantly* in unbelief." (1 Tim. 1, 13.) But when a person has been led by ignorance to drink the poison of falsity, how can it be anything but a dreadful denial of

justice to maintain that the Great Physician Who has the antidote all ready, must not be allowed to give it, indeed is not willing to give it, when once that poisoned soul has left its mortal body?

Yes, when I went to the Mission Field I soon began to realize that it is one thing to live in a so-called Christian country amongst multitudes of at least professing Christians, to profess a glib belief that all who die "unsaved" are lost for ever. But it is quite another thing to live year after year in a *non-Christian* country where people are not only convinced that there is absolutely no need for them to believe on the Christian's Jesus, but, like fanatical Jews and Moslems, believe with all sincerity that it would be the utmost blasphemy to do so. The multitudes of such "convinced" non-Christians who die and pass out of this world is so great that it completely dwarfs the numbers of those who by conservative standards would be considered "born again Christians".

Then has God really no loving and redemptive purposes for such immortal souls after they leave their bodies? Can He in justice condemn them when He knows that they fully believed they were worshipping Him in the way He wished to be worshipped? If it is almost impossible to get some really zealous and convinced "Conservative Christians" to open *their* minds even a tiny crack to admit some new aspect of Truth which may have been mislaid in their particular section of the Church, *how much harder must it be* for non-Christian people to open their minds to receive the Gospel after being reared from childhood in another religion altogether, a religion, moreover, which Christianity flatly contradicts and condemns.

As all these questions came surging into my mind during those eventful years in Palestine I was continually oppressed with the fear that all this was dreadful heresy and that these were questions which cast suspicion on the verity of the inspired Scriptures. But still, honesty, yes, and love to the Lord and intense longing to know Him better and to be freed from any false distortions of His character, impelled me to go on praying and seeking for light, and asking questions! For does not the Creator Who gave us minds, *want* us to ask questions when once we really begin to see what we are committing ourselves to, when we believe things about God which must be a distortion both of His justice and His love?

I tried at first to fall back on one verse which all my

Christian friends quoted whenever I tentatively spoke about these things: "SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT?" (Gen. 18, 25.) Then they would add: "The whole subject is indeed a great mystery, but evidently we are not meant to see the full explanation of it in this life. Let us rest thankfully and *unquestioningly* on this assurance that God is the Judge and He will do right."

Honesty, however, compelled me to ask, "How can I quote such a verse as this, affirming that the Judge will do only what is right because He is God Himself, and then continue to believe and teach others things which must make it impossible for all thoughtful and honest people to believe that He really is just and loving and does only act in a way which is obviously right? Must I actually affirm that we must believe blindly and unquestioningly that it is *right* for God to act towards His own creatures in a way which would be wrong for them to act towards each other? Are we to insist that because God does something, therefore it must be right, when we know that if we, His creatures, did the same thing, it would be the height of injustice and lack of love? Surely this must be a dreadful distortion of truth?"

If, then, the Scriptures do actually state these things and declare that He does give up multitudes of the creatures He Himself brought into existence, to everlasting ruin and separation from Himself and at the same time assert that it is perfectly *right* for Him to do so—what then?

I found that *this* was the heart of the problem. All the questions really boiled down to one question:

*Do the inspired Scriptures really teach what I had for so long supposed I must believe?* Or had I been believing "traditions of men" which were not a true interpretation of the Scriptures themselves? In that case, how different everything would be. For if it were a mistaken understanding of the real meaning of the Scriptures, then the sooner I realized it, the better. And oh, the joy, and relief and inexpressible thankfulness it would be to be free to believe about God the things which alone seemed worthy of Him and in harmony with the lovely revelation of Him given by Jesus Christ, without these other terrible and mysterious and apparently contradictory things added on. But was this only "wishful thinking?" as so many of my friends feared it was. "We would all like to be able to believe such a wonderful thing" they would say with a sigh, and then add sadly, "But the Scriptures do not confirm it and it is just the desire of our

sinful natures wanting to find just such an antidote to fear, and an excuse for thinking that sin is not so dreadful as it really is."

"*Too good to be true!*" That was what it really boiled down to. "But," I asked myself over and over again, "is it possible for any human heart to conceive of anything 'too good to be true of God'? Isn't the very fact that devoted and loving Christians *wish* that it could be the truth, only an evidence of the deep, true instinct implanted in our hearts that God is Good and He is Love and He is Just, and what would not be love and justice and goodness in us, cannot be anything but wrong and unjust and unloving in His sight also."

Oh, how many were the doubts and objections and fears of accepting errors which arose in my mind. And then, one night, as I have described in *The Winged Life*, I came across a book by William Law, *The Spirit of Love*, and there I began to find the lovely, liberating answer to the whole question, although all the details, of course, were not made plain immediately.

How feelingly and sympathetically William Law describes all these doubts and fears and perplexities when, in one of his dialogues, he makes poor Theogenes exclaim, in some such words as these:

I am now fully persuaded that as God is Love there can be in Him no wrath such as we conceive of wrath, or any possibility that He will condemn His own creatures to unending destruction, but I still must ask, *What am I to do with all the passages of Scripture which seem to assert the very contrary?*

The Scriptures of course *do* teach that there is a hell; they do warn of "the lake of fire and brimstone", and of "everlasting punishment" and of "eternal death". I knew many people take an easy way out of the difficulty and say that the men who quoted Our Lord as saying such things misunderstood Him and read into the expressions which He used, current rabbinical interpretations; or else they were men who still had not seen the full light. Such an explanation was no explanation at all to one who, like myself, believes fully in the inspiration of the Scriptures. I could not suppose for a moment that the Lord would deliberately use current rabbinical expressions which He *knew* would convey a different meaning to His hearers than the one He meant them to understand. And as practically everything which is written about hell in the New Testament came from the lips of the Lord Himself, it would therefore be necessary to suppose that He,

too, did not have full light! and was mistaken in His own ideas about hell, and also had the "notions" of His time!

As I myself do most fully believe everything in the inspired Scriptures and thankfully accept everything which the Lord Himself is quoted as saying, and as I believe He came on purpose to give a full revelation of the Truth and to dispel the false notions and distortions of the truth current at that time, such a solution to the difficulty was impossible. No, I had to admit to myself that all these terrible terms and warnings *are* found in the Scriptures and therefore must be true and cannot be discarded or altered. I then discovered something else just as true and, at first sight, completely mysterious.

For although all these warnings about hell and death and punishment and torment *are* in the Bible, *yet there are many other passages which most emphatically state that, in the end, God will completely triumph over evil, so completely that it will cease to exist.* In the end, *all things*, both in heaven and earth and under the earth, will be *reconciled to Him* and He will be all in all. (A list of some of these passages is given in the Appendix at the end of this book.)

What astonished questioning this discovery led to! What was I to make of such an apparent *contradiction* of teaching in the Scriptures? Are some passages in the inspired writings true and some not true? And if so, how are we to judge which of the two apparently contradictory lines of teaching is the true one? If one whole list of Scriptures is to be tacitly ignored as if those passages were not in the Bible at all, what right has anyone to say that the verses which so emphatically declare *the final complete victory of God* are the ones which must be discarded and explained away? and the others, which make Evil endless and leave a triumphant Devil gloating over the fact that he has been able to bring to endless ruin a great proportion of the creatures whom God created for His own glory, the list which *must* be accepted?

In actual fact both these lists of apparently contradictory verses *are* found in the Bible, and therefore neither of them can be discarded or ignored. There they are, running side by side through the whole Bible, Old Testament as well as New.

What then must be done concerning them?

As I prayed about it, it seemed clear that first and foremost I must honestly admit they are *both* there, and not try to explain away one of the lists and to retain the one which I so wished to be the true one. And just at that stage (oh, how graciously understanding the Lord is and how He meets our

need just at the right time and the right way!) I came across another book written by a great lover of the Lord centuries ago, and underlining a great principle to be followed when studying the Bible. It is this:

If the inspired Scriptures seem to contradict one another, and if equally devoted and sincere Christians who are honestly seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit, come to diametrically opposed conclusions, as they often do, then they can be sure of this, *there must be a third and higher truth not yet discovered*, which, when discovered, will perfectly harmonise every detail in all the passages which seem to contradict one another. Until that higher truth is discovered, the differing investigators are none of them seeing the whole truth, but have got hold of different parts of it. When the Higher Truth is discerned, it will be found that all the different pieces fit together without the slightest discord, in every detail, and together they reveal the full truth on that matter.

Dear Mother Julian of Norwich reminded Christians of this so sweetly and simply and humbly as long ago as the fourteenth century, but how easily such vital principles as this one get lost and need to be rediscovered.

Once it had become clear in my mind that none of the passages concerning this matter were to be explained away, but all must be accepted and a higher truth discovered which would reconcile them all, impossible as this seemed, then I made another discovery, which will be referred to much more fully in succeeding chapters, but which needs to be mentioned here.

I discovered that there is not one single verse in the Scriptures which uses the words "everlasting", "eternal" or "for ever and ever" in connection with *hell*. That is to say, in no single verse translated in English by the word *hell* referring to Gehenna, Sheol, or Hades the Pit, or the grave, is any word used which even hints that these places, or conditions, are endless, but there *are* several which definitely speak of being delivered out of *hell*. Therefore *Hell* and *Hades* (the place of departed spirits) cannot even be assumed to be endless; they must be TEMPORARY. And this is confirmed in Rev. 20, 14, where it is clearly stated that *Death* (the grave) and *Hell* deliver up those that are in them. They are emptied, and when emptied, are cast into the lake of fire for utter destruction. *Hell* comes *before* the Final Judgment of the Great White Throne, *not* after it. Those who go to *hell*, therefore, are judged to that condition as soon as they

die, and they are taken out of hell or "delivered up" from hell for the further judgment of the Great White Throne where the FINAL choice of every soul is recorded, *after* they have experienced hell.

What a clue was here discovered! For if there is not one single verse in the Bible which teaches that hell is endless, and if it is clearly stated that in the end "death and hell" are actually cast into the lake of fire for complete destruction, then it is obvious that they must play some vital and important role in *preparing* for God's Final Victory and for the "restitution of all things", to which so many of the Scriptures bear witness. They come before the FINAL JUDGMENT, and when they have fulfilled their Love-appointed ministry, they are both swallowed up and destroyed for ever. Then hell must surely be the terrible experience of being allowed to reap the full harvest of sin and its awful fruits of misery, ruin and torment. Holy Love would so thankfully spare every single soul such an experience, but if there is no other way by which men can be brought to hate and abominate sin and to turn from it willingly and for ever, then they will be permitted to reap that awful harvest. Surely all whom Holy Love permits to pass through that appalling experience will learn at last to turn from evil with utmost horror and loathing, safe for ever after from any future temptation to plunge into it again!

It was then, at last, that a veil seemed drawn away completely from my understanding and I beheld the glory which has been unveiled to us by the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection from the dead, by which He demonstrated His complete and perfect victory over sin, death and hell and all the works of the Devil. I also began to see what this glorious victory means for the *whole body of mankind*, which is the subject of the next chapter.

It is only in the light of all the torturing questions described in this chapter that the full wonder and glory thus unveiled can be understood. It seems to me that I have looked upon the Face of Love Himself, and as a result all my earlier conceptions of the nature and character of God and His purposes for Mankind have been swallowed up. It feels almost as though I have seen a new God altogether, but I know, of course, that the real fact is I have seen the true God in a new way—in the Face of the *Risen* Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As a result "old things have passed away and all things have become new".



The cry of all distorted things!  
Why hast Thou made us thus  
To bear the anguish that life brings?—  
Why didst Thou not love us?  
So marred—that God Himself must weep,  
Fit only for the rubbish heap.

The cry of every breaking heart,  
Why were we born for this?  
Anguish alone is made our part  
And nothing of earth's bliss.  
Why didst Thou give us human birth  
To live as sinners here on earth?

The cry of each despairing mind  
Goes up before the Throne;  
Behold us, God! or art Thou blind?  
Can we be blamed alone?  
If Thou be there, then answer us,  
Why make us? or why make us *thus*?

And Love's Voice answers from a cross,  
I BEAR it all with you;  
I share with you in all your loss,  
I will make all things new.  
None suffer in their sin alone,  
I made—I bear—and I atone.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE GLORY UNVEILED BY THE RESURRECTION

In the last chapter I shared my own personal wrestlings with a problem which has caused great sorrow and perplexity to an unnumbered multitude of Christians. It is the problem of how we are to reconcile the central revelation of the Scriptures of a God Who is Holy Love (I John 4, 16) and Who so loved this world of sinful men that He sent His Own Son to be "the Saviour of the World", with other Scriptures which seem to assert that, in spite of this, He will allow countless multitudes of the creatures He Himself brought into existence to perish everlastingly, by Himself giving them up to their choice of evil and endless ruin.

If we are to suppose that endless punishment and loss are the lot of all who die impenitent, and if there is no chance at all to repent after death then in that case we are compelled in common honesty to ask how it can possibly be accounted a victory to God, for in the end, He will be obliged to confirm many of His own creatures in self-chosen evil, instead of being *able* to win them to His own abomination and hatred of evil.

If such really is a true interpretation of the Scriptures, then we cannot escape the appalling and utterly incredible deduction that *the Devil must have an almost inconceivably greater victory than the Son of God*; although the Scriptures so insistently declare that He came to be the "Saviour of the world", and to crush the head of the serpent and utterly to "destroy the works of the devil." (I John 4, 14 and 3, 8.)

If there is no further chance for men to repent after death, then, taking into consideration all the heathen who lived before the Gospel era; all the multitudes who have heard the Gospel and have *not* responded to it; and all the multitudes in Christendom who have been professing Christians only, then it is quite obvious, as one intensely, missionary-hearted group of believers have recently computed, that the Devil succeeds in filching away from "the *faithful* Creator" Who made all men for His own glory, at least ninety-eight per cent of the

human race, leaving as a victory for the Lamb of God the fantastic and dreadful proportion of just two per cent.

Even if appalled at such an awful deduction, we say that children dying before the age of responsibility may be reckoned as "saved by the Atonement", we do not improve the matter, but rather worsen it. For what is this but saying that if God did allow them to come to years of responsibility He would not be able to draw them of their own free will to love Him in any greater numbers than the average two per cent? In that case how can it be just for Him to allow any rebellious persons to reach years of responsibility and to condemn themselves to endless ruin, while others are permitted to die young and so escape such a fate? Again, even if we grant that the heathen who never hear the Gospel will be judged by God according to His *omnipotent foreknowledge* of how they would have reacted if they *had* heard the Gospel, then we have only to consider the terribly small proportion of those who do respond to it when they hear it, and the masses who remain utterly indifferent to it, to realize that even in that case the victory of Evil over Good would still numerically be uncounted *billions and billions* the greater. In this one present generation alone there are millions more non-Christians in the world than there are even nominal Christians.

Then how *can* it be right to go on teaching or even silently acquiescing in a teaching which must, to any thoughtful and honest person, represent God both as an *Unjust Judge and a Defeated Saviour*? It is tragic that so many earnest and devoted Christians simply do not realize what multitudes of thoughtful people are stumbled by this teaching, and actually turn away from the Christian Churches altogether because they have heard that this is the orthodox Christian conception of God, both in the Roman and Protestant Churches.

