WHAT I OWE TO CHRIST

By the same author

CHRIST IN THE SILENCE
SADHU SUNDAR SINGH
JOHN WHITE OF MASHONALAND

WHAT I OWE TO CHRIST

BY

C. F. ANDREWS

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To the Dear Memory
of my
FATHER & MOTHER

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.

ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

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My father, who was born in the year before Queen Victoria came to the throne, was an East Anglian by birth and descent. His ancestors had made their homes on the border of the two counties of Suffolk and Essex. As religious leaders and preachers of the strict Puritan faith, they upheld in their generation with undivided allegiance the stern traditions of Milton, Cromwell, and Bunyan, who had come from the same eastern side of England. They had set their life-course inflexibly upon the one supreme adventure of the human soul in its quest for God. Sturdy, sober-minded, God-fearing folk they were, living upright lives; worshipping in bare, unsightly tabernacles; remembering the Sabbath Day to keep it holy. They devoutly reverenced the Bible, every sentence of which was to them the word of God. At all times they retained a sovereign awe of God's presence and a humbling sense of the exceeding sinfulness of man.

Yet, withal, deep down in their hearts and hidden from the eyes of the world, they cherished within themselves a tender, brooding, mystical imagination which found its centre in the life of Jesus Christ and His death upon the Cross. The beauty, which was denied all outward expression in their worship, struck inward and produced gracious thoughts that can never perish. In English literature, *Lycidas* and *Pilgrim's Progress* reveal what marvellous sensitiveness of spirit lay beneath the hard, forbidding exterior of their narrow creed. George Fox and his Society of Friends gave a final expression of supernatural radiance to the same Puritan movement when it broke through all bounds at last, and burst into a victorious song of love triumphant over the bitterness of sin and death.

There was no one who, in his heart of hearts, loved the ideal world of poetry more dearly than my father. He had a poet's imaginative mind, which is always akin to that of a child in its simplicity, full of awe and wonder. Yet, impelled by a hereditary sense of duty, and following the dictates of conscience as a minister of religion, he spent himself night and day, during the whole of a long lifetime, in a

crowded Midland town, where there was no comeliness of nature, no beauty of the countryside, no leisure for mystical contemplation. He had made his own career one long round of incessant spiritual toil, preaching the love of Christ to sinful men. In this alone he found his inner joy, and that joy transformed his outward life.

After my mother's death in the year 1914, when he was very old, it was deeply touching to us who were his children to watch how this inward life had leisure and peace to blossom out at last. When deafness came upon him, as a burden of old age, he would spend the long solitary hours composing songs and verses, chiefly built up from the Book of Revelation. They told of that fair Kingdom of his dreams, "whose light was like unto a stone most precious, like unto a jasper stone, clear as crystal."

The literary value of these poems might be slight, but they seemed to be able to release from the depths of his own soul all the pent-up longings that had been repressed, and thus to set free the wings of his imagination for one short flight of song before he died.

The heritage which these East Anglian ancestors valued most of all was religious independence. It is true that they were sometimes inconsistent, and began to persecute, when their turn came to rule. But that was only a passing phase, due to the spirit of the age in which they lived. The root of the matter was in them, and they were determined to obey God rather than man. Many of them had left home and kindred and all that they possessed and had set forth from their little hamlets in Essex and Huntingdon to essay the perilous journey across the Atlantic Ocean to a New England beyond the seas. They went abroad in order to preserve intact their own spiritual faith, and they laid the true foundation of liberty in the New World.

The story of their rough voyaging and incredibly hard life after they had landed has often been told. It is a chapter in the history of the upward progress of mankind which should never be forgotten. The memory of it all still remains in these eastern counties of England to-day. They were a stubborn folk, and most stubborn of all in their personal religion. Yet, in spite of all their Puritan severity, we can see a greatness and a majesty as we now look back at them in the perspective which time offers. For the current of

their inner life ran very deep, and an individual religious experience of conversion was seldom absent. Embedded in their own characters, they had kept that fear of God which is the beginning of all wisdom, and their home life had a singular sanctity and goodness. The rock on which they had built their faith was heart-allegiance and devotion to Christ as Lord and Master. While other things have been outgrown which they held sacred, this foundation has remained as our own great heritage and assured possession.

Among this ruggedly independent stock, from which he drew his descent, my grandfather proved himself, in the course of his eventful life, exactly true to type. He, like his father of old, cherished within his heart that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To quote the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "These men went forth as pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, not knowing whither they went; for they sought a better country, that is, a heavenly—for they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

My grandfather had followed the family tradition and had entered the ministry of the Christian Church. While he was still comparatively young, he had been set apart as a preacher and placed in charge of a small Baptist congregation in the east of England. Busily occupied in this congenial work, wherein he hoped to spend and to be spent in Christ's service, he had married very happily indeed, and had settled down close to the home of his birth among his own East Anglian folk. But later on, he had come under the strange spell of Edward Irving's preaching, and this had brought about a spiritual crisis in his life. When once conviction had come, he never shrank from the consequence, but gave himself up to the new faith which Irving preached.

Carlyle has outlined for us Edward Irving's noble and pathetic story. This tall, uncouth prophet from the North country, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, shook the stoutest hearts in London by pronouncing over that city the doom of Babylon unless it repented of its sins in dust and ashes. He drew most of his texts from the Apocalypse, and declared to his vast audiences, which contained some of the greatest statesmen of his day, how judgment was about to begin at the house of God. The

Judge was at the door, and the Day of Judgment was near.

To many earnest souls, during the dark and critical age which followed the fall of Napoleon and the breaking up of many earthly kingdoms, it had seemed as though some hidden word of prophecy in Holy Scripture was about to be fulfilled with literal exactness. There was among them a prolonged searching of the prophetic passages in the Bible in order to find out the things that were shortly to come to pass. The Books of Daniel and Revelation were the chief sources from which an explanation of the mystery of the "last days" was to be sought and found.

Gatherings of devout believers, who held fast to the literal interpretation of these prophetic books, met in retirement at a large country house, near Albury, in Surrey, a few miles out of London, and spent their time unceasingly in watching, fasting, and prayer. Strange voices broke forth among those who had assembled, and it seemed as if another Pentecost had come. Prophetic words were spoken, and on rare occasions of great spiritual tension men and women "spake with tongues." A body of believers spontaneously gathered themselves together to carry on this revival of spiritual gifts. The gifts themselves were looked upon as one of the signs of the last days. The return of Christ in glory, to judge both the quick and the dead, was hourly expected.

My own grandfather, with his deep personal faith in Christ and his ardent, passionate search for the living God, was drawn as by a magnet to these gatherings. At first he did not realise that it would mean leaving his settled home. But his conscience told him unmistakably that if he would follow Christ he must be prepared to regard all earthly things as dross in order to be true to His call. Therefore at last, with the full consent of his wife, he handed over his ministerial post to his successor and went forth on a fresh enterprise of spiritual adventure, becoming a member of the Irvingite communion at a time when it meant suffering and persecution to take this step in public. But he had counted the cost, and never turned back.

It was in the midst of these heart-shaking events that my own father was born. To me, it almost seems as though from his very birth the same passion for sacrifice had come to dwell in him that was present in my grandfather. For I

have never known a more unworldly man than he was—one to whom the outward, material things of earthly existence meant so little. He took no thought of food and raiment, and my mother had the greatest difficulty at times to keep the household going and to make both ends meet. That part of my story will be told later. But if birth inheritance counts for anything at all in the spiritual world, its effect may surely be traced in my father. In later years, he used to give us one simple, practical lesson on religion which to him was worth everything else put together. It was this: that if our conscience ever told us clearly, at any time, that a certain path was right, then we were to take that path in spite of all consequences. For conscience was the hidden voice of God speaking within the soul. He laid every stress upon this inner light, and followed it himself in all his undertakings. He also made plain to us that our own duty was to keep that light clear by pureness of heart and a sensitive obedience to the truth. With him this was a simple practical test of Christian living, and he followed this path with a child-like simplicity, without turning to the right hand or to the left.

Towards the end of his career, my grandfather had been able to build again, as headmaster of a school in the South of England, much of the position in society which he had abandoned in earlier days for conscience' sake. He had been chosen for this post mainly on account of his high religious character and the implicit trust that the boys' parents placed in him as a devoted follower of Christ. The strenuous toil and incessant care which this responsible work involved told at last upon his health. His character, which had been moulded in the hard school of adversity, reacted in its turn upon his pupils. He gained a high reputation as a Christian teacher, and his name became famous in his profession.

His portrait, which formed the subject of an Academy picture painted by my grand-uncle, used to hang in the dining-room of our own home when I was a boy, and I grew up beneath it. The picture was almost life-size, and the features were wonderfully expressive. He looked down on us from the wall with his pale, ascetic face and kindly, gentle eyes. Though I had never seen him personally (for he had died shortly after I was born), I felt quite familiar with him owing to this portrait. Indeed, as children are wont to do, at an

age when imagination holds undivided sway, I used to find myself carrying on imaginary conversations with him when I was very young, and he would smile back at me from the picture as if he knew all that I wished to say.

A characteristic story was told me concerning an incident which took place in his own school shortly before his death. It is striking enough to be worth recording here. The senior boys in his Greek class, at the top of the school, had such confidence in his goodness that they bought on one occasion a cane and presented it to him, with the request that he would use it upon them without fail if they were neglectful of their work and did not come up to his high expectation of them.

Those were indeed strenuous days, both for the headmaster and his pupils. While they recognised his gentleness, they were also aware of the iron discipline he exercised over his own life. For he seemed to be living day by day in the conscious presence of God. Milton's famous line, "As ever in my great Task-Master's eye," would perhaps most nearly describe him in those last school days. My father would speak of him with the deepest affection, but there was a certain awe present in the tone of his voice which was incongruous to his own sunny temperament.

My grandfather died by an unfortunate accident which might easily have been avoided. This was due to his having slipped and fallen heavily owing to a piece of orange peel which someone had carelessly left on the pavement. His own strained health at the time added to the seriousness of the fall, and he never recovered. Thus his death occurred just as he was attaining the summit of his powers as a great teacher. Even now I can remember my father, when I was walking by his side as a young child, suddenly stopping in the street to pick up a scrap of orange peel from the pavement in recollection of that fatal accident which had deprived him of his own parent. So instinctive has the habit become to me also, that I find myself doing the same thing in memory of the same cause.

Although my father, about whom I have written this chapter, became all in all to us as we grew up, sharing our games and walks and telling us numberless stories in his leisure hours, yet it was to my mother that I owe the deepest things in my life, and to her memory I shall mainly turn in these further reminiscences of my childhood.

My mother's family came originally from the south-west of England, and her maiden name was Cartwright. She possessed in her own character many traits of the Wessex people, and in certain respects her temperament differed widely from that of my father. Her nature was more practical than his. He was humble and wise enough to understand this, and usually trusted her homely judgment in all important matters. Of her Scottish descent, on her own mother's side, I shall write later on.

With her very large family of children, she had to economise all day long in every direction in order to balance her household expenses. We were fourteen in all, and only one baby girl died in infancy. Large families were much commoner then than they are now. She took great care that my father should not be unduly troubled about family matters, and this suited his own disposition and set him free for the things which formed his own life-work as a minister of religion. Yet she was never flurried or put out by the multitude of odds and ends which had to be arranged in order to provide for so big a household. With all her active temperament, she never became like Martha, in the Gospel story, querulous about much serving. My own place was fourth in the family group, two sisters and one brother coming before me. I was born at Carlisle on February 12th, 1871, but within a few weeks of my birth we made our home in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and all my early childhood was spent on the Tyne-side.

My mother's unselfishness was of the reticent kind; and it endeared her to us when we found out the little acts she had done quietly for us without our being aware of the pains she had taken or the thought she had given to us. In the same way, her religion was of the silent type, shy and reserved, known only to the Father who "seeth in secret," and utterly unobtrusive. Yet we could all see clearly, when important decisions had to be made, how her whole trust was upon God; and the light of His presence in her inmost heart shone out brightly through her eyes. She would teach her young children about Christ, but much more by example than by precept. It was during those times when she took us to her side at the end of the day, and sang to us our favourite children's hymns, that we learnt to revere her most. For

it was then that her own spirit was free, and we could feel its pervading presence shedding on us peace from above. She would speak about Christ to us in a way that could never afterwards be forgotten.

My mother would never leave our home, even for a single night, if she could possibly avoid it, and she rarely went out of the house except to go to church and to return. It seemed to her as if something was certain to be forgotten if she were absent; and her instinct was, on the whole, a true one. We could not even conceive of home without her. It was to her that we always wrote our letters when we were absent, and she was the first to welcome us on our return.

Her younger sister, to whom she was deeply attached, was eager for her to come and take a long rest in her own country home. We older children did our very utmost to persuade her; and at last, during one sultry summer, when city life had become almost intolerable on account of the heat, we conspired together and induced her at last to take the journey to the country. One of us went with her, to prevent her feeling lonely. But in less than a week a telegram came to us stating that she was coming back. She confessed to us that she had not been able to sleep at night, or rest in mind, because of her anxiety lest anything should go wrong at home while she was away.

While my mother's family was from Wessex, there were, as I have said, Scottish ancestors also, about whom she would speak with pride. Our cousins from Glasgow and Edinburgh would come down from Scotland to visit us occasionally, and they were always very warmly welcomed by my mother. Their arrival used to keep me on tiptoe of expectation and excitement. For it became an integral part of my nature from earliest days to imagine Scotland as a wonderful country in the north where everything was full of beauty. My mother's talks with me about the Highlands, the pictures in her own album which she used to show to me, and above all the plaintively sweet airs she used to sing, had somehow given me a romantic love of Scotland which in a measure I have retained ever since. Even now I can recall to my mind her tender, delicate face as she would sing to us at the piano "Auld Robin Grey." Her voice was always very soft and low. It seemed to be especially suited to these airs of Scotland which she sang so well.

But beyond all this there came another factor which endeared me to my mother most of all. Since it affords an insight into her deep affection and her wisdom towards her children, it deserves to be told at some length. It will also explain much of my childhood's experience of the deeper things of human nature, such as suffering and the bearing of pain and the near approach of death.

When I was four years old, and we were living in the bleak North at Newcastle-on-Tyne, I very nearly lost my life owing to an acute attack of rheumatic fever, which came on very suddenly indeed and brought with it long days and nights of pain. For nearly six months the extreme violence of the disease could not be brought under control. The fever racked me, and only the untiring devotion and care of my dear mother carried me through. We two were thus brought very close together, owing to this long illness, with an ever-deepening understanding; for she would feel my pain as if it were her very own, and she alone knew how to soothe it. If it came on afresh, and I could hardly bear it any longer, she would be at my bedside in a moment, with her comforting touch.

While she sat by my side, holding my hands in her own, she would speak to me in the very simplest words about Christ, who took the little children in His arms and put His hands on them and blessed them. It was at such times that there came to me my earliest conscious thoughts of God and Christ and prayer; for she would make such thoughts natural and simple and full of meaning to me in my illness, in a way that might not have been so easy to understand at other times.

One incident is perhaps most significant of all, slight though it was in character. At least, it is the one event which has clung most vividly to my own mind, and can easily be recalled. For long months together my spirit had been hovering between life and death, and I had almost lost the desire to live. Then one morning, when I opened my eyes, I noticed a flower by my bedside which my mother had put there while I was asleep, hoping that it would attract my attention when I awoke. It so happened that the sight of that flower proved the turning-point in the struggle that had been going on within me, drawing me back to life. For its beauty touched me with a rare joy. It brought with it

the desire to live, when life itself was hanging by a thread. My mother noticed in a moment the change which had come over me, after I had opened my eyes and welcomed the beauty of the flower. It was her loving care that had placed it there, and it was in truth her constant prayer that had restored me. From that day my recovery went steadily forward, and a keen pleasure in life revived.

This long and severe illness was the one outstanding event in my childhood, and it left its mark very deeply on my whole future. It gave me a seriousness and a knowledge of pain that went beyond that of ordinary children. Sometimes I have vaguely wondered to myself how it has come about that during many vicissitudes in outer circumstances, and constant changes of my inner mental thinking, the fundamental faith in God and Christ and immortality has remained so entirely unshaken. It has seemed to me that the quiet spiritual influence, which I had thus received through my mother during this early illness, had left a permanent mark upon me such as nothing afterwards could obliterate or remove.

For many years after this I remained almost pitifully thin and weak, and I have seen a photograph of a family group in which this anæmic appearance is still abnormally apparent. There in the portrait I can be seen, sitting at my mother's side, with a precociously large forehead and sunken cheeks. Any hard physical exercise was out of the question for me.

My father's religious duties brought him away from the North of England to the Midlands soon after I had recovered. We were obliged from that time forward to pass our days in the centre of the crowded, industrial city of Birmingham, with its congested population and its smoke-darkened sky. The expanding boroughs of the city were already swallowing up the countryside, and in the quarter where we lived, near the centre of the town, there was nothing visible except incessant rows of monotonously ugly streets, with all the noise and dirt of modern factory life in its worst form. The "Black Country," as it was rightly called, stretched out for many miles in one direction, with no intervening fields and woods. The noxious fumes which came from the factories and the mines were so penetrating, and the cinder dumps and slag-heaps were so continuous, that hardly anything green could flourish. Stunted trees with withered leaves covered

with soot survived here and there, but the beauty of the earth had vanished. At night-time, when all the smelting furnaces were ablaze, the sight was weird and terrifying. I can remember well, as a young child, one train journey through this region of smoke and flame, and can recall the horror it gave me.

In spite of this harsh town environment, we were, on the whole, a singularly healthy group of young children, and we came from a very hardy stock. Almost the only exception to this record of good health had been my own serious illness. As I have said, we were fourteen children in all, and only one had died in infancy. All the rest grew up to maturity, and nine of us are still living to-day. My father and mother were past four-score years when they passed away, and their own brothers and sisters lived on to a great old age. Owing to my mother's constant watchful care, and a wise family doctor's good advice that I should refrain from active exercise for some time, the harmful effects of rheumatic fever gradually disappeared, but the physical weakness remained for a very long time and has never entirely been absent. This long period of enforced inactivity induced in me a love of reading which stood me in good stead. It made the inner life of thought and imagination intensely real to me at a very early age. This used to absorb my attention so much, when a book was in my hand, that I became almost oblivious to what was going on around me.

During these early years of rapid mental growth, a glorious treasure-trove suddenly opened up to me a whole new world of fantasy and gave me its right of entrance into fresh realms of thought. For in my father's bookcase on an upper shelf, almost hidden away behind dreary volumes of theology, I discovered one day a badly printed, paper-covered edition of all Sir Walter Scott's novels and poems. They were set up in double columns, printed on wretchedly poor paper with small type, and were very trying to the eyes to read. But to me, when once the discovery had been made, they proved a golden store of wealth that could neither be diminished nor exhausted. For when I had once finished reading through the series—skipping hard passages and long paragraphs and leaving aside some that were beyond me—I used to begin with my specially favourite volumes

over again, and would always find them even more fascinating than before. Though I was absurdly young at the time for such a literary adventure, yet somehow I would manage with an unerring instinct to gather accurately the main drift of the whole story and also at the same time grasp something of the portrayal of character. Like a bee, humming and buzzing from one flower to another, I would sip the nectar out of each of them in turn.

No author has ever appealed to me in the singular way that Scott did during those days which were the most impressionable period of my life; but that is because he was my first love in the realm of literary art. Perhaps the greatest of all gifts that I owe to him has been the moral idealism which lay behind all he wrote. The romance of his stories was pure and noble, and it set me a high standard at the very beginning of my thinking days.

A brief anecdote from a much later period will confirm my story, and show how amazingly far and wide Sir Walter Scott's influence has gone. At Santiniketan, in Bengal, the eldest brother of Rabindranath Tagore, whom we called Borodada,* was never tired of speaking to me in his old age about the effect that Scott's novels had on him when he was young. In many ways his experience tallied with mine. Though he had spent his whole life in Bengal, and had never visited Scotland, the Highlands were to him a land of enchantment and delight because of the spell which the great novelist had put upon him. We came together intimately on this common ground of our early dreams.

In the months after this discovery of Scott's poems and novels, it is hardly too much to say that I moved about in an inner world of my own. His stories about Scotland fascinated me most of all, and I would be dwelling there along with the characters about whom I was reading. Scotland came to mean to me the home of all romance. At very rare intervals indeed my father used to take us for a day's excursion by train to a beautiful spot outside Birmingham called Sutton Coldfield, where there was a large open park with forest glades and pools. This would mean a long day of glorious fantasy spent in the imaginary company of one of my heroes from Scott's novels; and I would dramatise all sorts of incidents happening in those very woods. After-

* Literally "Elder Brother."

wards, in our tiny garden at home, I would carry out on a small scale the same wonderful adventures. Somehow I was too timid to share these inner experiences with my brothers and sisters, for fear they might not understand me. The game of fancy had to be played alone, and this made solitude a pleasure to me wherein I could work out my dreams. At the same time, it made me abnormally shy about revealing these thoughts to others, and drove me back upon my own inner resources of imagination.

For some years after I had grown up, it was difficult for me to make up my mind to visit the Highlands, lest they should prove disappointing. But it happened that I was able to see them at last under almost ideal conditions of beauty and solitude combined. For I made the journey alone on foot, and wandered along, just as fancy took me, from place to place, out of the beaten track of tourists. The charm in this way was kept fresh, and the imaginative delight of childhood revived. It was a great satisfaction to me to pick up those threads of memory and to be able to weave my day-dreams over again. And still to-day when my journey through life is much more than half accomplished, after visiting many beautiful places, the Highlands of Scotland remain to me the loveliest heritage on God's earth.

And, what is more, these primal fantasies which the great novelist was able thus to awaken in my mind when I was young have given me the inner power richly to enjoy the beauties of this visible world which Christ loved to the full. It has never seemed to me for a moment possible to separate them from Himself. Beauty, natural as well as spiritual, in all that I have seen and heard throughout this noble world, has reminded me of His love, assuring me that though heaven and earth shall pass away, His words can never fade.

The exact years of the different events in my early life are not clear to me at all, and I must leave these vague. But the next event that I can vividly recall brought to us as a family the greatest happiness in the end, though it meant acute suffering when it occurred.

My mother, on the occasion of her marriage, had a considerable income of her own, and we were therefore able to live in comfort all through the days when I was very young. Indeed, my father had been in a position to carry on his religious duties in the Church without taking any stipend

from the congregation, because my mother's income from invested capital was ample for all our family needs. Her money was held under a trust deed, and one special trustee had been appointed to look after her property. Everything had been going on in this manner ever since I was born, and it seemed as though this comfortable lot would be ours as far as we could look forward into the future.

But one day a letter came to my father by the morning post warning him that this trustee had been speculating with my mother's money. My father sent different telegrams at once to London, enquiring direct about certain securities in order to find out whether my mother's money was still invested in them, as it ought to have been under the trust deed. One telegram after another came back during the course of the day to say that the amounts deposited in my mother's name had been withdrawn, and the last news of all came that the trustee had absconded. He had been speculating on the Stock Exchange with my mother's money as well as his own, and had lost it all. Indeed, it was afterwards discovered that for some years past he had been defaulting. All the while he had been regarded as a pillar of society, but in reality he had been living the life of a criminal.

I can even now see my father's anxious face during that terrible afternoon, and my mother trying to console him. She was bravest of all. My father was blaming himself, because the trustee was his own dearest friend, whom he had advised to be appointed when the trust deed had been drawn up in favour of my mother as part of the marriage settlement. Not only was there in his own mind this miserable thought that he himself had proposed his friend as trustee and was responsible, but also the added suffering of his friend's terrible betrayal of friendship. It would be difficult to describe the agony he was in when the bad news came, and telegram after telegram was opened informing him of the same story of ruin. I clung to my mother and watched the desolation increasing, but I was still too young to understand what it all meant. Only the fact that my father's friend had robbed my mother of all her money became clear to me, and I wondered with a childish dread what my father would do. Then came the hour of evening worship, which was always observed in the family. My mother was brave and silent,

and I was nestling beside her as my father read the psalm for that evening. It happened to be the psalm that was written by the Hebrew singer concerning a treacherous friend, and it contained the following verses:

For it is not an open enemy, that hath done me this dishonour: for then I could have borne it:
But it was even thou, my companion, my guide and my own familiar friend.
We took sweet counsel together: and walked in the House of God as friends.

Then my father paused. Some terrible verses follow in this old Scripture, calling down a curse upon the traitor, but my father never read those verses. Instead of that, he began at once to pray to God; and as he did so his voice broke with compassion for the friend who had done him such a terrible wrong. He prayed for his forgiveness and repentance. Indeed, as the prayer went on, he seemed to lose all sense of his own personal loss in his overflowing love for his friend. When he rose from prayer his whole countenance was changed. My mother shared in that joy which no earthly loss of money could ever take away.

The rest of the story is very quickly told. In the long run, this event proved to be the best good fortune in our family life. I now cherished and admired my father and mother as I had never done before. Even though I was a child, I could understand and share something of what they had both suffered, and this increased my own love for them a hundredfold. I had to work for my own living, and did not have everything provided for me. What this meant to a weak child, who could easily have been spoilt by extra comfort, can well be understood.

Instead of my going to one of the great Public Schools, away from home, my parents sent me to the Grammar School in the centre of the city of Birmingham, which had been founded by King Edward VI. It was thus possible for me never to be separated from my parents, who became in this natural manner my chief educators and teachers. What I learnt from their daily lives I could never have gained at a boarding-school far away from home. Fortunately, also, at the same time, I was able to obtain my whole education

free of charge at the Grammar School, and to earn sufficient to enable me to go to college when the time came. For the school was endowed with scholarships which provided all my expenses.

But the greatest blessing of all has yet to be told. Owing to the poverty of our home, we became a united family in a way that might never have happened if our parents had been more wealthy. We learnt among ourselves to give place to one another in little things, and to find our true pleasure in personal affections rather than in external possessions. Thus all things really worked together for good, and my mother's sacrifice on behalf of us all became even more wonderful after she had lost her property than it had been before. She was absolutely untiring all day long on our behalf; and as we watched her pure unselfishness it made us ashamed to be mean and grasping, or to act in self-indulgent ways.

Later on, although no part of my mother's property was restored to her, the news came from abroad that her trustee had become deeply penitent for what he had done. He had finally lost in speculation all his own money and my mother's property as well, and could not therefore make any reparation, but, when he asked my parents' forgiveness, this was readily granted, and a reconciliation was effected before he died.

CHAPTER III EARLY DAYS

BEFORE we became in this way very poor in outward circumstances, but rich in home peace and inward happiness, there had been little in my life of a deeply religious character. What I had learnt about Christ came to me indirectly from the daily experience of my mother's love and my father's singular goodness. In a word, they represented Christ to me. Through their eyes I saw Him and loved Him. Whenever I used to think of Christ, I would picture Someone as gentle as my mother and with my father's genial good nature. The old coloured print of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came closest of all to my heart. The face of the Good Shepherd had something of my mother's look about it, and this always gave me a vivid sense of joy which I can still recall.

In later years I recognised its inadequacy as a true picture:

for it failed altogether to reveal the mighty strength of the Crucified. Nevertheless, it was wholly satisfying to me then, and it definitely helped to make Christ real to me as a little child. In this way it served its true purpose.

Some further memories of these earliest years are so vivid to me that I can remember every detail, and they may therefore be worth recording. They stand out in my mind like sharp jutting mountain peaks surrounded by formless clouds and obscure mists.

The first is a detailed portrait of my mother at Christmas-time, with all her children round her, while she used to tell us afresh the story of the new-born Babe of Bethlehem, whose name was the Prince of Peace. In her own beautiful way she would describe the cattle standing by, with their big, round, kindly eyes, as they gazed at the little, wee, baby Child, lying in the manger, who was the Lord Jesus. To our great delight, she used always to bring in at this point a description of the camel, with his long neck craning over the heads of the other animals in order to see the Child. We must always, she said, take care of these dumb, sensitive creatures: for they were good to Christ, the Lord, when He was young, and therefore they are very dear to God Himself.