There is no escaping the fact that such an interpretation of the Scriptures does represent to us a God Who could *will* to bring into existence all these countless billions of free-willed souls, but *could not* woo them to love Himself as their Heavenly Father and Who must, therefore, however, sorrowfully, and unwillingly, confirm them in their choice of evil for ever. *A God Who has lost almost all His own creatures to His great enemy* and therefore the power and influence of that enemy must be conceived of as greater than the power and influence which God Himself chooses to exert.

Is it any wonder that horrified Christians who have faced

up honestly to these dreadful conclusions feel that we have turned the Bible upside down and so distorted the true Christian faith as to teach that when Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all men unto me*" (John 12, 32) He really meant that far more than three-quarters of mankind will be drawn to the devil for ever and ever? That when the Scriptures assert that Christ will "*reconcile all things unto Himself*" (Col. 1, 20) they really mean the final perdition of the great majority of mankind? In fact, that God in the Bible is telling the story of His own defeat; telling how sin has proved too strong for Him; telling the pitiful story of His own Son worsted in His utmost effort to save sinners? Unable to prevent the great enemy from triumphantly carrying off for ever and ever multitudes "for whom Christ died"? That, when the Scriptures announce a Gospel of "Glad Tidings" they are really announcing the most awful news possible, that both the God-given Saviour and His grace have failed almost completely, and have, in reality, proved unable to "save the world"?

No! Any such interpretations of passages in the Scriptures which are not in harmony with the central truths about God revealed to us by the Son of God *cannot* be true interpretations, and we must look further for the Truth.

As mentioned in the last chapter, it was through reading William Law's book *The Spirit of Love* that I began to see the glorious truth that God's "Judgments" on sin are really His "Prescriptions" by means of which, He, as the Great Physician, with great wisdom and skill, plans to bring about a complete cure from the disease of sin. When the Bible speaks about "the wrath of God", it is speaking from the point of view of the sinner *who feels* and experiences the pains which necessarily accompany the treatment of the disease. In some cases that treatment may have to be the most drastic possible, and, therefore, the pains which accompany it may be felt as "fearful" and "dreadful" beyond description. Thus it may be spoken of, from that point of view, as the wrath and punishment of God inflicted on the cause of the disease, by means of which it will be overcome and cured. For these pains really are the expression of the infinite Love of God, Who, with infinite wisdom, prescribes that every sin shall have inherent in it the bitter fruit of pain and misery and ruin, so that the poisonous and destructive nature of sin shall be fully understood and recognised by all.

Seen in this light, is it not only reasonable and in full conformity with all the Scriptures to conclude that the passages

which speak about hell are meant to warn us of the *Inexorable Determination* of the God Who is Holy Love, to bring even the most stubborn and wilful of His creatures into an experience by means of which they will learn, at long last, to hate evil, by being *allowed to reap its full harvest*, and to suffer its worst miseries and the ripened fruits of anguish, frustration and apparent separation from God? Hell, therefore, must be looked upon, surely, as "the last Outpost of Love", and, when thus seen from the standpoint of heaven, and not from the viewpoint of one enduring hell, it is recognised as Love's most drastic prescription by means of which to bring about a cure of the disease. In this light, instead of the thought of hell causing God's own people horror and agony and perplexity, we see it shining with the glory of God's determination that not one soul shall be able to ruin itself irretrievably, and that not one place in the Father's House shall remain empty.

With this lovely new clue suggested to my mind by William Law's writings, I began studying all the verses in the New Testament which refer to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I found, with wondering awe and amazement, that here was the answer to the whole problem which for so long had troubled me. I found that in the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, the Apostle Paul also found his solution to the same problem and taught it with the greatest possible emphasis and joy. Over and over again in his writings he draws our attention to the glory which is unveiled to us through this supreme victory of the Saviour. In the resurrection of "*The Son of Man*" he saw the full and perfect guarantee that the *whole body of mankind* will eventually be quickened to life, raised up from the disease and death of sin, and restored, *member by member*, to the position which mankind lost through the "Fall" of the First Adam. Not simply that alone—but to an even better position! For every member of the fallen race is to be brought to a place of *full knowledge* through personal experience, of what Evil really is and of the miseries and wrongs and torments which it produces.

When Adam made his fatal choice *he did not know by experience* to what he was committing himself. Now *all* his descendants must "eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" and so discover by actual experience all that it involved in so doing. Not until *all* of them know fully what is involved in choosing evil, and, more important still, the blessedness of the Saviour's deliverance and healing power,

will they be called upon to make their FINAL CHOICE between loving God or loving self.

What Paul's real teaching on this subject was, we have clearly summed up for us in his famous passage in I Cor. 15, so that we are not left in any doubt as to his views. He makes the definite claim that Christ is *become the Second Adam*, the real *Head of the body of mankind*, in order to undo all the consequences of the fall of the first Adam whereby *all men* have been brought under the dominion of sin. Therefore *all men* must be freed from that dominion. And this he also enlarges upon in Romans 5.

I Cor. 15, 20: . . . "Now is Christ *risen from the dead* and become the *first-fruits* of them that slept." v. 21: "For since by *man* came death, by *man* came also the resurrection from the dead."

Rom. 5, 14: "Adam . . . who is the figure of Him that was to come."

Verses 18-20: "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift *came upon all men* unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall *many* be made righteous . . . where sin abounded, *grace did much more abound.*"

I Cor. 15, 22: "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* But every man in his own order," that is to say, not all at once.

The *resurrection* of mankind *will be in stages*; "Christ the *First-fruits*; *afterward* they that are Christ's at His coming. *Then* cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God . . . when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put *all enemies* under His feet." (verses 23, 24, 25).

v. 28: "*All things shall be subject unto Him*", for He will put all rebellion under His feet, conquering it completely, not by destroying His own creatures, but by destroying all their animosity and rebellion against Himself, as St. Jerome so beautifully has pointed out, and winning them to be His friends.

In these passages, surely we have the plainest possible teaching that, just as "all men" are in Adam and therefore born in a fallen condition, so *all men* are in Christ the New Head of the Race, and in Him will be raised up from their fallen condition.

It is perfectly true that no one is "*made alive in Christ*" until they respond to Him in faith and *receive* His life, yet it is obvious that Paul did consider that in one way *all* men are *in* Him because He is the Second Adam, just as much as we were *all* in the First Adam. For both the First and Second Adam represent the whole race of mankind. "IN Him" we do all "live and move and have our being", whether conscious of the fact or not (Acts 17, 28) because *we are all in the body of mankind of which He has made Himself the Representative and Head.*

From this wonderful fact it follows that in the resurrection of His individual human body in which He appeared on earth, we must be meant to see the guarantee and "earnest" that He will quicken to life the whole Body of fallen mankind which He represents, and with which He has made Himself AT ONE.. He will do this gradually as He wins the members of that Body to respond to Him individually by opening themselves to His life and healing power.

When this broke in upon my understanding I found that it was an immense comfort to me to remember, that before his conversion Saul the Pharisee would have been the most convinced believer in the doctrine of No Chance after death for anyone to be saved, unless they had been converted and circumcised and joined the Jewish Synagogue. It is against the background of *such a revolution in his religious thinking and beliefs* that his new teaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ being the guarantee of the resurrection of *all* men, takes on such special significance. It is because for him, also, the doctrine of a chance after death for Gentile heathen to be saved would have appeared so utterly contradictory to his former understanding of the inspired Scriptures, that I am sure he would be able to understand with the fullest sympathy the simple incredible revolution required in the religious thinking of such a Christian as myself, before being able to grasp the amazing glory unveiled to us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, from the dead. From childhood I had been led to believe exactly what the Pharisees believed, though with this one difference: that it is the Christian Church on earth and not the Jewish one which represents the People of God who are predestined to enjoy eternal life, while all others, who die outside that Church, must perish everlastingly.

One point I had constantly heard urged with great earnestness, as though it presented an unanswerable argument, and

already mentioned in the last chapter, namely that as God is not only Love but is also absolutely righteous and just, and cannot bear evil, therefore (alas) both His righteousness and His justice demand that those who reject Him in this life *must* for ever suffer the terrible consequences of so doing ; that indeed it would be immoral for the Creator to give them a further chance, for both perfect justice and perfect holiness demand that unrepentant sinners be, at death, eternally separated from their Maker. And the more missionary-hearted many Christian groups were, the more terrible any denial of this interpretation seemed to them to be. But the more I prayed about the subject the more certain it seemed to become that there *must be a full chance for everyone* at some time or other because I could not help seeing that both His justice and His righteousness must demand just such a full chance for every creature and that it must be an intolerable thing in his eyes if this should not be the case. Again and again new reasons for this became clearer and clearer.

For one thing, how could it possibly be just that even wilful rejection in TIME and here on earth in the midst of temptations should be punished *eternally* with endless torment ?

Again, how could either justice and righteousness, let alone HOLY LOVE, contemplate keeping creatures in existence for the one purpose that they *should* endure endless and *useless* punishment, useless because admittedly ineffective and unable to work any change of heart in them ?

If one suggested that it might be permitted on purpose that such endless punishment should act as a deterrent to others, then one could only ask in utmost mystification how a choice of "goodness", only through fear of punishment and not from a real heart of love of "goodness", could ever satisfy a Holy God?

Then again and again I was forced to remember those other and still more dreadful factors considered in the last chapter. I saw that the Scriptures most clearly state that we are all born into this world as members of a fallen race: "*born in sin*" (Psa. 51, 5; Job 14, 4), *biased to sin* (Rom. 7, 23), *blinded by sin* (2 Cor. 4, 4) *bound by sin* (Acts 26, 18), *deceived* by the devil (2 Cor. 11, 14; Rev. 20, 10); *deceived* by our own fallen and corrupted hearts (Jer. 17, 9); *alienated* from the life of God (Eph. 4, 18), and above all, *totally unable to save ourselves* or to change our own sinful hearts and desires.

As this is undoubtedly the clear teaching of Scripture I



had to ask myself in simple honesty, how can it be possible that such deceived, corrupted, bound, blind, and helpless human souls can *justly* be accused of freely and willingly choosing evil rather than good if they have never experienced the joy of goodness; of loving dark rather than light, if they have always been totally blind and had never seen the light; and how can they justly be guilty of the verdict, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25, 46) and "be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20, 10) until every one of them has had an equal chance with their first parents to make a free, unbiased choice, having first of all fully experienced the love and grace and goodness and mercy of God, as well as the torment and misery of self love? Then there *must* be this full chance for them somewhere, some time, other than on this earth.

I thought again and again of those verses in Romans 5, especially verse 20. "*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*".

How can grace possibly be said to abound "much more" if there are, in the end, many, many more souls, or even just a few, who, having been made sinners through Adam's transgression and inheriting a fallen nature, must finally be ruined everlastingly? In that case the Atonement of the Saviour does *not* meet the full need of the human race, for it will prove powerless to win the response of the majority of human beings before they die a physical death. In that case evil *is* stronger than God's efforts to win the love of His own creatures, and sin *is* stronger in its power than the love of God, and the Cross of the Lamb of God *is* pitifully inadequate and far less successful in winning men to God than the Evil One in winning them to ruin. "Oh," I thought to myself, "if only there were even a few verses in the Bible which tell us that there is a chance for men to repent and to be saved after death."

I then made another staggering discovery, that so far from there being no verses to confirm there is such an opportunity after death, the four Gospels and the teaching of the Lord Himself are full of the fact that if men will not learn on earth to respond to Him, they must learn in a far harder school *after* this life on earth ends. This teaching, however, will be referred to more fully in the next chapter.

In Heb. 9, 27, we read: "It is appointed unto men *once to die, but after this the judgment.*"

Many who quote this verse seem to think it speaks of final judgment to everlasting perdition and eternal damnation. But the context nowhere suggests any such thing. It speaks of *judgment following death immediately*. It warns men that there is inescapable judgment after death—not at some remote period, but at once, for as the Lord said: "The hour is coming and *now is*, when *the dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God." (John 5, 25.) That is to say, the hour of death, when the body is laid in the grave and the soul or spirit passes out into the other world, *that is* the time when all shall hear the voice of the Son of God and stand before Him for judgment, to give an account of the life they have passed on earth.

This is a judgment which all men must face as soon as they die.

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ". (Rom. 14, 10.) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether they be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5, 10.) Here we have the truth stated that every person at death is raised up for judgment, a judgment either for commendation or condemnation. And in John 5, 22 it is stated: "The Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*"

In these words the Lord Himself tells us that He is the appointed Judge before Whom all men will stand when they die. Then the judgment which follows physical death is a judgment given by Holy Love Himself. He decides and determines, according to the life that has been lived on earth and the response of that soul to light, or rejection of it, just *what treatment is needed next* in order to bring a soul which still cleaves to evil, to a position in which that soul will learn to hate evil and desire to be separated from it for ever. It is the judgment or diagnosis of the skilled Physician Himself.

Again, in this fifth chapter of John, verses 26, 27, we read, "The Father . . . *hath given Him authority to execute judgment.*" Why is the Son to be the judge? "*Because He is the Son of Man.*"

That, of course, is why the Father gives all authority to judge *men* into the hands of the Son. For He is *Son of Man*, and therefore the only One Who is really able to do the judging and to decide who, during their lifetime on earth, have responded to the light, and who have deliberately chosen evil, and all the shadings and gradations in between the two. He knows perfectly because He is the Son of God *made Son of*

*Man*, and therefore consciously immanent in *all* the members of the Body of Mankind, feeling and experiencing with them every single detail of their daily lives. For, just as the brain in the head of the body is centre of all feeling, and knows and experiences everything which happens from the head down to the toes, so Christ, Who has made Himself the Head of Mankind, knows and feels everything that happens to all the individual members in the Body of Mankind.

Yes, He knows, and He alone, the exact force of every temptation felt by every single member in the body of Adam's fallen race. He knows the cruel and debasing influences of environment, of teaching and of example; the glimmers of light either responded to or rejected; the flickering faith; the gross ignorance, the weight of doubts, the inner yearnings and fumbblings after something better; the secret desires of every heart; the innermost thoughts and motives of all men. He has been personally conscious of every single battle between good and evil in the soul of every single human being since the creation, because He is immanent in every individual member of the Body of Mankind, *whether that member is alive to the fact or dead to it*. He has the fullest possible knowledge of every failure, every repentance, and every choice made from birth to death. That is why He alone can be the Judge, because He alone knows all the facts.

As soon as this is realised it also becomes absolutely clear that He is *the only One Who can undo all that the First Adam did*; the only One Who can heal the whole fallen Body of Mankind of the dreadful disease by which it became infected at the Fall. *He is the healing life and the healing bloodstream* flowing through the whole diseased body from the Head, carrying life to every member of the body as they will receive it; flowing on and passing by those still unreceptive and closed, yet always returning, conquering the disease and destroying its fatal outcome—death itself; and thus *gradually* restoring the whole body to perfect health. Only when the whole Body *has* been restored to the perfect health and wholeness which man knew before the Fall, can the *final* choice be made by all the members of the Body as to whether they wish once again to cut themselves off from the life of the Son of Man and to be reinfected again with the dreadful disease which they all know so well from actual experience; or whether they wish to remain in the perfected Body of Mankind, in glad allegiance to the Head of the Body, enjoying in ever-increasing measure the fullness of His life and power.

Once, when these things were under discussion and I had drawn attention to the verse in Rev. 20, 15, as evidently meaning *that hell had succeeded in its Love-appointed purpose*, and that those who had been in hell and were now "delivered up" by hell to record their final choice before the Great White Throne, were ready to turn from sin for ever with loathing and horror, just because they had reaped its full harvest, one friend exclaimed (almost as though it were wrong that such should be the case) "It stands to reason that anyone who has been in hell will want to leave it!"

Yes, I think it does! and that is the exact point. *It does stand to reason that nobody who has been through the awful experience of hell*, will ever want to go back to it again, and, now that they know it to be the harvest of sin and selfwill, will be tempted to go their own way again. If such were not a certainty *there would be no reason for hell*. For Eternal Love is indeed *the most reasonable* as well as the wisest and most determined of Lovers in the universe. "God is Love", and He Who would so thankfully spare every one of His creatures the appalling experience of hell, will *not* spare it, if it proves to be the only way by which some souls can be brought to recognise evil for what it is and so learn to hate it for ever. Hell, in all its terror and anguish, is the last means resorted to by Holy Love, *and it does stand to reason that it would not be resorted to unless it were bound to succeed*. From the Epistles of St. Paul it is clearly obvious that he believed it would prove entirely successful in every case.

I know of course that one point is always urged by anxious Christians, a point already referred to in the last chapter, but no doubt it recurs to the minds of some who are reading this at this particular juncture. It is the fear that such teaching as this, by taking away the fear of everlasting torment and punishment, deprives the call to penitence and faith during this life, of one of its strongest appeals. *But if we teach the true biblical warnings about hell* (which will be considered in the next chapter) and not mistaken ones, this excuse loses all force. For the Saviour's own teaching about hell, which is constantly disregarded today, is one of the most powerful appeals of all. He taught that *there is no escape* from the terror and horror of hell, until there is repentance; and if men will not repent here on earth, then they must endure the anguish of hell until they do so everlasting. Love will never let them escape. He taught hell as a terrible fact which even religious people cannot escape if they continue to love sin.

But the Lord never taught that hell is endless and the only reason why Bible readers have ever supposed that He did teach so, is because of a misunderstanding of the meaning of the words "eternal," "Eternity," and "for ever and ever," which, in the Hebrew and Greek do not bear the same meaning as they do in English. In actual fact, in the Hebrew and Greek languages, those words eternal, eternity and for ever and ever do not really express time or duration at all. They refer to all that is completely beyond and outside the understanding of the Mind of Man, because they refer to the Mind of God, and to all that God is aware of and conscious of in worlds and times quite beyond our own consciousness. Eternity is the Bible word expressing the limitless consciousness of God the Creator of all things. All that He is conscious of and aware of is eternal, because He maintains it in existence in His own consciousness, but when He ceases to hold it in His consciousness it ceases to be eternal and sinks back into non-existence. It is blotted out of His consciousness and therefore no longer is.

Eternal life is all that He is aware of in His Mind as partaking of His own Nature, and eternal death is also in His awareness, as the experience of those creatures who are turning from Him and creating for themselves a condition of mind consisting of misery, torment and lonely selfcentredness. He is conscious of the existence of evil in this world and any other world where it may be present; in this age or any other age; He feels it in every fibre, as it were, of His Mind and Being, until He can win all spirits to hate it and turn from it to the experience of eternal life. Thus Eternity is not endless Time, but all times; not endless duration, but infinite scope; all times, all worlds, all conditions which are *present* in the Mind of God because He maintains them in His consciousness.

When once this glory unveiled to us by the Lord Jesus Christ when He rose from the dead broke upon my own understanding, it seemed as though I saw every single thing in a new perspective, and as though from a higher and clearer viewpoint. Now I found that *all* the Scriptures fitted together in perfect harmony, the terrible warnings and the triumphant assurances. They all combined together to confirm this truth so plainly that it seemed incredible to me that until then I had never realised, in trying to fit together a picture of the full truth, I had been obliged to discard so many vital pieces, without which, as in a jig-saw puzzle, many ugly gaps

remained in the picture. There had been so many things about which I had been obliged to say sadly : "I cannot explain them now, but I must simply believe that everything which seems so mysterious and unlike a holy and loving God, will be explained later on and that explanation will perfectly vindicate His wisdom, His justice and His love. Meanwhile I must not doubt Him."

But now it seems to me that, though such an attitude was the best under the circumstances, it left me still blindly teaching terrible distortions about my Lord and His character, and creating unlovely mysteries where none really existed.

Now is Christ risen from the dead!  
Firstfruits of all the Race;  
No more is Adam Mankind's head,  
But Christ doth take that place.  
"In Adam" Mankind died in pain,  
"In Christ" shall all men live again!

Let Christ be preached that He arose!  
Triumphant over sin,  
His victory tell! Let none suppose  
That death and Evil win.  
No single member of our Race  
But shall be quickened by His grace!

Let Christ be preached as RISEN LORD,  
The Head of all Mankind;  
In Him this fallen Race, restored,  
New life and health shall find.  
Three days and nights the Grave may boast—  
Then burst from thence Christ's conquering host.

Yes, He shall reign—till every knee  
Most willingly shall bow,  
His enemies shall cease to be,  
All men their love avow;  
And joyful worship be outpoured  
To Christ their crowned and chosen Lord.

Where is thy victory, O grave?  
O death, where is thy sting?  
The Son of Man doth all men save,  
He shall be crowned as King.  
*All men* from love of sin be won—  
*This* is the triumph of God's Son.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE GLORY UNVEILED BY THE DESCENT INTO HELL

It was when I turned afresh to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself that I found the clearest assurances and confirmation concerning the purpose of hell. He, of course, is the only authentic and trustworthy witness on this awful condition of hell; and in Luke 16, 19-31, He gives us the most vivid, realistic and suggestive report as to what hell or Hades is really like; at the same time revealing to us its purpose and also those who must experience it. It is His story of the the rich man in hell and the beggar in Abraham's bosom. (Luke 16, 19-25.)

Before considering this passage, however, I must at once confess that I used to read into this story a number of assumptions for which I now see there was absolutely no warrant.

First and foremost I read into it the assumption that Lazarus the beggar was most certainly "a true believer in God", and that is why, when he died, he found himself in "Abraham's bosom". (This is a rabbinical expression descriptive of those privileged souls, who, after death, are received into blessedness in the hereafter and not into torment and punishment. It does not, however, refer to heaven itself.)

Secondly, I read into the story the assumption that the rich man had heard the Gospel and had rejected it. Later, a more thoughtful consideration of the facts enabled me to recollect that at the time when the Lord told this story the Gospel had not been preached because He had not yet died on the cross nor risen from the dead. I then assumed that the rich man had been an irreligious atheist and had not believed in the God of Israel.

I also read into it the assumption that the "great gulf fixed" was fixed for ever and ever, and that the Lord was teaching that the rich man could *never* leave his place of torment.



I further assumed that Abraham and Lazarus the beggar, in the joy and blessedness of everlasting life, enjoyed a full view of the torment of Dives, and could contemplate it with pious approval for ever, could indeed justify God wholeheartedly for permitting him to suffer eternally for his evil life of a few earthly years, and even reason with the tormented soul himself to show how right such unending punishment was, and assure him that the great gulf could not possibly be removed for ever.

When, however, with the new illumination in my mind, I re-read the story, I discovered that there is absolutely nothing used in the language of the Lord either to support or even to suggest any of these assumptions. There is not one word which mentions the faith of Lazarus nor the irreligion and atheism of Dives. There is not a hint anywhere concerning the religious beliefs of either man.

There is not one word to suggest that the gulf was fixed for ever and ever. The Greek word for fixed is the same as the word used for the Throne of God Himself (i.e. *established*), but surely that means that the gulf between good and evil is indeed as firm as the Throne of God itself, but it makes no mention of the *duration* of the gulf. If evil ceases because sinners cease to love it and cry out to be made righteous, then there is no gulf left! There is absolutely no hint that to all eternity Dives must remain divided from the joy and blessedness which he could behold afar off. No one can legitimately say "I have fixed a great fence to keep the cattle out of my garden", or, "I have dug a great moat around my house to keep the thieves from breaking in", and expect us to infer that the fence or moat is an everlasting affair which cannot be altered. If the field outside is emptied of cattle, the fence can well be taken down and the garden extended. Our Lord said absolutely nothing about the *permanence* of the gulf, only about the *effectiveness* of it as long as it is needed.

Moreover, when one finds the Lord Jesus making Abraham say to the poor tormented soul in hell "Son" (verse 25), it is difficult indeed to picture pious approval on the part of Abraham that the torment should last unendingly, or, indeed, one single moment longer than *necessary*. In that case we would expect Abraham to reply in some such words as these:

"Hardened sinner, justly condemned by the wrath of God to unending punishment, do not presume to call me 'Father Abraham', for I must remind you that not all of my seed according to the flesh are my children." (See Rom. 9, 6, 7.)

No, when we hear a man saying "son", we are surely meant to picture a man who will never be at rest until that son is delivered from everything which corrupts and debases him and is healed completely of a loathsome disease. Then are we to suppose that the Lord used this word "son" carelessly and never meant us to picture Abraham as representing the Father heart of God, grieving heartbrokenly as a father *must* do over a ruined son? Why! the Apostle Paul cried out: "I could wish to God that I were accursed . . . for my brethren's sake" (Rom. 9, 3.) He was a true son of Abraham and of Abraham's God, when he voiced that passionate outburst of love's sorrow and anguish over sinners. And what sort of heaven is it going to be if father hearts for ever and ever must look on at their sons in torment? Why, the Devil himself might well approve such an ideal, and feel that hell was able to ruin heaven.

I have, indeed, heard it contended that we must not take the words of this story literally because, of course, the Lord was speaking metaphorically, and that the story implies that hell is everlasting, even though the Lord does not use this term. By *implication* the gulf is fixed unendingly, and by *implication* also it is quite clear that redeemed souls will be so ravished by the perfect holiness and righteousness of God that the torments of the unrighteous will not be able to disturb them, but will only cause them satisfaction by pointing the contrast between the fruits of good and evil.

Well, rather than *add words* which the Lord did *not* use, in order to make the story *imply* certain traditional ideas, long accepted as true, I infinitely prefer the conviction that *the Lord chose His words* with all the care of Love's desire so that we should understand just what it means to the Father Heart of God to have to watch the suffering of His beloved sons in their self-made hells, and this, even though those sufferings are self-inflicted, so that we may understand that such an experience would never be permitted unless it were *the one sure and certain treatment* by which a successful cure from the disease of sin can be effected.

When at last I was able to clear my mind of all these assumptions and continued studying the story, prepared to see just what the Lord meant to teach, and not what I *supposed* He meant, what a lot of surprises I met.

It is the story of these two men, first *in this world*, then *in the next world*. The one was very rich, the other was a beggar who possessed nothing at all; who, moreover, was covered

with sores, was weak and hungry, and had no one to care for him. There is no indication at all that the beggar was carried daily to the gate of the rich man, but that once, some kindly disposed person had carried him and laid him at the gate of perhaps the richest man in the city, and left him there. Thenceforth the rubbish-heap just outside the gate, where the scavenger dogs fought and snarled over the scraps, was his home, day and night, until he died. This is no uncommon thing in the East. It is the only "horror story" that the Lord ever told, but it is a "horror story", and we Westerners miss the whole significance of this fact. With our ideas of friendly dogs, house-trained and licking their owners in token of affection and devotion, the whole point is missed. This poor beggar was so weak that, when he was laid on the rubbish-heap at the gate of the rich man, whom it was hoped might have compassion upon him and allow his servant to throw him unwanted scraps of food, he could not prevent the hungry scavenger dogs from snatching away the scraps which were carelessly thrown on the heap; nor, as his weakness increased, could he drive these ferocious creatures away from himself. Anyone who has lived in the East will understand the grim significance of the words "and the dogs licked his sores", because he was too weak to defend himself from their hungry approach. Anyone who reads the story of Jezebel, flung out from the window and "caten by the dogs" will know what happened to the beggar as soon as he died, if not before. Anyone will be able to guess at the answer the rich man or his steward gave to servants when they asked what they should do with the miserable corpse of skin and bones lying on the rubbish heap. "Don't bother about it—leave it to the dogs." And it was this same rich man, "clad in purple and fine linen", who sat down to "fare sumptuously" every day in his mansion.

In these few, yet terribly vivid words, the Lord gave a graphic description of the ruination of character which self-centred love will work in even an apparently respectable human being: the utter callousness and indifference to the needs of others which riches *can* breed in the heart of those who own them. Even a famished fellow-being, lying in the glare of the Eastern sun and moaning for a drop of water to cool his parched lips, made no impression at all on the heart of the rich man in this story. He was as indifferent to the sufferings of Lazarus as he was to the dogs quarrelling over the scraps on the rubbish-heap. Man and dogs were just some-

thing to be kicked aside or ignored. Yet it is quite possible that this rich man went regularly to the Temple, to worship and, like the Pharisee, elsewhere mentioned, "thanked God that he was not as other men."

That is the scene as the Lord described it in this world, the world known to the five physical senses only, a world of men utterly unconscious of the real, eternal world all round about them where *the unseen watchers are*.

Then the scene changes. "It came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." (v. 22.)

There is nothing in the context to suggest that Lazarus had the same faith which Abraham had displayed, not that he knew more than the vaguest hints about the God whom Abraham had worshipped, any more than a little gutter-urchin in one of our great cities is likely to know about the Lord Jesus Christ. As a poor, diseased creature, perhaps a beggar all his life, subsisting on the charity of those who sought to store up merit for themselves through almsgiving, probably deformed or maimed in some way so that begging was his only means of livelihood, it is most unlikely that he had ever been able to attend a service in the Temple or to enter more than the "Outer Court", and certainly that he had never had any religious instruction from a Rabbi. But even if the case were quite otherwise and he had been a true and instructed "Believer", there is no hint in the story that such was the case. His faith is not once mentioned. Yet after death he found himself graciously and lovingly received by Abraham, "The Father of the Faithful". Granted this is a metaphor, but the metaphor means that he was received into a company of those, who, like Abraham, loved God and did believe in Him, and "he was comforted".

We are told the reason for this, and once again there is not a word suggesting it was due to his faith. Just the contrary. It was because on earth he had never had the opportunity to acquire faith and therefore *must* be given the opportunity to do so after death. For the Lord Jesus describes it thus, "In his lifetime Lazarus received (experienced) *evil things*, but now he is comforted" (v. 25).

Surely in these words we are given the complete assurance from the Lord Himself *as to what happens after death* to all those who never in their lifetime have the opportunity to hear about the love and mercy and forgiveness of God, because they were born in an evil environment and all their lives

exposed to heathen vices and cruel customs, or to the debasing influences of our great city slums. That which they never had the opportunity to learn on earth, they then learn through loving and skilled teachers, there, in the other world, where perhaps even Abraham, as this metaphor suggests, counts it an honour and privilege to receive such poor, destitute and ignorant human souls with tenderness, and to comfort them and to share in the blessed work of teaching them. What lovelier work could heaven afford to any true lover of the Lord of Love.