After this she would pass on to King Herod, who wished to kill the new-born Child. Then she would picture to us the three Wise Men coming a long journey from the East. They had travelled across the desert waste, all through the cold, dark night, guided only by the star. One of these, she told us, came from distant China, and another from golden India, and a third from Ethiopia, which is now called Africa. These names of distant countries would have an almost magical effect upon me, as I looked into the firelight while my mother was telling us the story of the Child Jesus.

She was, indeed, a marvellous story-teller for young children. This Yule-tide tale from the Bible would enthrall me as I watched her face in the glow of the fire just before we went to bed on Christmas Eve. We had also, each year, the great excitement, as children, of getting up in the dark, quite early on Christmas morning, in order to go to church at six o'clock. Just before we all went out of the house, we used to creep down on tiptoe to my mother's door in the dark, and then, after much whispering together, burst out singing, "Christians, awake!" All this was for us the very soul of romance.

Another scene, of a different kind, comes clearly before my mind as I write. It was connected with my first sight of death near at hand, and the shock did me grave harm at the time. It happened that I was playing with my elder brother, not far from our own home, when by mere accident I saw a fowl being killed in a neighbouring yard. It was already in the agonies of death at the moment when I saw it struggling on the ground. At once I ran back sobbing to my mother, as if my heart would break. For a long time afterwards I could not get rid of this terror of death which had come with such a shock to my mind.

In another instance of childish fright, I was foolish enough to keep the panic to myself, because here I was actually the wrongdoer. In a sudden fit of temper I had said to my elder brother, " You fool ! " Then, like a flash, the verse in the Bible about the danger of hell-fire gripped hold of me with dreadful alarm. For days and nights I was obsessed with the thought that I had committed an unpardonable sin. This imagination came back again and again. Nothing seemed to drive it away.

I had not yet learnt to turn to God quite naturally and simply in childish troubles such as these. That experience came later. Now, when I look back, and smile at these fears, the strangest thing of all to me is that I should have been so thoroughly frightened as to keep this inward terror from my own father and mother, about whose perfect goodness I had no doubt at all. It showed how God was still to me an object of fear, a God of awe rather than of love, and that the prayer " Our Father " had not yet been understood in any real sense. Christ at this time was loving and kind, to my child's imagination, but God was distant and severe.

If, however, I were merely to illustrate my childhood from incidents such as these, I should give an utterly wrong impression. For I had a singular faculty from a very early age of gaining the purest joy from every sudden surprise of new beauty in nature whenever I visited the countryside. Those excursions into the country were the golden days of my life, which filled me with delight. They have remained long in my memory afterwards. Wild nature was a passion to me. Sudden gleams of light, such as the sunshine in a forest glade, the blaze of colour from some cottage garden, the sunset glow catching the ripened corn, the ripple of

light on the water, the clouds reflecting the glory of sunlight after the rain—all these entranced me. They carried with them a unique store of inner happiness. As I grew older, this fresh delight in nature tended to fade away: it only returned during periods of high spiritual tension when my whole being was awake with joy.

My father carried still further with me in later years my mother's early influence. He was an almost perfect teacher for those of his own children who had keen imaginative powers. For he had kept unsullied and pure within himself the simple child-like mind of wonder and admiration. He had always an interest in tiny, insignificant details that ordinary people pass by without notice. In addition to this, he had retained the impulsive buoyancy of youth, which made it no conscious effort on his part to be young with us while he was giving us instruction. We used to think of him as one of ourselves rather than as a grown-up man. In his large family of children he was the eldest child of us all, sharing our games with us as well as our lesson-books.

With such a hopeful disposition, he had no hesitation in trying to teach me all kinds of things which were apparently beyond my reach. For he had an unbounded confidence that I should easily be able to understand. Never, in all my recollection, did he ever talk down to me, as though I could not get up to his level. Rather, in every sense of the word, he made me his companion and trusted my intelligence.

All this was in reality an integral part of his own character: for he would treat everyone else in the same way, completely confiding in them. For instance, if at any time he was present at some gathering of strangers, or travelling in a railway carriage with people he had never met before, he would enter into conversation with them and tell them his own views. So full of kindly good humour was he that no one resented this. He treated all men alike with a simple trust in human goodness. It was useless for my mother to leave much money with him, beyond his bare travelling needs, because he was certain to give it away if anyone asked him for help. Though in certain instances this led to his being deceived, yet in the end his confidence in human goodness was amply rewarded, and he was trusted and loved in turn.

During the times that he personally taught me, he carried

me forward very rapidly indeed into ever-widening circles of interest and ideas. Long after I had left off receiving any daily lessons from him, he still remained for me the most sympathetic companion I have ever had. He would discuss everything with me in the most natural manner, treating me as an equal and rousing up eager curiosity and intelligence.

Throughout my childhood days there had been unbroken trust and confidence hitherto between my father and me. But one day, through my own fault, there came a break, which caused me acute distress and shattered my peace of mind. The incident which brought this about was the telling of a lie. It happened in this way.

A first cousin of my mother, an elderly man, who was almost a stranger to us, had very kindly taken my brother and me, along with one of my younger cousins, to London. There was very great excitement in my mind at the thought of such a visit, because I had never seen London before. It had been arranged with my parents that we should all return the same evening. But this relative of ours pressed us to stay the night in order that we might see some grand illuminations at the Exhibition. If he had done this quite openly, there would have been no harm done : but he practised deceit by sending a telegram stating that we had missed the train. He then enjoined upon us all to keep the matter secret, and we consented.

I did not realise at once that this would be telling a lie. Therefore I acquiesced along with my brother and cousin. But, after it was over, I saw clearly what I had done : and yet I was bound by my promise to keep the matter secret. Thus the thing became a torture to me. For months the disgrace of it haunted me, until at last the whole incident gradually passed out of my recollection. Other things came in, which drove it to the back of my mind : but it left a scar behind.

As I grew older, my mother, with her many family cares, was less able to be my daily companion, and my father became the ideal of all that implied heroic greatness to me. He seemed able to do everything and to know everyone, and to have grand ideas about every country in the world. So I used to confide in him all my own glowing thoughts about the future, when I grew to be a man, and he in his turn would kindle my imagination with the certainty of their fulfilment,

telling me stories of distant lands to illustrate everything that he had said.

One day I went to my mother and pleaded with her that she would allow me to have some rice each day with my midday meal.

"You see, mother," I said to her eagerly, "when I grow up I am going to live in India, and father has been telling me how everyone in India eats rice. So I must get used to it now, before I go there."

This was the way I broached the news to her, showing her plainly that my mind was set on going abroad when I grew up. She laughed a little at my request about the rice, and called me an absurd boy. But, all the same, there was pain in her voice as she realised, perhaps for the first time, that I was bound to leave the nest and fly away when I became older. For among all her children she loved me very dearly indeed, and my love for her was the deepest thing in all my life.

All alone, one day, with the high spirit of discovery surging within me, I had gone a long walk to Sutton Woods, where new fields of adventure were waiting to be explored. The solitude and beauty of these woods possessed an endless fascination for me. Brought up, as I had been, almost entirely in the centre of a large ugly town, there was a spiritual hunger within me for the open country: and forests had all the mystery as well as beauty of wild nature in its varied forms.

On this special occasion I had found near the edge of a treacherous marsh, hidden in the reeds, a bird's nest containing four eggs, each of which was tinted with a delicate light blue shade. The danger of the quaking bog to be crossed in order to get them had added a thrill of excitement to the capture. Without a single thought, except one of rare delight, I took possession of them and brought them back to my father and mother, fully expecting them both to share in my own pleasure with me.

But my mother took me aside very gently indeed and then drew before my eyes such a pitiful picture of the wild mother bird coming back to her desolate nest that all my eager delight vanished like an empty bubble. My father also explained with equal care how thoughtlessly cruel I had been to take all the four eggs from the nest and not leave one even behind

for the mother bird. Neither of them scolded me harshly, but the shock I received was immediate, and greatly disturbing in its consequences. Early next morning, after a miserable night, I went back the whole way on foot and retraced the path leading to the marsh, with its reeds. But in vain I searched everywhere among the rushes to find the nest in order to restore the eggs.

So deep was the shock left upon me, that childish fancy exaggerated it beyond all common sense, and made the evil I had done quite fantastic, with its false proportions. On this occasion I asked God's forgiveness, pleading with a grief which was pitifully sincere, and in the end found some comfort from my prayers. But I had only a dim faith in Christ at this time, and I was just beginning to think of God as a Father who loved me as His child. There were other things which filled my young mind with dread and stunted my true religious life.

It was an unending pleasure to me in my boyhood to go for walks with my father, and it was also a great happiness to him. For he would go on talking the whole way when he found such an eager listener holding his hand and trying to keep up with his strides. He would explain to me in his own vivid manner his peculiar religious views about human life and the future. These were deeply coloured by the teaching of Edward Irving, and he would refer again and again to his sermons as the greatest literature in the English language, next to the Bible.

"It is a blasphemy," he would say with vehemence, "for people to assert that power comes from below, from the multitude. That is the great lie which Anti-Christ, the Man of Sin, will preach to the whole world. All power is of God, and comes from above, not from below. To say that the voice of the people is the voice of God is Satan's favourite deceit."

Opinions such as these had come into our home with a profound reaction from the radical ideas of the Puritan faith held by my ancestors. My father had inherited them from my grandfather, after he had come under the spell of Edward Irving. They had led inevitably to Conservatism in politics and an ardent belief in the divine right of kings. Queen Victoria represented to him God's anointed sovereign, to whom by divine ordinance heart-felt allegiance was due.

Thus he was intensely royalist and patriotic as well as deeply religious. With great pride he would tell me how Victoria was Empress of India as well as Queen of the British Isles. Stories of Havelock, Outram, Lawrence, and other Indian Mutiny heroes were often told me, and these tales of British heroism in India fired my own imagination, making me more than ever desirous of going out to the East when I grew up to be a man.

The vast British Empire in India was, in my father's opinion, the most glorious achievement of the Anglo-Saxon race. It was to be compared with Imperial Rome. All these ideas and opinions became almost a conventional tradition with me as I learnt them one by one from my father's lips.

Gladstone's name was one which roused my father to indignant wrath, especially after what he regarded as his base surrender on the Irish question. He would call him a "traitor" with great vehemence, but his good humour and laughter would reappear again the next moment. There was always a warm corner for Gladstone in my father's heart for what he regarded as his "monumental" work, called *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. He told me with great gusto, when I grew older, that Gladstone had "trounced" Huxley in controversy.

Not one word was told me, on the other side, of the evils and weaknesses involved in the British imperial system. For my father had the innocence of a child in these affairs, and simply could not believe that his country had ever been in the wrong, or had done anything that was unfair and ungenerous to others in foreign lands. These same patriotic convictions, which I had thus inherited from him, were so strongly inwrought into my own character that it was long before I could be induced, even by my own practical experience, to believe that there was another side of the medal.

As I look back in perspective down the long vista of this half-forgotten period of my young boyhood, happiness is the one predominating feature. Though I was a nervously timid little child, full of fears and alarms, with intermittent days of physical weakness and ill health, yet on the whole I was remarkably free from care, and often recklessly happy, living in a dreamland of my own whereto my father and

mother were the chief persons admitted. Among my many brothers and sisters I had no boon companion quite so close and intimate as these two dear parents to whom I owed my existence. My brothers and sisters were good comrades and friends, but my father and mother had all my heart's devotion. Therefore they shared my dreams.

CHAPTER IV THE CONGREGATION

THE congregation of the Church in Birmingham where my father ministered was not large in numbers, but its spiritual life was intense. For the disciples of Edward Irving in the Midlands had formed themselves into a body very closely knit together, carefully watched and shepherded, living as in the days of the early Christian Church. These good and devout people were instant in prayer, given to hospitality, and they met one another frequently from house to house. They were bound together by the unity of their common faith while they watched and prayed without ceasing, waiting for the immediate appearing of their Lord and Saviour from heaven. This they called the " blessed hope," and it was a glorious watchword with them, as it had been with the first disciples in the apostolic age. Owing to this inspiring faith, which they held in common, they were able to keep their fervour highly pitched. They had the courage to make great surrenders in their own personal lives, involving worldly loss, which would have been difficult to demand from them under ordinary and normal conditions.

When this new movement was first brought into prominence by the sermons of Edward Irving in London, it was naturally called by the public the " Irvingite " sect ; because his name came most into popular notice in connection with it. But my father never liked to be called an " Irvingite " ; for he used to tell me with deep conviction that the movement was not of man, but of God. It had been directly guided, through the sure word of prophecy, by the Holy Spirit.

This doctrine of the direct divine leading of the believers by the voice of the Holy Spirit was perhaps the most marked feature of all in the new faith. Along with this, there was held the ardent belief in the second coming of Christ as an

immediately expected event. These two doctrines were constantly impressed upon me by my parents. They were the two fundamental truths of religion which ought to fashion my daily life.

When, at a much later period, Dr. Albert Schweitzer published his book, called, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, he brought into prominence this same expectancy of the "coming" of Christ as the chief mark of the early Church. He traced it back to Jesus Himself and His own environment among the simple Galilean peasants. This at once attracted my attention, because all through my childhood and early youth I had actually been living in the midst of such ideas. Through personal experience I had known their influence in the lives of my father and mother, giving a radiance to everything that they did. I wish I could picture them to my readers as they appear to me while I write these words. So bright they were and fervent in spirit that their faces shone with expectant joy.

Along with them I would try to imagine as a child all the wonderful things that were certain to happen when Christ came. Miracles would usher in His coming. Indeed, they had already begun. My father firmly believed that he had received the gift of healing, and many remarkable cures had happened at his touch and according to his faith.

In those early boyhood days, while this fervent religious life of the Church went on all around me, my own great difficulty was mainly due to a vivid, nervous imagination. In some ways this was the greatest natural gift I possessed, but in other ways it was a cause of acute functional disorder. I had no difficulty in imagining all that my father and mother described to me concerning the "coming" of Christ whom they daily expected, and at first this did me no harm. The real injury came later.

During these years the inner world of imagination was vividly real to me, so that I lived and moved about in it. It was possible for me, when I was quite young, to visualise before my eyes things that I saw with my mind. Not seldom, my elder sister, who was matter of fact by temperament, would scold me when I declared positively that I had seen things with my own eyes which were not outwardly apparent. When she blamed me and called me untruthful, I could only reply, "But I *did* see them!" and there the matter ended.

This visualising outwardly of one's inner world must be distinguished from hallucination, though the borderline between them is sometimes not very clearly defined. What I refer to is rather a distinct process, not uncommon in early childhood, and lingering on with some people much longer than with others. It is akin to the dramatic instinct, and may become very highly developed by one who is by nature introspective.

One person, well known to me, who had this trait to an abnormal degree, was Sadhu Sundar Singh of India, about whom I shall write much in a later chapter. It was not difficult for me, when I lived with him, to understand his nature; for it was similar to my own, but quite hypersensitive in this respect. I have heard from his own lips stories of supernatural visitations that confirmed me positively in the belief that he had really seen certain inward things objectively, in the same way that I had done when I was a boy. With him, the faculty had remained active right on till middle age. In my own case, it almost died away in my youth, and only appeared at very rare intervals in after life. It would seem that, with certain individuals, the line between the subjective and the objective has never been very distinctly marked. Perhaps also its sharpness of outline varies from age to age, and in different parts of the world.

This imaginative precocity led on, in my own boyhood, to acute religious fears. With some highly strung children, nervousness will take the form of a dread ever to be left alone in the dark; with others it will lead to an abnormal fear of ghosts. Neither of these had anything to do with my own trouble. My inner distress, amounting sometimes almost to terror, came through those strange beliefs which my father and my mother taught me. For they had fully explained to me that Christ's "coming" might happen literally "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The dead would rise out of their graves, and the faithful ones, who had the "seal of the living God on their foreheads," would suddenly be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so would ever be with the Lord.

These ideas meant little to me at first as a tiny child. But later on, when the sense of religious awe and wonder developed, they began to absorb my imagination, and I would constantly try to visualise them in my own way. Little by little they

became a source of nervous trouble, and produced in me all kinds of alarms.

About these things, to my great unhappiness, I spoke to no one openly at the time, not even to my mother. The Church itself, where we used to worship, was the centre of them, because it was there that I heard the ecstatic outbursts already mentioned. Sometimes they were quite terrifying to a young, imaginative boy. There was a silent sympathy with my mother, when I sat beside her and she soothed me; but to her these strange sounds were the very voice of God speaking through the lips of men. Her faith was such that she would never dream of any harm coming to me on this account.

The extent of the malady cannot easily be realised by those who are unaware of the injury that purely mental distress may cause to those who are young. This teaching concerning the "coming" of Christ had at last so impressed me that at night-time, on my way back from the choir practice in the Church, I would hurry with flying steps past a certain cemetery where the gravestones could dimly be seen, white and ghostly. Fear would then get entire possession of me and grip me with a kind of frantic dread lest at that moment Christ might descend from heaven with a shout and the dead should be raised. I had a sense that I was altogether unprepared and was terrified lest this event should happen while I still remained unready for it.

In mentioning these childish things, I have in mind the thought that similar nervous fears are still happening in the world to-day owing to an almost fatal difficulty in childhood caused by timid reticence and reserve. For the young child is often tongue-tied, especially if something sacred is connected with such troubles. He is quite unable to explain, even to those nearest to him, what the distress is that troubles him.

My father and mother would have been the last persons in the world to wish to excite abnormal religious fears in me. Not only was punishment practically unknown in our household, but even a harsh word was hardly ever uttered. They were both looking forward with intense joy and hope to the "coming" of Christ, and they naturally expected me to share this joy with themselves. Though my father very rarely spoke with "tongues" in the church, he would frequently utter ecstatic words in a voice that had an unearthly sound, called "prophesying." It gave him a joyful rapture

to feel this inspiration. Therefore he had no idea that there was anything terrifying in it to me.

Christ's own attitude towards little children is plain from the Gospel story. He took them up in His arms, when the mothers brought them, and laid His hands upon them, and blessed them. He rebuked those who treated them roughly or caused them to stumble. In the same way, it was the earnest desire of my father and mother to bring me to Christ, so that I might be taken in His arms to receive His blessings; and their faith and love were in a true sense rewarded. But the bewildering doctrines about Christ's literal "coming," which they themselves accepted with such fervent faith, began to repel me unconsciously even from the very first. These things did not grow up along with my life as an integral part of it; they became instinctively more and more external to me, however much I might try to believe them.

At first I did not understand the reason why I shrank back with alarm in the church when these ecstatic utterances occurred. But in later years, after a painful inward struggle, it was possible for me to see at last that this instinct in my childhood had been a true one, and that the theory which had so attracted both my grandfather and father in turn was altogether too literal in its method of interpreting the Scriptures. It was as far removed from Christ's inner mind as many of those external ideas which the first disciples had held about the immediate coming of the Kingdom. God's reign, said Christ, did not come with observation.

For this attempt to revive each detail of the apostolic age was really an anachronism. It was an effort, noble but futile, to cling to the exact forms of an epoch already long gone by. Life does not develop in that way. When the Spirit and the Bride say "Come"—to quote from the noble climax of the Book of Revelation—our heart's deepest cry will still be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" But we shall find God's Kingdom appearing, not by pointing to the heavens and saying, "Lo, here" or "Lo, there." For the Kingdom of God is already in our midst, within us and about us and around us. Wherever the earth is full of darkness and cruel habitations, and the sunshine of God's love breaks through, there His glory appears. There His Kingdom has come. There the Father's will has been done on earth as it is in heaven.

It took me many years to see all this with a clear, unclouded gaze, and there was an inner transformation first to be accomplished through great suffering. But the truth once gained through the agony of inner struggle was all the more firmly held. Like the captain of the guard, in the Acts of the Apostles, I have still to confess, "At great cost won I this freedom." For with me the spiritual life did not develop naturally and simply. Rather I have to look back on repeated failure to understand what Christ was seeking to show me. I was not "freeborn."

When, however, the plunge for freedom had once been made, it was not possible for me to halt any more. Having put my hand to the plough, I could not look back and yet be fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Since then, the way has stretched forward, not backward.

Just as this one statement in the Apostles' Creed concerning the "coming" of Christ had to be expanded until it became quite universal, so I was led on to understand, by my own religious experience, how each part of the same creed had to be interpreted afresh in turn. No living truth concerning Christ can ever be allowed to shrink back into the hard shell of the dead external form. It must find its own expansion through the Lord, the Spirit, in the power of an endless life.

Once I saw a mediæval picture representing God Himself. He was made to appear as a venerable aged man with a long white beard, crowned with a golden mitre. The startling reaction which came when I saw this was really the measure of the distance that my thoughts had travelled beyond those of the mediæval artist. It is true that we still see "through a glass darkly," and that we "know in part." It is true also that our symbols of the Eternal will each in their turn prove inadequate. But, while we press forward to run with patience the race that is set before us, we know that Christ Himself has traced each step of the road in advance, not only as the Pioneer, but also as the Perfecter of our faith.

CHAPTER V CONVERSION

WHAT follows in this story must be told as simply as possible; for it is an attempt to describe in words a deep inner change

which came into my life just before I left school for Cambridge University. I shall try to keep to the objective facts, which are almost as clear to me to-day as when they actually occurred.

At King Edward VI School, Birmingham, when adolescence came, difficulties and temptations arose for which I was altogether inexperienced and unprepared. No warning had been given me beforehand by my parents and teachers, and therefore it was a very rough treatment I had to go through after my sheltered home life. At first I was utterly miserable in the huge school buildings and the crowded class-rooms, constantly despised by my companions as a weakling, and at the same time dragooned by boys much bigger than myself into the " herd " life which young lads, grouped together, are wont to exercise in common. The illness which had crippled me in earlier years still clung about me in some of its worst after-effects of physical weakness. Therefore the strain of Public School life tended to force the pace of mental development while the body still remained feeble.

As yet I had not learnt to find my own inner resources of spiritual strength; and the religious instincts of early childhood were too frail in their growth to bear the rude shock of transplanting. At a rapid pace I was pushed up the school from one class to another. This process left me always the youngest boy in the class, and therefore an easy victim for the stronger boys to bully. As a sequel to all this, in self-protection I gradually gave way to the school environment and took the line of least resistance, endeavouring to imitate other boys whose upbringing had been different from my own. This meant that I soon learnt evil habits, which my inner conscience told me were wrong. Impurity came into my life, and found a lodgment there for a time. The brightness and joy of earlier days, which I have described, tended to die away. Along with this there went on a hardening of those sensitive spiritual faculties which good home influences had tended to foster.

In all outward respects, the purely formal side of religion continued as before. Services of the Church were attended, Sunday by Sunday, but they began to have very little inner reality for me as I grew older. The mystery and awe which my childhood had associated with them had almost vanished. Yet the externals of piety remained, and both my father and

mother regarded me as the one member of their large family who seemed marked out for the ministry of the Church when the time came to make a final choice in such a sacred matter. All this was not often talked about, but I knew that it was expected of me. My elder brother had already been sent into business when quite young. My younger brothers would probably take the same course later. But I was to follow my father, and thus keep up the family succession in the ministry.

At last the time had nearly come for me to leave King Edward VI School and go to Cambridge, where I had won a scholarship at Pembroke College. This success of mine had given my parents very great satisfaction, because they had both set their hearts on my going to the University, and now the way was open.

One day, on a walk that I remember well—I can recall the very street where the subject was broached—my father set out before me all his high hopes and longings for my future. He proposed to me at last quite definitely that I should seek to enter the ministry of the Apostolic Church wherein he himself has served. In very moving tones, he pleaded with me to fulfil his own and my mother's most earnest and heart-felt desire. At the moment I was stirred very deeply in turn, and had not the courage to tell him that my whole soul shrank back from such a calling. For to fulfil his wish, in such a state of mind as I was in then, would clearly make me nothing less than a hypocrite. It was the right moment for a frank confession, and I missed it, remaining silent instead.

This conversation often disturbed me during the weeks that followed, and my cowardice at the critical moment in not making a frank confession only increased the evil. The more I tried to be honest with myself, the more my conscience became acutely awake. It was obviously necessary for me to be quite straightforward with my father, whom I loved for his goodness and simplicity; but still I refrained again and again from speaking to him as I should have done, though the words often hung on my lips and nearly found an utterance.

An evening came when I was quite alone in my room and had prepared for rest. In the usual formal way, I had knelt down for a few moments at the bedside to say my evening

prayer. Then, without warning, the strong conviction of sin and impurity came upon me with such overpowering strength that every shred of false convention was torn aside, and I knew myself as I really was.

To describe the sudden agony which followed is quite beyond my powers. It broke me down completely. There had been nothing during the day to lead up to this: and in church, where I had attended, there had been no stress laid upon "conversion" as a necessary religious step in Christian progress. It was agonising, alarming, and unexpected, breaking in upon me like a lightning flash followed by its crash of thunder, leaving at first nothing but black darkness behind it. I buried my head in my hands and knelt there, alone with God, in an anguish of spirit that blotted out everything else and left me groping for the light. So intense was the agony that I was quite unconscious of the lapse of the hours as they went by.

So the struggle went on, long into the night. At last a new and wonderful sense of peace and forgiveness came stealing into my life at its very centre, and the tears rushed out, bringing infinite relief. I dare not venture to explain further the process of the change that was wrought in me, and I have shrunk back from even saying so much; but I knew at that time without any doubt that Christ was my Saviour and my Redeemer, and that His love had won my heart for ever. The chain of evil habit was broken, and its hold over me had vanished.

The first thought that came to me was a practical one. The gospel story of the lepers who were cleansed by Christ had been vividly brought to my mind, and it seemed to me that, as one of them, I ought to "return and give glory to God."

There was an early morning service each day at six o'clock in the church, which was more than a mile away from our home. I had hardly ever before got up from bed so early to go to church. Except on special occasions, the thought had never entered my mind. On Christmas morning, as I have mentioned, we all went there together as a family to keep the festival. But that was the only time I had attended this early service. As a heavy sleeper, it was almost impossible in ordinary circumstances for me to rouse myself from sleep and reach the church at such an early hour, even if I wished to do so; and now the time was long past midnight. But

in the exaltation of that mood such difficulties did not loom large. So I went at once to sleep, quite confident that I should wake at the right time.

In the morning, when I opened my eyes, at first the memory was dim concerning what had happened the night before; but when I looked at my watch it was nearly half-past five. In a moment the whole change in my life came flooding back to my mind. I hastily dressed, with a tumult of gladness in my heart, and reached the church just before the prayers began. During the service, my thoughts wandered. They went back in humble thankfulness and love to the new peace and joy that had begun at the night hour, when Christ Himself had given me His forgiveness and had made me His own for ever.

The prayers were chanted and the scripture lesson read in the church, but I hardly listened to them, because the new song was ringing in my heart all the while and my thoughts were soaring upward, far away from earth. Thus it went on throughout the whole act of worship. But, just as the prayers ended, the last words of all broke suddenly upon my ear: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen."

Then—how can I explain what followed? The supreme blessing from on high seemed to be given to me personally—to me, even me—at that divine hour, as a gift of love from God Himself. All the peace and joy of forgiveness, which I had known on the previous night, came back, intensified a thousandfold, until the flood of God's abounding love was poured around me like the great ocean, wave upon wave, while I knelt with bowed head to receive it. I waited on in the church a long while, quite oblivious of everything else, kneeling in thankful adoration. So unconscious was I of anything outside me, that in the end the doorkeeper came and tapped me abruptly on the shoulder, thinking I had fallen asleep. He wished to close the church doors and go home. So vivid is the memory still that I can picture the start I gave when he brought me back into the outer world.

As I walked home, the sunlight was flooding the streets with pure gold and the dayspring of new life had risen in my own heart. My mother silently noticed the change that had come about, and my father also; but I spoke very little

indeed to anyone concerning what had happened, and for a long while could not bring myself to do so. It seemed to be too sacred to relate, even to those who were closest to me, and to belong rather to those inward things that cannot be told. We read in the Gospel how Mary "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." That was the feeling uppermost in my own mind in those days.

Even now, more than forty years after, it is still very difficult indeed for me to get free from this sense of diffidence which has become almost an obsession. Yet clearly when at last, after great hesitation, I have consented to put down my own experience in this book, in the hope that it might be of service to others, this plain record of what happened could not be omitted. For Christ has been the living Christ to me ever since. Henceforth I do not merely picture Him to myself as I see Him in the Gospel story, or only follow with vivid imagination His footsteps by the shores of Galilee. For I have known the secret of His presence, here and now, as a daily reality, at some times more intimately than at other times, but always the same Christ—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Therefore He has become to me the living Christ, and it has not been possible for me to think of Him or speak of Him in any other terms, because my articulate life as a Christian began from that day forward, and all my deepest thoughts are coloured with this one impression. This fact has to be taken for granted by anyone who wishes to understand the meaning of Christ in my life, and what I owe to Him.

After that event, it is not too much to say, as I have done, that Christ's presence became a daily experience. It may be well to pause a moment to make this quite clear, even by repetition. It was not that I pictured Christ any more in the mood of childhood, according to the teaching which my mother had given me, when I used to think of Him coming in the clouds of heaven, and could almost see Him with my naked eyes. That, after all, had been a child's fancy; and, as I grew up, it had already begun to fade away. It was a dream picture.

But this new power in my life was altogether different. No dream could have wrought such a change within the soul as to transform my whole moral being and make me new-born. This was all God's doing, and it was marvellous in my eyes.

God in Christ had come to me in the night. He had been, as the psalm says, "about my path and about my bed, searching out all my ways." I could not flee from His presence. If I went up to the heights, He was there. If I went down to the depths, He was there also. This realisation of God, which the psalm had described so exactly, had now become mine also. He was my constant companion.

There was something still further which does not appear in this psalm. For there had stolen into my heart from Him a forgiveness, deep as the ocean, wide as the blue sky, unfathomable in its depths of divine love. This had broken me down completely and made a new man of me. There had been a sacrifice on God's part. I could understand it that night so clearly. He had given Himself for me. This brought me close to Him, not in fear, but in boundless love. I began to know the perfect love which casts out all fear. It was this Divine Presence, this Spirit of redeeming Love, around and about and within me, which had made the real change in me.

No! This that had now happened was no fantasy of the imagination, no dream to vanish like mist in the morning when we awaken, but a life-change, a new spiritual birth, with power to overcome sin itself and swallow up death in victory.

What I am now struggling to describe cannot really be expressed in words; but I wish to make one more fact clear if it is possible to do so in human ways of speech. All this new consciousness of God's love came to me directly through Christ, and in no other way. What the equation was which made God and Christ one in my innermost and deepest thoughts I could not have explained at that time, nor could I give a logical explanation of it to-day. But it was Christ now who was in all my thoughts, and His face was ever before me when I thought of God.

There was, it is true, nothing directly outward, visible, and objective. I saw no vision of Christ, as Saul did on his way to Damascus. Nevertheless, the love and the forgiveness that I experienced were made real to me in Christ and through Christ. They had come to me in that way. I understood by an inner experience what St. Paul meant when he said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." For at that very time of blessing, God was in Christ forgiving

me and healing me and making a new man of me. Apart from Christ, all this would have been impersonal and abstract. In Christ, God Himself had become human and personal and real; His love had become human and personal also.

We have a word, in common use in India, which seems to express my meaning better than any other, if only I can make its meaning plain in the West. It is said in ancient Sanskrit that God in His infinitude has no "form" by which we may comprehend Him. The word used for "form" is *rupam*. But the Formless is ever seeking to take form, the Infinite to become finite. Now, just at this point, in the direct religious experience which I have recounted, the vital meaning of Christ to the human soul appears to be represented. Through Him, all that was vague to me in God became definite; all that was impersonal became intimately personal; all that was infinite became finite. Thus Christ became to me truly God's *rupam*, God's word, articulate and intelligible to my heart; God's symbol, making visible the invisible God. Just as we cry out in the dark, "Abba, Father," like frightened children, so God answers out of the dark to us and touches us with His hand. That answer, that touch, is Christ.

God's longing for my love is the very counterpart of my longing for His love. It is His own nature to reveal Himself in human ways. He does so in Christ. His longing for my love, expressed in outward form, is Christ. Thus Christ is God's perfect Word to us. In Him, God's voice comes clearest through. In Him, God's hand pierces the veil. In Him, God's infinite formlessness takes form.

Other symbols have been given to man. Each prophet and seer has been a divine voice, speaking of God, revealing God as His messenger; the Epistle to the Hebrews opens with the majestic words, "God, who at sundry times and in divers places spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." But that is not the end of the sentence. The writer goes on to tell us that the same God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

We have been able to hear from prophets and seers of the past some syllable of His meaning, to absorb some ray of His truth, to catch some gleam of His beauty. But in Christ we can obtain a clear image, a distinct meaning, a full likeness. "He is," says St. Paul, "the Image of the

invisible God "—the Symbol whereby God may be known to man; the Word whereby God is expressed.

In the Rāmāyana, written by Tulsidas, who was himself one of those great seers through whom God spoke, there is one revealing passage. It shows how universal is the longing for that "form" of God which makes His Presence manifest to man. Tulsidas describes in his epic how the philosopher, who was learned in the Scriptures, began to recite to him his ideas about God the formless, the infinite, the impersonal, the invisible, the incomprehensible. But Tulsidas begged the philosopher to pause, and cried, "Sir, show us the Incarnate."

The greatest poets in the West have also brought near to us this cry of the human heart, which rings through the whole religious literature of the world. There are few nobler passages than that in Browning's "Saul," where the song of David, the minstrel, as he plays on his harp before the darkly brooding king, rises higher and higher, reaching its climax in these words:

As thy love is discovered Almighty, Almighty be proved,
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most: the strongest shall stand the most weak,
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever: a Hand, like this hand,
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee. See the Christ stand!

Utterances like these, after my conversion, I could realise in my inner spirit. They meant something quite new to me. For they now re-echoed the very song that was ringing all day in my own heart.

Thus, to go over again what I have been struggling to make clear, the secret of Jesus is this: that He becomes to the soul, as it realises His presence, God's love made visible to mortal eyes and knowable in human form. There is no more now the impossibility of worshipping an unknown God who can only be described by negatives, but a human God

whose very nature and name is love; who is so close to us that He suffers with every pang we feel, and bears the wound of every sin we commit. He undergoes for love's sake the uttermost renunciation, dwelling among us in such a way that we can behold His glory—the glory of love incarnate, enduring all for the beloved. He suffers shame unspeakable, is mocked and scourged and crucified for love's sake.

We believe that not in word only, but in very act and deed, God is love; not in abstract theory, but in supremely tragic and concrete reality. It is this deed of God's love which fills us with adoring devotion, and makes our hearts sing the new song of love in response.

If we are asked to give the reasons for our belief and worship, we have many infallible proofs. There is the cry of the human heart down all the ages, "O God, show me Thyself —not another, but Thyself, Thyself." That cry cannot have been created and inspired in vain if human life is rational and God is true; and in our own human experience there has been in every generation the drawing near of the Divine Spirit to the human spirit, the cry "Abba, Father," the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God. This, which has been felt in every age and in every religion, lifting up the soul of man to God, has found its perfect voice in Christ.

For this reason, the saints and martyrs who have lived and died in the great apostolic succession, Paul and John, Augustine and Monica, Bernard and Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena and countless others of a later age—these have all borne witness with one voice, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me"; "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." And this has not only been the high experience of the saints, but also of simple, ordinary, humble men and women of each generation in turn. Those in England or America, India or Africa, China or Japan, who have experienced the love of Christ, declare the same thing. It is Christ Himself who lives and works in them, changing their lives. It is He who inspires and constrains them by His love to go out and labour in the dark places of the earth.

It was this love of Christ within the heart which now began to constrain my life and mould my whole character. This is, essentially, what I owe to Christ.

In the Fourth Gospel we have recorded by the Evangelist the scene in the guest-chamber at the time of the Last Supper. Philip cries out, " Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Christ answers, " Hast thou been so long with Me and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? "

This word of Christ to Philip expressed the very thing that had now come to pass in my own life. For with me also it had become clear that to see Christ was to see the Father and to understand His love.

There was no need for me to formulate this in a creed. It was a spiritual consciousness that had come to me, not an intellectual definition; and whenever I have gone aside from that spiritual basis in order to define in metaphysical terms what I believe, it has seemed to me to bring weakness instead of strength, uncertainty instead of truth. I can well understand the need of expressing in human words as far as possible that which is intimately experienced; but the words remain, after all, symbols of the truth rather than the truth itself.

Almost the next day I began to put this new-found joy into practice. Near the church wherein I had worshipped Sunday by Sunday was a slum quarter where drunkenness and vice were forced upon the poor by their poverty itself, creating a vicious circle. Never before had I even dreamt of visiting these homes or seeing these poor people. But now they became very dear to me for Christ's sake. I could not speak much about my own deep inner experience, and an instinct forbade me to do so. But it was not difficult for me to make friends; and I would go from house to house getting to know different people, seeking to help them wherever occasions arose. In this way the weeks and months went by, and the vision of Christ remained with me all the while.

CHAPTER VI COLLEGE DAYS

WHAT I have related did not become plain to me all at once, but I had now, as it were, the key in my hand wherewith to unlock vast hidden treasures. The New Testament became a different book to me, and I would spend long hours in exploring

it with intense inner delight. It was possible for me now at last to understand even the most difficult of all New Testament writers, St. Paul. He had received an experience of conversion which I found strangely akin to my own. Gleaming points of light, such as "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" or, again, "The love of Christ constraineth us," or that amazing word, "For me, to live is Christ," became messages of life sent to me direct from Christ Himself. It was with a pure thrill of joy that I discovered their grandeur, and placed them like jewels next to my heart. There was one passage that I loved best of all; it runs, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

What was clear to me, during this wonderful time, was that something entirely new had come across my horizon and changed the very scenery of daily existence. The sky overhead seemed a brighter blue, the loveliness of nature became still more entrancing in its beauty. I can remember one night of the full moon, when I got up and went out walking on and on, right through the night into the sunrise, with hardly the consciousness of any bodily need, singing to myself all the way, with God and nature as my intimate companions. Such events became almost normal for me at this time in the glorious world of the Spirit that I was then inhabiting All the earlier joy I had in nature came back to me with redoubled power.

Human faces attracted me with a singularly poignant sympathy, especially if there was any sorrow or trouble in them. An overwhelming eagerness to do something to help everyone became the strongest longing within me. Any smallest act of service, especially if it could remain altogether unnoticed, gave me peculiar pleasure. It was easy at such a time to understand what Christ meant when He said, "The Father, who seeth in secret, shall recompense thee."

One other deep inner experience I must relate that still comes back fresh to my mind with all the beauty of a dream. On a perfect day just at the beginning of the autumn, when the leaves were turning gold, I had walked out to Lichfield from a cottage in the country, where we were staying on a holiday. There was sunshine in my heart as well as in the sky. At the turn of the road, on the brow of a steep hill,

the Cathedral, with its three spires, came suddenly into sight through a gap in the trees.

I had not expected it at this point on my journey, and its appearance in the distance was all the more beautiful on that account. My heart began singing with joy. Afterwards I went along in glorious exultation, almost as if I was treading upon air, and at length entered the minster.

The time of evensong had nearly come, and I sat down waiting in quiet peace and restfulness of spirit, taking in the mysterious awe of the vaulted roof and pillared arches. The early evening light came streaming through the clerestory windows, giving a radiance that helped to lift the human spirit out of the normal world. The spirits of just men made perfect the innumerable company of the heavenly host seemed to fill the place with mystic presences. Soon from the choir, as evensong began, the voices of the singers and the organ music reached me.

Then something happened which I cannot well describe. I became lost altogether to time and space and outer things as I passed upward into realms of unimaginable light. In the end, I found myself back again amidst external things, and went on my way rejoicing.

On the road outside the Cathedral a tramp met me who begged alms from me, and I can remember well the joy with which I emptied my pockets and gave him every coin I had, in sheer delight. I had taken no food, and it was a long walk home. My intention had been to go back by train, and I had taken money with me for that purpose, but at such an hour of inner vision I could think of nothing else but Christ, who was my all in all. The fatigue of the return journey and the lack of food were hardly felt for the pure happiness of giving thanks in this way to the Divine Lover who had claimed me by His love.

In all this, it was action rather than speech that brought happiness with it; for I was still excessively reticent concerning the things that had come to pass, and this shyness had become almost an inhibition. But whenever, in some silent manner, however insignificant, I was able to do some lowly act in Christ's name, then at once it seemed to make the pent-up fountain of joy within to overflow, and my intense longing to serve Christ was immediately relieved.

To give one single instance of this, small and unimportant

in itself, I can recall even to-day what a perfect happiness it brought me, on an excursion into the country, merely to carry the heavy basket of food on the way out, thus relieving others of the burden. Before this time I should myself have tried to get off with a minimum share of an irksome task like this; but now there was a delight even in the strain that came with bearing such a load. In those days of pure happiness and nearness to Christ's presence it seemed as if nothing could damp the ardour of the fresh spirit within me.

There is a beautiful phrase used by Clement of Alexandria, where he describes the Christian life as a "perpetual spring-time." That was, in fact, my own experience during these wonderful days, and I do not think the freshness of that period has ever passed out of my life, in spite of very great suffering and sorrow.

The early morning service in the church became now one of the trysting-places where I met my Lord, and while I was at home in Birmingham it was very rarely missed. The prayers and psalms and lessons had come back to life, and I would go rejoicing on my way, with gladness in the very depth of my being overflowing and triumphant. On the journey home from church each day I could hardly refrain from singing out loud for joy, for God's own glorious goodness was making melody in my heart.

It was through the good mercy of Christ, my Master, that all this came just before my entrance in October 1890 into University life at Pembroke College, Cambridge. For if I had gone there without this inward change, it is not difficult to realise how much deeper I might have gone down into the abyss. But, instead of this, my whole inner being had suddenly blossomed out in the sunshine of God's love.

Furthermore, it was a unique good fortune to come into close touch, at the very beginning of my University days, with one far older and wiser than myself, who was my college tutor—Charles Hermann Prior.

When I first went to him, on entering college as a freshman, he saw with clear intuition what had happened, and drew out from me my secret. He was able to share with me my new-found joy more than any other person I had yet met, and it was a new thing to me to find myself able to speak about it all quite freely to him. He had experienced the same awakening in his own younger days, and for him it was not

too much to say that the love of Christ constrained every word and thought during the day. Thus he quickly broke down all barriers of reticence between us. My heart's allegiance was given to him as I learnt to love him, and when I came to know him more intimately my reverence for him increased.

Though I was only an undergraduate, one of his many pupils, he admitted me to his own heart's friendship in a singular manner. Such was his goodness to me that his home became my home. He saw at once my love of children, and he and his wife encouraged me to become a member of their family circle. Soon I found myself day by day telling him more fully each detail of the peculiar faith in which I had been brought up. He never argued with me about this belief, or sought to undermine it. On the contrary, he tried to keep me true to it as long as he saw that it had any hold over me. He never used my love and friendship as a means to lead me to his own religious position. But when, later on, the intellectual questionings became too strong for me, and I went to him to find their solution, his practical wisdom was equal to his sympathy and goodness. At such times of inner trouble he was like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. One of his favourite chapters in the Old Testament was Isa. xxxv, which begins, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." This verse has remained to me intimately associated with the fragrance of his own beautiful character. I remember him reading to me one day the whole chapter. When we came to the closing words, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," his voice broke and his eyes were filled with tears.

Charles Prior was a scholar with many-sided activities of mind. Yet with all his profound learning he was as humble as a little child. In my own college days he became almost like a Christ to me, visible and tangible in outward form so good and pure was his life. Chiefly through his influence and friendship, during the stormy years of trial that lay before me, my Christian faith became stronger instead of weaker; and in the end, while vast changes of intellectual outlook had supervened, the central place of Christ remained

the same. Never till I reached India have I had a friendship like that which came to me at the very time I needed it most of all.

The storm of doubt broke very soon, as the old naïve beliefs of my childhood were whirled hither and thither, like leaves before the tempest, and the frail vessel of my life, with its sails all set, was driven right out to sea through untried waters. In those eventful and tempestuous years the peculiar religious creed which had supported my earlier home life was shattered to pieces against the rocks, and I was left like a stranded mariner on a bleak and desolate coast, blinded by the surf and seeking to escape the fury of the waves. Spiritual doubt and distress of this fundamental character, when once they begin to shake the soul, have to run their course to the bitter end before the unsettling and disturbing winds are laid to rest.

How wonderful a thing is human friendship! It seems to me, looking back, that nothing but the magic touch of this new personal companionship could have carried me beyond the eddying uncertainties which I was called upon at this time to struggle through. There was no escape for me; and more than once I went alone into the wilderness to find an answer. When I came back, Charles Prior would cheer me and encourage me to go on with the quest.

When I first went up to college, it was quite natural that I should be drawn toward the leaders of the Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, whose fearlessness of faith took sometimes extreme forms. It was their open, ardent courage that attracted me, and the passionate fervour of their devotion to Christ. But there was one whole aspect of their faith where I could not follow them at all. Most of them were Fundamentalists, and I had already broken with their ideas of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Yet, in spite of this, it was a great inner strength to me to share their ardour, and I attended their prayer-meetings regularly.

But there had come into prominence among them, owing to this theory of verbal inspiration, a doctrine concerning eternal punishment formulated from various texts. It seemed to me nothing less than blasphemy to hold such ideas as these about the God of Love whom Christ revealed. What shocked me most of all was the fact that He, the Saviour, was made sponsor for this horrible creed of hell. The Christ who had

spoken so tenderly of the Father's care for the fall of a single sparrow, who had said that the very hairs of our heads were all numbered, who had taken little children in His arms and blessed them, was actually supposed to be the author of this monstrous doctrine of eternal torment.

One evening, after a meeting with them, I went back to my room and sat at the table, with a Bible open before me, dwelling long, with brooding thought, over the discussion that I had just heard. Other questionings had also sorely tried me. The inner light of the Spirit, which had hitherto been my guide, had grown dim; and I had been obliged to surrender much that I had held sacred before. But this fundamental certainty of God's nature as love I could never surrender, even though an army of texts were brought against it; for to give up that would have been spiritual suicide with me.

It was just then, in an hour of utter weariness and exhaustion, that there came to me a light and a vision that left behind an ineffaceable memory, and changed once more the whole tenor of my life. I saw no outward form, but I was conscious of an overshadowing presence and an ineffable peace, as though the everlasting arms were upholding me and I was utterly at rest. The radiance was inward, not outward, and it flooded my whole being. It came upon me suddenly, unawares, just as in the former instance of my own conversion. It was in a very real manner the fulfilment of that supreme earlier experience, and it brought into my life the final and complete assurance of inner peace. The joy that accompanied this assurance was overflowing, and it remained with me almost undimmed for many months after the occurrence, flooding my whole being with gladness.

About this new inner conviction also I found it impossible to speak openly without restraint, and I shrank back at that time from any disclosure. But it gave me courage, where courage was most needed; and it seemed to renew within me the inner light, to guide me on my way.

As the years went slowly forward one by one at college, grave anxieties at home added to all these difficulties of the mind. For my father was known to be suffering from an acute form of heart disease which might at any time prove fatal. One attack after another had already come and gone, and each one had brought a crisis with it. The

reiterated order of the doctor was that he was to be kept from all physical and mental worry.

My mother's anxiety was naturally greatest of all, but her unselfish devotion and serene trust in God enabled her to overcome it. In my own struggles at Cambridge to reach a sure intellectual foundation the keen suffering of giving my father pain when he was least able to bear it had always steadily to be faced. At first he could not credit the fact that my early faith had in any way been shaken. It was a presumption on my part, he felt, due to pride of intellect, that I should even challenge it at all. When I raised serious objections he would foreclose discussion by referring me to his own spiritual gift of "prophesying" in the Apostolic Church. Could I for one moment believe that his experience of God was a lie?

I would sadly assure him that I could never doubt his sincerity or question his spiritual gifts; but at the same time I would yet remain as unconvinced as before. Instead of arguing with him in person, I tried to write letters to him stating my own position; but these letters excited him so much that I was obliged to refrain, lest some serious injury should happen to him.

What I have thus told in a few words took long and painful years to carry through to its conclusion. All the while the conviction was being strengthened in my inner mind that I could no longer hold my father's faith.

The break came at last, full of terribly sad misunderstanding and unavailing argument, with deep heartache and anguish on either side that only time could heal. My dear mother remained silent. She never argued with me. But her suffering was greatest of all, and I could feel it all the while.

The last dread step of all was taken owing chiefly to the quiet and persistent faithfulness of a friend. Basil Westcott, the youngest son of the late Bishop of Durham, was at this time the dearest companion I had in the world among those of my own age at college. He was the brother of Mrs. Prior, and I had thus first made his acquaintance at their house. We shared everything in common, living together as fellow-students are wont to do all over the world, and daily studying together in each other's rooms.

With very great difficulty, at an early stage in our friendship,

I had spoken to him about the peculiar religious beliefs which I held. All my doubts and misgivings had also been made plain. He was a High Churchman of a very advanced type. My own wavering reluctance to take action after my mind had become clear gave him the greatest pain. He pointed out to me, in the deep love of friendship, how my whole life would be ruined if I went on playing fast and loose with my convictions and trifling with my conscience in this manner. He told me quite plainly, also, that it would be the ruin of our mutual friendship.

This last thought immediately brought me face to face with reality from a startlingly new angle. With an agony of pain that I can vividly recall, I was at last convicted by him of wrongdoing. My conscience itself bore witness. I saw that the step, however difficult, had to be taken which would spiritually sever me from my home.

Thus gradually what had been long expected came to pass. The breach was actually made. I was confirmed in the Church of England at Lichfield Cathedral. The pain of separation from my father and mother by this act was too great at the time to allow me to feel any joy in the solemn sacramental service. The beauty of the Cathedral, which I had learned to love, and the tenderness of the saintly bishop as he laid his hand upon my head and spoke the word of blessing, only added at the time to the anguish of sorrow that was deep within my heart.

From that time onward, it did not seem possible for me any longer to receive the Holy Communion side by side with my father and mother and all my brothers and sisters in the church of my youth. Whenever Sunday morning came, and I was at home from Cambridge, my way to church used to diverge from theirs. By my own act, I was excommunicated from them.

Since then, as this narrative will show, my own thoughts in such matters have become altered and widened. After much pondering, I have come to the conclusion that in this last act of all, whereby I cut myself off from receiving the Holy Communion with my parents, I was mistaken. For, although the two paths of our outer lives had thus begun widely to diverge, our common faith in Christ had remained unchanged, and I was really much nearer to my parents now than I was before my conversion. Indeed, while we

had been facing these intellectual differences we had spiritually drawn nearer to each other. For we had both realised anew the vision of Christ in the midst of our different views, and we had been brought in this way nearer to His Cross. In the end, my father understood that all I had been compelled to do had been done for Christ's sake. Nevertheless, he agreed with me that we could not now partake of the same Sacrament together.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and, when I had gone through this inner struggle to the bitter end, I naturally clung to the services in the Church of England which now took the place of those I had left behind. At first, there was a coldness difficult to overcome; but soon the daily Eucharist gave warmth and life to worship, and a new spiritual joy entered. To be present each early morning at the Holy Communion in Little St. Mary's Church, which was opposite Pembroke College, became one of those strong anchorages of the soul at a time when the foundations of my faith were being sorely shaken. It was there, at the daily Sacrament, that I found Christ's presence anew, and a habit of frequent Communion grew up with me. At first, this deep instinct became associated with the High Church view of the religious life, but in later times I was able to realise the same communion with Christ in more universal ways.

In what I have written, I have tried to keep one single thread of my narrative clear; but I find I have simplified the story too much. For the picture leaves the impression that doubts and difficulties came chiefly in one direction only. But it would be more true to record that, in those revolutionary days at Cambridge, questions and doubts of every kind, with reference to all I had been taught about God and Christ and the life beyond the grave, were presented to me. Nothing could be left out of the searching test in such a time of transition.

It was an age of intellectual enquiry, and Cambridge University, with its high record for pioneer advance in both scientific discovery and mathematical research, was peculiarly open to every wave of thought that swept forward, washing away some old landmark as the tide of new knowledge rushed past in full flood.

This was indeed a stimulating atmosphere wherein to acclimatise the Christian life, and I have valued these many

years I spent at Cambridge, both as a student and as a teacher, because they afforded the greatest advantage to the mind that a man could have during the critical years of early manhood. In such a keen and biting air it was not possible for me, even if I would, merely to hug the shore and creep along by sheltered channels with the vessel of my life. Thank God, it was made imperative for me to launch out far into the deep and explore the great high seas, and thus to gain an ever stronger confidence of faith in Christ amid the buffeting of the waves.

It is out of the turmoil of these stormy waters, with here and there a haven to repair in, that the record of these pages has been written. With the poet Milton, I would confess with all my heart that a "fugitive and cloistered virtue" has never had any attraction for me. The adventure of following Christ has always sent me forth upon the open road into unknown lands, and across the sounding seas to seek new shores. Christ's call has awakened this spirit again and again. And when sometimes courage has failed, and the heart has been chilled and numb, His voice has rung out, "Be of good cheer."

CHAPTER VII THE NORTH COUNTRY

WHEN I had finally taken the plunge, and made the great rift in my spiritual life which separated me by my own act from my own father and mother in religious worship and practice, my mind was instinctively drawn more and more to look forward to ordination in the Church of England. One supreme wish now remained that I might be enabled to find my entire life-work among the poor. It was the work I passionately loved, and my heart went out into it. There among the poor I found Christ.

During my undergraduate days, whenever occasion offered, I had gone down to stay at the college mission in Walworth, in the South-East of London, and I had found there a joy which often carried me through the difficulties and doubts of college days. Life was simpler there; the suffering of the poor called out sympathy in return. Christ was near: I was consciously taking part in His service. That was my

great delight ; for in His presence the fullness of joy was with me all day long.

My tutor and friend, Charles Prior, had recognised this, and had cordially supported my growing resolve to be ordained for college mission work among the poor rather than for work at Cambridge. He saw very clearly that it was necessary for me to go away altogether from the University, at least for a period, in order to face the concrete realities of practical life. I was too much of a dreamer.

With this direct object in view, and as a necessary preparation for the college mission, he chose for me one of the most poverty-stricken districts in the bleak climate of the North, where men and women and little children had to face hardships such as I had never experienced in my own sheltered life. Thus, in the late autumn of 1895, I left Cambridge University for a time and went as a lay worker to the Durham diocese, where Basil's father, Dr. Westcott, was bishop.

The choice Mr. Prior made for my new home was a remarkable one. It revealed the care he took even in such a detail as this. He found an ideal parish for me at the harbour mouth of the River Wear, called St. Peter's, Monkwearmouth, where the ancient church dated back even before Saxon times.

The channel had once been the sanctuary of an old priory, built on a small jutting promontory which looked out across the North Sea towards Norway. For many generations it had formed a notable landmark. Ships of every kind had passed it as they sailed up the river out of the storms into a safe anchorage. Many times over, in the early days, the priory had been destroyed by fire and built up again. It had weathered furious gales and still stood fast. Thus it was a standing symbol of the Church of England itself.

In modern times the parish had become the centre of a large shipbuilding industry, and in the shipyards the hammering of bolts and rivets went on from morning till night. The work was terribly monotonous, and the weekly pay very small. These Durham labourers lived a hard life of incessant grinding toil. Poverty and stark hunger were widespread in those days. The little children were ill cared for and under-nourished.

I had fully determined, before I went out to this work, to follow the golden rule of Christ and love my neighbour

as myself. Therefore I tried, as far as it was possible to do so, to live on nearly the same scale as the shipyard labourers who were my daily companions. A room had been provided for me by the good vicar of the parish. This helped me along and saved any payment of rent. For food and personal requirements I tried to manage everything else on ten shillings a week. In doing so, I often felt the sharp pinch of hunger, and knew well what it meant to go without a meal. But there was real happiness in such scanty fare, because it led to a much closer following of Christ.

The vicar was a most generous friend, and a scholar of no mean repute. He had lived in the parish for over thirty years, and was loved by all the poor for his Christ-like character and work. He was a personal friend of Mr. Prior's, since they had both been at college together and had remained in close fellowship ever since. Thus he welcomed me from the first, for Charles Prior's sake as well as for my own.