Then what was Lazarus, the one-time starving beggar, learning "in Abraham's bosom"? Why, to be sure, he was learning *The Law of Love and Forgiveness*. He was learning all the lovely, lovely things about the God of Abraham of which he had remained ignorant all his earthly life. And *he was learning to practise them*. How do we know his? Why, it is as clear as daylight, as will be seen in a moment. But first we must return to the rich man.

v. 22: ". . . the rich man also died, and was *buried*." It is pitifully significant that the Lord makes no mention of any sort of burial for the poor man. How much He was able to convey in a few words! and almost as much by His omissions. For there had been no burial for the beggar. The dogs *had* seen to that! The rich man, however, had a rich man's burial, and no doubt crowds followed his body to its last resting place, and the priest or Rabbi probably gave a wonderful eulogy, because he *had* been a rich man. But all that the poor rich man was then conscious of was that he had lost his body and, with it, all contact with his riches on earth and the pleasures and delights and homage which they had secured for him; and that he was now in hell—in a state or condition of torment.

Notice once again that there is not one word to suggest that this was because he had made no profession of faith or had been a heretic outside the one true Church, or an atheist, or "a Modernist" or one who believed false "isms" or cults. No, the only thing which the Lord said about him, the only clue as to *why* he was in hell, is, that though he himself had been rich and wore fine clothing and fared sumptuously every day, he had, among other utterly selfish things, allowed the poor beggar to die of sores and starvation on the scrap heap at his own gate. For this he was held responsible, as, doubtless, for all other times when he had broken the law of Love, but this, which had been the most flagrant and terrible of them all, is

the first of which he was made conscious. The irrevocable law of Cause and Effect had gone into operation. He now had to reap the consequences of his selfish indifference and cruelty. He, too, in some way, was now tormented in the heat of a raging fire; he, too, moaned for "one drop of water to cool his tongue".

We must of course bear in mind that the language is figurative and pictorial. He did not burn in a literal fire nor feel a literal heat and thirst, for he had no body and no physical senses by which to feel that kind of suffering. But he did now experience that which he had allowed the beggar to experience, the anguish of having no one to care what happened to him, no one to take compassion on him or to alleviate his sufferings. He experienced the awful feeling of being *alone*, with no one, in all the wide universe, to love him or to befriend him.

Now notice what happened, and the strange, unexpected words which follow.

v. 23. "*And in hell, he lift up his eyes . . . and saw.*"

Hell was beginning to carry out its merciful, Love-ordained ministry. The prescription against the dread disease began to work. There is no indication as to how long after death this began to happen, for there is no *time* there corresponding to time here on earth, but, at last, "HE LIFT UP HIS EYES". He not only looked away from himself for the first time, but he looked *upward*. Like the prodigal son among the husks and the swine he began "to come to himself". He looked up and away from his own torment, and what did he see?

Well, first of all, he saw the beggar whom he had allowed to die and to be eaten by dogs on the rubbish-heap at his gate. And that sight must, at first, have increased his torment with the pangs of conscience. There returned to his memory the dreadful picture of the look in the eyes of the man, as, tortured by thirst among the savage scavenger dogs, he had moaned over and over again for a drop of water. And the memory of himself "in purple and fine linen" stalking haughtily and indifferently past that sight and sitting down at his own sumptuously spread table. Ah! some things in hell must be beyond description. *But he began to see and to recognise* the law of Cause and Effect: that he had made his own hell and was rearing his own self-sown torment.

Then his eyesight became still clearer. He saw that Lazarus was now "in Abraham's bosom". Does that mean that he literally saw Abraham tenderly nursing the one-time beggar?

It is all pictorial language. He saw the blessedness experienced by Lazarus. In what did that blessedness and happiness consist? In knowing and loving what Abraham had known and loved, and experiencing the joy of practising the "Royal Law of Love". How did Dives know that Lazarus was enjoying that experience? Surely there can be no doubt whatsoever. *He saw it in the attitude of Lazarus towards himself.* For listen to what Dives cried out when he saw the man, who, more than any other, he had most wronged and treated with such callous cruelty. He cried out begging that *that* man might be allowed to come and ease his torment. Fancy asking that the man whom he had treated worse than any other should be the special man sent to him, instead of asking for someone else to whom, perhaps, in his lifetime he had shown kindness and help.

What answer might the "ignorant beggar" Lazarus be expected to give to that piteous appeal from the man who had refused to help him and had allowed him to die in indescribable misery at his own gate? and who was now himself in torment. Surely, the natural thing to expect would be such an answer as this :

"Fancy expecting *me* to try to help you! Why, don't you remember who I am? I am the man you left entirely uncared for, with whom you would not share a single crumb nor spare a drop of water. Don't you realise that you are reaping what you have sown? Now reap it, and don't expect me to lift a finger to help you."

That would be the kind of answer Dives might reasonably expect. Then what made him appeal to *Lazarus of all men?* BECAUSE HE SAW THE COMPASSION AND LOVE AND FORGIVENESS IN THE FACE OF LAZARUS and saw how gladly he would have come to his help. And that was how he recognised that Lazarus was now in Abraham's bosom, and that was why he dared to cry out to him for help and mercy. That is why we also may be certain that Lazarus had been learning those lovely things in the after-life which no one had bothered to teach him on earth.

Is all this imagination? No more imagination than all the contrary assumptions, but all of it vividly suggested with the Saviour's consummate skill, in the words He used and the description given.

Dives in hell cried out "*Father Abraham.*" He was a Jew and so, no doubt, had been accustomed to claim that he was "a son of Abraham". But surely he saw a father's love and

compassion in the face of Abraham, or, *being in hell*, he would never have dared to use that term to "the friend of God". Abraham at once accepted the appellation and answered "Son".

It was in *hell* that Dives began to see and understand things to which he had been completely blind while he lived on earth. He began to understand the wonderful compassion of true LOVE, *the love which identifies itself with sinners and does not repudiate relationship with them, even when they are in hell.*

He still had yet another lesson to learn in hell, and Abraham, the representative of Fatherly Love, began to teach it to him. Dives had to realise that he had made his own hell and no one could take him out of it save his own self. So he heard love and compassion saying :

"Son . . . between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which *would*" (the Greek word is *desire*) "pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us who desire to come from thence." (Luke 16, 26.)

What really was the "great gulf" fixed between the blessed state of Abraham and Lazarus on the one side, and the torment of Dives on the other? It could not have been a material gulf any more than the thirst and fire of Dives were physical or material, for none of the three had *physical* bodies. No, it was the gulf between the attitude of heart of these men. Lazarus was already learning to love and respond to God and to forgive his greatest enemy, and was therefore unspeakably blessed. Dives, up until then, blind and deaf and dead to the love of God and therefore unspeakably wretched, chained to the love of himself, imprisoned in his own created hell and *while in that state of heart*, utterly unable to escape from that hell.

*The only thing which could bridge that gulf was conversion—yes, conversion in hell.* A real change of heart was needed, a willingness to die to himself completely, and to let the fires of Holy Love, which had begun their cleansing work by purging him thus far that he could "lift up his eyes and see", complete that work and destroy his self-love for ever. However much Lazarus might *desire* to help Dives, he could never enter into that condition and state which Dives was in, because he had learnt to love and forgive and therefore could know nothing of the torment of being dead to love. Dives, on the other hand, could not possibly pass into the blessed condition of Lazarus until he too was willing to learn what



Lazarus had learnt: *how happy it is to love* even those who hate us, or who will not love us in return; how blessed and heavenly it is to forgive! That was the gulf which separated the two men, a gulf as firmly fixed as the Throne of God Himself—the impossibility of evil and self-love enjoying any of the blessings of goodness and unselfish love.

Oh, how skilfully the Lord told this story! Just notice what happened next. Dives, the poor rich man in hell, began—yes, actually *began—to bridge that gulf*. For his next words were:

vv. 27, 28: "Then I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that *he* may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Now these are not the words of a man fixed in hell for ever and ever. They are the words of a man *being converted in hell*. To turn away from thoughts of one's own suffering and misery, to think of others and long to spare them, is certainly not the attitude of anyone who belongs to hell. They are the words of one to whom the gates of hell are beginning to open so that he may go out.

It is interesting to think of those five brothers of the rich man. If they were all rich, too, and as absorbed in themselves as Dives had become through his love of riches, there cannot have been much real love in that family or between those brothers! Indeed, we may be sure that such was the case, because poor Dives recognised quite clearly that his brothers *would* come into the same condition in which he found himself, unless they could be warned. For, like himself, he realised that they were all busily making their own hells.

Now the lovely lesson continues, and Dives is taught the way, the only way by which anyone can avoid making a hell for themselves, or escaping from it when once inside.

v. 29: "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them."

Now in Hebrew the word to *hear* is the same as the word to *obey*. Those brothers knew the Law of Moses which their own religious leaders had summed up in the words "To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and to love thy neighbour as thyself." (Luke 10, 27.) "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore *love is the fulfilling of the law.*" (Rom. 13, 10.)

There is only one way to escape from hell. It is at last, at long last, to allow the Saviour, by His grace and power,

to "incline our hearts to keep this law." For it is the breaking of the Law of Love, at any point, which is the first step towards hell. And in hell, just as here on earth, the only salvation is to *respond in obedient faith to the Saviour of all men.*

When poor Dives heard these words he exclaimed (v. 30): "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent."

Dives knew those brothers of his, with whom perhaps he had quarrelled bitterly. They did have the Law and the Prophets, but, like himself, they paid no heed, and lived neglecting them. What they needed, he felt, was something to shock them into realising their desperate danger. To be warned of the torment he was suffering in that world beyond the grave.

Yes, most certainly the door of Dives' hell was opening wider and wider, the bridge was stretching out farther across the gulf. For notice, he did not ask to be freed from his torment to go to them himself. He asked that Lazarus, so eager and willing to help, might be allowed to go and warn those brothers in his stead. Surely for him hell *had* begun to change into a fiery, purging process, about which it has been said, that those who experience it love that fire for it is the means of their cleansing and healing.

Then Abraham spoke again, once more voicing the Father-Love of God, the Voice of pleading Love and warning:

v. 31: "If they hear not (obey not) Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Dives was told that it would be of no use even to send a man back from the dead to warn those who are still alive, for men would refuse to believe even such a messenger, declaring him a fraud.

Would men really refuse to listen if someone whom they had known before his death, came back from the grave to warn them? Is that really possible?

Yes, it is only too true. If men will not listen to the pleadings and warnings of God when they hear the Scriptures read, as they gather for worship, then they will say, as did the religious leaders about the Lord Himself after *He* rose from the dead, "He is an impostor and deceiver. This is not the man we crucified and buried."

Our Lord closed the story at that point, and then, with startling and razor-like earnestness, *He turned to His own*

disciples and drove home its application. "TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES. If thy brother trespass against thee . . . *thou shalt forgive him.*" (Luke 17, 3, 4.)

Can it be possible that the hell created by refusal on the part of God's people to forgive one another is even a more terrible hell than that created for themselves by the covetous and the callous? O, let all the disciples of the Lord lay to heart His words, "*Take heed to yourselves.*"

The more I studied the Lord's own teaching on the subject of hell, the clearer it became that He Himself did not preach "hell fire" as a means of frightening publicans and sinners and ignorant people into repentance: to them He spoke of Himself as the Saviour and Healer and Cleanser whom they were so conscious of needing. But He did again and again preach "hell fire" to His religious hearers and those who professed to be serving and loving God. To them He hardly opened His mouth without referring to this subject. Study His discourses as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and see how true this is. Over and over again He warned "professing" believers in God of the terrible results which must follow rejection of the light which He brought, and also of refusal to live up to the light they had already received through "The Law and the Prophets". It is the wilful rejection of light which brings darkness and leads in a straight and direct path to the condition He named Hell.

That servant *which knew his Lord's will* . . . but did not according to His will, shall be beaten with *many stripes*. But *he that knew not* and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. (Luke 12, 47, 48.)

He said moreover so clearly and solemnly: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven: *but he that doeth the will of My Father* which is in heaven. *Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works?* And then will I profess unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU, DEPART FROM ME, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7, 21-23.)

What is this but the clearest possible statement from the lips of the Lord that GOD WILL JUSTIFY NOTHING BUT THAT WHICH IS IN HARMONY WITH THE TEACHING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: and He will justify no one who professes to be a disciple and yet refuses to allow the Saviour to separate them from everything which breaks the Royal Law of Love?

Yet how many of us who call ourselves Christians continue to grudge and envy one another, to criticise others and judge them, to be bitter against each other, to backbite, to tear each other's character to shreds, to have lawsuits against one another and, above all, to refuse to forgive those who wrong us and to bear the harm which they cause us. Yet these are all things against which the Lord warned us, telling us that they lead to hell. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 7) He most carefully *listed the things by means of which we bring ourselves into self-made hells*, and He warned that such hells can even begin here in this life. For Love is so merciful that He allows us all to begin to reap the bitter fruits produced by breaking the Law of Love, that thereby we may be brought to realise how inescapable misery and torment are, if these hell-producing attitudes of heart are persisted in.

But see what it costs the Saviour to conquer Hell.

While Our Lord and Saviour still hung upon the cross and as the moment approached for His Spirit to leave the body, He uttered that most terrible cry which wrings the heart with dread as we read it:

"My God! My God! *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"

"And Jesus, when He had cried again, yielded up the Ghost . . . *and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain* from the top to the bottom." (Matt. 27, 45, 50, 51.)

With this terrible cry upon His lips, revealing the uttermost horror possible to any soul, that of a feeling of such complete separation from God that it seemed He was left alone in an empty universe, the Spirit of the Son of Man left His physical body and descended into the experience of HELL; for only by the utterance of this heartrending cry, could He reveal to us the overwhelming truth that the Lamb of God does indeed bear and experience with sinners the uttermost dread consequences possible to sin.

"He descended into hell."

Yes, the full revelation of the agony of the suffering love of God had to be made. When the unrepentant sinner goes down into the darkness and terror of that experience in which it feels as though there is no God and no Goodness anywhere, but only Evil is real, *then love goes also*. The Son of Man (the suffering consciousness of God in Mankind) feels in and with that tormented member of the Body of Mankind, all that hell means. He goes the last, uttermost, terrible mile.

This is what it costs the Son of Man, the King of Love, and the Saviour of the world to remain faithful to His complete identification with us in our sin and its awful consequences: what it means for the Lamb of God to "*bear the sin of the world.*"

Not just once, two thousand years ago, did He make this awful descent, but, through the "*rent veil*" on that one occasion, He made visible in *time* the overwhelming truth that, just as He is *all the time* conquering sin, quickening souls to life and raising them up from the death of sin, so He is *all the time* descending with His creatures into their self-made hells. He knows what it is to experience with them the very worst that sin can do to them. He does not ask even an *unrepentant* sinner to experience anything which He, "the faithful Creator" is unwilling to experience also.

For listen to the Psalmist as, with amazed awe and wonder and thankfulness, he expresses the truth:

"*If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.*" (Psa. 139, 8.)

*Love can go no further*; but indeed the other side of the staggering fact is also true; *Love can do no less*. Real Love, eternal Love, cannot hold back from going with His own creatures into all that those self-deceived creatures have brought upon themselves.

Surely the terrible lack of love among so many of us who are Christians is because we have never understood this truth; have never even suspected that such is the real nature of Love. We have failed to grasp the truth about God revealed to us by the Son of God when He uttered that awful cry upon the cross as His Spirit descended into the condition which the Bible calls HELL.

"He descended into hell" *before* He rose again from the dead. *Why* did He go there? Because so many members of the Body of Mankind make the awful choice of going there themselves, *and it is there, in hell*, the last outpost of His love, *that He must win them to Himself*.

Why did He go there? Listen to the Scriptures.

"Christ . . . being put to death in the flesh . . . went and *preached* unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient." (I Pet. 3, 18, 19.)

He went and *breached* to the souls in their self-made hell. What did He preach? Surely the selfsame Gospel that He preached on earth—the Gospel of the liberating power and love of God Who *so* loves the world that He gives His own

son to be ONE with men in their sin and misery, yes, even in the depths of hell. This is the Gospel of the Grace of God and of the forgiveness of sins.

*What result* was there to His preaching? "He descended first into the lower parts of the earth; He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended* up far above all heavens, *that He might fill all things* . . . When He *ascended* up on high *He led captivity captive.*" (Eph. 4, 9, 10, 8.) He opened the gates of hell and set its prisoners free and led them up into heaven with Himself.

It really is impossible to conceive of any more glorious Gospel than this, and yet there are many Christians who honestly fear to believe it. One argument which they often bring forward against the possibility of such a magnificent and God honouring victory is that punishment and prison always tend to have a hardening effect on sinners and do not, as a general rule, lead to repentance, but rather to a confirmation in evil.

It is, of course, true that such is often the effect of punishment and imprisonment here on earth, because the sinner *must needs go alone* to the prison and there associate only with other wicked men and be cut off completely from all the softening influences of love. But what if the prisoner in hell finds that Love Himself has gone there with him, that He is bearing all the suffering and shame, refusing to give the sinner up. This is quite a different matter. And this Saviour Who is perfect Love, makes this statement:

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and *have the keys of hell* and of death." (Rev. 1, 18.)

Why should we suppose that in these words of the *triumphant* Saviour as He asserted His complete victory over death and hell, that He meant us to understand that He would use those keys *to lock sinners into hell* for ever and ever, instead of the obvious and glorious truth that He was glorying in the fact *that He is able to open the gates of hell*, that indeed "the gates of hell cannot prevail against" Him nor His Church, and that His sole use for the keys is to open the gates and, at last, to lead hell's captives out into liberty. Otherwise, why did He go and preach in hell, if that preaching was not meant to be their opportunity to respond and turn to Him for salvation? I cannot possibly read any other meaning into these glorious verses. How vividly Dante describes this truth.

Over the gateway of the Inferno, as he saw it, were inscribed these terrible words: "*All hope abandon ye who enter here.*" But it is beautifully significant that he saw these words also inscribed on the same gate: "ETERNAL LOVE WAS MY ARCHITECT." How truly Dante saw! As we follow him on that awful path through the hells which men had made for themselves, and through the City of Despair, its capital, we are made to realise that everything is described from *the point of view of those in hell*. They see no hope. But when Dante, at long last had made the tortuous ascent out of the utmost depths of hell and up the Mountain of Purging and fire and at last reached the highest of the heavens and caught one indescribable glimpse of the Beautiful Vision, he found that from that heaven of love he could look upon the torments of hell from quite a different point of view. For he saw that hell was already swallowed up in victory and he saw Eternal Love *smiling* in the joy of Love's complete triumph.

The Lord, when He warned men of hell, spoke to them of it as they must experience it, not from the standpoint of those in heaven! How appalling is the standpoint of hell, because it seems as though the condition must be endless and that there is no hope and no escape from it, for "there is a great gulf fixed". But quite otherwise from the standpoint of those in heaven, who know that when the awful condition has worked its Love-appointed task, the delivering work can begin. This surely is the only possible explanation of that verse which says that those who are tormented in hell are also in the presence and sight of the inhabitants of heaven (Rev. 14, 10), a verse which used to seem to me too unutterably awful to be possible. But with this new understanding of the purpose of hell, how right, how perfectly right and lovely it is! Think what it must mean when those in hell at last begin to see the truth, and actually find heaven all round about them though it had seemed to them that they were in "outer darkness"; and to find heaven's inhabitants waiting joyfully to comfort and revive the poor tormented souls, counting it their love-appointed privilege to do so. How much we have missed when we have understood otherwise! Think of Christian parents who have seen their own sons and daughters choose the perilous way out into the darkness; have watched them growing more and more blind and deaf to spiritual realities; who have wept and prayed for their salvation, apparently in vain! What heaven more glorious, more full of adoring joy and thankfulness and worship, than that of watching over

the blind, lost, suffering loved ones, and to be there when at last "in hell, they lift up their eyes to see".

When all this began to break upon me, with what new adoring joy I read the words of the Apostle Peter, which he quoted from Psalm 16, 10, and applied to the Holy Son of God Who was made Son of Man, and Head of the whole Race, and Who had just risen from the dead:

"THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL, neither suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." (Acts 2, 27 and 31.)

O our Lord and our God, how unutterably glorious and lovely are Thy grace and Thy love and "Thy thoughts which are to usward the children of men". For now it came breaking in upon my understanding why Peter quoted that verse and what he meant by it. Now I realized *why* the *body* of the Lord Jesus Christ was not allowed to suffer corruption in the tomb. It was so that the truth might be unveiled to us that, just as the human body in which the Saviour appeared and revealed His ONENESS with mankind, was not allowed to fall into corruption *even when laid in the grave*, but was raised up again on the third day, to newness of life, so the whole Body of Mankind which His human body represented, is *not* to be "left in hell" nor given over to endless destruction, but, complete, with not a member missing, is to be "made alive again" and be raised up from death and sin. Death and hell cannot prevail against the Holy, triumphant One Who was made MAN that He might raise up the whole fallen race of Mankind. Yes, the whole glorious revelation given to us by the Lord Jesus personally, when He appeared on earth, is in every detail an unveiling of the full Truth.

Then, if we preach anything less than this, are we not guilty of preaching something less than the glory unveiled to us by the Saviour Himself, and at such cost to Himself?



Can Love be terrible, my Lord?

Can gentleness be stern?

Ah yes! intense is Love's desire

To purify His loved, 'tis fire—

A holy fire to burn.

For He must fully perfect thee.

Till in thy likeness all can see

The beauty of thy Lord.

Can Holy Love be jealous, Lord?

Yes, "jealous as the grave!"

Till every hurtful idol be

Uptorn and wrested out of thee,

Love will be stern to save;

Will spare thee not a single pain,

Till thou be freed and pure again,

And perfect as thy Lord.

Can Love seem cruel, O my Lord?

Yes, like a sword the cure!

He will not spare thee, sin-sick soul,

Till He has made thy sickness whole,

Until thy heart is pure.

For oh, He loves thee far too well

To leave thee in thy self-made hell;

A *Saviour* is thy Lord.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE GLORY UNVEILED BY THE CROSS

As a young Christian my first conception of God represented Him to me as a holy God, "high and lifted up and inhabiting eternity", seated upon the throne of the universes and "of purer eyes than to see evil". I thought of Him as entirely unapproachable to sinners save through a Mediator, His Son Jesus Christ. I knew that the Scriptures also said that "His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth" and that therefore He knows everything and nothing can be hidden from Him; that "even the hairs of our head are numbered" and so is every blade of grass and every speck of dust floating about in the universe. But I conceived of Him as being cognisant of it all in an absolutely impersonal way. I vaguely supposed that He was above and beyond the reach of all suffering. He was the One Eternal Spirit Who was to be worshipped and adored and *feared*. But He was also to be loved, for, wonder of wonders, mystery of mysteries, once, nearly two thousand years ago, He had chosen to become incarnate as a man and "to visit this world in great humility in the person of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ". Thus, for thirty years He did actually share in our human nature and become "acquainted with grief", and for six awful hours on the Cross He did endure appalling human agony, and did actually die a terrible physical death. So now He does know what it means and feels like to be a man, just as a doctor can understand and feel for a patient who must undergo a painful operation which the doctor himself has already undergone, though of course he no longer feels the pain in the way the actual patient must now feel it. I was quite sure that when Christ rose again from the dead and returned to the glory of the Father, that all His sufferings were over, and now He only waits for sinners to accept what He did for them during those six awful hours upon the cross. I pushed aside the thought, which did sometimes intrude, that His *atoning* sufferings lasted a much shorter

time than the agonies which He allows multitudes of human beings to suffer, sometimes even for years; such as those dying of lingering disease or languishing in prison for life, and perhaps undergoing terrible and repeated torture at the hands of cruel men. But because He was God Himself, and therefore infinitely great and holy, His suffering on the cross as a substitute for sinners, was of infinitely more value than passing a just sentence of death on all fallen mankind. Therefore those six hours of suffering by a Divine and innocent victim *were* sufficient to atone for six thousand years of a whole world's sin. It was the *greatness* of the victim sacrificed which made his offering of such infinite value, and not the greatness of His sufferings.

I was also absolutely certain that now the Saviour, seated on the right hand of God in the heavens, is beyond the reach of all suffering and can feel no trace of any kind of sorrow.

Though it is now more than twenty years ago, I never can forget the shock of horror and repudiation with which I reacted to a passage in a book in which a minister shared some new thoughts which had been coming to him in connection with the sufferings which God must still undergo because He is *cognisant of everything* which goes on in this sin-ruined world. He suggested that if we could know about all the sorrow and suffering and sin in even one tiny village, we would break down and be unable to bear it. *But God is all the time cognisant of it all, not* only in one place, but all over the world, and He is never able to be unconscious of it. Not a single detail but is known to Him.

Then the writer of the book described his own reactions while visiting in the slums of a great city, when it was sometimes necessary for him to penetrate into places of ghastly evil and haunts of vice and crime, on some errand of love and mercy. He wrote, "I pity, I sympathise, I try to help, and then I come home. And at home I bathe myself and sit down to a meal prepared by my wife and I go to bed and to sleep. I am away from it all. But HE stays there. He is still in that foul den, in that slum, that brothel. He remains cognisant of it all."

That was the very first time that such an idea had ever been presented to my mind, and it appalled me. With my whole will I longed to reject it. A *suffering God* instead of the high and lofty One Who had only need to suffer once in order to atone for the whole world's sin and anguish and ruin!

But there it was, and in the end I could not escape the realisation that God, being omnipresent, so far from being apart altogether from the world's suffering, must be conscious of it all the time, and, moreover, conscious of *the whole sum total of it*. And feeling it all with the anguish of Holy Love.

It was an appalling thought. A suffering God! How can I possibly describe the overwhelming revolution which this new understanding wrought in my whole conception of God? *The sin of the world was still hurting Him*. Our transgressions were still wounding Him. After all, He was not beyond the reach of pain.

But revolutionary as this idea was, I still thought of Him as suffering, as it were, from without, looking on at our agony and all the terrible results of our sinfulness, in much the same way as a loving parent suffers while tending a child during some agonising illness, or as a husband suffers while nursing a wife dying of a disease. Suffering in the anguished sympathy of helpless love.

It was not until years later, when I was reading a book written by Ernest Raymond, called *In the Steps of St. Francis of Assisi*, that the greater and infinitely more overwhelming truth broke in upon my understanding.

How strange it seems as I look back to that moment. For I had been reading the book with very little enthusiasm or interest. At that time St. Francis was not a character who appealed to me, and as a Protestant, I was suspicious of Pre-Reformation saints. But as I read, I came to the description of St. Francis, just after his conversion, as he rode one day in the forest near his home town, and came to the cross roads where there stood a leper hospital. He had such a horror of lepers and of the stench which issued from this Lazar house that generally he avoided the place altogether. But on this occasion he was lost in prayer and meditation and allowed his horse to go where it pleased. Suddenly it shied, and then he saw a leper standing in the path before him, holding up his hideous stumps of hands and asking for alms.

The first impulse of St. Francis was to fling all the money in his purse to the poor wretch and then to spur his horse away from the place as soon as possible. At that moment, however, an overwhelming realization broke upon him, and, leaping from his horse, he ran to the leper, pressed the money upon him, and then, raising the poor, eaten stump of a hand, he kissed it. And in Italy (added Ernest Raymond) the kiss of the hand is the kiss of reverence to *the representative of Christ*.

When I came to that point in the account, suddenly, without any warning, some inner veil was torn away from my understanding, and at last, in a blinding flash of insight, I beheld the truth—it was as though I saw a God I had never before beheld. All my previous conceptions of Him, glorious and wonderful as I had felt them to be, were torn to pieces as though they were strange and distorting veils over the Mirror of Truth. I saw at last such a glory of love and humility and grace and oneness, as I had never before conceived. At the same time it seemed to me that I ought always to have realised that those earlier conceptions were utterly inadequate, because the truth had been so plainly *unveiled to us once for all, in the Person of Jesus Christ.*

I saw an absolutely new meaning in the Incarnation and in the Sufferings of Our Lord and what He revealed to us by becoming MAN, the actual HEAD OF THE WHOLE BODY OF MANKIND. I saw that it meant that He has chosen to extend His own consciousness into every single member of the human race, so that *He feels with us all*, everything that we feel, in exactly the same way that the head of the body must feel and be conscious of everything that goes on in the Body.

As St. Francis looked at the poor, miserable leper with his eaten face, and useless stumps of hands, a man living amongst a never-ending stench, despised and feared by everyone, an outcast from all his fellow men except those who like himself were lepers, he realised that our Creator, the Son of God, made Son of Man by becoming immanent in the Body of Mankind, knew and *felt* all that the leper felt and everything felt by every other individual in the whole world.

When this realisation broke upon my own mind, I understood at last that we, fallen, sin-diseased Mankind, are the Cross of the Lamb of God. IT IS IN THE SUFFERING BODY OF MANKIND THAT HE IS CRUCIFIED AND BEARS THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

This is the overwhelming revelation which the Son of God could only unveil to us by hanging upon His cross on earth, and by the crucifixion of the individual human body in which He appeared among us. Once, "when the fulness of time was come" and men were ready at last to be shown the *full* Truth, the veil was rent in twain so that we can look through into reality and see the actual truth and what it costs God to redeem this fallen world.

That is why, when Our Lord hung upon the cross and wicked men mocked Him and cried, "If Thou be the Son of

God, save thyself and *come down from the cross*", He made no response, and wrought out the awful revelation of the awful truth. For He could not come down from His cross on earth if He were to give us a true revelation about His cross in Mankind. The truth is that our Creator and Saviour *will not come down from His cross*, will not save Himself and cease to suffer with us, UNTIL WE TAKE HIM DOWN FROM HIS CROSS INDIVIDUALLY, by responding to Him and allowing Him to *save us* by separating us completely from *the sin which wounds both us and Himself*.