One incident at Sunderland is well worth relating in this book. John Jobling was the burly, muscular doorkeeper of old Monkwearmouth Parish Church. He had been at one time a scoffer at all religion and a notoriously heavy drinker. Besides this, in former days he had been a noted figure in the district, both as a prize-fighter and a man of iron strength.

On one memorable evening he had come by accident into a social gathering of the Church Institute under the influence of liquor, and insulted a gentle lady who was a Sunday-school teacher. Thereupon the curate of the parish had stepped forward and with one blow of his fist felled him to the ground.

In other circumstances, it might have been hard to justify such a violent act on the part of a man of peace and religion. But what actually happened in this instance was that John got up from the floor completely sobered, and from that time forward began regularly to attend church. A true inner conversion followed, whereby he surrendered himself, body, soul, and spirit, to Christ's service.

When I met him in 1895, his faith in Christ had been abundantly confirmed and strengthened through long years of trial and temptation. He had frequently been able, under great provocation, to suffer insult without a word of anger in return, keeping love all the while in his heart. From the time of his conversion he had never touched liquor

again. At an early stage in our companionship I was able to learn from his own lips his profound experience to the change which had come so suddenly over him and yet had lasted on unbroken in its spiritual effects. It was like listening to the narrative in St. John's Gospel of the blind man who had received his sight at the healing touch of Christ: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

This saying of the Gospel might have been employed, word by word, for John Jobling as he described to me with great humility the wonderful thing that Christ had done to transform his whole inner character, making him a new man.

There was a widow woman in Monkwearmouth parish, advanced in years, whose lot had been one long struggle against penury, without any joy or peace. She truly believed in God, but her faith had not brought her that inner light which completely transforms the soul.

Good Friday came, and I had spent the night before in prayer, remembering the Betrayal and the Passion. That night was singularly beautiful and still. I can well remember the large Paschal moon as it rose higher and higher in an unclouded sky. Just after the Three Hours' Service on Good Friday was over, she had come to me to unburden her grief. It was as if she had been drawn to do so by some unseen power. She told me how impossible it had been for her to find the inner peace of forgiveness which her soul so ardently desired. She had sought to hold fast to the love of God; but doubt and fear had continually obscured the light, until nothing but darkness remained.

The story of the Cross was in my heart. So I spoke to her quite simply and said, "When Jesus uttered from the Cross those words, 'it is finished,' did He not bring to an end your sins and mine?" Something in my look and in my voice, as I spoke these words, brought the good tidings of forgiveness home.

Never, as long as I live, can I forget the light that came streaming into her eyes as she heard those simple words and looked into my face. The miracle of divine love was completed by the feeblest of human instruments. From that moment her whole life became changed, and she was full of radiant gladness. She had "seen the Lord."

At Cambridge, during my last two years at college, I had been making a special study of the doctrine of the Atonement, and I had written a thesis upon it. But when we are brought face to face with these direct and immediate longings of the human soul, it is only love creating responsive love in personal ways, that is strong enough to bring miracles of grace into effect.

If through lack of inner experience, during this time in Sunderland, I had been ignorant of this divine forgiveness in my own heart, I should have been helpless in the midst of all the cruel suffering and hungry need that the homes of these poverty-stricken labourers contained. It is fire alone that can kindle fire.

One pure, unalloyed happiness of a different kind came to me while I was in the North at Monkwearmouth. The church building wherein we worshipped each day had been part of the monastery church of the old priory, which I have mentioned. It was this fact which had given the place the name of Monkwearmouth. Its ancient historical traditions went back in an unbroken line for fourteen hundred years. Benedic Biscop, the Deacon James, and the Venerable Bede were known to have worshipped on that very spot. The stones still remained whereon they had stood, day by day, praising God.

In my childhood, the direct religious impulses which I had received from my father and mother had been concerned almost entirely with the future. The one absorbing expectation of the "coming" of Christ had swallowed up all other interests. It is true that the New Testament itself is full of the beauty of the past, and my mother's stories made its pages vividly real to me. There was also a little book called *Line upon Line* which delighted me as a child. I read it over and over gain, and almost knew it by heart. But in those early days I had very little knowledge of the historic Church and the Communion of Saints, and only vaguely understood how integral this understanding was to the full conception of the Christian faith.

But now at last, in Monkwearmouth, I was in the very sanctuary where saints had knelt age after age. The ships had come in from the rough sea, following the beacon light of the priory on the cliff, where the monks watched in prayer. Men of violence had landed and harried the coast, but still

the Christian faith had survived. Changes innumerable had taken place, but Christ Jesus remained unchanged.

The inner perception of all this came flooding into every corner of my being, almost as if it were re-awakening in me some reminiscence of an earlier existence wherein I had lived in this place before. It was not at all an artificial stimulus of the æsthetic sense, which would rapidly pass away and be forgotten amid the pressure of other things. It was, on the contrary, a deep reality of the spirit that left its permanent impression on my life.

In this manner, even before my own ordination, I began to cherish a deep love for the Mother Church of England, with its agelong memories stretching back into the distant past. This love has continued to grow ever since. Like my own Motherland, it has won a place in my heart's affection that nothing can ever take away. If I am obliged to write later about revolt against some of the things I encountered, it does not mean that my love has become less, or my confidence has been shaken. The very opposite is the truth. For long years spent in Eastern lands have only served to draw me closer to this home life and home worship in my own country.

I had now at last been accepted for the ministry of the Church, and looked forward with ardent longing to a period of work among the poor in the Pembroke College Mission, Walworth. My tutor, Charles Prior, had carefully thought out each step of the way forward. At the mission I should be closely associated with him in a common work for Christ, and this thought filled me with joy. For his heart was always with the poor, and the college mission had been, in one sense, his own creation. He had helped more than anyone else to build it up from the very start, and every new development had been made under his care.

Thus, like some late blossoming flower, the petals of this new religious life of mine within the English Church began to open, and the sun shone out brightly upon them. It was an exceedingly happy time, and I had not a single touch of ill health at first to interfere with the strenuous life I was leading. God was in His heaven, and all was right with the world.

In a similar manner, wherever the outward privilege of Communion with Christ through His Sacrament was granted, the daily Eucharist became more and more dear to me, and

I would go long distances walking in the early morning in order to take part in it. But never in these High Church days did I become, as it were, dependent upon it; for the whole beautiful earth became to me one Divine Sacrament of His presence, and I had learnt the inner joy of spiritual communion. Heaven was quite near to me. Above all, I was able, in the daily work of ordinary life, to find Christ among the poor and the aged and the children.

There is another sacred memory of those Monkwearmouth days. I have never known the happiness of marriage. This has been denied me, and the loss has undoubtedly been great. Yet the very things that had to be undertaken year after year made a settled family life, with wife and children of my own, well-nigh impossible. Continually it has been my lot to be a wanderer on the face of the earth, and therefore it has been necessary for me to build up a sense of "home" in other ways.

But, while I have been thus consciously bereft of intimate family love at its highest point of marriage, I owe nearly everything relating to the finer sensibilities of character to woman's influence. My own clear vision of Christ has been continually sustained thereby, and without the inspiration of woman's intuitive faith I might have lost my own. It is quite easy and simple for me, looking back, to trace this through individuals, among whom my mother was the earliest and by far the greatest.

During this time in the North Country there came into my daily life an ever-increasing reverence for a frail invalid lady, the elder sister of my friend, Basil Westcott. She had never been able to leave her couch since her childhood days. Already her years of suffering in this earthly body were drawing to a close. She was fully aware of this fact, and looked forward to the time of her departure with gladness. For she seemed to have pierced the outward veil of things, and to be dwelling consciously in the eternal. She had transmuted her pain into joy. Her face was very beautiful—"a thing enskied and sainted." She lay back propped up with pillows, whenever on rare occasions I was allowed to see her, and this vision of her seemed to carry me into the very presence of God. Her love for Basil was deepest of all, and her prayers were with him night and day.

Owing to this deep love for her brother, my name was also

continually mentioned in her daily prayers. She would write me letters in her own frail handwriting, which I used to read over and over again. Verses from Keble's *Christian Year* were often inscribed by her at the head of the letter. At every great moment in my life, until she passed away, she never failed to remember me and to write one of these dearly cherished letters. Her love for Christ, who daily sustained her in her pain, strengthened my own love and devotion.

The Church Calendar, with its red-letter days, helped her in a remarkable way. She would frame, as it were, in her own room, her Christian festival. Whenever possible, on such days, she received the Sacrament, but, if that was not feasible, she would hold her spiritual communion with Christ instead. I saw the grace of all this through her own beautiful life. In the smallest things she would take infinite care—in the flowers near her bedside, which she loved; in her prayer-book, with its decorated markers made by her own white hands; in the way she arranged her room, so that every ray of sunlight would stream into it, bringing its own radiance; in her tenderness for every living creature. Three of her brothers were out in India, and her heart was there almost more than in England. When Basil at last went out to join them, then that country of her dreams seemed also to be in her waking thoughts all day long. Her own instinctive appreciation of Indian womanhood was marvellously true. In after-years I have often recalled her delicately sensitive face, and it has helped me to understand the same refinement of inner beauty in the womanhood of the East.

The Roman Catholic Church was dear to her on account of its long array of saints and martyrs. The Eastern Church also was recorded fully in her devotions. But India and China were remembered most of all. In her invalid's room, from which she never went out, the whole living world seemed to be present. To be with her was to realise this world vision, not only from her words, but also from the little unremembered acts of her daily life.

Thus, in many different ways, during my short stay in the North, the portrait of Christ as the Son of Man became enlarged in its perspective, without losing its foreground of intense personal devotion. Christ's footsteps could be traced in every age and in every land as human history developed. He was moulding, not my own isolated life

merely, but the environment that was making me what I wished to be. The saintly heroes and heroines of my own land, Columba and Aidan, Bede and Hilda, Hugh of Lincoln, Mother Julian of Norwich, right on to Wycliffe and Ridley, George Fox and dear John Wesley, Keble and Josephine Butler, were part of the "innumerable company" of those who had lived and died in Christ, counting it all joy to suffer in His name and to share the burden of His Cross. To use, with humble reverence, St. Paul's great words—all these were mine, and I was Christ's, and Christ was God's.

CHAPTER VIII THE COLLEGE MISSION

FROM Sunderland I went on, while preparing for ordination, to the Pembroke College Mission. The people there were old friends, and they received me with open arms. The district lies close to the Old Kent Road, and is crowded with costermongers and casual dock labourers, who are among the poorest and most neglected of London's poor. It was marked very heavily all over with dark blue colour in Charles Booth's descriptive map of London's poverty, taken district by district. This meant that in those days—nearly forty years ago—it was not only full of poverty, but crime also. The improvement since then has been beyond description, but in the nineties of last century the vicious circle of drunkenness and crime was almost complete.

Owing chiefly to lack of employment and enfeebled health, it was a common experience in the mission district for whole families to sink down to the extreme verge of hunger, bordering on starvation; the feeding of the hungry and the clothing of the naked formed a considerable part of mission work. Often families, including many children, would be found sleeping in one room. The stunted lives of little ones were pitiful to witness. Death was constantly present, especially among the young.

Thus we were surrounded by mean streets and low quarters. But a happier crowd of people than these laughter-loving folk could hardly be imagined. Their good humour was constantly bubbling over, making life full of merriment. The way in which they went through their troubles with a brave

smile always did one good to witness. The very same people during the war showed in the trenches what amazing courage and endurance could be expected from the under-sized and under-fed East End Londoner.

The house we lived in, at the centre of the Pembroke Mission, was practically turned night and day into a club-room. Boys and girls wandered in and out, under the motherly care and protection of Miss Gosse and Lizzie Middlemiss, who had come down with me from the North Country in order to maintain, with some regard to tidiness, an almost impossible household. Undergraduates from college used to descend upon us at all hours, and join us in our daily work and amusement. Sometimes we had as many as fifteen of them filling our mission house, till every bedroom was overcrowded and camp-beds were called into requisition. The Rev. J. H. B. and Mrs. Simpson, from whom I took over charge, were kindness itself to me during the time of transition. Both of them had suffered so much in health owing to the strain of the work that they were not able to continue any longer.

The great joy of this life at Walworth was that it touched bedrock humanity at every point, with all conventions brushed on one side. Men and women were round about us, struggling to meet the hardest facts of hunger and want without flinching, and we tried to share their hard lot with them as far as that was possible. There was no difficulty about loving and serving people like these, for they gave out love in return in such overflowing measure that even the dullest heart would have been touched by it.

Our mission building was in no sense an ordinary church, but rather a central home for the whole neighbourhood, which everyone regarded as his own. Indeed, so public and open was the place that Mrs. Pritchard, the good caretaker, who lived in one corner of it, endured patiently interruptions all day long from children and elderly people alike, who either came in and out with their various needs, or else simply sat down in her kitchen to pass the time of day and have a homely talk. She was obliged to undergo the strain of this every single day, from early morning till late at night, Sundays included. Her simple faith and clearness of inner vision did very much to keep brightly burning my own faith and love for Christ. The people of the district, young and old alike, felt that they had lost their mother when she passed away.

The children were by far the most frequent occupants of the mission church and the club quarters. When divine service was being held in the church, we were able to keep some sort of reverence and order. But at other times the chancel was shut off by a screen, and then the rest of the church was turned into a club and given up to all manner of games, including boxing with huge padded gloves.

Each week-day evening, from five o'clock till nearly midnight, the club-rooms would be occupied, first of all by the boys and girls with their wild games, and secondly by the men who came in from their day's work and sat round a blazing fire smoking strong tobacco till the air was almost too thick to breathe. We had one day each year on which we went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, and shared the hospitality of the undergraduates in the college hall. An amusing cricket-match took place during the afternoon. In the evening there was a concert, and the club members reached Walworth again soon after midnight.

The mothers of the college mission, who came in even greater numbers than the men, had their own club in the afternoon. On several days in the week they would come in for their Mothers' Meetings, under the care of Miss Langley and Miss West. They would put their pennies each week in the saving box which gave them one day of superb pleasure in the country.

This complete immersion in the concrete human world was gloriously refreshing. It was like a great plunge into the sea, with all the joy which a bather feels who has surmounted the breakers and feels the life-blood tingling in his veins. The cobwebs of old difficulties, which had filled up the corners of my mind too long, were most of them swept away even without my knowing it. The breath of fresh air rushed in to render life sweet and wholesome once more.

In this atmosphere of human fellowship, amidst suffering and laughter, young life and sudden death, the story of the Gospel rang out true and real to me as it had not done for some years past at Cambridge. Charles Prior's judgment was thus entirely sound when he sent me away from the lecture-rooms at Cambridge. Christian truth has its own concrete reality, which must always balance abstract ideas.

Yet, in spite of the joy of the work, there were difficulties in the way which had not yet been wholly overcome. Even in

the midst of such friendly and loving people, the inner struggle to attain the clear vision of Christ often kept me anxiously on guard. For side by side with the kindness which I received from the poor people themselves, there were confused doubts of conscience arising in my own mind about my ordination which could not easily be lightened.

I desired to find Christ, not only as the Life and the Way, but also as the Truth. This meant that I must be scrupulously honest with myself in thought and word and deed. Only in this way could I claim to be His disciple.

Whenever I had faced ordination, the Articles of the Book of Common Prayer, which have to be signed by each candidate, made me hesitate. There were things in them that I could not sign with any full intellectual conviction ; yet I was not able to judge how far my signature would cover these in detail and how far it was a general subscription that was required. While, therefore, I was certain that it was God's will for me to work among the poor, I could not for a long time bring myself to subscribe to these Articles of Religion. Even when at last I signed in a general sense, without accepting every clause, I still retained misgivings, which did not grow less, but rather became greater as the years went by.

The memory comes back to me of the Ordination Service itself. In deep penitence for what I supposed to be my weakness of faith, I had knelt down to pray, but doubts came back even in the midst of my prayer itself. Then, as the divine service proceeded, I was lifted up by the music of the anthem, " How lovely are the messengers, that publish the gospel of peace." The great Consecration Prayer followed, and the joy of complete dedication to Christ, my Lord and Master, overcame all fears. Body, soul, and spirit, I gave myself up to His service.

That joy was now carried into all my work at the college mission, which was so absorbing that it drove away my anxiety, and gave me strength to serve Christ with a single mind.

One woman in the mission district, whom I knew well, was an habitual drunkard. People said that she had never been free from drunkenness for a single week for over thirty years. She was now such a complete addict that nothing seemed able to cure her. At the end of one mission service, she came forward in a half-intoxicated state to surrender herself to

God. It seemed almost wrong to get her to take the pledge in such a condition, but something told me that the Spirit of God could work miracles of divine grace even with the most fallen. We knelt down in prayer together, and she went home that night with a sincere longing in her heart to lead a new life. Before leaving her, I told her to come to the early service the next morning. She came, entirely sober, and renewed her penitence and faith. In the end she struggled through, until she became a completely transformed character, saintly in spirit and wholly dedicated to Christ. Through His divine grace she had been delivered from the power and bondage of sin.

Such joys as these banished doubt and fear. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit were visible in our midst. These were higher marks of ordination than any man-made articles of subscription.

Nevertheless, my conscience still troubled me in other directions also, even when these earlier doubts had been relieved. For there were two recitations which I could never tolerate without shame in a Christian Church. Whenever it was possible I omitted them : but I did not feel happy about doing so on my own responsibility, and sometimes I was even forced to recite them.

The former of these had reference to the Psalter. Certain psalms of hatred and vengeance had to be recited in the daily service on different days of the month. I knew exactly when they would come, and was literally afraid to repeat them. It seemed to me impossible to use such blasphemous sentences in a church, whose ideal was the Sermon on the Mount, and whose golden precept was to love our neighbours as we would love ourselves.

The second stumbling block was the Athanasian Creed, with the so-called damnatory clauses at the beginning. This creed is set down in the Articles of Religion as one of three Creeds of the Church which " ought thoroughly to be received and believed : for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

Times without number I had gone over all the excuses that had been given about accepting this Creed as a hymn of praise rather than a formal expression of faith. This argument I knew by heart, but it did not remove the crude, dogmatic

narrowness of condemnation of all unbelievers implied in the opening clauses. It was easy to say to myself that great souls like the saintly Bishop Westcott, whom I revered as a man of God, had been able to recite it historically. But that did not relieve my own conscience. For the poor people whom I was shepherding had no trained historic sense, like the bishop.

It has been necessary to give this divided picture of the college mission work, with its light and shade, its anxiety and its joy. For long periods at a time I would have intense happiness in the glorious service of Christ among the poor, which called forth all that was best. Each early morning, at the celebration of the Holy Communion, I would renew the sacrament of love. But again a period would come when these old misgivings would return, and I would lie awake far into the night wondering if I had done the right thing in being ordained at all. Then I would plunge deeper into the personal work of dealing with individual souls, blaming myself for lack of faith, while, as a matter of fact, God was calling me to be more faithful and I was refusing to hear His voice.

The subconscious strain of this distracted state of mind at last brought its own inevitable result in chronic ill health, which puzzled the doctors who came to see me. There were no symptoms of disease except a low fever, accompanied by a lack of sleep. The perpetual traffic of the London streets added to the difficulty of getting well, and the work itself was exacting.

An offer came to me, at this time, to go back to Cambridge as a teacher. My own deepest longing naturally was to remain with the poor people, whom I could not bear to leave. But during a long holiday with Mr. and Mrs. Prior and Bishop Westcott in Yorkshire I found I could not recover health; it became evident to all that the doctor's verdict must be obeyed, and I must give up the college mission work.

Soon after I had returned to Cambridge, Mr. Prior himself became seriously ill with an incurable disease. It was diagnosed as cancer, and no operation was possible. His death was the first great sorrow of this kind that I had ever had to bear.

During the last days, when he knew that the end was near, the light of Christ within his soul shone out far more transparently than ever, as he bravely bore his pain. One message

he gave me to take down to the poor people in Walworth, whom he specially loved.

"Perhaps," he said to me, "you might tell them this, which may be a comfort to some of them in their sickness. At the last Communion there came home to me the thought of Christ the True Vine, and of the life of Christ running through the living branches. In spite of my utter unworthiness, such as I alone could know, I could realise that I was still a living branch of the True Vine. This thought has been my joy and comfort while I lie here in pain. For, though the outward man is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day."

His simple faith in Christ strengthened his dear wife in a wonderful manner in her hour of bereavement. She was able to share with him his victory over death. Her four children were quite young, and, on the evening after we had come back from the graveside, she gathered them all around her, drawing them close to her side, and sang with them the hymns he loved best. It was a beautiful deed, worthy of Charles Prior himself. She seemed to me in that room like my own mother: and the memory of childhood came back to me as I sat there with them. But I had not yet suffered such a loss as those young children whom I loved for his sake. For my own parents were still living, and did not pass away till extreme old age had come upon them.

Basil Westcott, the greatest of all my College friends, had now at last gone out to Delhi as a missionary. His letters to me came in by every mail, making vivid to me every phase of his own reaction to his new environment. He had found a true friend in a leading Indian Christian professor, Susil Kumar Rudra, who was Vice-Principal of St. Stephen's College. Susil's wife had died, leaving her husband with three motherless children: and Basil's heart had gone out to him in his great sorrow. They had learnt to love one another in this simple manner.

Then came a tragic ending, which was also glorious. Basil was called upon to nurse a British soldier in the Delhi Fort who was dying of cholera. His own health was far from strong at the time, and he fell a victim to the same fatal disease. Susil was with him in his illness, and wrote to me about him sending me his last messages of affection.

This period of my life in Cambridge was a long passing

through the valley of the shadow of death with one friend after another, till I seemed to know every step of the way.

In these days the presence of Christ and the unseen world became real to me in a way I had never known before. Old intellectual questionings ceased to trouble me while I stood at the death-bed of those I loved so dearly. My inner life of communion with God in prayer became more steadfast. The students of the University who had difficulties of faith would come to me for comfort and help, and I would tell them my own personal experiences. Christ was now all in all to me.

Meanwhile, since Basil Westcott's death, my earnest thoughts had been turning to the mission field as a means of a further surrender to Christ and a way to follow Him more closely. In earlier years my mind had been attracted towards Central Africa, where the hardest conditions had to be faced. But when Basil Westcott died of cholera at Delhi, all thoughts of mission work elsewhere were abandoned. It was clear to me that I must go out and take his place. The only question was how soon I could be set free from my college work.

In the end, one of my oldest friends at Cambridge, Dr. Ryle, settled this matter for me.

"You are now," he said to me, "just thirty-three years old; it is the exact age at which the Saviour actually finished His own work upon earth. Surely, if India is to be your field of service, you should not delay a moment longer. Each year it will be harder for you to get away from Cambridge. He who puts his hand to the plough and turns back is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

That word released me in a moment. I knew, there and then, that I was called to go. Never have I had a moment's doubt from that day onward that this word he spoke to me was from God.

The joy which followed this long tension, with its sudden release, was immediate. It carried me forward over immense obstacles. Barriers were broken down one by one, and I started at last, on February 28th, 1904, to go across the Continent to Trieste on my way to Bombay and Delhi.

It was a wintry morning, bitterly cold, but my heart was beating warm. Joy conquered pain. The purpose of God in my life had become so clear to me that I had been able

to convince my father and mother that the divine call had truly come. They did not hold me back, but gave me their blessing as I went away.

A strange incident happened towards the end of my days at Cambridge, during my last long vacation. Hitherto I have kept it stored up within my own memory as being too personal to be told abroad. But it touched my inner life in Christ in such a peculiar manner, that it needs to be mentioned.

It was a time when I was constantly living in the presence of the unseen world. Mortal illness, the last messages of the dying, and death itself, were constantly my companions. One summer evening I was standing alone in the college screens outside the hall facing the porter's lodge. It was twilight, and the air was still and calm. While I was there, I saw someone coming towards me slowly, clothed in Eucharistic vestments, bearing the sacred vessels in his hand. The thought at once came to my mind that it was the Vicar of Little St. Mary's Church bringing the Sacrament to someone who was ill in the college. There was no sense of mystery or alarm as I watched him approaching. Everything appeared quite natural to me, and my mind was untroubled and at ease. I was preparing with reverence to stand aside, if he intended to come through the college screens into the Ivy Court beyond, and I had just begun to wonder in my mind who might be ill in college, when, instead of proceeding farther, the figure turned towards a door in the Old Court and vanished away. The door that he was facing, when he vanished, was half covered with a creeper, and unused.

It was some time before I fully realised that the vision had come from within. It must have risen up from the subconscious level of my mind, because there was no conscious thought that might have caused such an image to appear at that moment, and it reached me as though it was entirely from outside.

But it is literally true that for many years afterwards the intensity of that spiritual moment of luminous vision helped me to keep fast my hold upon those unseen realities of God and Christ and immortality which are not temporal, but eternal.

To others, of course, such an inner vision, seen objectively, could have no such significance. It was a personal matter, and therefore it was one of those things to be kept and

pondered over in the heart. Yet, in my own personal life, it carried with it a sustaining joy which was a source of spiritual strength.

CHAPTER IX THE NEW LIFE IN INDIA

THERE is a second birthday in my own life which has now been kept fresh in my memory each year for nearly thirty years with deep thankfulness to God, who is the Giver of all good gifts. The date is March 20th. For that was the day in 1904 when I first set foot on Indian soil and began my new life in the East.

A common word, *dwija*, can be found in most North Indian languages, meaning "twice-born." In a very real sense I have been a *dwija*, because my life has been cut in two. Half of it has been lived in the West, and half in the East. Any claim I have to being an interpreter between East and West comes from this source.

From the first day I landed in India it became clear to me that I had entered a different world of human thought, fascinating and perplexing by its very unfamiliarity. Later on it was possible for me to learn much of the unity of human character which lay beneath all this difference. But the change of perspective at first dazzled my eyes.

After nearly thirty years of life spent in the East, certain great facts in my own religious thinking stand out in the foreground. By far the greatest of these is this, that Christ has become not less central but more central and universal; not less divine to me, but more so, because more universally human. I can see Him as the pattern of all that is best in Asia as well as in Europe.

Since I have learnt to know Christ afresh in this Eastern setting, it has been easy for me to point out the weakness of the portraiture, when His character has been depicted with only western ideals to draw from, as though these comprehended the "fullness of the Christ." For in such pictures the true proportion has not been kept. Some of the marked traits of His character have not appeared at all. Much has been lost. Some day I would like to draw His likeness anew, with the colour of the Eastern sky added to the scene.

For the supreme miracle of Christ's character lies in this : that He combines within Himself, as no other figure in human history has ever done, the qualities of every race. His very birthplace and home in childhood were near the concourse of the two great streams of human life in the ancient world, that flowed East and West. Time and place conspired, but the divine spark came down from above to mould for all time the human character of the Christ, the Son of Man.

This is a tremendous claim to set forward. In all other ages of mankind, verification would have been impossible, because the world of men had not yet been fully explored. But in our own generation the claim may at last be made, and may be seen to correspond with the salient facts of human history. For those who, through intimate contact with other races, have gained the right to be heard have borne witness that each race and region of the earth responds to His appeal, finding in the Gospel record that which applies specially to themselves. His sovereign character has become the one golden thread running through mankind, binding the ages and the races together.

" Who is this Son of Man ? " the different generations ask in turn. Apart from Jesus, there is no human character that can embody adequately in his own person the full yearnings of mankind.

Such has been the great and satisfying thought that has come home to me since I passed on from Europe to India. In the same manner, a further field of discovery, only half explored as yet, has been opened out to me concerning the meaning of things divine. Here, what I have been receiving from the East has not been unexpected, for I had studied under Westcott, and he had made a special research into Indian religious ideas.

The main conception of God, which I had been taught in England to hold as true, was that of One who is the Creator and Ruler of all mankind. " I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Thus the creed ran. The picture which I naturally drew for myself was that of Someone outside myself, infinitely great, who had fashioned the world by His power, and was the Ruler over the kingdoms of men. My home training tended to increase the awe which this conception carried with it. The only intimate word was " Our Father," and this brought me

direct to Christ and His great love, taking away some of the fear.

But when I went deep into the heart of India, I found the whole emphasis to be laid on the realisation of God inwardly and spiritually within the soul. There was no less awe than in the West, but it was of a more inward character.

This, when fully grasped, brought me nearer to St. John's Gospel than the ordinary Western teaching. It meant that not only Christ could say, "I and my Father are one," but that we, as God's children, in all reverence, could say this also.