I have read that there is a picture in one of the art galleries of Europe which depicts the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. In that picture, Eden lies just behind them and an angel with a flaming sword guards the gate against their return. Before them stretches a waste of briars and thorns. But Adam and Eve are not pictured as looking back with sorrowful longing towards Eden, nor are they looking with shrinking fear at the wilderness before them. The artist has depicted them as looking up towards heaven, awestruck, and overwhelmed with horror at what they see, for a great cross has appeared in the heavens above them, and the One Whom they had known and worshipped in the Garden of Eden, is now nailed upon that cross.

Does not the painting of such a picture as this bear witness to the fact that there are some truths, yes, some *vital* truths which have been *mis-laid and lost* and are largely unknown to Christians today? Like the Church of Laodicea, the last Church, which believed herself so rich in knowledge and truth, we are really *blind* to things which constitute the real heart of the Gospel.

For many love-illuminated hearts in other generations have seen these things and in their writings and paintings have borne witness to the fact that not just once, for six hours, when Jesus the incarnate Son of God hung upon *His cross on earth*, did He bear the sin of the world. No, from the first moment of man's sinning "God hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all", and His cross began. It was only necessary that He should suffer *ONCE* on earth, so that for six hours the veil should be rent in sunder and the truth be made visible to me, the Truth of the Lamb of God continually bearing the sin of the world—until sin shall be no more because He has overcome it in the last diseased member of the Body.

When the Lord was on earth, over and over again He claimed that He Himself was *THE TRUTH*, the whole truth

about the relationship between God and this Body of Fallen Mankind. His life, death and resurrection and every single detail connected with them were all part of the full revelation He gave us. He was not doing something during those few years on earth which He is not doing all the time in that world of which we are so unconscious. He was rending the veil and *making all the facts visible to us*, and the cost to Him as a Man, in an individual human body, was the greatest possible cost. But He showed us that the very heart of the Gospel which we are to preach is this: that everything which happened to Him from His birth to His crucifixion and resurrection *had to happen* because every single part of it was His way of telling us and making known to us *the good news* about our Creator and Saviour.

He is ALL THE TIME being "made Man", by His immanence in every member of the human race, for He is the Second Adam (MAN) Who is the Head of the whole Body.

He is ALL THE TIME the Lamb of God, bearing the sin of the world and feeling all its agonies, for in the suffering Body of sin-diseased Mankind He is nailed to a cross of anguish.

He is ALL THE TIME quickening the sin-crucified Body of Mankind and raising it up from the dead, member by member, by the life-bringing power of His blood flowing through the Body at such cost to Himself, to be received member by member. And as the different members of the Body receive it into themselves and are quickened to resurrection life, so He knows the continual joy which makes all the suffering worth while and to be accounted as nothing.

He is ALL THE TIME ascending in a glorified Body in those whom He has raised up as "the firstfruits" of His suffering, the true Church both of the Old Testament and of the New, and through them, transmitting His life to other parts of the diseased and suffering Body.

I used to be greatly puzzled when I read so many passages in which it is said that the Lord did certain things "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled", going out of His way, as it were, to make the prophecies about Himself come true, instead of allowing them to happen of themselves. It seemed hardly right, I thought, to force things in that way. But now I realise that of course He had most carefully and deliberately to fulfil every single detail that had been written about Himself in the Scriptures because they were all like little fragments of the truth, seen by different men of God, which, when fitted together, would make up a picture of the full truth about God and

His relationship with the creatures whom He has made.

How significant certain things in those prophecies have now become. For example, I never could understand why the whole of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah is written in the past tense, as though much of it had already happened, although the prophet wrote it so many centuries before Christ appeared on earth. Now I understand, Isaiah, just as Moses and the other prophets, knew the real truth about "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" of fallen sinners. They knew that He has been BEARING every single sin, ever since. I always used to *read into* that verse that He was slain "*in the intention of God*", from the foundation of the world, but not literally slain till thousands of years later. But from the day that the word spoken to Adam came true "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2, 17) the Lamb of God has been the real VICTIM every time men sin.

Ever since the Fall, every single human being can say truly, "*Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He is wounded for our transgressions.*" "In all our afflictions He is afflicted. He Himself bears our diseases."

It is so evident that John the Baptist also knew and taught this truth, for, three and a half years before the Lord hung upon His cross, John pointed at Him and cried: "Behold the Lamb of God Who *beareth* the sin of the world" (John 1, 29, margin). John did *not* say, "Behold the One Who will bear it at some future time, but, the One Who *beareth* it continually".

Surely it was to confirm such a testimony as this that the spotless Son of God insisted on going down into the waters of baptism with publicans and *sinners*, thus attesting openly *His complete identification of Himself with sinful mankind.*

When His disciples (the Apostles) looked upon all these things actually taking place before their eyes, they knew that they had seen the whole truth unveiled to them, the Truth made visible in *Time*. They saw Him, in His *humanity* doing "once for all" on earth in one individual body, what He does in the whole Body of Mankind all the time.

I do believe that many of us who are sincere Christians need a complete revolution in our thoughts about sin and God's attitude towards it. We need to understand that He so abominates sin because it is such a frightful and destructive disease in the Body of Mankind, the Body of which His Son has made Himself the Head; a disease which causes the most intense suffering to every single member of that Body. It is also because He Himself, daily, hour by hour, minute



by minute, is conscious of all the agony caused by the disease.

It is, I think, our failure to grasp this aspect of the case, namely *the appalling thing that happened to the whole Human Race* when sin entered the world, and just what it means to every single member of the race to be born into this sin-diseased Body of Mankind, and that we are *all suffering together*. It is this which is the real root and cause of the problem of our LOVElessness towards each other, and why so many of us find ourselves unable to keep the Lord's one commandment that we should "love one another as He loves us". We are so hard of heart towards each other just because we have failed to realise this truth. When we see the blemishes and ugly failures in one another, we suppose that we may feel irritation and indignation and even contempt, because we suppose that God, with His far greater holiness, and far higher standard of what is right and wrong, feels a "righteous wrath", and also a desire to punish the wrongdoer who is stumbling others through selfishness, tyranny, laziness, bad temper, dishonesty or cruelty.

Whereas ought we not to realise that these things awaken in Him the same feelings of agonised compassion and grief which the horrible symptoms of a malignant disease awaken in the hearts of those who dearly love the patient? All the hideous, loathsome and disgusting manifestations of sin, far from stirring up wrath against the one in whom they appear, arouse Holy Love to rise up in all His strength and determination that the beloved *must and shall be cured*.

The Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the rending away of the veil so that we are shown what it costs God to make this full atonement, both to Himself and to fallen men, to atone for all the awful havoc wrought by sin. *He bears it all Himself*, overcomes it and atones to every single member of the sin-suffering body by raising them up to complete restoration, for ever safe from re-infecting themselves with the frightful disease. He shows us how gloriously worth while it was for Him to create human beings with free will, capable of bringing even such appalling suffering and evil upon themselves as has been the case. When the veil is torn away from our understanding, *we see Him bearing our sins in His own Body on the tree* (I Pet. 2, 24.) We also see that the sin-diseased Body of Mankind is the body in which He suffers, for He has so completely identified Himself with us "even while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5, 8) by making Himself the Head of the whole suffering Body, in order that His life may overcome

the disease in every single member, as they respond to Him individually.

"Before ever He made us," cried Mother Julian of Norwich, "He loved us, and because He loved us He created us." And every thought and purpose of His heart towards us, adds William Law, is nothing but love, for to all eternity He is, and can be, nothing but love.

The love of the Creator, Christ shows us, cannot, and will not, allow the beloved creatures to suffer anything which the Lover and Creator Himself is not willing to suffer with them. For Love is ONENESS and complete identification with the beloved. *This* is the very heart and centre of the Mystery of Love unveiled to us by the Cross of the Lord of Love.

Every time that we partake together of the Supper which He instituted, telling us "Do this in remembrance of Me", is not this the real truth which we are to remember about Him?—the truth of *His Body still broken, His Blood still outpoured*, until He appears again in a Body *wholly healed* and raised up to fullness of life and perfection. Have we not, some of us, missed the very heart of this central act of remembrance which He instituted so that we might never forget this fact? The centuries roll past and nearly two thousand years have gone since, once, IN TIME, He hung upon His earthly cross. We are to remember Him, ONE with the whole suffering Body of Mankind, the only way by which He can heal us and give us His life. This precious sacrament which He instituted was in order to keep alive in our hearts the flame of passionate desire for the full consummation of His victory and to have a share in hastening it, so that Our Lord and Saviour may descend altogether from His cross and may "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied". (Isa. 53, 11.)

Then how it must come crashing into our understanding that *whatever we do to other members of the Body of Mankind, we do it unto Him*. He feels it, whether it be some token of our love, or some harsh, unloving thing. Whenever we yield to temptation we wound HIM afresh. Whenever we break the Law of Love, HE is the real victim.

O understand it if you can!

('Tis Love Himself Who pleads,)

Whene'er you wound a son of man,

The Son of God then bleeds.

And not till sin is fully slain,

Can God's own heart be healed of pain.

Oh ! If only we all realised this. What a transforming effect it would have upon us! For how often we treat our fellow brothers and sisters in the Human Body with hardness, unkindness, unlovingness, yes, and even with injustice and (at times) with intentional cruelty, actually desiring to wound and hurt them, because they have wounded and hurt us. How impossible such an attitude would be, how impossible to disdain any others, if only we recognized that it is our Best Beloved Himself Whom we are treating in that way. If only we remembered all the time the words which HE said :

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME.” (Matt. 25, 40.)

Have we not here the one true MISSIONARY MOTIVE AND INCENTIVE ? Here we find the full import of the Saviour’s command that we shall all go and “preach the Gospel to every creature,” so that every single member of the Body of Mankind may hear the message of the Lamb of God Who *still* bears their sins and is nailed to His cross by those sins, suffering with men, and *in* them all, feeling the sum total of this world’s agony and woe and cruelty, yet able to heal and raise up through His own quickening life blood every single soul which responds to Him.

“THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINS US!” cried Paul. That is why we must go forth to preach the Gospel, that HIS bearing of the sins of the world may at long last come to an end. That He may see of the travail of His soul, and may be free to come down from His cross.

It is so easy to remain callous and indifferent to the needs and woes of the countless unknown heathen whom we cannot see and whose plight we really cannot imagine. They are so far away, and, in a sense, so unreal that their desperate need can never move us in the same way as the need of those who are near and dear to us. But when we see the truth, the almost unbearable truth, that *it is our Beloved Lord and Saviour Himself* Who waits to descend from His cross in all those lives, then we can no longer remain indifferent or say that we are not called personally to go out and witness to others, either to the heathen, or, just as important, to our unreached neighbours in the homeland. *For whenever a son of man suffers, the Son of God suffers with him.*

“Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth the sin of the world.”

Love is the Lord! He hears each cry,  
His gentleness is great,  
No wounded heart will He pass by,  
Nor leave it desolate.  
For in His love He stoops to be  
At ONE in all our misery.

Love is the Lord! Love casts out fear;  
He breaketh all sin's chains,  
The sighs of sin-sick hearts He hears  
And feeleth all their pains.  
There is no wrong that men can do,  
But God's own Lamb must suffer too.

O understand it if you can,  
( 'Tis Love Himself Who pleads )  
Whene'er you wound a son of man  
The Son of God still bleeds.  
And not till sin is fully slain,  
Can God's own heart be healed of pain.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE GLORY UNVEILED BY THE INCARNATION

WE stand now before the Holy of Holies, to have the veil drawn aside from the great central TRUTH revealed to us by the Incarnation of the Son of God Who is made Son of Man also.

One day, when I was still a girl in my teens, and before I knew anything about personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, I came across a book containing an illustration of the purpose of the Incarnation of Our Lord which made an ineffaceable impression on my memory, although of course I can only remember the main idea and not the words of the writer. However, it was described in some such way as this :

Let us suppose that you are a person passionately interested in butterflies and particularly interested in learning everything possible about the life and habits of one particular species; for instance, the common variety which, while in the caterpillar stage, feeds on cabbage leaves. So in your backyard you grow several beds of cabbages as a feeding ground for a large number of such caterpillars. Now it will be no use at all for you to go out into the backyard day after day and thus harangue the caterpillars :

"O caterpillars! I am deeply interested in you, and indeed have your welfare so much at heart that I have devoted the whole of my backyard to your convenience and pleasure. I want you all to understand and believe this, in order that you may show me love and gratitude in return for what I have done for you. I also want you to understand about the wonderful change which awaits you in the future. For, O caterpillars ! you will one day cease to be crawling creatures, interested only in cabbage leaves. You will die to this present existence of yours and then rise to a new kind of life altogether, the winged life of heaven. Listen to me as I explain all this to you, and pay attention to my words."

You could, in fact, stand in your backyard all day long and talk yourself hoarse, exhorting the caterpillars in this

way; but they would go on calmly munching cabbage leaf, paying no heed to you whatsoever, and understanding not a word you said, for to them it would be exactly as though you did not exist.

No, if you really cared enough and thought it sufficiently urgent to make them understand these things, you would have to become a caterpillar yourself, sharing in their nature and living on the cabbage leaves right down amongst them, speaking to them in caterpillar language and thus winning their interest and response. And if you wanted to make them understand the glorious destiny awaiting them, you would have to gather a group of caterpillars around you and say:

"I am going to manifest the truth to you myself and plainly show forth the wonderful purpose for which you were created. Watch and see what happens to me, for I am the truth itself and everything which I thus reveal to you is, in every detail, a revelation of the truth about you and your caterpillar nature. Very shortly you will see me buried in a cocoon and you will think that I am dead, because I shall die completely to this kind of life on the cabbage leaves. But watch carefully, and wait until you see me again, for I shall rise to a new kind of life altogether. That life is for you too. I have left my own inexpressibly higher condition, in order to become a caterpillar like yourselves on purpose that I may manifest to you this glorious truth. No detail of what happens to me is without significance, but it will all happen to me and come to pass in order to *fulfil* all the truth and to reveal it to you in its entirety."

In such an illustration as this we have a very vivid and suggestive illustration of the purpose of the Incarnation; the great reason why the Son of God was "made Man" and appeared thus visibly among men, so that we might be shown the real truth, which otherwise we could never have guessed nor understood. Our Lord said so plainly that His purpose in coming into the world was *to manifest the Father*; to reveal Him so fully and plainly that He could actually say:

*"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."* (John 14, 9.)

And again, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (John 1, 18.)

*"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* (v. 14.)

Amazing as it now seems to me, for years and years of my

Christian life I simply did not see the central core of truth which the Son of God so strikingly and vividly revealed to us, when, by His own Incarnation in a human body He revealed Himself as "Son of God" made "Son of Man."

As I have already described in chapter 6, there came a day when the veil was drawn away from my understanding and I saw that which before I had not even dimly suspected ; though, of course, I have since discovered that multitudes of other Christians in ALL sections of the Church and in all ages have clearly borne witness to it, and though the Scriptures themselves are full of the truth from beginning to end. And stranger still travelling from country to country around the world, speaking to large and small congregations of Evangelical Christians, I never met a single one, passionately devoted to Christ as many of them were, who seemed to know this loveliest and most wonderful of all the truths unveiled to us by the Lord in the Holy of Holies. This book is written simply and solely because the unveiling of this glory to my own understanding marked a new epoch in my Christian life, and, like all other Christians who have caught even a dim glimpse of the "unveiled glory of the Lord", I too must bear witness to it.