The East regards the Eternal Divine Spirit—the Paramātmā moving within the soul of man—as spaceless and timeless, yet He ever uses "time" and "space" as a garment of self-revealment. He is unmanifest, yet He is mirrored by the pure in heart in the depth of the human spirit. He is invisible, yet He is visible in great human souls. He is formless, yet He takes form in man.

Such, in substance, is the Eastern idea of God which has been embodied in writing and in symbol. Even the simple villager in India has learnt to think in these terms, although his crude idol-worship appears to deny them.

It is true that there are scriptures even of the Old Testament —such as Ps. cxlv—which come near to this inward view of God, but the general picture of the "Lord of Hosts" is more external. Again, in the writings of Plato we have the same idea expressed in perfect Greek form, but Platonism has hitherto been unable to take deep root in the bleak climate of Northern Europe. St. John, the Cambridge Platonists, the German mystics, George Fox and the Society of Friends—all these have found their joy in this inner light. But the West generally has believed in a transcendent rather than an immanent God.

In some such way as this, I began to understand from my own personal experience that both environments of human thought—the Eastern and the Western—are needed to complete the portrait of the divine and human in Christ, just as two hemispheres of the globe appear to be necessary for the fulfilment of men's destiny on this planet.

Yet it was not any academic theory as to the difference between East and West, stated in general terms, which drove me as a Christian seeker after truth to face the new religious atmosphere as it came streaming in on every side.

Much rather, it was the hard, concrete reality of everyday life in Delhi compelling me to face practical issues and to look carefully at each step of the way as I went forward, lest by any means I should fail to follow closely Christ, my Master, along these new and unfamiliar paths. With His guidance, after prayer and communion, I took one step forward after another, finding Him indeed to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Susil Rudra, who had been Basil's greatest friend, welcomed me in Delhi with open arms. At his touch, difficulties vanished and the strangeness of the new life in the East began to disappear. For I found in him one who was a friend indeed.

Many have wondered greatly how I came so quickly to understand the people of India, and to be understood by them. The answer is quite simple, and the secret is easily told. Such a close friend as Susil Rudra is very rarely given in this life to any man. He received me at first for Basil's sake and then for my own. We became life-long companions.

Already he had passed middle age when I first met him. He had married late in life, and his three children were quite young. His youngest son was a tiny baby when his wife died.

We made our home together, and his children soon learnt to give me a place, only second to their own father, in their heart's affection. Thus, from the very first, I had the unique advantage of sharing an Indian home as a dearly-loved member of it. This made me able to appreciate the new progressive life of India from the inside in a way I could not otherwise have done. For Susil himself was able to bring me into close contact with all that Young India was thinking, and also to inspire me with his own ardent devotion to his country. He was a patriot in no ordinary sense of the word. What was still more precious to me, we were able to share from the outset our common devotion to Christ, for Susil's whole life was surrendered to Him, as Master and Lord. In a silent way, his deep religious faith influenced and moulded each act and word throughout the day. He also brought to his own Christian belief an independent and original mind.

His father, Pyare Mohan Rudra, had come in his young manhood under the spell of the great Dr. Duff's teaching in Calcutta, when the latter was at the height of his power.

Dr. Duff had called out from orthodox Hinduism a small group of brilliant young men who had followed him right through to open confession of Christ's name. This, in those early days, involved complete severance, root and branch, from Hindu society. With some of these, the change had meant a reaction so great that everything belonging to the East became abandoned. Dress, manners, customs, were adopted from the West as part of the Christian religion.

But Susil's father had never thus "learned Christ," nor did he teach his children in such a way to follow His Master. He remained a Hindu in outward things, while his inner life was more and more transformed by Christ. It was this attitude towards the great inheritance of Hindu religion which his son faithfully kept.

As Susil had grown up to manhood, he had gone through the hardest trials of faith; and here there was common ground between us, though our difficulties were not the same. In his University days at Calcutta, he had lived in the Oxford Mission Hostel. The life of prayer and silent devotion which he had seen there had sustained him when the storms of doubt had raged most fiercely around him. With great sincerity of purpose he had battled through into calmer waters.

At last he had come to Delhi, strengthened in spirit and rejoicing in a passionate love of Christ as his Saviour and Redeemer. He had found Him anew through a heart conversion which had come in middle age. The words of Christ recorded in the Gospel of St. John, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," had wrought this great change in him. Here was a common meeting-place where our two hearts could unite in love. We told each other our dearest hopes as well as our anxieties and doubts. Thus by sharing together our common devotion and faith the personal bond between us grew stronger.

At such a time of rapid change and new experience this pure, whole-hearted love of one so good and noble as Susil was a gift for which I thanked God every day. He was the humblest man I have ever known. At the same time he carried the quiet dignity of true greatness into every little act he performed. No one spoke lightly in his presence, yet none ever felt embarrassed or afraid. His tenderness of heart became proverbial. If Newman is right in his

definition of a gentleman as one who seeks never to inflict pain, then Susil came up to his ideal. Right onward to the day of his death, through a period of over twenty years, his love for me remained unchanged and unchangeable.

Each day we would walk together along the Ridge outside the Kashmir Gate, or towards the Delhi Fort and Humayun's Tomb. At other times, we would enter the crowded city to meet Hindu and Muslim friends whose sons we taught in College. We used also to cross the bridge over the River Jumna in order to see the nearer villages on the other side. Susil was an Indian historian. For this reason, his comments on the rural economy of India, as we went among the village people, were full of help and instruction. He soon made me an enthusiastic supporter of village India, thus saving me from the fatal mistake of judging everything in India by the towns.

During these long walks we came to know each other intimately. We shared our memories of Basil Westcott together, and spoke frequently about his sister Katie, who had kept up a long correspondence with Susil from her bed of sickness in England. In this and in other ways the first newness of India passed into closest contact with its people. Those whom I met personally were attracted to me through witnessing my friendship with Susil; and I was attracted to them through the same winning personality. From the outset he was the intermediary, and I was the gainer by his presence.

CHAPTER X CAMBRIDGE MISSION, DELHI

AN experience has happened to me so frequently in India that I have no longer come to look upon it as anything strange or unaccountable. I can only describe it in the following manner. Continually, when I meet with new faces or am present at some new situation, the consciousness of the presence of Christ is borne in upon me irresistibly. If I may dare to express what happens, it is as if I saw Christ in the faces of those I met or felt His presence in the midst.

All this, I am fully aware, is mystical language, but I can express the reality of what happens in no other manner;

and what I have written seems the simplest way whereby I can explain my experience. Thus it is continually true that kinship and sympathy are already established with people before even we speak to one another.

Such happened above all with Susil. His face itself was so Christ-like, that it at once brought back to me the picture of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, which had been dear to me ever since I was a child. But, far more than his outward appearance, his inner character portrayed Christ in every act of his daily life.

Soon after I came to Delhi our friendship was put to a severe test. The college principal, an English missionary, resigned and, according to the general custom of those times, another English missionary would take his place. Susil wished me to take the office; but it seemed entirely unfair that he himself, after more than twenty years as vice-principal, should again be superseded by an Englishman in his own country. So I spoke out very strongly against this and at the same time did everything possible to obtain his appointment. In the end, though with some misgiving among the older members of the mission, this was accomplished. It was an intense joy to me to be able to serve under him. Looking back, I can see how fatal a blunder it would have been if I had acted otherwise, for he proved the most capable administrator we had ever had.

There were others in Delhi who brought to me the same vision of Christ, even as Susil Rudra did. One especially, Munshi Zaka Ullah, an old saintly Musalman, came closest to me in heart affection. I have written at length about his beautiful and serene character in a book recently published.* He used to call me his own son, and treat me as such. At one period he wished me to visit him every day in his own home, and he looked forward to these visits with as great an eagerness as I did. In all this, I had no other thought whatever of proselytising or conversion, though we talked with the utmost freedom about religion, which was the one subject dearest to his heart. In him I felt Christ's presence, and this gave me great joy.

Such an intimate and devoted companionship between a Christian missionary and a Musalman, without the least thought of conversion, was by no means common at that

* *Zaka Ullah of Delhi*, pub. by E. W. Heffer & Sons, Cambridge.

time. There might have been some danger of misunderstanding on the part of other Musalmans. But Susil's friendship at this point stood me in good stead, for he was well known all over Delhi as having no sympathy with proselytising methods, and I too soon came to share with him that character.

Again, there was a Sikh Sardar, the President of the Regency Council of Patiala, whom I learnt to revere for his goodness in a similar manner. Whenever I went to see him we spoke together about the deeper things of religion, not in any spirit of controversy, but as lovers of God. On this account he often wished to have me by his side, whenever I could pay him a brief visit, and this led to a very close friendship. He gave me some books of his own, printed in Urdu, concerning the things of God. Whenever I parted from him, he embraced me and urged me to return. Both these old religious devotees have long ago passed to their rest. But their vivid memory remains with me, and I can even now picture their faces as I write down these words.

The precedent, prevailing in some mission circles in the Punjab, whereby a controversial attitude was taken up towards other religions, was repugnant to me. I have quoted elsewhere the wise words which were said to me by one of our own Brotherhood. Fortunately, his point of view had already been adopted by some of the younger members of the Cambridge Mission, and I was thus not alone in holding these advanced opinions. But certain other missionaries in the Punjab took an entirely different course. Counsels were thus divided, and heated arguments ensued. The bishop, who was called in, stood somewhere midway between us. He had been famous in controversy with Musalmans, and was noted for making a convert of a blind Maulvi by these methods. But he too felt that the times were changing, and that the missionary outlook should change with them.

Probably the talks I had with Bishop Westcott, during our walks over the Yorkshire moors, had done more than anything else to prepare me for this before I came out. The Cambridge Mission had been founded by the three great Cambridge Schoolmen, Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort. Its object was to represent in India what the School of Clement and Origen at Alexandria had meant for the early Church.

Thus I had a latitude allowed me far beyond that of most missionaries who have gone abroad.

There was one other influence in the old Cambridge days for which I ever remained grateful. Professor E. G. Browne was a Fellow of my own College, and before I went abroad I was constantly an eager listener in his rooms, drinking in his own enthusiasm for the East. The long talks I had with him gave me a background of appreciation of Islam which helped me greatly when I reached Delhi.

Yet, even with all these advantages, it was not easy to get rid of certain deep-rooted prejudices which I had inherited from my youth up. For my father's conservative view of India as a British "possession" had got farther into my subconscious thoughts than I liked to imagine. At times it became painfully evident how deep the fibres had gone, and how hard it was to eradicate them completely.

Susil was in this respect the greatest help of all, and he gradually weaned me from these racial and imperial ideas whenever he saw them appear above the surface. He knew me so well, and loved me so deeply, that he never became impatient with me when some hidden racial or religious arrogance showed itself in what I said. He had lived with Englishmen long, and understood them. To him, the aggressive spirit, whether in politics or in religion, was a thing to be resisted.

"Charlie," he said to me with emphasis, "I find it difficult sometimes to read St. Paul's Epistles. He is like you Englishmen—always trying to force someone to his own point of view and 'compassing sea and land to make one proselyte.' Christ Himself is free from such forceful methods to obtain success. His great parable is that of the seed growing secretly. The East understands that hidden growth."

Possibly such a criticism of St. Paul's methods was one-sided; for his hymn in praise of charity comes very near to Christ, and is clearly wrought out of his own experience and practice. But the more I studied the character of Christ in the Gospels, the less I felt ready to defend the methods of the West in its treatment of the East, whether in Church or State. The arrogance of racial and imperial dominion differs altogether from the appeal of Him who said, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

Often by some startling sentence, intended to shock me out of my complacency, Susil would send me back to Christ. It must be remembered that, with all my liberal views, I still was a High Churchman at this time. Here, he could not follow me though no one felt more deeply than he did the beauty of the Sacrament. It was our joy to go early on each Sunday morning to the Holy Communion together.

But any limitation of the Sacrament merely to those who held certain doctrines he could not endure. Did the centurion in the Gospel, he asked me indignantly, need first of all to be baptised, or to become a proselyte, before Christ welcomed him as a true son of God? Did not the Lord declare that in all Israel he had not found such faith? Are we to be less full of love for all mankind than Christ our Master? "It is enough," he said, quoting Christ's words, "for the disciple, that he should be as his Master."

Very soon indeed the impossibility of continuing and repeating my Anglican High Church views in India became abundantly evident. A test case soon came when, at a gathering for spiritual fellowship, Indian Christians and English missionaries met together. It was suggested that a united service of Holy Communion should be held at which the aged saint, the Rev. Dr. Chatterji, who was a Presbyterian, should preside. When I faced the issue in this way, it was impossible for me to refuse to join with Indian Christians and others in such an act of fellowship simply because I was an "Anglican." Susil was there with me, and we went to the service together. It was a very simple act, but it broke through an ecclesiastical tradition which would have separated me from those I loved in Christ Jesus and made the deepest Christian fellowship impossible.

The barriers were now being broken down one by one which separated me from others, and I was led on from one act to another. During one "hot weather," after several attacks of malarial fever, I had suffered greatly from loss of sleep, and a young Baptist missionary in Delhi, C. B. Young, like a Good Samaritan, had taken me out to a mission bungalow outside the city, where he nursed me back to health. While doing so, he himself fell ill, and I promised to take a service for him in his own Mission Church, which would otherwise have to be dropped altogether. For offering to do this, I was told by the Bishop of Lahore, whom I loved sincerely

for his goodness, that my licence to minister in his diocese was in danger of being cancelled.

This happened more than twenty years ago, and it would probably be impossible for the same thing to happen to-day, at least in the Punjab. But at that sudden crisis of decision it seemed to me that an immediate choice had to be made. In the end, I was obliged to tell the bishop, to whom I owed canonical obedience, that in this matter, with all humility and deference, I must obey God rather than man. This was one of the things which finally sent me out into a wider sphere of work.

Other difficulties began to reappear which had been almost laid to rest in England. It was one thing, for instance, for Bishop Westcott and the Archbishop of Canterbury, saintly men of God, to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion in England, but it was quite another thing to impose them on the infant Indian Church.

Now once again all those conscientious objections which I had against subscription began to appear in an aggravated form, and I seemed to realise at last the wrong I had done by disregarding them in England. At a small but very important Mission Council in Delhi, when both the Bishop of Lahore and the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta were present, Susil Rudra had read a paper protesting against these things. He said frankly that he had refused to be ordained because he could not see his way to subscribe. When I was asked to give my opinion, I took Susil's position, and said that we must not "put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear"—quoting from the Acts of the Apostles.

The two bishops were evidently shaken by these signs of revolt, but the time had not yet come for such abuses to be reformed. My own doubts, which had ceased to trouble me gravely in England, began therefore, to assume a far more serious aspect. It seemed likely that here again, sooner or later, I should be called upon to choose whether I should obey God rather than man.

On one Christmas morning, things at last came to a head. My heart at the early Communion Service had been overflowing with love and gratitude to Christ, my Lord, for all the beauty of the faith which He had brought into the world; and the song of the angels to the shepherds, "Peace on earth,

goodwill towards men," was still ringing in my ears. Susil and I received the Holy Communion together.

Then the Morning Prayer began, with a crowded Indian Christian congregation. I was in the choir, behind the row of little choir-boys in their white surplices. All had gone well at first, and the service opened with a glorious Christmas hymn. Then I heard the Athanasian Creed given out, as the special Creed to be recited on that day, and my heart sank. The tiny Indian children in front of me began to recite in Urdu the words: "Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." The choir-boys sang those solemn words without any understanding of their awful meaning, and the large congregation responded for the most part with a like indifference. But here and there, as with Susil himself, there might be a sensitive, intellectual soul, whose conscience was being offended, and the words of Christ Himself are true for all time, "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

That Christmas Day ended in gloom. Susil had not attended the service. He said to me impatiently, and almost harshly, when I went back to his house, "How long are we to suffer beneath this terrible bondage? I have told my son that there is one thing he must *never* do. He must never on any account accept mission service."

On looking back and questioning myself why I did not at once declare a final revolt against these things, when God was speaking so clearly to my heart and mind, the answer I give to myself is that I did not feel confident that the hour had come for open withdrawal on these issues. It seemed to me best to fight the battle from within; and here I had, on the whole, Susil's sympathy and guidance.

There were even graver evils to be fought outright, especially that of the colour bar and racial discrimination, poisoning the wells of the Christian faith in almost every land abroad, leading to a divided Christendom. Here the fight had to be waged desperately with one's back to the wall in order to avoid quite irretrievable disaster. Lesser struggles, however important in themselves, might have to give way to this larger issue.

IT would, however, be a complete misunderstanding if I left the impression over from the last chapter that these years of my life at Delhi were one long period of revolt against the Church, ending in a serious rupture with my bishop. The affection which the bishop had for me was far too deep and true to be strained by any surface disagreement, however important the issue might appear to both of us. I knew well the pain that certain decisions of mine caused him, but I knew also that in other respects I was able to help him and give him great joy. Above all, he realised my ardent love for Christ, his Master and mine.

His house, called "Bishopsbourne," always remained my home at Lahore, and he loved to have me with him. "Man! It's good to see you!" was his warm welcome. His face lighted up as he uttered these friendly words, and his hand-grip showed how real his pleasure was.

Long before I came out to Delhi, Bishop Lefroy had been the ideal for me of a Christian missionary hero. He was one of the bravest and humblest men I have ever known, an Irishman with an unfailing fund of good humour and high courage combined. There was only one whom I placed in the same category—Bishop Montgomery. The latter is now passing his closing years in peace in Donegal—an Irishman like Lefroy, with the same big, generous heart. Bishop Lefroy has gone to his rest after years of bodily pain patiently endured to the end.

The discipline under which the bishop kept his own daily life was very severe indeed. Having no fear of danger, and being ready to take great personal risks, he was always prepared at a moment's notice for any call of duty which should bid him press forward along untrodden paths for the furtherance of Christ's Kingdom. In any new enterprise, I knew that I could come straight to him for help and encouragement with the certainty of being heard and understood. Nothing gave him such joy as an adventure, to be undertaken in Christ's name, that might open up fresh methods of Christian service.

For some years I had settled down very happily indeed to the work of the College in Delhi, and had tried with Susil's help to make friends with the people of the city. Then the

invincible longing came back to me that I might be enabled in some simple way to live among the poor, even while carrying on my daily college routine. Except to Susil, I spoke very little about this, but to him I opened my whole mind.

There was a suburb of Old Delhi, called Sabzi-Mandi, which was within a bicycle ride from the college. In that quarter, the Chamārs, who are untouchables and outcasts, had their dwellings. Among them was a small group who had become Christians, and we had built a little church on the spot, where I often ministered. It seemed to me that it might be quite feasible to live among the Chamārs and at the same time continue to lecture in the college.

Susil was at one with me in wishing this plan to be tried, but he doubted exceedingly whether my health would stand the strain. At last I approached Allnutt, the head of the mission, who referred me to the bishop. Then I went to the bishop himself in Lahore, whose whole heart at once responded to such a venture of faith. I can well remember the joy which the thought gave him when I spoke to him about it.

But, when the plan was finally tested out, it proved quite unworkable, and broke down. The ultimate obstacle that stood in the way was a malignant form of malarial fever for which Delhi in those days was notorious. The attacks of this fever became so persistent in my case that at one time it seemed as though I should be obliged to leave India altogether and remain in England for good.

While I was struggling each year against ill health in this way, it became necessary for me to spend a considerable time in the hills in order to regain strength after each attack. This in the long run proved a blessing to me. For in these hills I was brought into closest contact with two remarkable men—Samuel Stokes, a young American of Quaker origin, hailing from Germanstown, Philadelphia, and through him with Sadhu Sundar Singh, who was then quite young and comparatively unknown outside the Punjab.

Both of these shared to the full all the longings I had in my mind to live among the poor. They had already done this themselves in a very practical manner. For in a literal sense they had set out to follow Christ like St. Francis of old, taking neither purse nor scrip, nor two coats apiece, but embracing poverty with joy for the Gospel's sake. In leading this simple Christian life, they had brought back into the

distracted Church of the Punjab something of the pure happiness of sacrifice which we read of in the first century of the Christian faith, when men and women's hearts were filled with the Holy Spirit. To meet these two in the hills and share their life with them at such a time of bodily weakness was a benediction.

While it was chiefly in the hills that I met Stokes and Sundar Singh, they used to come down to the plains in the cold weather, and go barefoot through the villages. Whenever they came to Delhi they were thrice welcome guests at Susil Rudra's house. There would be great rejoicing if either of them suddenly arrived, and their coming made me restless to go to the villages with them, sharing their simple way of life in Christ's name.

For several years in succession, as soon as the long vacation began and the heat of Delhi was at its worst, Susil Rudra and his two boys and I used to go on foot along the Hindustan-Tibet road, five or six marches beyond Simla. We would reach a turning-point in the road called Bareri, where Mrs. Bates, a widow lady whom we knew well, welcomed us to her home. She had remained in the hills after her husband had died, leaving her a tea estate which had gone out of cultivation.

More than five thousand feet below the road, the River Sutlej wound its way through the hills. Far up in the sky towered the great snow mountain peaks of the distant Himalayan ranges. After this bend in the road, the Buddhist shrines with their praying-wheels began to appear, and the Hindu villages soon ceased. For Tibet is not far distant.

A little higher up the Hindustan-Tibet road, before Bareri is reached, the whole panorama of snows can be seen on a clear day from Narkhanda. They stand in a semicircle, rising to the height of 26,000 feet. A still more glorious view is gained from the top of Mount Hattu, which is easy to climb from Narkhanda. The primæval forest, with gigantic trees, stretches down the steep mountain slopes to incredible depths below.

On one occasion, just at dawn, I had started with the bishop to climb Mount Hattu from the Narkhanda side, hoping to obtain a full view of the glory of the snows. Then, just as we reached the summit, to our disappointment, the mists came down and the clouds overshadowed us. But a very tender sight still remained, because at our very feet we saw

the ground carpeted with blue and white flowers in such abundance that the whole summit was arrayed with them. Even if we were not able to see the distant vision of the high mountains, we could discern God's beautiful handiwork near us.

As we sat on a ledge of rock, after our climb, the bishop took out his Prayer-Book and began to read the Morning Service with me. We had gone forward with the service together, until we came to the words, "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father Everlasting." The phrase that soon follows, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ," had just been reached by us, when the sun broke through the mist with a sudden burst of splendour. There we saw through a rift in the clouds the eternal snows, range upon range, lifting up to heaven their white heads crowned with the light of the sun. Everything beneath us and around us was still encompassed with cloud, and on that account this vision of the snows seemed brought quite near to us, rising high above us with overwhelming majesty of beauty.

At the sight, we both paused instinctively in our recital. Then we repeated with joy the words we had just uttered: "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father."

This vision of beauty remained fresh in my memory long after. I could understand what those three chosen disciples felt upon the Mount of Transfiguration, when the Lord was transfigured before them in dazzling light and Peter cried out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

Once Samuel Stokes had gone with Sundar Singh across the nearer ranges of these mountains, late in the year. Sundar's strength had failed him at last in the bitter cold of the journey, and Stokes had carried him on for some distance until his own strength too was exhausted. At that time, before consciousness left them, they both felt certain that their last hour had come. Stokes has told me how in that moment of utter human weakness he saw before him, with inexpressible joy, a vision of the Lord whom he loved, comforting him and giving him new strength.

In the end, they were both rescued from a death by cold. For some travellers with mules, passing by, saw them lying on the ground and took them forward into safety.

At another time, when Susil and I were staying with Stokes and Sundar Singh in these hills, Stokes himself was nearly killed. He had baptised a hill boy, who had been with him for a long while and wished to become a Christian. The hillmen were full of wrath at this, and set out to meet and attack him on the road as he came back from the plains. No news had reached us as to their intention.

Susil and I were sitting quietly reading at Bareri when suddenly we heard a noise of fierce shouting, and rushed out. Susil's son, Shudhir, with a young Indian Christian called Dina Nath, were already before us, keeping the hillmen back. We were all too late, however, to save Stokes from a terrible blow on the head, which seemed to be fatal, for he lay there, with a great open gash on his forehead, deadly white. The hillmen had fled away, leaving him half dead.

For one whole day and night after this he remained delirious, while we sat by his side in turns and bathed his temples with ice-water. All the while there was a moaning sound, full of suppressed pain, pitiful to hear. Then one sentence came, which he kept repeating over and over again in Hindi, entreating us not to let any action be taken against the hillmen who had tried to kill him.

When he had recovered strength, he insisted on being carried into Simla before the Deputy Commissioner, in order to plead forgiveness for those who had sought to murder him. In the end, he succeeded in this, and all the men were released.

Among such stirring events as these we passed many months together, sharing our communion and fellowship with deep love in Christ's own service. At another time, we had to go through a cholera outbreak in the hills and to nurse the sick and dying. In joy and sorrow it was the same. Christ was with us.

The retirement of this place, amid the fastnesses of the mountains, endeared it most of all to Sadhu Sundar Singh. He always loved to be alone, holding communion with Christ. There was also a little Christian Church there, nearly 3,000 feet below Bareri, at Kotgarh. An old white-bearded German missionary, the Rev. I. Beutel, with his aged wife, used to live there summer and winter. They had spent most of their lifetime in the hills.

Stokes had brought up from the plains with him those whom he used to call his " family " of young children. Every

one of them was infirm. One was blind; another was a cripple; three were born of leper parents, but had not yet become infected by the disease. Each child was a waif of humanity, rescued from a miserable existence. Yet a merrier company it would be hard to find in this world, for they loved one another with all their hearts, and shared everything in common. Those were glorious days.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, as I have said, liked solitude most of all; he would often be away for many weeks together. Then he would silently return, and take up his duties with us once more. In certain years during this period he was absent altogether, and no one knew where he had gone. He used to spend whole nights alone in prayer on the open mountain-side, waiting upon God. There was a dry cave which had been found in the forest, not far from Kotgarh. Here he would retire for prayer and communion during the day.

A more beautiful spirit than his I have seldom known. His love for Christ, his Lord and Master, was the deepest passion of his life. Everything had this as its centre. His great longing, which was always with him, was to go forward right on to the very end of the Hindustan-Tibet road and to enter the forbidden land of Tibet itself, where Christ's name was not known. To do this he had to cross a precipitous mountain pass. Those who had attempted the latter part of this journey told me how fearsome it was. He had accomplished it in the year 1908, during one of his long absences from Kotgarh. He went again in the late summer of 1919. What he suffered is only vaguely known, but his life was in peril all the way.

I remember well one summer our very great excitement at Bareri, when the news came trickling through from the remote interior that a European traveller was coming down the Hindustan-Tibet road from the farther side of Tibet, whose name was Sven Hedin. After some days, the famous explorer himself appeared with his Tibetan guides. We had gone down from Bareri to the Evening Service at Kotgarh and saw a strange bearded figure in the mission church. It was Sven Hedin himself. He did a very beautiful thing that Sunday evening. As a thank offering to God for His great mercies in bringing him safely through his two years wandering in the mountains, he gave Mr. Beutel his gold chronometer, which had kept time for him all through the

journey. He asked that it might be used for the mission in any way that might help most.

There was a sick student named Amar Nath, Dina Nath's brother, whom I was nursing at Bareri. He was intensely excited at the arrival of the great traveller, and longed to meet him. I asked Sven Hedin if he would go out of his way on his march to Narkhanda, in order to fulfil the wish of this young Indian Christian lad. He gladly consented to do so, and sat with him for a long while, telling him of his wonderful adventures, while the invalid's face glowed with excitement. The young student never recovered completely from his illness, and this one act of kindness remained with him as a precious gift to the end of his short life. Sven Hedin told us before he went away that we were only the second group of people with whom he had been able to converse in a European language for more than two years. The former group were the Moravian missionaries up the Pass. So completely lost had he been in the great mountains!

Sundar Singh, while he was with us, would often meet with Tibetans, who came through the mountains to barter their goods and to take back the famous homespun blankets which were sold once a year at the Rampur Fair in the deep Sutlej valley. He would try to learn from them their language; for he was determined to go back once more into Tibet for Christ's sake, even if it meant for him a cruel death. He told me how he had been saved on his earlier journey by the Tibetan women who had taken pity on his youth.

In all this he was a solitary, seeking to follow Christ along the hardest pathway of suffering and finding a joy in so doing. To be with him in silence was always an inspiration to me, bringing me nearer to the presence of Christ Himself in unseen ways of the Spirit. Later in his life, during his tours abroad, in Japan, America, and Europe, where thousands flocked to hear him, hanging upon his lips, he remained throughout simple and humble, entirely unspoiled by the world's praise. He would shrink back from the crowd and retire into solitude with his Lord.

To anticipate events in my own life for a moment, it was my very great joy to see Sundar Singh, for the last time, a little more than four years ago. He had come in specially to meet me at the Indian Christian Church below the Mall, in the Simla Bazaar. At that time he was looking ill and

worn ; I could not help noticing how weary and tired he had become. Yet, when anything in our conversation brought back to mind for a moment the name of Christ, his face at once lighted up with joy, and the tired look seemed to vanish away. That was the very last sight of him I had before I left India for the West.

Since then, I have heard very little news indeed of him from any reliable source, though I have made constant enquiry. One piece of information that has gained a wide currency is this—that his illness had still further increased and his eyesight had become impaired. Nevertheless, in spite of all these things, he had determined to press on with his journey into the interior, seeking once more to proclaim in Tibet " the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It is not yet possible to say for certain if this news is true. Indeed, even whether his life itself has been preserved is still unknown.

Nearly three years have now passed by without any further message from him. Those who have been closest to him in India as dear companions, and have thus been able to know best the extreme frailty of his health, before he started for Tibet, have begun to assume that he has passed away in death. But whether this longed-for release has come to his tired body or not, one thing is quite certain. The supreme witness of his Christ-like life, revealing how his Lord and Master by the power of the Spirit can still work miracles of grace as He did in the early days, has been one of the most moving testimonies which has gone forth to the whole Christian Church in our own generation.

CHAPTER XII THE IMITATION OF JESUS

STOKES himself decided, after much earnest consultation with the Bishop of Lahore and advice from those who were in deep sympathy with his movement, to found an order, called the Brotherhood of the Imitation of Jesus.

There was to be among the members a close and literal following of the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as He lived and walked among men on earth, with special regard to His great commission contained in the text, " I was an hungered." Everything was to be given up with

joy for His sake. Nothing was to be kept as one's own. The poor, who were dearest of all to the heart of Christ, their Master, were to be the special and peculiar care of the order. Its members were to be—like the first Franciscans—"Little Brothers of the Poor."

The new Brotherhood began with two full members, Samuel Stokes and Brother Western. The latter was a younger member of the Cambridge Mission, who had shared with Stokes the same ideals of poverty for many years past. Sundar Singh and William Branch both worked in closest connexion with the Brotherhood, sharing its life of poverty; but they did not join the order.

It was a deep disappointment to me personally when I could not fulfil the great longing of my heart and join the order. But the continual attacks of fever, from which I still suffered, made it quite impossible for me even to think of such a step at that time. Yet all my heart went out to these young heroic spirits, who were making their glorious venture of faith in Christ's name. Most of all they received in their new enterprise the warm encouragement and good cheer of Bishop Lefroy. He was enthusiastic and looked upon the founding of this new order as the greatest event that had happened to the Church in the Punjab during his episcopate. He laid his hands upon them at a solemn service in Lahore Cathedral, and thus sent them forth to their work with the blessing of God.

While Stokes was trying to settle down among the hill people, whom he had learnt to love with all his heart and soul, he discovered more and more certainly each year that they were mistaking altogether the true motive of his Christian service, regarding it as self-seeking with a view to his own spiritual advancement. So serious was the misunderstanding, that this Christian witness was in danger of being given to no purpose, and even of leading to wrong impressions.

"Ah," they would say to him, in all sincerity, "you are able to acquire for yourself very quickly indeed, because you are free from family cares. But we, poor people, who are living in the midst of this world of sin, have no time to give to religion. We have to earn our living. You will soon reach your own salvation; but we shall have to go through many rounds of birth and death before we are set free from this earthly bondage."

It became more and more clear to Stokes that they were identifying him, in his homeless, celibate state, with the ordinary mendicants of India, who go begging from village to village, seeking to acquire merit on their own account, often through the avoidance of worldly duties. They were not at all recognising that everything he did—his whole life of self-abnegation—was a pure love-offering for their sakes, done in the name of Christ, his Master, whom he longed to serve, without any " merit " of his own.

Here then appeared to Stokes, as a practical Christian, a fundamental issue. Was he building up his active life in Christ on a false basis of misunderstanding? The idea of " acquiring merit " was the very last he wished to encourage. Yet his actions encouraged it.

He struggled with this crucial problem night and day, waiting in earnest prayer to God for an answer. In his own mind from the very first, since the day when the problem had really gripped him, there had seemed to be only one real answer. He felt that if his true mission was to live among the hill people, then he ought himself to take up the duties and responsibilities of married life and become a householder even as the hillmen were. He should reside among them as one of themselves, marrying into their own hill clan. Thus he would make himself in every respect one with them.

In the end he convinced me by this argument, though at first it greatly troubled me that the Order of the Imitation would be in that way abandoned after such long and prayerful preparations. The bishop could not reconcile himself to his point of view at all, and very strongly opposed him all through. Susil Rudra agreed with Stokes and upheld him.

So, in the end, he married a Rajputni lady, an Indian Christian, who was herself born in the hills. Curiously enough, a Chinese Christian, who had come out for tea-planting at Kotgarh, had married at an earlier time into the same family, and was the grandfather of the lady whom Stokes chose to be his own wife. Thus his children have the blood of three different races flowing in their veins.

Stokes told me that a further thought had weighed much with him when he made his own decision. His conscience, as a Christian, had been outraged by the racial treatment meted out to Indians by Europeans who professed and called themselves Christians. So strong was the colour prejudice

that even in " God's acre " the two races were not allowed in certain places at that time to be buried side by side. The fact was glaring in the Punjab that the colour bar had laid its stranglehold upon the Christian Church itself. Therefore, in the most drastic way possible and in generous rebellion, he was ready to make his protest by sharing the most sacred ties of home and family with an Indian Christian wife at his side as his dear helpmeet and companion. He felt that he should do this deliberately for Christ's sake, thus showing plainly to the Indian Christian Church, which needed some such example to reassure it, that " in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all."

It was a noble ambition, looked at from this point of view ; and, though I had not yet thought out to its ultimate conclusion what Christian marriage really involved, I felt that if Stokes were ready to make the experiment in his own person, then I, for one, should wish him all God-speed. Of one thing I was quite convinced : the colour bar itself was the most deadly enemy in our own generation which the Cross of Christ would have to face.

Through this act of marriage on his part, the Order of the Imitation was shattered, and it has never been revived. The Bishop of Lahore was cut to the heart when this fatal blow was dealt. Others have felt the shock deeply in the same manner. Yet, when a long view is taken, it is possible to perceive the providence of God working through all our human frailty to unexpected ends. For the sudden loosening of the rigid ties of the Brotherhood of the Imitation in this manner led undoubtedly to the release of Sadhu Sundar Singh for his own world-wide service in the Church of Christ. Indeed, he could never have been what he has since become—the Sadhu, known all over Christendom, in East and West alike, and loved by millions of simple Christian people for his faith in Christ—unless he had been set free from the direct control of the head of the order and allowed to take his own course. Probably, as a solitary, he was never really suited to become a member of any order. For he lived singularly alone with Christ, and always went on his own way under His guidance.

Also, Brother Western, the third original member of the order, was set free for special work that he alone was able to perform, and he has been used elsewhere by God in the

Church for His own great purpose. He is now the Bishop of Tinnevelly, in South India, where he ministers to a very large Indian Christian community, the majority of whom are very poor. Among them he has already become deeply loved for his devoted and consecrated life.

In thus relating, with barest outline only, the story of what has happened to Samuel Stokes and Sadhu Sundar Singh and others, I have been describing at the same time an intimate part of my own life-history, wherein the presence of the Living Christ was made known to me, in India, in wonderful ways that made my heart beat high with hope that I had found the true path of service at last. For in every detail of the movement I followed earnestly the thoughts and ideals of the chief actors, and was ready, if illness had not prevented me, to join them under Stokes' leadership as a member of the new order.

Strangely enough, Stokes's main point, as to the danger in India of the celibate life being regarded as something " higher " than the married life, had never struck me before. The thought at once repelled me, as being repugnant to Christ's own standard, wherein marriage is honoured as a great sacrament, going back to man's primal creation,* and the family life is held so sacred that little children are taken as the symbol of heaven upon earth.† Therefore to admit the celibate life to a " higher " rank than the natural, wholesome married life of man and woman is surely to wander far astray from Christ and His word.

It was necessary for me, once and for all, to decide this question for myself in the light of what I had found in Christ to be true, because the same danger of a wrong impression being formed about my own unmarried state had to be faced. But, in the much-travelled existence which I had been obliged to lead since I went out to the East, there had not been the same risk of a misunderstanding in my case as there was with Samuel Stokes.

Looking back now, as I am able to do, after nearly twenty years of greatly varied Christian experience, since those early days with Stokes and Sundar Singh and Susil Rudra in the hills beyond Simla, I can see more clearly than I did before that there is a law in the spiritual kingdom which Christ has expressed once for all in the perfect simile of the corn of wheat

* Matt. xix, 5. † Matt. xix, 13.

falling to the earth and dying, before it becomes fruitful. "Except it die," He said, "it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

So it is possible to regard this great experiment of the Imitation which Stokes and his little band sowed in the fruitful soil of India. While the order itself died a natural death when Stokes married, the germinal idea has risen again within the Indian Christian Church in many singularly beautiful forms. The Christian Asrams at Tiruppatur, Almora, and other places; the Christa Seva Sangha at Poona —these, and other ventures of faith, have shown that Christ is still calling forth those who will follow Him to the ministry and service of the lowliest and the lost. That call may come to us in different ways, and we must watch for His coming. It may be that He will come in the darkness of the stormy night with a sudden lightning flash of illumination. It may be that He will come amid the heat and weariness of the midday journey, or in the quiet of the dawn, or at the sunset hour. Our loins must be girt about for the work, and our hearts aflame with hope as those who wait for their Lord.

CHAPTER XIII ALBERT SCHWEITZER

WHILE I was thus seeking to follow in Christ's footsteps, and facing at the same time the difficult practical task of literal obedience to His will, I was brought into singularly close spiritual touch with that great Christian, Albert Schweitzer.

The contact came to me from across the sea in the midst of bewildering perplexities at Delhi, like some strong current of fresh air sweeping away all the dust and cobwebs of the mind. It was first of all through his writings that I knew him; but this, to my great joy, was afterwards strengthened and confirmed by his personal friendship.

The immediate touch with Schweitzer came to me through his newly published book, called *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Sometimes a single volume may change a whole life outlook. Such was the effect that this great book on the life of Jesus had on me. The last chapter in it moved me most of all. There he seemed to speak to my very soul.

After I had come out to the East, the historical Gospels had naturally absorbed most of my reading hours as a subject of special study. It was necessary at every point to relate these to the sacred literature of the East. While this study was going forward, the argument had constantly confronted me that if the stories about Krishna and Buddha were full of mythical legends, then the story of Christ in the Gospels might have suffered a similar fate.

How could we really distinguish truth from myth, and myth from truth? How could Christians be certain that the story of Christ did not contain much that was mythical, and was not itself a myth?

In moments of heart weariness and bodily weakness, with the disease of malaria in my blood, sapping vitality away, it was often difficult to face these ghosts with clearness of mind and critical perception. In Cambridge I had often met the very same arguments in other forms. But now I was out of touch with Cambridge scholarship, and dependent on what reading I could find on the spot, when new problems arose. It was not easy to get at books, though I had the advantage of a library at Delhi and also in Lahore.

The question regarding myth and legend was only a single instance of a large number of new difficulties that came forward for solution, and I was constantly perplexed while facing them in the midst of other work. Yet I could see at once that where they remained unanswered, they left a scar behind and weakened the spiritual hold I had on reality. Human life is such a complex thing that, while I was going through these intellectual uncertainties on the one side, I was finding moral issues becoming more difficult on the other.

There is a passage in St. John's Gospel where Christ says to His disciples, "A little while and ye shall see Me, and again a little while and ye shall not see Me."

This has been throughout my whole life in Christ singularly true. At certain periods His presence has been so near that I have needed no further witness, and have been able to laugh at all perplexities and doubts. With the disciples, I have been able to say, "Lord, now speakest Thou plainly and speakest no proverb; by this we believe that Thou comest forth from God."

But at other times the darkness has descended; clouds have obscured the open vision, and I have felt the extreme

need of holding on fast to that faith and hope which are a sure anchor of the soul.

In such periods of doubt, which were frequent during these years at Delhi, Susil Rudra was not able to help me directly, though his sympathy and love always sustained me. He had his own peculiar difficulties of belief, out of which he always rose triumphant; but with all his ardent love for Christ his intellectual nature tended to oscillate like my own. On the other hand, the child-like faith and radiant courage of Sundar Singh, whenever I met him, gave me joy. He was a Galahad, a "very perfect Christian knight"—one of those pure in heart who see God.

It was in the midst of these uncertainties that Albert Schweitzer's book came like a gift from God to lighten my burden. He faced, as a scholar only can do, all the difficulties of the New Testament text that I know so well, and the historical questions that were involved. He discussed, one by one, the chief monumental studies that had been made of the life of Christ, showing how Jesus challenged the opposition as well as the acceptance of every age. He claimed for Christ the soul's absolute allegiance.

In the last chapter, which had moved me most of all, he carried forward his own argument and interpretation of Christ, not any longer with the logic of the scholar, but with the passion of a saint.

Let me try to give, in connection with my own need, a paraphrase of the thought which I found in the book.

No account of Christ's life, he said, could fit in with the historical facts simply by stripping away the supernatural element from the Gospel story and leaving a residuum behind. Jesus could in no sense be bound hand and foot within the nineteenth-century framework which learned scholars had made for him. He was for all time. He was not a casuist: He was not even a teacher merely: He was an imperious ruler commanding the soul's allegiance. Miracles of grace break through wherever His amazing personality is present. They are the signs of His "coming." Men were at that time living in a miraculous age, and the greatest of all miracles was Christ.

Were we prepared, he asked further, to take Christ as our own life-guide to-day, honestly, sincerely? Were we ready to leave all and follow Him as the first disciples were? Even

if Christ and His apostles were mistaken in expecting an immediate return, had He not also been amply justified in the end at the bar of history? What was the strange, magnetic, spiritual appeal that had drawn men and women towards Him in every age? How was the great enigma of His abiding influence in the world to be solved, if He were not Himself profoundly true?

This ultimate search after the historical Jesus, the one supreme figure in human history, he describes in the following words which end his remarkable book:

"Christ comes to us as One Unknown, without a name, just as of old by the lake-side He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, 'Follow thou Me,' and sets us to those tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings, which they shall pass through in His fellowship. And as an ineffable mystery they shall learn in their own experience who He is."

Schweitzer thus brought me back to the living Christ—to the Christ I had known and loved in the best moments of my life. It was as if he had read the secret of my own heart and had given it utterance.

There was another factor in Schweitzer's book which came home to me with almost equal force. He had gone back, in his quest of the true historical portrait of Jesus, to the life of the Church in the first century in all its glowing expectation and marvellous hope. He had not slurred over, but rather emphasised, the passages which spoke of an immediate return. He restored the background of the supernatural as the first disciples had experienced it.

In all this he drove me back once more to my earlier life—my father and mother, my home, the Apostolic Church with its supernatural visitations. I was forced to consider it all afresh and explore its ultimate meaning for my own life.

It was still as obvious as ever to me that I could not go back to the literal beliefs of my parents, though in every letter to me my father used to write about some "sure word of prophecy" which had been revealed, and how he was daily expecting the return. Nor, again, could I believe, with my father's childlike faith, that things might happen directly contrary to nature if God so willed it. But I could believe

with all my heart in a supernatural realm of grace, for I had experienced it. I could hope for a life of the Spirit, with God Himself as the ever-renewing and creative source within and without. Never could I ultimately question that: because it had now become part of my own existence.

My father had borne, even in his outward appearance, the "marks of the Lord Jesus." His very face showed his Christ-like character. His simple trust, like that of a little child, in Christ his Saviour and Master had been justified by his own transfigured character and wonderful beauty of soul. However mistaken in detail he might have been about the "coming," he had won through to those things that were abiding—faith, hope, and love. It was for me to retain in a wider sphere the overflowing joy, the glowing hope, the ardour of devotion, which were so manifest in his Christian life.

Thus I was compelled to go over the whole range of my past experience once more in order to test to the uttermost the fundamental ground whereon I had built up anew the house of faith. There must be no shifting sand beneath the foundation, but only solid rock.

In one further respect, Albert Schweitzer gave me the greatest help of all. This was by the example of his own life. For he had decided unflinchingly to live out in action what he had written, and to continue the quest of the historical Jesus, not in word only, but in deed. He had put aside his own unique academic and musical career in Europe and had undergone training as a doctor in order to go out to tropical Africa, where centuries of human wrongs had left a dark trail of misery behind them. He went at last to Lambarene, on the River Ogowe, in equatorial Africa, and settled down in the heart of a malarial district. There he has since dedicated his whole life to the service of the sick and dying in the name of Christ. As a good physician, he has literally obeyed the precept of the Gospel, giving up all he possessed to follow Christ.

Surrounded by the vast silences of the African tropical forest, he has found Christ's presence near at hand. With the clear sense of supernatural guidance running through his whole life, he is still carrying on his daily work. His joy in this service of the poor for Christ's sake has far exceeded any suffering he has undergone.*

* Read *On the Edge of the Primæval Forest.*

For Christ, he feels, is not merely a past character in history whose record may be found in ancient documents by scholarly research. He lives on in the hearts of men. Indeed, mankind is only just beginning to realise what fortitude and endurance the quest of His presence implies. To be fully known and loved with devotion, He has to be sought afresh in every age by heroic souls ; and in every country there are those fearless lovers who have thus found and known him. He is the great challenger of all conventions. His " coming " brings crisis and judgment with it, wherein apparent defeat opens the way to a new victory in His name. Christ leads the way forward in His own person. He dies to live. He loses life to save it.

Later on in my life, it was a rare privilege to stay with Albert Schweitzer for a time when I was in Europe. Probably there is no one living to-day, except Kagawa of Japan, and Sundar Singh (if he is still alive), who has come so near to the Imitation of Jesus. What Christ has meant to him his own devoted sacrifice has now made manifest to the world. He has remained, all through his career, simple as a little child ; his character has been fashioned, line upon line, by the living Christ whom he worships.

It came to me with profound conviction, as I read Schweitzer's book, that all my early home training had been given me with a divine purpose in view. God would enable me, however unworthy, to take up this same quest of the historical Jesus. I must do all I can in Christ's name to pray and work for the revival of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, which had been so manifest in the early Church. I must seek and find Christ in human suffering, wherever it is to be found, and must worship and adore Him, not in mere empty words, but in the service of the poor in every land. Thus I should find His presence anew, like those first disciples, in the early morning by the lake, and hear His voice saying, " Follow thou Me."

For what was so plainly required in a tortured and diseased world, racked with pain and doubt, and filled with suffering and misery, was a renewal of those excellent gifts of the Holy Spirit which the apostolic age had received in fullest measure. We needed to become " first century " Christians once more.

The early Church, in its young enthusiasm and inexperience, had over-simplified this problem of Christ's coming. Like my dear father, it had been too crudely literal. But Christ

had never cast any doubt upon the central hope itself of a miraculous intervention of God's grace in a world of sin and death. This was the good tidings, the Gospel. This was the true and actual Kingdom of God which Christ came to reveal. These first disciples had been conscious of a marvellous outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and had felt themselves to be already moving in the midst of a spiritual world. They had healed the sick and opened the eyes of the blind. The crisis was always present; the Lord was always at hand. The Kingdom was at the very door.

There is a touchingly authentic story told us at the end of St. John's Gospel which brings us into the centre of the Christian fellowship and gives us the rare, tense atmosphere of those days. We can almost witness the scene, so clear is the picture drawn.

The saying had gone abroad that the beloved disciple should not die at all, but "should tarry till the Lord came." Therefore it was necessary to tell the story over again, exactly as it happened, in order to turn the minds of the young followers of Christ to the stern duty set before them as heirs of the Kingdom of the Cross. "Yet Jesus," writes the Evangelist, "said not unto that disciple that he shall not die," but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

We can still picture to ourselves that scene at Ephesus, where the aged saint told over and over again the story of the Lord Jesus to the young disciples, in those miraculous days before the last outward witness of His life on earth had faded away. We can get an insight here into the powerful attraction of the "coming," and understand what a strength it was thus to get free from the bondage of the outer world and to live in that eternal Kingdom where Christ was invisibly present.

Perhaps it was even necessary in God's good providence that the literal expectations of that first age should be allowed to linger on, just as the hard shell protects the germinating seed. The wonder is that those simple, humble men and women, with no great tradition behind them, should have gone through such sufferings at all. Some very concrete hope was needed; and who are we to speak lightly of them, if its symbols were crude? "Love not the world"—so writes the aged John—"neither the things that are in the world.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Little children, it is a last hour."

The crisis of a last hour, the life and death decision, the loins girt and the lamp burning—all this is quite clearly an intimate part of the Gospel. It is, as it were, a central nerve, which means paralysis if it is severed from the rest of the body. Mere day-dreaming will not do. The followers of the Crucified must be ready each moment for the call of their Lord, " Follow thou Me." It may come at midnight. It may come at the early morning hour, by the still lake, in the quiet hour at the break of day. It will be always unexpected when it comes, yet always expected.

And in that life-giving and bracing atmosphere of expectation, the love of the world, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, will not be able to obtain over us the insidiously fatal hold which paralyses the soul. The supernatural life in Christ will quicken the laggard will to action, and enkindle with fresh ardour the drooping heart. Christ will be all in all.

This was the new gift from God that Albert Schweitzer's book brought to me in the midst of weakness and doubt. His own life drove me back to the crucial sufferings among the poor and to the homes of the meek and lowly. I began to leave my books once more and go out into the villages, learning human life afresh from simple people. At last there returned into my heart the glow of faith renewed. The lamp of devotion, ardent and aflame, leapt up like a fire within, as the Holy Spirit descended, enkindling the soul. I was waiting expectant for a new call to come, and it came.

CHAPTER XIV CHRIST AND THE NEW AGE

THE greatest break in my whole life came when I decided at last to leave the Cambridge Mission Brotherhood and abandon direct ministerial work under a bishop, in order that I might launch out on an unknown sea and set sail for a wider

and ampler world. This step was not taken in haste. Many years passed in doubt and indecision. Health conditions drove me back to shelter more than once. But I had heard the voice of the Master by the lake, in the early dawn, when all was still, calling me again and again, " Follow thou Me," and I knew in the end that the inner voice would prevail.

Before I relate the facts, I must give in outline the picture of Christ, my Master, which came before me most clearly during those heart-searching days, when my whole future course of action was in doubt and I was tossed to and fro by bewildering hesitations. Schweitzer's book had helped me much to strengthen certain lines in the portrait of Christ which I am about to draw, but the picture itself is my own. It is only one of the many visions of Him that I have seen with the eyes of the mind ; but it will show in what direction my thoughts were tending, and what hidden cause it was that forced me now to take the most revolutionary step in all my life's career.

The scene in India during the early years of the present century, when I lived at Delhi, resembled that of the Roman Empire nineteen hundred years ago. There was the same vast, unbroken, imperial peace in external affairs and a settled order outwardly maintained. But within this area of apparent calm a surging, heaving ferment had suddenly begun to appear, like volcanic lava cracking through the surface of the soil. Men called it the " national movement," but its force and range were far vaster than that. It was an eruption of a whole continent of humanity from within seeking to mould itself afresh in new forms.

There is perhaps no image to describe it so powerful and true as that of the Creative Spirit in Genesis brooding over chaos—" And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light."

Galilee and the whole of the East, under the settled sway of Rome, were inwardly experiencing just such an inner upheaval when Christ came. In Galilee itself, this took inevitably a religious direction. Jesus, the young Carpenter of Nazareth, saw with supreme vision the trend of the new forces that had suddenly appeared, and plunged into the midst of them with all the reckless daring of youth, seeking to claim the whole movement for the Kingdom of God.

He was not alone. The heralding voice from the wilderness

had already gone forth to prepare the way for God. The Lord would come, as He had ever come of old, to visit and redeem His people. Such was the high hope abroad in every part of Galilee. The villagers were already talking it over as they met one another on the way, or sat round their village fires at night.

Jesus stepped out upon this stage of life, as the great drama opens, to bring to the people the good news that deliverance was near at hand. From the fishing-boats and the countryside He gathers His band of young disciples. Like Himself, they are hardy and strong, used to strenuous toil. He will make them "fishers of men."

The movement begins. The sick are healed: the blind receive their sight: the good tidings of deliverance are preached to the poor. What Galilee so eagerly looked for is now coming to pass. The new life of the Kingdom of God has already appeared. The zeal of the young disciples, as they take part in it, cannot be kept within bounds. The old restrictions and taboos are cast aside. Life overflows, and creates new forms of its own as it passes on. The new wine of the Kingdom begins to bubble over; the new cloth rends the old garment to pieces. Jesus hails all these aspirations with the unbounded confidence of youth.

But the scribes and Pharisees—here the drama begins to move forward and a tragic note is first sounded—like sulking children sitting in the market place, reject each appeal that is made to them to throw aside the old, outworn things, and join in the great game of life which has now to be played. They have no power of response to the new truth of the Kingdom of God, whether it comes from John the Baptist or Jesus Himself. They are hardened in the confining crust of the old order. Their narrow racial creed has bound them hand and foot, until they carry their hard shell with them wherever they go, impervious to the light. As blind leaders of the blind, they grope their way in the darkness, thinking that they still hold the key of knowledge, when it has been taken for ever from their hands.

But Jesus and His disciples, as they go forth with the fearless step of youth, have emancipated themselves from these old wrappings of a dead past. They live in a new age. Jesus exults in spirit at God's mighty working in the world. He welcomes as His followers all those who would take the

new age by storm. "The Kingdom of Heaven," He dares to say," suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." It is the cry of youth to youth. A life-and-death struggle is approaching, wherein all has to be lost or won.

Thus Jesus sets out on His great adventure of faith, filled with an overflowing abundance of joy. It is a marriage festival which is about to begin. The pipes are playing as the Bridegroom's party advances. No one can afford to be late. The glad tidings of great joy to all mankind are being sung. The children of the bride-chamber cannot fast, in such a propitious hour, while the Bridegroom is with them.

There was surely a time of suffering coming when they *should* fast; but that time had not come yet. The agony which Jesus already foresaw was also an integral part of God's Kingdom. For whether it was sorrow or joy, fast or festival, pain or gladness, it was the Father's name that was to be hallowed and the Father's will that must be done on earth as it was already done in heaven. His sovereign reign was over all.

Here, at this point, comes the supreme note—the refrain of the whole drama. For this one word, "Father," as it came from the lips of Jesus, was a revelation, a New Testament. He breathes upon that word, and plays upon it, as a great musician plays upon a violin, till the perfect music responds.

Jesus can sound this music as none other can, because He has in Himself the child Spirit of Man looking out upon God's universe, undismayed and utterly trustful; simple, humble, fearless, and true; knowing instinctively that the world is very good, because it is the Father's own creation. He is instinct with joy and reverence at every detail of this marvellous and beautiful home of many mansions, which is His Father's house. He goes about His Father's business, filled with admiration, hope, and love.

No one can know the Father as He does, or reveal Him as He can, because—that is His great secret—He and His Father are one. He is the Son of the Father, not in any narrow, abstract, metaphysical sense, which has no moral meaning, but in a deep spiritual sense of oneness; one in mind, one in will, one in purpose, one in character itself.

Herein, in the character of God, is the profoundest religious change that Jesus offers to all human estimates and values. It is a change, so deep, so original, so incredibly simple, that

it makes the Christian faith a new religion indeed—not a compendium merely of what had gone before, but startling in its originality, and in its outward results nothing less than a fresh beginning in human history.