In one sense it is true to say that I am not the same woman that I was before this unveiling of the truth in my understanding. For whenever the Lord gives new vision in the sense of new insight into the truth, that new light must necessarily be accompanied by a new inflow of life. The two go together; not by any self-effort or struggle, but in the same way as the breaking through of the warm spring sunlight dispels the winter cold, quickens to life and pulls upward the life buried in the seeds and roots underground. The crocus or tulip with their vivid colours glowing in the light above ground are not more unlike the shrivelled corm or bulb underground, than is the human understanding before and after it has been illumined with new light of truth.

As we now approach the Holy of Holies and look into the very heart of God we are to have unveiled to us the purpose for which the God who is HOLY LOVE, created the whole Body of Mankind.

For what purpose *did* He create the human race—this body of humanity?

Listen to the Apostle Paul struggling with words as he tries to tell us about the glory of glories which he has seen in the Holy of Holies.

"He hath chosen us *in Him* before the foundation of the world . . . that in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might *gather together in one* ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even IN HIM". (Eph. 1, 4, 10.)

"The Father . . . hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son . . . Who is the image" (the visible body) "of the invisible God." (Col. 1, 12, 13, 15.)

"And He is *the Head* of the Body: the Church." (Col. 1, 18.)

"When He cometh into the *world* He saith . . . *a body hast thou prepared Me.*" (Heb. 10, 5.)

Christians have always known that the Body of Believers which constitutes the Church of Jesus Christ are said to be the Body of Christ Himself. He is the Head of that Body and through all the many, many individual members which together make up that Body, He plans to express Himself and His glorious purposes, as a man expresses himself through his own body.

Israel of old, also knew this truth and looked upon themselves as the "Chosen People" and being just such a Body for the use of God. The whole symbolism or typology of the Tabernacle and the Temple, and the pattern of everything in them, was built upon this conception of the Holy People as a Temple of God, in whom He would dwell and through whom He would manifest His glory and holiness and power. The Temple was built to embody this conception of the Chosen People formed into a *dwelling place for God*, as it is written, "*Ye are the temple of the Living God*, as God hath said, I will *dwell in them and walk in them.*" (2 Cor. 6, 16.)

One thing, however, both the Jewish Church of the Old Testament and the Christian Church of the New Testament, have all too often forgotten, namely that *both of them are representative of the whole Body of Mankind*, and everything promised to them is promised to them as an earnest and guarantee for all the peoples and nations of the earth. They are the "firstfruits" who enjoy the blessings which are the purpose of God for ALL MEN. They are the first to be gathered into, and incorporated in this risen and glorified Body of the Son of Man. But it is His purpose that ALL men shall be gathered together in "*one in Christ*" (Eph. 1, 10) and therefore form the great Body of which He is the Head. It is the whole Body of Mankind in whom the Son of Man suffers, and the whole Body of Mankind which He is to raise up again,



as a "glorious Body without spot or wrinkle or any such thing". Mankind is the Body prepared for His use "in the ages to come".

For many, many ages, this was "a hidden mystery", as the Apostle Paul explains. In general, Israel never could believe, indeed never could even desire to believe, that such is God's purpose, and that everything which was promised to them represented God's gracious purposes for the Gentile nations also. They could not realize that as "firstfruits" of those who turn to the Lord, they *represented* the whole Race of Mankind, for whom Christ dies.

Indeed, Israel throughout all her history in Bible times, wanted to be "*The Chosen People*" in a sense God never meant them to be. They wanted the exclusive rights of being His People and His Possession and Temple, and only such as were "converted" or became proselytes of the Jewish faith could share in the blessing. To them all the other nations were to be outside the loving purposes of God, whereas the real fact, of course, was that they were the Chosen People because they were chosen to make known these glorious purposes and plans of God to all the nations of the world. Because they were the first nation to respond to the true God they were to be His chosen messengers and witnesses to the ends of the earth, that in them "all nations should be blessed" and enter into the same glorious heritage. How difficult it was for Israel of old to believe this and to desire it is evidenced again and again both in the Old Testament Scriptures, where Jonah is the outstanding example of a Jew fearing lest Gentiles should repent and believe on the Lord and so be saved, down to the Jews of Nazareth who tried to kill the Lord when He preached this very Gospel of the grace of God for Gentiles as well as for "*The Chosen People*". The Apostle Peter, we know, had the greatest difficulty in accepting this truth that Gentiles were to be incorporated into the Body of the Lord without first becoming circumcised Jews. As for Saul of Tarsus and the other orthodox Jews who persecuted the early Jewish Christians and put Stephen to death, this teaching was the main cause of their hatred and persecution. As soon as Stephen tried to remind them of this truth that their Temple and their form of worship was not the exclusive way of approach to God, had indeed left them still "*stiffnecked and uncircumcised* of heart" (namely, no different to the Gentiles) "when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth . . . and

cast him out of the city and stoned him". (See Acts 7, 48-58.)

When, in the end, Israel positively refused to carry out this task for which they had been chosen, of winning the Gentiles to become members in the Body of Christ, then the glorious task was transferred to the Christian Church consisting of both Jewish and Gentile believers. How strange that the Christian Church should repeat the very same mistake that Israel made, and refuse to believe that God has loving purposes of redemption and everlasting life for all men, even those outside the organised Christian Church!

"When He cometh into the world He saith . . . '*a body hast thou prepared me*'." (Heb. 10, 5.)

Is not this the central truth which the Incarnation revealed, namely, that the whole Body of Mankind, of which Adam was the first cell or member, and as such, represents all the other cells which developed since, is being prepared as a Body for the Son of God Who is the Head of that Body and its very life.

It is often suggested that we should think of the billions and billions of human beings who have lived since Adam, not as separate units but as being in the form of a growing *tree* which continually puts forth new twigs and leaves as fast as the old ones die and drop off the tree, and that this is the form in which the Race of Mankind would appear if they could all be seen at one and the same time by any being looking on from outside. But ought we not to suppose that we have a truer representation in this one given to us by the Lord when He appeared in the form of ONE MAN: that in the sight of God, Mankind is in the form of a HUMAN BODY, in which we are all individual cells, grouped together to form the different organs and members of that Body and each individual cell a perfect microcosm or miniature of the whole man? And the Son of Man is the Head of this Body.

At first I could not see how this could be the truth (though countless multitudes of Christians, especially in earlier generations, believed it) because the Epistles so clearly state that "THE CHURCH is HIS BODY" and only as men and women respond to Christ in faith can they be incorporated into this completely new Body. I then saw that in Nature we are given perfect illustrations of the real truth. We have already noted the case of caterpillars crawling on the cabbages. In that stage they have a head and a long, crawling body, completely earthbound and bearing no resemblance at all to the glorious winged creature which is to emerge out of that *first* body.

Then there comes a stage of apparent death, when the caterpillar disappears into a cocoon and looks as though it is in a coffin or grave, for there is no movement and no outward sign of life at all. Following a period of being dormant, the cocoon or chrysalis at last splits open and first "the head" of the "new creature" appears. It is the very same "head" which felt and experienced the crawling, earthbound stage, and which now feels and experiences all the joy of the new creature as it emerges with an appearance of travail, from its grave-like prison. After the emergence of the head, the body appears, which all the time was being fashioned inside the chrysalis, where all the different parts were brought together to form the new structure. The chrysalis sheath falls to the earth and a completely new creature steps out into the air and sunshine. But this creature can no longer be called a caterpillar, it must have a *new name*. Caterpillar described the old body, but butterfly is the name of the new body which has developed, though the head of the old and new body is the same.

Even then, however, the lovely metamorphosis is not complete. The head and the body having emerged out of the chrysalis (the old body of death) the new creature now basks in the light and warm sunshine. But there is more to follow. After a time, something utterly marvellous happens, and then the victory of "the head" is complete. As the warm sunlight shines on the body which formed inside the cocoon, that body shows signs of something not visible previously. The long, closely folded wings pressed to its sides begin to unfold, and, as they dry in the sunshine and open and spread wide, what beauties are displayed! Not until, at last, the wings are dried and ready for flight, can the lovely creature leave the twig or leaf on which it stands and launch forth into the air, a dazzlingly beautiful winged creature, fitted for a higher and incredibly enriched life. A life, however, which is still completely controlled and directed by the head, which has been conscious of the whole experience, first of the earthbound, crawling life, and now of the resurrected winged life.

Have we not here a beautiful illustration of what St. Paul meant when he wrote that the resurrection of the dead takes place in stages, first the head, then the body, and then "the end", when every part of the new creation is completed.

Just as, in Nature, there are two names for the two different stages of development, caterpillar and butterfly, so in the Bible there are two names for the Body of Mankind describing

the two stages and phases of development of which Christ the Head is so conscious. Adam, or "the old man", is the name for the fallen condition of Mankind, the earthbound, sin-clogged stage of those who are "dead in trespasses and sins". And "The Church" is the name for that part of the Body which has already been quickened to life; those who have died to themselves (in the chrysalis experience), the Church on earth, and those who have been raised up and quickened to life by response to Christ and have left their earthly bodies, the Church in heaven, the part of the body already out of the chrysalis. When the Scriptures speak of the Church they are referring to *the new body being formed out of the old one*, and when they speak of Adam and "the old man" they are referring to that part of the human race who have still not begun to undergo the glorious process of being "changed" and being incorporated into the new body. When, however, the "Head" and the Body (which is the Church) *appear together*, we may expect to see a further stage, corresponding to the opening and unfolding of the wings of the butterfly, which completes the whole wonderful process.

The words of the Apostle Paul are extraordinarily like an analogy drawn from this very example of the caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly metamorphosis.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things *on earth*. For ye are *dead*, and *your life is hid* with Christ in God. When Christ, Who is our life, *shall appear*, then shall ye also appear *with Him in glory*." (Col. 3, 2-4.)

It is always difficult for us as long as we are living in "Time", to understand how, from God's point of view, all the different stages can be taking place simultaneously, some parts of the body still, as it were, in the caterpillar stage, others in the chrysalis, and many already emerging into the butterfly. A very different illustration may therefore help to make it clearer.

Let us suppose that a man has one dear son whose body has been completely paralysed by polio. Perhaps the whole body must lie for a time in an "iron lung" with only the head of the body free. There have been wonderful instances of some who have lain for months or even years in an iron lung, absolutely unable to move a finger and yet with brain alert and clear, able and willing to take a cheerful interest in everything around them (as was the case of the son of an American millionaire). Then, gradually, life begins to flow back into the paralysed body, but *in stages*.

First, the upper part of the body begins to respond to the quickening life and power. Normal breathing becomes possible in the lungs and chest, and then the body can be lifted out of the iron lung altogether. Later the arms begin to move feebly and power gradually extends to the hands. Then, bit by bit, power returns to the lower parts of the body and, finally, at long last, to the legs, and the youth begins to be able to walk again. The nervous and muscular systems respond more and more to the life awakened in them by the head of the body, and so the gradual quickening takes place, until, in the mercy of God, the time comes when it is declared "This is a complete cure; there are no permanent after-effects at all."

How glorious, how indescribably joyful an experience that must be! when the "body of death" at last is fully restored and enjoys what must really be felt as "resurrection life".

Can we possibly say that the father would be *fully* content if only a part of the practically lifeless body of his son recovered and if the lower members of that body must remain dead and useless? Away with such an idea. Every sign of the new life and healing spreading throughout the body is hailed with unspeakable joy. The already restored members of the body are a source of immense joy and comfort, but especially so because they are "the firstfruits" which guarantee the complete restoration of the whole body to health and power.

We know that our Heavenly Father and Creator cannot possibly be content with anything less, for not only has He said that He created nothing in vain, and that nothing will go to waste but *every creature* will be brought back to Himself, but also, the fallen Body of Mankind is "the Body of His dear Son" Who is the head of the Race and by Whose life we are ALL to be healed. Nothing else can possibly satisfy the Father's heart.

"He has vowed that every living creature or living soul, not just human beings but all the creatures brought into existence, are to be redeemed from the curse brought upon the Creation by Mankind's dreadful Fall into selfishness and disobedience to the Law that we are to love and treat every creature as we want to be loved and treated ourselves. The whole creation is to be restored to perfection and to become "living members in the One great Body of His dear Son."

When fallen Mankind no longer preys upon the other cells in the Body, by slaughtering the birds and beasts and fish, and ceases to devour their flesh, then we shall realise once again

this wonderful Truth, that the Creator Himself is immanent in *all* the living creatures, feeling in and with them everything which they experience, and that what we do to the least of "our little brothers and sisters", as St. Francis called them, we are really doing to Him too.\*

This wonderful and glorious truth revealed to us by the Incarnation of the Son of God, the truth that He is *immanent* in every single living creature, feeling with them all that they feel and experiencing all that they experience during their phase of *becoming* a living body, prepared for the use of His Son, is a truth which has been treasured by the saints in every age and every section of the Church. Those who once saw this glory unfolded to them never after doubted it. St. Francis of Assisi was only one of many such saints. In a very vivid way he brought this glorious truth back to the consciousness of multitudes of Christians in the Middle Ages. The mystics, especially, have joyfully reaffirmed it in every generation. It is only in this materialistic and blind age that many sections of the Church have lost the vision, and how terribly we need to have it made real again. For "Where there is no vision the people perish".

But this word *IMMANENCE*, and the truth which it conveys to us of God Himself consciously feeling in the creatures which He has made, even as the Lord Himself told us, with the sparrows that fall to the ground, has come under very great suspicion, as being, supposedly, identical with *Pantheism*. Pantheism, the dictionary tells us, is "the identification of God with the universe". It has been the teaching of many religions, especially in the East, that, as God is present in everything which He has created, therefore the sum total of everything that exists must be God. Or, to put it the other way round, God is no more than the sum total of everything that exists.

The true saints and lovers of the Lord, however, never fell into this error. Immanence to them never suggested the idea that because God has chosen to be conscious in the creatures

\* If you are interested to read more about this wonderful and awesome subject—a part of the Truth which the Christian Churches laid aside long, long ago, but which we are now being challenged to rediscover, please write for these booklets:

The Secret of a Transformed Life.  
Children of the Highest.  
The Way of the Holy Harmless Lamb.  
Is Somebody Knocking?

which He has brought into existence, feeling everything with them, that therefore He is nowhere else but in the creatures. They knew and loved and emphasised the opposite side of the truth, the TRANSCENDENCE of God, Who is also beyond and outside everything which He has created, just as artists and sculptors are outside and beyond and greater than the pictures and statues which they create.

There is also another thing which has brought the term "Immanence" into disrepute. This truth, as so many others, has often been corrupted and has led to idolatry. Men have said: "If God is present in this stone, or this tree, or this beast, or in this human being, then I can set them up and worship them. In some of the cults, this doctrine of the Immanence of the Spirit of God in every man has even been distorted into the blasphemy of worshipping *man* himself as God. The Apostle Paul in his day, described it thus:

"Men changed the truth of God into a lie, and *worshipped and served the creature* more than the Creator Who is blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 1, 25.)