For He dared to tell us that God's own character was as simple as that of a little child, and the pure in heart could know Him thus. To be of the same character as God is to enter God's Kingdom. That is really what heaven means. "Except," says Jesus, "your whole mind is changed and ye become like little children, ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." He repeats, so that there may be no mistake about His exact intention, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." And once again He says, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall in no wise enter therein."

Everyone knows how among tiny, innocent children the conventional barriers do not exist. Children can be devastatingly simple. So it is with all God's truth. Just as the whole material advance of modern times has been made from the discovery of a few simple yet profound truths of modern science, so there is a universal truth, running through God's spiritual universe, simple, yet profound. This truth Christ has brought to the surface of human life.

Thus in Christ's conception of reality God and the Kingdom of Heaven are inseparable thoughts, and at times almost interchangeable terms. And since, in the Kingdom of Heaven, the most simple and most childlike are the greatest, so it is with God. He is infinitely humble and forbearing. When he seeks to win man's love, He is humblest of all. He waits upon man. He wills us to be free with His own freedom. He refuses to use force even to bring His most rebellious sons to reason. He will win only by love.

See how humble God is with the prodigal son! While the son is yet a great way off, the story goes, the father runs to meet him, and will hardly listen to his confession of repentance; for that dead past has been forgotten long ago. Even so, says Jesus, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

God is also lavish in forgiveness beyond all human calculation, beyond even the seventy times seven. "Do good," says Jesus, "to those that hate you; pray for them which

despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Ye shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

No one had dared to say these things about God before, in this natural way; yet this is the very character of God which is really and truly at the heart of the universe. Our Father cares for the fall of a sparrow, and even the hairs of our head are all numbered. The urgent spirit within man, pressing him to leave the past and go forward, was good and not evil. This joyous movement of the Spirit in Galilee, breaking through the old bondage, was good: it came from God, not from Satan. To call such good evil was an unpardonable blasphemy; it blinded the eye of the soul, making light darkness. The creative Spirit, the Holy Spirit, brooding over the face of the waters, is the Lord and giver of life. Therefore the future is to be trusted, and not looked upon with perpetual alarm and timid fear.

Thus God is ever renewing, recreating, restoring: He waits for the child heart in man to respond to His own heart, as we cry, "Abba, Father," the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

And if we ask for the proof of all this wonderful good news from God, Christ does not reason about it like a philosopher, in abstract terms. He lives it out to the very end, and proves it to be true in His own life. He makes (if one may dare to use the words) the laboratory experiment with His own earthly existence. He risks everything on this one experiment. He is determined to make the last sacrifice of all. The only way to bring conviction home to heart of man is to live out the faith that is in Him to the very end. This Jesus does.

There is no easy optimism in all this amazing confidence. Christ knew, at every moment, the full price that would have to be paid. He is human to the heart's core. He does not hide His fears. When the agony came at last in all its fullness, even His brave spirit drew back and He cried, "Abba, Father, all things are possible with Thee: take this cup from Me."

Yet when the agony is over, and strength has returned, He is able to say with serene majesty to Peter, "Put up thy

sword into the sheath. The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? " And He drained it to the dregs.

There is told us in all the Gospels, during the week of the Passion, the story of the alabaster box. It lets us get one glimpse into the soul of Jesus at that dreadful hour. As the woman broke the box, it reminded Him at once that He was bound to die. His own body had to be broken like that alabaster box, if the fragrance within was to be poured forth. " She did it for my burial," said Jesus. His disciples had murmured against the woman and said, " Wherefore is this waste ? " That word " waste " had touched Jesus to the quick. He was thinking of His own death. No ! His own reckless sacrifice was *not* waste. The woman's heart had finely understood. She had interpreted sensitively and rightly, with a woman's intuition. For in the heart of God there is that which is altogether lavish in its self-spending. And Jesus had in His own nature all the lavish self-spending of woman, as well as the high physical courage of man.

In this idea of God, as pure overflowing goodness and self-spending love, which Jesus was thus implanting with infinite care in the world of men and women, He is really the poet, the artist, at His creative work, moulding the stubborn and rough material of human life to receive the divine impression : He breathes on it and fashions it to His touch, till He gives it the breath of life, just as a poet does with words, or a musician with notes of music. We cannot see the creative process, but we can feel and know the result.

Divine goodness can be stern and terrible in the face of evil. The love of Jesus is not a sentiment. It is a fiery deed of agony. Albert Schweitzer in Central Africa has had often to inflict terrible wounds with his surgeon's knife ; but they have been healing wounds, cutting down to the root of the mischief. So it is always with God's love. It heals most where most it wounds. They are the faithful wounds of a Friend.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had learnt this aspect of God's love when he wrote, " Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? "

Christ Himself speaks of plants which are not of His

Father's planting, and therefore must be rooted out. The mystery of evil in the world goes far too deep for any facile explanation. Its eradication can only be dimly foreshadowed by such metaphors as the travail pains of a woman ending in joy ; or the good harvest being gathered in, while the tares are destroyed ; or the seed dying in order to bear fruit.

Jesus had the poet's sensitive temperament in His moods of exultation and despondency, which came upon Him suddenly and almost unawares. Here again He is human through and through. The creative spirit within Him, as He fashions His monumental deeds with swift, fearless strokes, can only accomplish the best work at a white heat. We watch with awe, as He suddenly becomes ablaze with the flaming light of vision. He sees, creates, works.

This is what happened when the disciples came back and He shared their joy of victory and said, " I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." In that very hour, we read, Jesus exulted in spirit and said, " I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

At an entirely different moment, when the high tension of the last scene in the upper room with His disciples is ended, we can feel the reaction that has already begun in the words, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch with Me."

Jesus never hides these moods from us. Here again He has the spirit of the child. He tells us what He feels. But He holds the mastery over each mood in turn, and brings the music out of it, like a master singer who takes the very simplest notes of a tune for his greatest song. He lives His life to the full in all its ranges of sensitiveness, and will take no anodyne or opiate even on the Cross. " I am come," He cried, " that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."

With this nature so finely poised, joy and pain alternating while the soul tries to keep its balance, Jesus gives us phrases and words which will last for all time, just because they have come from those deepest things in life which are always simple and elemental. That is why His words appeal to every race through the medium of each translation. They tell us those very secrets which the heart knows in its best moments.

Dwijendranath Tagore, the eldest brother of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, at Santiniketan, would speak to me about this fact as he described these sayings of Jesus. He was an aged philosopher and sage, and he had been also a great poet in his younger days. I have mentioned before how those who knew him called him "Borodada," because he was like an elder brother to us all. He was a Hindu, having a beautiful tolerance of spirit with the heart of a little child. As a philosopher his intellect was profound and his range of knowledge vast. In his declining years, he would sit for hours each day on his verandah while the birds and squirrels played about him. Thus in silent meditation he led his innocent life gently to its close. He lived in the serene atmosphere of a few great truths, which he had found by long experience to have the power of lifting up his soul to God.

With all his immense learning, he was simple and humble in spirit, and truth was ever on his lips. Each day at sunset, after he had taken his frugal meal, he would like to have me with him. Then, at that hour, he would gather up the thoughts that had come to him during the day and tell me all about them. During the last years of his life he would go constantly to the Sermon on the Mount and dwell on its central sayings.

"They are my food and drink," he said to me one day, "so simple in their setting that a child can understand them and yet so profound in their inner meaning. Along with the words of the Upanishads, they are among the few great classical things left to us in the world. What a daring saying is that of Christ, when He says, 'My words shall never pass away.' Yet it has proved to be altogether true. Day after day I ponder over them, and, when I lie awake during the sleepless hours of the night, they come back to me. There is no need of any commentary to explain them, and I never seem to grow tired of them or to get to the end of their significance. They contain the truths that sustain a man at the last, even in the presence of death."

The one saying of Jesus that meant most of all to him was, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This gave him a satisfaction, in its completeness, that no other word could give, and he often returned to it. One other saying, which was almost equally dear to him, was,

"The Kingdom of God is within you." He would repeat this sentence to me with a touch of awe in the very tone of his voice, that added mystery to the words themselves as he used them. Especially he would love to dwell upon their inward meaning as representing the Kingdom of the heart—the heaven within.

With his own deep spiritual nature and his poet's temperament, he would not seldom bring out some fresh interpretation that I had never seen mentioned before. Thus his rendering would often differ from my own: but he would say to me that the depth of the words of a great Master, such as Christ, is literally unfathomable. They are like a living fountain of pure water, ever flowing to satisfy the spiritual thirst of mankind. Each age goes back to them afresh in order to drink at the fountain-head, and future ages will do the same so long as man's nature remains with its ultimate needs.

Jesus was at the height of His manhood when the Cross came. He died young. No shadow of middle age had yet lengthened across His path. Every word He utters bears the impress of youth. That is where the tragedy of the Cross lies, which came to One so sensitive, so young, so human. The words of the prophet were fulfilled in His Passion, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

For, just because of His youth, in all its glow of vivid realisation, His powers both of joy and of suffering were far beyond those of ordinary range. He did not, in ascetic mood, shut the door of His senses. He came "eating and drinking." He enjoyed life to the full in all its finer aspects of beauty and colour and form. Nor did He ever restrict the limits of His penetrating mind, which went straight as an arrow to the mark. "The truth shall make you free" is an immortal charter of intellectual liberty. More than any other figure in human history, Jesus represents, for all time, the youth of man confronting, undismayed, obstacles inconceivably great, and conquering them by the daring of His Spirit. Other founders of the universal religions of the world, each in their own sphere supremely noble, have lived long lives on earth and died in old age, leaving their messages of truth behind them. Christ has this one surpassing quality: He represents for all time, in a classical and perfect form, the religion of youth.

Men in every age, since Christ's message came fresh into

the world, have sought to tone it down and reduce it to their own common level, weakening its daring paradoxes. But Christ appeals always to that impossible in man, which only becomes possible through faith—the faith that can remove mountains.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Music of words like these has roused fresh generations to action and made the whole heaven ring with song.

In the Russian Church, the Easter Festival begins with the salutation, "Christ is risen." Then the cry of victory is chanted: "Let us purify our earthly senses, that we may behold Christ radiant with the resurrection light ineffable, and hear Him say in accents clear, 'Rejoice,' as we sing the song of victory. For Christ is risen, our Everlasting Joy. Amen."

During my life in the East, the startling originality of Jesus Christ, as the most revolutionary religious thinker whom the world has ever seen, has come home to me much more than in the West. There is a true and rightful place for the calm serenity of the Buddha, as old age is reached with its ripe wisdom. But passionate utterance is the sovereign prerogative of youth. It is one of those dynamic forces that are needed to move mankind.

Therefore also there is a generous indignation of the young which has its place in the economy of the Kingdom of God. The storm of Jesus' judgment on the godly Pharisees, so terrible that it shakes the soul, ends at last with heart-broken lament, as the anger dies away in tears, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

If there is a passion of wrath in the beginning, there is a passion of pity at the end. Something is given us here which has its supreme spiritual value, like a thunderstorm and lightning flash in nature, with a torrent of rain at its close, making the world clean as the sun shines out once more. We need this purging of man's spiritual nature if the heart is to be restored to its inmost recesses by awe and hope, by joy and pain alike.

This heroic element in Christ's character, sounding all the depths and reaching at the same time to the heights, is quite fundamental to the Gospel. There is the mighty onrushing surge of triumphant revolt against all that is old and outworn. It comes like a tidal wave. It is cleansing. The fiery ferment of the new wine of the Kingdom must break through the old wine-skins wherever they confine it. It bursts them asunder with an explosion.

That grotesquely distorted portrait of Christ, showing us One who was almost insufferably pious, cautiously religious, and conservatively moral, has to be frankly rejected; it is not history. A feeble, unoriginal character like that could never have roused the powers of evil in the world to a pitch of frantic desperation as Christ did. Such a cautious spirit could never have quickened the heart of youth in any age.

The hard crust of convention has continually bound fast the seed of new life within, as it struggles to burst through into the light. The dead wrappings of the past have always tended to constrain and confine the insurgent spirit of man. Christ comes again to His own right in our day. He comes to set us free.

CHAPTER XV SOUTH AFRICA

MR. GOKHALE, in the early years of the present century, was one of the most trusted leaders of the Indian people. In November 1913 he asked me by telegram to go out immediately to South Africa in order to help the Indian community, which was suffering from an intolerable wrong under the indenture system. Mahatma Gandhi was their leader.

Ever since the year 1861, Indians had been recruited for the plantations of Natal by a system of labour called indenture. This system became more and more vicious as the years went on, and its many abuses proved quite incurable. Recruiting in India for it was liable to be fraudulent, because professional recruiters were employed, who were paid so much per head for each recruit. More was paid for recruiting a woman than for recruiting a man. Very many thousands had gone over, under this indenture, until there were more Indians in Natal than there were Europeans.

The original signed agreement with the Indian Government was, that if the labourers fulfilled their five years' service under indenture, they should be free to settle afterwards in Natal. But attempts had been made to get round this agreement by imposing a £3 tax on every Indian who came out of indenture. This tax was only remitted if the labourer agreed to go back to the plantation and serve under indenture again. If he refused to do this, and did not pay the tax, he was deported.

In this way the Natal Government hoped either to get back the Indians on to the plantations, or else to drive them out of the country. For they were far too poor to pay such a monstrous poll-tax, which was imposed on women as well as men, and also on children over fifteen.

This indentured Indian labour on the plantations was semi-servile in character. Sir W. W. Hunter, the historian, had called it "bordering on slavery." The phrase was a correct description, as I found out for myself after the most careful examination. No Indian could choose his own employer, or leave the plantation on which he was employed. If he did so, he was prosecuted as a criminal.

Although there was Government inspection, cruelties were seldom remedied, because the Indian labourers were too frightened to give evidence against their overseers and masters. The most evil part, however, of the whole system was this—that only forty women were recruited along with every hundred men. Since very few married couples came out from India, this fatal discrepancy between men and women on the plantations led to frightful immorality.

All these things I had to discover for myself, as this story will show later.

Indian indentured labour had originally been introduced into Mauritius, British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Grenada, and other sugar-growing colonies, in order to take the place of the old slave labour after the Abolition of Slavery in 1834; and everywhere it reproduced many of the old evils of slavery, sometimes in an exaggerated form. If the master was good, the Indians were well treated; but under a bad master, who was determined to "drive" his labour, it became so vicious, as a system, that suicides were not uncommon. The immoral conditions, which were its worst feature, led to added misery, and this wretchedness not seldom ended in a ghastly tragedy—

the murder of the woman and the suicide of the man. These were called "cutting-up" cases, because the man used the sharp sugar-cane knife in committing the murder. It was noticed in Government reports that, wherever the indenture system spread itself in the British colonies, the murder and suicide rates tended to run very high.

This £3 poll-tax in Natal, which was intended to force the Indian labourers back on to the plantations, had long been recognised as quite indefensible from any humanitarian standpoint; but the opposition from the Europeans against its removal had been so great, that General Botha and General Smuts, who were then in office, were unwilling to take action and repeal it. They truly desired to do so, and made a verbal promise to Mr. Gokhale when he went out to South Africa that it should be repealed, but they felt unable to keep their word.

When every method of repeal had been tried and no other way was open, Mahatma Gandhi and his followers offered passive resistance. He gathered together a "ragged army" of indentured labourers from the coal-mines of Northern Natal and marched into the Transvaal to draw attention to the Indian grievances. More than two thousand, men, women, and children, had at once responded to his summons to join him on the march across the Drakensberg Mountains. Many thousands more were ready to come out as soon as a further summons was given by their leader. By leaving the mines, and also by entering the Transvaal, they deliberately invited imprisonment: for both these things were punishable offences, involving hard labour, if the magistrate so determined. Every indentured labourer and free Indian knew this before they started, and on the march itself they endured very great hardship, but none had turned back.

In the end, Mahatma Gandhi, along with most of his followers, suffered imprisonment. Every leader was in jail or under arrest. Acts of violence and shooting had occurred in Natal, when Indian labourers had tried to leave the plantations. The news of all this was sent to India, and public indignation reached a fever-heat. Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, made a famous speech supporting the Indian cause.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Gokhale had telegraphed to me asking me to go out to Natal, while Mahatma Gandhi and the leaders were in prison. I had already written to my

mother, who was very ill, saying that I would come back home ; for she did not expect to recover. But she made one of the last sacrifices of her wholly unselfish life, and bade me go instead to Natal to help her Indian sisters in their great need. She passed away in peace soon after I arrived in South Africa, and thus I was not able to see her again.

Willie Pearson, the son of the late Dr. Samuel Pearson, a celebrated Congregational Minister of Manchester, accompanied me to Natal. His mother was a Quaker. He had been one of my closest friends in Delhi, and he gave me a glorious surprise. Everything had to be arranged hurriedly, and I had to leave that very midnight by train from Delhi in order to catch the steamer. Willie came to me and said, " I have a little present to give you before you go." When I looked enquiringly and asked what it was, he cried out, " Myself," and burst out into a peal of happy laughter.

That delightful present of himself was exactly in accord with his sunny nature. No one could have been a truer friend or more loyal companion than he was, and he won the hearts of the Indians in Natal from the first moment they saw him. To him I owed everything on these different voyages, which I began now to undertake. His death, owing to a fall from a railway train in Italy, in 1924, was one of the greatest blows I ever had in my life. It came suddenly and unexpectedly, and was on that account all the harder to bear.

We had to pass in the wake of a hurricane for the greater part of the voyage from Colombo to Durban, and were five days late in consequence. When we arrived at last, to our great surprise we found Mahatma Gandhi waiting for us on the wharf. He had been released by General Smuts unconditionally, with a view to coming to terms. World opinion against the indefensible poll-tax was already beginning to carry weight.

We soon found out that the root of the whole mischief in South Africa was the race and colour question. The one desire on the part of Europeans generally in South Africa, who were not actually sugar planters, was to get rid of the Indians altogether from the country as a " coloured " race. They regretted that they had ever been brought over. So long as they remained in South Africa they were determined to keep them in an inferior position as " coloured people,"

subject to all the social and political disabilities of other "coloured" races.

While I had been in Delhi, and also with Stokes in the Simla Hills, the whole question of "race" and "colour" within the Christian Church had troubled me very greatly indeed. It seemed to me an impossible position to observe, *as Christians*, racial and colour discriminations in human life. This would inevitably lead on to a new caste system. Such a thing could never be the will of Christ, my Master, who taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. If Christendom ever finally became divided into "racial" Churches, with a colour bar standing between, and the Sacrament of the Holy Communion were denied to Christians solely on the ground of colour or race, then this fundamental principle of the Brotherhood of Man, for which Christ died upon the Cross, would be made of no effect. We should "crucify the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame."

It was clear to me also from the New Testament that at Antioch, Paul the apostle had withstood Peter to his face on this very issue, at a time when Jewish racial exclusiveness threatened to divide the Christian Church into two sections. This was the underlying basis of St. Paul's great controversy, running through all his epistles.

Thus probably on no issue was the New Testament more explicit, and the teaching of Christ Himself more plain, than on this. "In Him," St. Paul writes, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

Yet when I reached Natal, I found a racial situation within the Church almost exactly parallel to that against which St. Paul had so vehemently contended. For "race" Churches were actually springing up, and the colour bar was being imposed on Christian people, not only by administrative acts, but even by direct legislation. Social segregation of races was taking the same course and moulding public opinion.

In certain respects, this was an evil heritage from the past. For there had been a bad debt left over from the Boer Republics, whose Grondwet, or fundamental law, had run: "There shall be no equality between white and black either in Church or State." The British settlers in Natal had instinctively taken up an attitude which was leading to the same results.

From the first day when we landed in Durban the racial prejudice was glaringly apparent. Soon we experienced it personally in some of its worst forms. It is an evil which is like a poisonous infection, spreading over an otherwise healthy body. The infection had already begun in South Africa, and there was very little effort then being made to stop the disease. The Christian Church, in some of its branches, was itself infected.

Islam stands clear in this respect, with no racial barrier between its members. But Christendom, to our shame, has spoken with a faltering voice, because practice has fallen short of profession.

At one of the Christian Churches, where I had been asked to preach, Willie Pearson had brought Mahatma Gandhi to the church door because he wished to hear my sermon. Afterwards I found, to my utter shame, that the church-wardens had refused him admission, because he was a coloured man and an Asiatic. In such an act of refusal I felt that Christ Himself had been denied entrance into His own Church, where His name was worshipped. Those who knew the facts best told us that such things were constantly happening in South Africa.

On a later occasion, I had gone down to Cape Town, where the colour prejudice is not so great as in Natal. Mahatma Gandhi had sent his son, Manilal, with me to look after my personal needs, and he had done for me many kindly acts of service. The lad had become almost like a son to me, and one day he asked me eagerly whether it would be possible for him to come and hear me preach. So I took him to a suburban church, where the vicar was a great friend of the Indian community, and the church itself had for a long while supported foreign missions in India.

We went to tea with the vicar and his wife before the service, and everything went well until I suggested that Manilal should come to church to hear me preach. Then the vicar's countenance fell. For, though he would gladly have welcomed it himself, his congregation might object. To have an Indian boy sitting side by side with them in church to hear Christ's message was almost an impossibility for them. A compromise was reached at last whereby Manilal, seated by the vicar's wife near the door in the back seat, was able to hear the Gospel.

A succession of incidents of this kind followed one another. I will relate one more because, though slight in itself, it left a very deep impression on my mind.

Early one Sunday morning I was taking the Celebration of the Holy Communion at St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, where there has never been any colour bar. I had thought that all who wished to partake had received the Sacrament, and was just about to continue the service. Before doing so, however, I happened to look round, and saw an aged negro lady coming up alone. She had waited till all the Europeans had actually returned to their seats before coming up herself. As I took the elements down to her while she knelt there in deepest reverence, it seemed to me that she represented the very soul of Africa, bowed down with sorrow on account of the intolerable wrongs that Europe had committed. The awful humility wherewith Africa has borne them is the greatest pledge of their redemption.

On one Sunday morning, the Dean asked me to preach in the Cathedral, and my heart was burning within me at the cruel things I had seen. I had taken as my text Elijah's challenge to the priests of Baal. There were two idols, I said, in South Africa, set up for worship. They were " Gold " and " Race Prejudice." It was concerning the second that I intended to speak on that day. All the pent-up feeling in my mind came out in that sermon.

Despondency overcame me afterwards, and it seemed as though I had utterly failed to make any impression on a frigid congregation. But a kindly, generous letter came from J. X. Merriman, who had just retired from the Legislative Assembly. " I would like you to know," he wrote, while thanking me, " that there are a few of us left in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal. One of these is a saint, whom I would much like you to meet, and I am sending you a book of his poems."

The book was by Arthur Shirley Cripps of Mashonaland, a young Oxford poet with a rare gift of song. He was living in a very simple Christian fashion among the African natives, sharing their hard lot with them. His book led on to a friendship which has grown deeper as the years have gone by.

It was not long before the African Bantu people themselves, by their wistful faces telling of centuries of sorrow, won the fullness of my heart's sympathy and love. Olive Schreiner

had taught me to understand the secret of Africa, and I was to learn it more fully from another South African lady, Miss Molteno. She, with Olive Schreiner, belonged to the company of those who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Her white hair and worn face revealed a lifelong struggle for the oppressed.

"Only as you are ready to suffer," I heard her say at one of our Indian meetings, "can you become worthy children of Africa and claim her as your mother. Suffering is our divine right: it is the divine pathway to love: and you must love Africa, if you are to become ready to bear her burden.

She went on to tell the Indians present how, as a Boer girl on a lonely farm, she had lived among the silent hills, by the side of rushing torrents, and on the star-lit veld, wandering among her own people. Three things had become clear to her, she said, which belonged to the very soil of Africa.

One was the power of music. The voices of even harsh-speaking Dutch and English grew mellow in that land of soft skies and dewy hills. The soul of the African could be stirred by the sound of a human voice singing its song of love, as by no other power in the world. Bitterness at such a time went out of the heart.

The second was the power of suffering. Nowhere in all the world had suffering been borne like the pain of Africa; and it had made their hearts softer, not harder. In the long run, through slow patience, the voice of suffering would be heard.

The third was the moral power of a woman. That was to come in the future. Woman had been always the burden-bearer, and, because the women of Africa had borne burdens as none others, they would come through the fire of suffering, pure and refined, as fine gold.

As Miss Molteno said these words, with the marks of suffering written on her face, I realised in a new way in Africa that Christ's message is for all time and all races; that love is the greatest thing in the world, far greater than righteous indignation; that only by redeeming love could Africa's wrongs be set right.

One very moving incident happened to me at a later date in Natal, which may serve to illustrate Miss Molteno's emphasis on suffering in Africa as a "divine right."

A farewell meeting had been arranged for me by the

Indian community in Durban, and I noticed that a large number of Zulus were also present. This had happened before, and I had marked the grave dignity of their bearing and the sadness written on their faces as they watched me speaking.

On this last occasion, I had gone back to the shop of an old Musalman, named Miankhan, where I was living, and had just sat down with him to tea. Two Zulu leaders entered, and we invited them to sit down with us. Then one of them, pointing to me, said to Miankhan, "We want to ask *him* a question."

When this was interpreted to me, "Do, please," I said; "tell me quite freely what is in your mind."

"We have seen," he answered, turning to me, "by the look of your eyes when you speak to the Indians, that you are ready to die for the Indians. Are you ready to die for *us*?"

This simple question was asked with a wistful earnestness that went direct to my heart. I hesitated before answering, in order to speak with entire sincerity, and then said, "Yes, if the time comes, I am ready." For it came to me like a flash, while I paused, that in Christ's service there can be no thought of race at all; for all are one man in Him. There can only be one divine love wherein all the races of mankind are one.

Another great soul whom I met frequently was Mrs. Drew, the daughter of W. E. Gladstone. Her whole heart went out to the Indian community in their struggle. Silently she helped us through her brother, Lord Gladstone, who was the Governor-General. Love shone out from her pure eyes, and she had known the depth of human sorrow. Her talks with me at this time, and her deep sympathy with Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi, were a benediction.

In Mahatma Gandhi himself, whom I thus met in South Africa for the first time, this sovereign power of winning victories through suffering was apparent in every aspect of his hard life of pain. Our hearts met from the first moment we saw one another, and they have remained united by the strongest ties of love ever since. To be with him was an inspiration which awakened all that was best in me, and gave me a high courage, enkindled and enlightened by his own. His tenderness towards every slightest thing that suffered pain was only a part of his tireless search for truth, whose other name was God.

Once I remember sitting down with him by the side of a stream on a hot day near Pretoria, in the Transvaal. I had been arguing that, since nature had contrived that the higher life should feed on the lower, it could not be contrary to the moral order of things for man to take animal life for food.

He turned on me in a moment and said, "Do you, a Christian, use that argument? I thought you believed that the Divine Lord had become incarnate, not to destroy life, but to save it; that the life of Christ found its truth in sacrificing itself for you and others. Is not the divinest thing of all to give life, not to take it?"

His words revealed in a flash to me his own spirit, which ceaselessly gave itself to the last limit of sacrifice, and found joy in so doing. In him, from the very first, I felt instinctively that there had come into the world, not only a new religious personality of the highest order, moving the hearts of men and women to incredible sacrifice, but also a new religious truth, which yet was not new, but old as the stars and the everlasting hills. His one message was that long-suffering and redeeming love is alone invincible. It was the same message which Miss Molteno had so movingly uttered when she spoke to us about suffering as the divine pathway of love.

I found this in evidence throughout the whole South African struggle. The scene out there, among the small, persecuted Indian community, reminded me of nothing so much as the early days of the Christian Church, when the disciples of Jesus had everything in common. There was a sweetness and simplicity in utter contrast with the racial bitterness outside.

The first evening which I spent at Phœnix Asram, where Mahatma Gandhi and his followers had built up their own religious life together, revealed this. He was there, with the little children round him whom he loved. Mrs. Gandhi and her sons had not yet been released from prison, and so he was there alone. One baby girl, belonging to an "untouchable" family in India, nestled in his arms, sharing her place there with a weak little invalid Muslim boy who sought eagerly to gain his special notice. A Zulu Christian woman had stayed for a while to take food with us on her way to the Zulu Mission on the hill. Every word spoken about the Boers and British that evening was kindly and considerate. Again and again the words of the Acts of the Apostles came

back to my mind, "They that believed were of one heart and one soul, and took their food with gladness, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for His name."