But the truth unveiled to us by the Incarnation of the Son of God is not that Man is God, but that *God has humbled Himself* to accept the whole Body of Mankind as a vehicle or body in, and through which, to express His love and grace and glory in the ages to come. He therefore has extended His own consciousness and feeling into the Body and is as cognisant of what is going on *in* the Body and being felt by every member of it, as the brain in the head is the seat of all consciousness and feeling.

It needs to be emphasised again that we are not to suppose that *all* the fullness and glory of God are present even potentially in the Body of Mankind, nor even in the sum total of all that God has created and brought into existence. Far from it. For, not only is God immanent in the creatures which He has made, but He is also *transcendent*. He is the God "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. Whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to Whom be honour and power everlasting". (I Tim. 6, 16.)

But because the truth is so often distorted and corrupted by the blindness of men, the truth itself remains unchanged and we ought not to fear to accept it. Indeed, in a way, the distortions only bear witness to the real truth of the Immanence of God in the creatures, because if this were not a real

and true thing these distortions could never have been invented. Any conception or idea of the Immanence of God could never have entered into the mind or imagination of men if it were not a true fact.

The mystics have always seen in the two names by which we are taught to name the One true God, the expression of this two-fold relationship between Him and His creatures.

In the name FATHER they behold the revelation of the transcendence of God and see Him as "the Eternal Spirit", *outside and beyond* all that He creates, the Source of all existence, the Creator of all beings, Himself the eternal BEING without beginning and without end, yet rightly named Father because He loves His creatures with a Father's love.

And in the Name SON OF GOD they saw unveiled to us the unutterably glorious truth of the life of God sent forth, or preceding forth, from the Father to become *immanent* in the Body of His creatures whom He has made, and *becoming* more and more fully developed in those creatures as they mature in understanding and love through the operation of His Holy Spirit of Life within them.

When at last these things began to break upon my understanding, what a flood of light and illumination they cast on many passages in the Bible to the meaning of which I had been most strangely blind. For example the words heard by Saul of Tarsus as he lay trembling on the Damascus road: "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." Saul had supposed that he was persecuting and wounding Christian heretics, but the appalling truth broke upon him that Jesus, Whom he had so hated, was not just a man, but the Holy One of Israel, immanent in all those whom Saul was so cruelly wronging.

Now I find myself able to understand in a completely new way the significance of the Saviour's words in Matt. 25, 40, 45: "Inasmuch as ye have done it [or not done it] unto one of the least of these My brethren, *ye have done it unto Me.*" I had always assumed that this applied only to my treatment of other *Christians* (and was, moreover, only a figure of speech). I now realise that every single individual in the world is a member of the Body in which Christ, as the Head of that Body, *must* feel everything which the members feel, and therefore it has become of supreme importance to me so to act towards every single person with whom I am in contact, as I would act towards my Lord Himself, for as I treat them, so, quite literally, I treat Him.



Such a realisation of the "true ground of our ONENESS" as Mother Julian expressed it, has necessarily revolutionised my attitude towards all other human beings, both Christian and non-Christian, the already "saved" and the "still unsaved!" Now I recognise that those who have not yet responded to Him are still causing Him unutterable suffering, and if I act towards such persons with hardness and lack of love and selfrighteousness, then it breaks over me with absolute horror that my Lord and Saviour feels that attitude of my heart as an attitude towards Himself in His sorrow and anguish as Sin Bearer, and I am thus adding to the weight of His sorrow and pain. I also know that I am not to love sin-spoiled men and women less, but *more*, far more, because only love can help Him as He suffers with them. As the father said to his little daughter, "I never can cease to love you, but when you are good my love makes me happy, and when you are naughty, it hurts me."

Here, then, in this Holy of Holies, we have a dazzling glimpse of the glory unveiled to us by the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ when He was once and for all *visibly* "made *Man*", and manifested to us the truth that He is the Head of the whole Body of Mankind, the fallen Race of Adam. And that His purpose for this suffering, sin-diseased race is :

"That He might gather together *in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in *Him*." (Eph. 1, 10.)

"*By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven . . . in the Body of His flesh* through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight." (Col. 1, 20, 22.)

"And *every creature* which is *in heaven*, and on the *earth*, and *under the earth*" (Hades or Hell) "and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto *the Lamb* for ever and ever." (Rev. 5, 13.)

Love was "made *Man*". O Son of God!  
Flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood.  
We are His Body—let us kneel;  
He, as our Head, feels all we feel.  
This is the love of God the Son—  
With fallen Mankind made *at one*.  
O mystery of Adam's Race,  
This sin-sick body with Christ's face!

Behold our God and Saviour thus!  
We love Him—for He first loved us!

"And He was crucified." O loss!  
In us God's Son hangs on His cross;  
In Mankind's Body, there upborne,  
Wounded by Sin, defiled and torn.  
He is our life—our very breath,  
Yet in this Body of our death,  
All pangs of Sin's disease so dread  
Are suffered by our thorn-crowned Head.

Behold our God and Saviour thus!  
Love Him—because He *so* loves us.

"And He descended into hell."  
The deepest depths God's love knows well;  
So *one* with us, He will not part  
E'en from the hardest self-willed heart.  
"Where shall we go to flee from Thee?"  
Love's only answer still must be,  
"Though thou dost make thy bed in hell,  
Lo! I am with thee there as well."

Behold our God and Saviour thus!  
Love Him—because He *so* loves us.

"On the third day He rose again!"  
Long night of sorrow and earth's pain  
Gone like a dream! Death vanquished now!  
The victor's crown is on Love's brow.  
The Body Sin could not destroy,  
Now healed, and raised to life and joy.  
By Adam came all sin and pain—  
In Christ shall ALL men live again.

Behold our God and Saviour thus!  
See what His love will do for us!

## CHAPTER SIX

### TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY FATHERS

ONE of the vivid memories of my childhood carries me back to a hot summer's day at the seaside on the east coast of England. We were a group of eager, barefooted children, each carrying a paper bag as we scrambled about on the crumbling cliffs in search of treasure. The treasure consisted of diamond shaped pieces of gypsum which here and there glittered among the broken clods of clay and which imagination could most easily transform into uncut diamonds. These gypsum searches were one of the most exciting of our holiday pleasures and there was eager competition to see who could find the most "diamonds" as we scrambled up and down the cliffs, breaking the clods with our bare feet and excitedly pouncing on the glittering fragments which were rare enough to make the finding of each one a delightful discovery, hailed with loud cries of delight from the happy finder.

On this particular morning I had wandered rather apart from the other searchers, and by rare good fortune stumbled on what might almost be called "a vein" of gypsum, for the sun flashed on quite a number of shining objects in the bank of clay. The strict etiquette of the game required that each "find" should be announced by a shout, and the series of delighted cries which I then uttered quickly brought the others hurrying to the same spot. Hastily collecting as many of the fragments as I could see, I stuffed them into my bag and scurried on ahead, anxious to keep my place in front of the other searchers and to be the first discoverer of new treasures. Suddenly a shout from my brother, who was close in the rear, announced that he had found "a whopping big diamond", and then an outbreak of delighted squeals from all the other members of the party suggested that they too had discovered a rich vein which in my overhaste I had missed. As no more diamonds presented themselves to my own eager gaze and I feared that the others might be finding so much treasure back there that they would surpass my own collection, I peeped

anxiously into my paper bag in order to reassure myself that I really had collected an unusually fine haul. That anxious peep revealed a devastating situation! First, I discovered that the bottom of my bag had fallen out and not a single "diamond" remained in my possession, and, secondly, it was all too plain that the cries of joy behind me announced the appropriation by others of all that I myself had so carefully collected and hoarded.

Undoubtedly I remember the scene so vividly after the lapse of many years because although I stamped with my bare feet and vociferously demanded the return of my rightful property, all my fellow searchers just as firmly maintained that what they found and collected certainly belonged to them, and if certain people were careless enough to bestow piles of treasure in paper bags, whose bottoms were too weak to sustain such a weight, that was no concern of theirs. If I so wished I might now follow in the rear and pick up any diamonds they might let fall if they were foolish enough to give inadequate support to the bottoms of their own treasure bags.

The poignancy of that loss and the barrenness resulting from so much effort to collect for oneself and not to put into a common treasury, has long remained with me, though, alas, it was the memory and not the lesson which lingered.

Has something of the same sort perhaps happened in connection with the priceless "Jewels of Truth" which the Lord has entrusted to the care of His Church? We know that there have been many tragic occasions in the history of the Christian Church when, because of schisms, persecutions and almost endless divisions amongst the Lord's People, the Treasury of Truth has been so contested and fought over that it has, as it were, been burst open and many of the precious jewels have been spilled out. As a result, on such occasions each of the contesting parties have recovered some of facets of truth and not others, without perhaps in the least realising that though they have recovered some of the jewels, they have also lost others to the opposing party. Thus multitudes of earnest Christians never even suspect that in their particular section of the Church they lack certain of the Jewels of Truth which were the common heritage of the whole Church in past ages, although they have been mislaid at various times, and have, perhaps, even been "picked up" and appropriated by all sorts of queer groups and parties on the very fringe of the Church, or not even professing to be part of the Church at all.

Many of us may have suffered a far more tragic loss than we have ever dreamed of because we do not realize that other sections of the Church either do possess, or did in the past, facets of the truth which have been completely mislaid in our own group; yet we fear to look through the treasury of others lest we be beguiled into accepting falsities and "vain traditions of men"; and we do not realize how the Lord loves to give to all of us as we share together and open up our treasures quite freely.

At times of "Reformation" some of these lost truths are rediscovered and courageous men of God face persecution and slander in order to restore to the Church of Jesus Christ truths which are so terribly needed. In the same way Revivals of spiritual life and power often spring from re-emphasis of certain aspects of the Truth which have been pushed aside and almost completely mislaid. When these are again brought to light they are able to exercise their full power and work a glorious transformation or reformation in the light of such sections of the Church as receive them. But often, as time passes, the truths rediscovered are so emphasised that other aspects get pushed aside and are unused and so get mislaid in their turn. And with the gradual loss of those truths, the power generated by the rediscovered ones leaks away, and because of oneness, distortions appear again.

Oh, to be made free from believing distortions of the Truth! and free from the powerlessness and bondage and failure which result from believing less than the full truth. For the one real proof of Truth is its *liberating* power in the lives of those who find it. As the Saviour said:

"Ye shall know the Truth and *the Truth shall make you free.*"

It is often stated that the Early Church never taught anything but the doctrine of endless hell and "everlasting punishment" for all who have not in this life responded to the Gospel, and that whenever the Church has been pure and true to the faith, this has been her teaching. This is not so.

During the first four hundred years after the time of Christ, that is before the conversion of Constantine and the ensuing worldliness and corruption of the Church, many of the Early Fathers did most emphatically teach this glorious truth that death and hell are the means chosen and prescribed by God's love for the purging of sinners and their healing from the disease of sin.

St. Ambrose, through whom St. Augustine was converted:

"There is unavoidable pain attending the removal of intruding sin. *If this sin is not cured here, it is postponed to a future life.* God's future judgment is the cure for the disease . . . The wisdom of God discovered this plan, to suffer man to do what he would, *that having tasted the evil he desired, and learning by experience* for what wretchedness he had bartered away the blessings he had, he might, of his own will, hasten back with desire to the first blessedness; either being purged in this life through prayer and discipline, or after his departure hence, through the cleansing fire. *Our Lord both delivers man from evil and heals the inventor of evil himself.*"

Clement of Alexandria:

"He saves *all* universally, but some are converted by punishment, others by voluntary submission."

Origen:

"The Son 'breaking in pieces His enemies' is for the sake of remoulding them."

Gregory of Nyssa:

"All punishments are means of purification, *ordained by Divine Love* to purge rational beings from moral evil and to restore them back to communion with God . . . God would not have permitted the experience of hell unless He had foreseen through the redemption, that *all* rational beings would, *in the end*, attain to the same blessed fellowship with Himself."

Jerome:

"The Lord descended to the place of torment and punishment in which was the rich man, in order to *liberate* the prisoners." "*All God's enemies shall perish*—not that they shall cease to exist, but that *they shall cease to be enemies.*"

Theodoret:

"The Lord, the *Lover* of men, torments us only to cure us; that He may put a stop to the course of our iniquity."

These quotations from some of the Early Fathers before the time of Constantine are not given in order to prove the doctrine of God's ultimate victory in *reconciling all things unto Himself*, for that proof is found in the inspired Scriptures themselves, and they are the one, final authority. But having

first found it so plainly in the Scriptures, and then so often being assured that it is a heresy, which was quite unknown in the first centuries after Christ and primitive Christianity knew no such belief, I was very glad to be shown that this really is a very uninformed objection, and that there is all this ample evidence that the teaching of the Apostles on this subject was still plainly recognised during the first four hundred years after Christ.

## APPENDIX

### SCRIPTURES EMPHASISING THE PURPOSE OF GOD TO SAVE ALL MEN

1. "God our Saviour Who WILL have ALL MEN TO BE SAVED and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2, 3, 4.)
2. "God hath concluded them ALL in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon ALL." (Rom. 11, 32.)
3. "He died for ALL." (2 Cor. 5, 15.)
4. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life." (Rom. 5, 18.)
5. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the WORLD." (John 1, 29.)
6. "We trust in the living God, Who is THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN, *especially* of all those that believe." (I Tim. 4, 10.)
7. "At the Name of Jesus EVERY knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things *under the earth*, and that EVERY tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Phil. 2, 10, 11.)
8. "He is the propitiation for our sins : and *not for ours only*, but also for the sins of THE WHOLE WORLD." (1 John 2, 2.)
9. "We see Jesus . . . that He by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY man." (Heb. 2, 9.)
10. "I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw ALL men unto Me." (John 12, 32.)
11. "That *the residue* of men might seek after the Lord, and ALL the Gentiles, upon whom MY NAME is called, saith the Lord, Who doeth these things." (Acts 15, 17, 18.)
12. "This is indeed THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD." (John 4, 42.)



13. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to RECONCILE ALL THINGS unto Himself . . . whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." (Col. 1, 20.)
14. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might *destroy the works of the devil.*" (1 John 3, 8.)
15. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive. But every man in his own order." (I Cor. 15, 20-23.)
16. "Where *sin* abounded *Grace* did MUCH MORE ABOUND." (Rom. 5, 20.)
17. "The Father sent the Son to be THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD." (I John 4, 14.)
18. "God was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself." (2 Cor. 5, 19.)
19. "*Who* shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? . . . For ALL nations shall come and worship before Thee." (Rev. 15, 4.)
20. "His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of *the fulness of times*, He might gather together in one ALL things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even IN HIM." (Eph. 1, 9, 10.)
21. "There is no God else beside Me ; a JUST God and a SAVIOUR . . . *I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth . . .* that unto Me EVERY knee shall bow, EVERY tongue shall swear . . . Even to Him shall men come, and ALL that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed." (Isa. 45, 21, 23, 24.)
22. "EVERY creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and *under* the earth . . . heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." (Rev. 5, 13.)



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The Glory Unveiled by the Incarnation

The Glory Unveiled by the Cross

The Glory Unveiled by the Descent into Hell

The Glory Unveiled by the Resurrection

**HE IS RISEN + HE IS**