The next morning I was to see with my own eyes something of what was occurring under the indenture system in Natal, in spite of all Government inspection. While I was walking with Mahatma Gandhi, we saw the figure of a man crouching near the sugar-cane. He drew close and touched Mr. Gandhi's feet, and then pointed to some unhealed wounds across his back which had evidently been inflicted by a lash. He had run away, and had now come to seek for protection. At first sight of him I had been slightly behind Mahatma Gandhi, and now came forward to examine the wounds. When he saw that I was a European, he suddenly started back with fear, as though I might strike him ; and it was necessary to reassure him that I was not an enemy, but a friend. That look of fear on his face as he saw me coming towards him haunted me for many days, and filled me with pity.

In the midst of scenes like these, the cable that I had long dreaded was sent from England, saying that my mother had passed away. When the news had reached me and I was all alone, a little group of the Indian mothers, with Mrs. Gandhi as their leader, came to comfort me. Dear, tender, faithful Indian mothers, so true and so brave ! The love that you gave me at the hour of my own heart sorrow can never be forgotten.

CHAPTER XVI CHRIST AND RACE

DURING these days of suffering and sorrow in South Africa, after the death of my mother, when it seemed that the passive resistance struggle would have to be begun over again, new thoughts about Christ's Kingdom in the hearts of men rose daily before my mind, and my whole vision of Him became more distinct. I wrote to my father telling him that I would return by way of England as soon as the struggle was over. His heart and soul were with me in this work I had undertaken, and we had never been so close to one another in spirit for many years past as we were then.

Two things stood out in perspective in South Africa.

As I saw Mahatma Gandhi and his followers instinctively taking the true Christian position—suffering wrong-doing patiently and overcoming evil by good—it made me relate, as I had never fully done before, the Law of Compassion which the Buddha taught in India with the Law of Universal Love in Christ. I found a harmony which went very deep indeed into human life and human history. It brought me back continually to the great sentence in St. James's Epistle: "Every good gift and every perfect boon cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

Secondly, side by side with this in Mahatma Gandhi and those with him, which I recognised truly Christian, I was brought up directly and painfully against things within the Christian Church which were just the reverse. If Christ's own principle of moral judgment—by deeds, not words—were to be applied to these, there could be no question even for a moment on which side He Himself would be found. For Christ had no words strong enough to condemn religion, however hallowed by antiquity, which relied merely on profession apart from practice. He called it hypocrisy. It was "the leaven of the Pharisees."

While I was waiting at Pretoria with Mahatma Gandhi for the purpose of seeing General Smuts, I would lie awake under the vast South African sky at night looking up into the clear star-lit firmament, with all its mystery and wonder. It was midsummer, and we used to sleep in the open. Often I would get up very early in the silence before the dawn and sit still for hours, pondering over the meaning of human life and its brief history on this planet—so insignificant yet so infinitely great; a moment of consciousness rising out of the inanimate void to sink back into the inanimate again. Yet all the more it seemed vitally important to employ every speck of it in God's service, with Christ to guide and direct me.

Even when I was actively engaged in trying to help Mahatma Gandhi, at the height of the strain of conflict, I was subconsciously occupied in thinking out the spiritual meaning of his personality—so entirely "Hindu," and yet so supremely "Christian." I wrote a series of letters about it, which were published by my friend, Mr. Ramananda

* James i, 17.

Chatterjee, in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta. It seemed to point to an organic unity, beneath the outward differences of religion, which needed to be traced, if mankind was ever to become one in spirit. This did not necessarily imply direct historical connection, but rather an inward and spiritual kinship going back in its origin to the One Universal Father, who loves all His children equally, and is ever seeking, in every possible way, to bring them closer to Himself and to one another in love.

This thought of God appeared to me to be incomparably nearer to Christ's own mind and heart than either the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, with its damnatory clause, or the similar teaching, still being given in many theological seminaries, concerning the millions of India and China who were "perishing in heathen darkness." For this phrase was still being propagated in hymns and addresses, and the idea that those who were thus "unsaved" went after death to hell to suffer torments, was often connected with it.

Such doctrines as these I had rejected long ago as quite unworthy of the name of Christ. With Mahatma Gandhi I had become so completely one at heart that it was easy for me to talk over these things with him freely, and I consulted him about the moral weakness of my own position in being obliged to consent, as a clergyman, to the recitation of the Athanasian Creed in church. When I told him all the circumstances, he did not blame me, nor press me to take action immediately, but said that he was certain the time would come when I should find my true position as a minister of Christ in a wider sphere of Christian service. With Mr. Gokhale also in London, on my return, I talked over the same matter, and he gave me the same advice. But it was owing to Rabindranath Tagore, in Santiniketan, as I shall afterwards relate, that I obtained my final release and freedom.

All this inner ferment of thought, during these eventful days, drove me back more and more to study anew, with clearer vision, the simple and direct teaching of Christ in the Gospels. It was astonishing to me to find what new light came to me as I faced these South African problems. I was confronted by the very same questions of racial and religious exclusiveness which so deeply offended Christ and called forth His severest condemnation. I could see now exactly why Jesus had deliberately taken the despised Samaritan in

His parable as an example to the godly Pharisee. I could understand how He had shocked the Pharisees still more by declaring that the publicans and sinners went into the Kingdom of Heaven before them.

The thought of all this made me more steadfast than I had been before in standing out against racial exclusiveness. It became clear to me that I must take up a firm stand, even against my own fellow-countrymen and fellow-Christians, since as a Christian it was necessary to bear witness for Christ's sake. Everything as a Christian depended on that—not on one's privileges, or upbringing, or Church and sacraments, but simply on one thing. I had to do what conscience told me to be right, fearless of human consequences. This doing of God's will was the one ultimate test. Even when Christ's own mother and brethren sought to speak with Him, He said, "Who is My mother or My brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother and My sister and My mother."*

The first disciples of Jesus, starting with all their racial and religious prejudices—such as I saw around me on every side in South Africa—had felt instinctively the Divine Spirit in Christ breaking through these narrow limitations, and they had followed their Master step by step, eradicating one prejudice after another from their own lives. That was a great part of what it meant to do His will. They watched Him closely, and saw how His heart went out in love to the Samaritan, the Roman centurion, the Syro-Phœnician woman, who were supposed to be outside the covenant of God's mercies and aliens to God's grace. They had to learn that God's way of thinking was exactly the opposite of their own foolish racial way; that He loved these people all the more, not less, just because they had not received any special privilege, and were looked down upon by others.

So when the apostles saw God's hand pointing forward, telling them to welcome as brothers, and more than brothers, those who had been socially ostracised before as Gentiles, they praised God and took courage, and went where the Divine Spirit led them, risking all the consequences of being socially ostracised themselves for so doing.

It was a fearsome and adventurous journey for such men to take. It carried them far beyond the bounds of the old

* Mark iii, 33.

Jewish Church, with its strictly defined classification of "Jew" and "Gentile." It broke down utterly all their old racial and religious prejudices. But as they advanced they saw also how much more beautiful God's own character and Christ's own Gospel were than they had ever understood before. They saw what the words "God is love" really meant—that this was not a mere empty phrase hung up as a text on the wall, but a very wonderful and concrete thing that upset all human standards, and led often to strangely difficult decisions.

Once or twice they very nearly failed and drew back. Peter's old impulsiveness, with its strain of moral weakness, nearly betrayed him at the zero hour, when he withdrew from eating with the Gentile Christians and Paul had to withstand him to his face "because he was to be blamed."* But on the whole they were marvellously brave. They went forward, not backward. And still Christ's presence was there before them, opening up new roads of spiritual progress, breaking down old, hard barriers, and ever embracing wider ranges of humanity than the Church of their forefathers had dreamt of.

This, in barest outline, represented the first great Christian advance—perhaps the most remarkable development in all human history. The world we live in to-day sprang directly out of this struggle, against desperate odds, for wider liberty and spiritual freedom, which the apostles carried through in the name and faith of Christ.

Now I could see, when confronted with "racial" Churches springing up in South Africa, that something like this experience of the first disciples had come to me in my own life. I must not for one moment shrink back from the issue, but boldly meet it. Like Paul, I might have to withstand to their faces those who would bring racialism inside the Christian Church.

Also I must recognise, without any reserve whatever, the Spirit of Christ present in those who did not call themselves Christians. I had to stand on their side, and not with those who were keeping alive the spirit of racial and religious exclusion. There must be not a single vestige of the caste spirit left in my own heart. I must be wholly on the side of God, who is no respecter of persons.

Not I alone, but numbers of sincere and earnest Christians

* Gal. ii, 11.

in South Africa, when they watched the self-sacrificing conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi, would say with conviction, "These good people are better Christians than we are." Such words were not a mere formal mode of speech, but rather a direct acknowledgment of a divine truth. For these Indian passive resisters *were* better Christians, though they remained Hindus and Musalmans, just as they were born. Facts like these had to be taken into account in reading the New Testament and in framing any theory of the Christian faith.

It will easily be seen how the consequences of all this were revolutionary in my own life as well as in that of others. I remembered the words which the aged Bishop Westcott, of Durham, had said to me as he paused suddenly in the midst of a walk near Robin Hood's Bay. He stopped abruptly and stood firm, leaning with both hands on his walking-stick, and said, "The one denial of Christ is to leave Him out of *any* sphere of human life, as though He were not, in very truth, the Son of Man." He looked at me for some moments with his wonderful eyes, and the emotion was so strong in him that they were filled with tears. He was not one to show emotion very quickly, but this came from the depths of his heart.

The changes which I had begun to make in my High Church views were not sufficiently drastic as yet to contain the whole truth which thus came pouring in on every side. I had to walk in the light of this truth. It was impossible to continue to hold any theory of the religious life of man which refused to acknowledge the concrete facts as they now confronted me every day.

I could appreciate the feelings of those who desired for themselves to be bound rigidly by the outward sacraments of grace, as something tangible, visible, and well-defined. My own mind had constantly swung that way, and it had made me a High Churchman. But to bind down everybody else to do the same on pain of excommunication—there was the cardinal mistake.

The poor woman in the Gospel story, who had an issue of blood, wished to feel the very touch of the hem of Christ's garment in her own hands in order that she might be made whole. Jesus did not rebuke her. He had pity on her, and her faith made her whole. But her faith had clearly its

clinging side, which kept it down to earth. It had not reached to that faith of the Roman centurion who could say, "Lord, speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." It was this centurion's faith which drew from Jesus the highest commendation of all, "Verily I have not seen such faith, no, not in Israel."

The great *Sursum Corda*, "Lift up your hearts," invites us not merely to lift up our spiritual vision to the heavenly heights, but also to watch the inward movement of the Divine Spirit in the heart of mankind, stirring to goodness every living soul of man, of whatever country or race.

One story of this period concerning Mahatma Gandhi and General Smuts is so beautiful that I must tell it before passing on to other events.

Of all the Indian ladies who had suffered in prison, Mrs. Gandhi had suffered most. I had tried to see her in jail, when I arrived in Natal, but she was too ill to see me. All the while when we were in Pretoria our anxiety about her health had been very great indeed. Then, as negotiations proceeded favourably, she was released with all the other prisoners, but her health was broken and she got weaker every day.

We were not yet able to leave Pretoria, because some of the questions in dispute still remained unsettled and some deadlock might occur at any moment. Then at last all was agreed upon, and the only thing left was to obtain General Smuts' own signature to the draft agreement. We were warned, however, that this might take several days, on account of a syndicalist strike, which demanded all his attention. Just then a telegram came to Mahatma Gandhi telling him that his wife was dying. I pressed him to start at once, leaving the final signature of General Smuts in my hands. But he refused. No public duty, he said, could be shirked for a private cause. He was firm as a rock, and I could not shake him; but I could see what his suffering was.

That night I could not sleep; and some time after midnight the thought came suddenly to me that I should go early to the Union Buildings and seek to obtain General Smuts's signature myself. This thought relieved my mind, and I went to sleep.

In the morning I reached the Union Buildings soon after six. For, while General Smuts was engaged in trying to check the strike, he used to go long journeys across the country each

day, starting very early. At seven o'clock he came, and when I told him the news he was greatly shocked. His most human side came to the front in a moment, and he asked for the draft agreement. He read it through, and asked me if every point was included in it. When I answered " Yes," he signed it, and I had the great joy of hurrying back with it to Mahatma Gandhi. We went down to Durban together that very morning, and on our journey by train the good news reached us that Mrs. Gandhi was better.

In all that I have written about South Africa it must be remembered that the evils I have described occurred nearly twenty years ago. Since then the South African Church, in all its branches, has experienced a remarkable awakening. Groups of earnest men and women, Dutch as well as English, are seeking to follow in Christ's footsteps more closely. The joy of Christ's discipleship has come back into many congregations. The Oxford Group Movement has done a very noble work in quickening individual souls. At Stellenbosch University, and throughout the Dutch Reformed Church, there has been a new movement of the Spirit. All this has given grounds for hope that the vicious circle of racial contempt and pride has been broken through at last, and that the Spirit of the living Christ has quickened once more the hearts and souls of faithful men and women, filling them with divine love.

After a settlement of the Indian question had been reached, I went back to England in order to see Mr. Gokhale, who was lying there ill in London. I had also promised my father to come home in order to stay with him for a while. He had become very weak and helpless since my mother's death, and my home visit was one of the greatest happinesses of his declining years. He was enthusiastic about all that had happened in South Africa, and told me how eagerly my mother had followed up to the last what we had gone out to do. The joy of this home-coming was very deep indeed, in spite of the sorrow it contained owing to my mother's death.

Then I went back to India, determined at last to launch out into a wider world beyond the local bounds of the Cambridge Mission.

For many years past I had been earnestly considering this step, and had been praying for divine guidance about it. Above all, I desired to throw in my lot with the people of the country, and no longer to depend for support on foreign

resources. Also, it was necessary to be free to undertake further public duty when the call should come. It was already nearly certain that I should have to take up the cause of the Indian indentured labourers abroad in other lands. It thus became abundantly clear that if I would follow Christ faithfully I must now at last be ready to "launch out into the deep."

The Cambridge Brotherhood, with Allnutt at its head, clearly recognised that God was calling me to new work in His own way. Therefore the separation came at last without any break in our inner relations of Christian love and fellowship. Though I had sorely tried the bishop himself and Allnutt by many hasty and inconsiderate acts, and had done things with an impetuosity which was very hard for them to bear, they kept me in their heart's affection and understood me with the deep understanding of love.

India was surging with new life; her old society was breaking loose from restraint. There was the need of making new experiments of the Christian faith and starting out upon the open road. To delay any longer, for me at least, would have been fatal.

With Susil Rudra the parting was hardest of all. He had become more than a brother to me. Although I knew nothing about it at the time, a fatal illness had already set in which would sap all his strength. He had himself fully suspected it, but had not breathed a word about it to me. His unselfishness had no limit. He would not hear of my staying a day longer for his sake.

Let me briefly describe how the change actually came. In order to do so, I shall have to go back in my narrative.

The name of the poet Rabindranath Tagore had been like a beacon to me ever since I had come out to India. He represented all that was noblest and best in Indian literature and philosophic thought, and his character was as noble as his writings. The opportunity had never yet been given me to meet him; for Delhi was a thousand miles from Calcutta. But I had heard of him from afar through Willie Pearson, who had lived in Bengal and always spoke of him with deep love and devotion. At last the meeting which I had looked for with such earnestness came to pass, not in India, but in London.

It was a perfect summer evening in 1912, and Rothenstein

had invited me to his house, near to Hampstead Heath, because Rabindranath Tagore was in London and W. B. Yeats was to read some poems from a new manuscript of his writings called "Gitanjali."

That night, the supreme delicacy and beauty of India's great world culture was brought home to me with overwhelming power as I listened to the poet's songs and met the poet himself. He was still strange to London, and suffering from ill health. In his self-diffidence and utter loneliness he remained shrinking back, almost out of sight, while his poems were being read. When I went up to speak to him at last, my heart was too full for words. He seemed to know instinctively what I was feeling, and I could give him no formal thanks for the beauty of the poems I had heard.

I went out on to Hampstead Heath and walked about for hours alone, thinking out what I had seen and heard and what it would mean for my own life. It was a night of inner illumination and clear vision.

Before I went to rest I had fully determined, if the poet would only allow me, to go to his Asram at Santiniketan, and seek there to learn to know India as I could never learn at a foreign mission station in Delhi. To my great joy, I found that Willie Pearson had determined to do the same, with the poet's full consent. It was not possible as yet to proceed any further forward with such a plan, because I was not free. But I had the joy of its future hope with me all the while I was in South Africa, and it sustained me during many difficult days.

It was the inner moral beauty of India which I was seeking to know at first hand. I could see it and almost grasp it. Sometimes I could instinctively recognise it in human faces I met. But at Delhi I could never fully comprehend it. There I was in constant revolt against the narrowness of Government control of education. I was also in revolt against much that was rightly called "foreign mission work." For I had no wish to be "foreign" any longer; rather, I longed to be bound up in the life of India in every respect. If I were to find Christ truly in India as the Son of Man, then I must live and move among the people of India as one of themselves and not as an alien and a foreigner.

More than anything else, perhaps, as the years went by, I was in revolt against the outworn order of things. For the

old order was clearly becoming disintegrated. It was showing its cracks on every side. A new age was thundering at the door. The stir of new life was in the air. There was the throbbing of wings that longed for release into the wide vault of heaven, instead of pitifully beating the ground. To all this new movement in India my own heart was pulsing and my mind was instinctively responding. Now that my apprenticeship had been served at Delhi, it was right that I should be free. I could not possibly be bound any longer.

If I had not been called quite suddenly and unexpectedly by Mr. Gokhale to go out to South Africa, I should certainly have sought for permission to join Santiniketan earlier. But now the parting from the Cambridge Mission came in the best way possible, directly after my return. I left Delhi at Easter in the year 1914.

The poet, in his great-hearted generosity, took me just as I was, wishing me to continue regularly all my Christian duties without interruption. So I offered the bishop, while staying at Santiniketan, to serve at a little Church at Burdwan every Sunday. It happened to be the very congregation to which Susil's father, Pyare Mohan Rudra, had ministered when Susil was a boy.

Then came Trinity Sunday, and as sole minister in charge I was faced with the recital of the Athanasian Creed at Morning Prayer, according to the rubric. I had only recently arrived in Santiniketan, and was living in its peaceful environment, with a heart brimming over with love, among those who were not Christians. It came home to me with a shock that I could not possibly recite the damnatory clause of that Creed and yet be in harmony with them in spirit. So I omitted the Creed altogether from the service, but realised, even as I did so, that this was trifling with my conscience and playing a coward's part.

When I returned to Santiniketan and saw the pure face of the poet looking into mine, I knew at once that I was living a life of untruth, and that a final decision had there and then to be made. His clear eyes looked into my own. It was like standing before Christ in the Day of Judgment. I could not face his clean soul. So I confessed to him all that had happened, and how from that day forward I must act out the truth.

At first he was troubled, and urged me to take no hasty

step. But I had seen the brink of the precipice of falsehood on which I had stood. It was really no hasty step, but the end of a long moral struggle which had lasted for many years. Now the struggle had suddenly ended and I knew what I had to do.

Two letters had to be written on that very day which were hard to write—one to the bishop telling him simply the reason why I could not any longer conduct the Sunday Services at Burdwan. The other had to be written to my father.

The dread, which I had before, that I might give him a serious shock when his heart was so weak greatly troubled me ; and I waited very anxiously for the result of my letter. But his mind was entirely absorbed in his expectation of the " coming " of Christ, and he was free from anxiety on my account. After my visit home, he had complete confidence that I was " in the Lord's hands " in everything I did.

Since then, I have not taken any regular ministerial duties directly under a bishop, feeling that the subscription which I once gave to the Articles and Book of Common Prayer no longer holds good.

But I have remained throughout a communicant of the Anglican Communion wherever I have gone in distant lands, and I have accepted occasional invitations to preach and administer the Sacrament whenever Christian fellowship demanded. I have done the same for other Christian Communions also, without any distinction. From that day to this, the thought has been present with me that the true ministry for which I was fitted and prepared by God was prophetic rather than priestly, and that He had brought me back, through all my own futile wanderings, to the right way by which I should go.

Other articles of belief had troubled me greatly before I took this final step, but I need not mention them here. As the years go by, the sense of relief has been greater and greater, and I have not wished for a moment to go back to the position I held before. It would have been impossible to have led the life I have had to lead, and done what I have been called to do, if I had not been free.

THE story of Santiniketan Asram, the home of Rabindranath Tagore, is full of romance and beauty. His father Debendranath, called Maharshi, or great Rishi,* had come to the end of his active career, and was seeking a place of retirement, where he might end his days in peace. He had come to a barren part of the country infested by robbers, and his servants who bore his palanquin were afraid to go farther. But the old man's faith overcame their timidity, and he bade them take him forward to two old trees which stood out upon some slightly rising ground.

The sun was setting in the West in all its beauty, and there came to him, as he sat beneath the trees, looking towards the western horizon, such joy in the realisation of the Presence of God that he remained awake all night, and in the morning named the spot Santiniketan, the Abode of Peace. He made there his Asram, and for many years used to live in it, passing the greater part of his time in silent meditation. He loved to have his youngest son, Rabindranath, who is now the world-famous poet, by his side to sing to him the hymns of devotion which he himself and Raja Ram Mohan Roy had composed. The latter had been his great teacher in the earlier days of his youth, and had led him out from orthodox Hinduism into the universal religion of the Brahma Samaj. The son of Maharshi, Rabindranath Tagore, in turn inherited this universal religious teaching.

A touchingly true story is told, how the captain of the robber band had come up stealthily one evening as Maharshi was seated in meditation. He had heard that there was gold underneath the two trees, and that this was the reason why the old man always remained seated in that place. So he had drawn near with a dagger, intent on murder, but at that moment Maharshi opened his eyes from his meditation and gazed at the robber with such peace of countenance that he dropped the dagger and fell at the saint's feet, confessing his sin. The Maharshi gently rose and embraced the robber, thus making him his disciple, and he remained a changed man, devoted to the service of God, to the end of his life.

Maharshi died at a great age, shortly before I came to Santiniketan, and his memory had pervaded every part of

* Rishi means saint.

the Asram. Near his seat of meditation under those two old trees the text he loved most of all is placed in remembrance. It reads thus:

He is the repose of my mind,
He is the joy of my heart,
He is the peace of my soul.

It is God who is thus referred to as the source of joy and peace and repose: and those who had lived with Maharshi used to tell me about the serenity of his life reflected in his beautiful countenance. Many have told me also how singularly like him in appearance his youngest son, Rabindranath Tagore, has become now that he in turn has grown old.

Three rules only have been inscribed upon the boundaries of this sanctuary. The first is that no image shall be set up there for worship. The second is that no life of man or animal shall be destroyed within the precincts. The third is that no controversy about religion shall be carried on. With these three restrictions, all men and women, of whatever religion or race, are equally welcome.

On one day each week, in the very early morning, the poet himself gives his children in the Asram an address of a very simple character about the Fatherhood of God. They also sit each day at dawn, and again at sunset, in meditation, thinking upon God. This is their simple religious life while they are young.

In the midst of this peace in the shelter of Santiniketan, the news of the outbreak of war in Europe suddenly burst upon me like an earthquake shock, shattering many of my dreams. It seemed like one of those Days of Judgment which Christ Himself had foretold—a Day of the Coming of the Son of Man.

To my aged father in England it meant the near fulfilment of all his prophetic hopes. He was now past fourscore years, and extremely feeble in health. The most touching thing, my sisters told me in their letters, was to see him trying to keep everything in the house just as my mother would have left it. His belief that the " coming " was near, even at the door, sustained him, and he wrote me long letters about it. Sometimes in place of a letter he would send me a poem in blank verse, and I have many such in my possession. He died before the war ended.

When war had been fully declared and my own country was involved, I found myself wavering and doubtful, torn with questionings and hesitations; yet rapid and firm decision was clearly needed, if I was not merely to drift with the stream.

There was very much, at first sight, that was essentially good and noble. The youth of every country, without a murmur, stepped into the ranks of death, ready to sacrifice life itself, and things dearer than life, for a cause which they sincerely believed to be true and just.

Rabindranath Tagore, with his highly strung, sensitive nature, felt deeply the vastness of the moral crisis through which humanity was passing. Earlier in the year I had been with him, while he had gone through an agonising darkness of spirit, unaccountable in its depth of anguish, as though some world disaster was impending. When war had broken out at last, he had held fast to the sublime hope that out of the wreckage of the old world a new and better world order might arise. He gave utterance to this in one of the greatest of his poems, called "The Trumpet," and then on Christmas Day, 1914, he gave me, as a present, a translation of a second poem, called "Judgment." It was one of the most precious of all his many gifts of love.*

What I have described was his immediate reaction in the hour of the world's deepest pain. But the brutality and cruelty, lust and falsehood, involved in modern warfare, soon inexpressibly shocked him, moving the very depth of his soul; and he hated the war with an intensity which grew deeper as the agonising years went on.

The hesitation which I had felt at the first proved my own moral downfall. For in the contagion of universal excitement I was not strong enough to stand against the current. The war spirit found a lodgment in my own mind, and for some time I could not keep it under control.

By the intense eagerness with which I followed every scrap of news about the war each day, I could almost feel the hidden power of this war-lust rising within me. Yet when it appeared on the surface, I at once began to despise myself for it, and the better part of me revolted against it. For always, in sober moments, I could realise that such a war-spirit is clean contrary to the Spirit of Christ. Soon also I found out how hatred of the enemy was being sedulously fanned into a flame

* See *Letters to a Friend*, published by Geo. Allen & Unwin, London.

by a torrent of falsehoods and lies, which put me on my guard.

The scales at last fell from my eyes, and I went back sobered and alarmed to the New Testament in order to study more carefully and thoroughly the words of Christ. With Him as guide, I saw that there could be no halting between two opinions, no serving of God and Mammon. He was unmistakably clear in His utterance: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

Clearly the whole character of God was at stake in this very issue. Either I must choose the tribal idea of God from the Old Testament, or Christ's idea of God from the New. In the end, I saw that I had betrayed Christ, my Master, when I had allowed the war fever to get possession of me. Now Christ Himself had cleansed me by His word, and I was back in my right mind.

From Rabindranath Tagore I received the tenderest help at this time. My reverence and love for him became deeper and deeper every day. He, in his quiet wisdom, could understand my difficulties, and I was able to talk about them to him without restraint. Though he was a Hindu by birth and not a Christian, he had studied the Sermon on the Mount. "What are you Christians doing?" he asked me. "You have the clearest moral precepts. Why do you not follow them?"

A third help came to me from another source. In South Africa, I had been with Mahatma Gandhi, and had watched his own interpretation in action of the Sermon on the Mount. He had then put us Christians to shame; and his example had ever since set me seriously thinking. What he called while Satyagraha,* or Truth Force, was obviously Christian; the savage brutality of war was the reverse.

All these three influences converged on one point. They showed me, beyond a shadow of doubt, that Christ condemned war. Thus, before the question of military service was presented to me (it came later), I had fully made up my mind not to serve; and, when the direct issue rose at last, I had no hesitation in refusing. It is true, I did not have to suffer imprisonment, but I was eager to do so, and my mind was from that time forward perfectly clear. The relief that came

* A form of passive resistance.

with the decision was very great, and it was never regretted afterwards.

During all this time of acute inner suffering and trial, Christ Himself became inexpressibly near to me in new and unimagined ways. I found Him, indeed, much more a power and strength in my daily life after I had made these two decisions—first about subscription and secondly about military service—than I had ever done since the early joy of those mission days in Sunderland and London.

Susil Rudra's son, Shudhir, had come to stay with me at this time before going out for ambulance work in France. He said to me, " Sir, I wonder how you can get on here, at Santiniketan, without the Holy Communion."

" These children here," I answered him, " whom I am teaching, are my ' Holy Communion ' now." And I referred him to what Christ had said about the service of the least of His brethren, and the " cup of cold water " given in His name.

Shudhir always remembered what I had said. When he returned from France, and we were together during his father's last illness, he said to me, " Those words of yours that morning helped me very many times in France. When I was nursing the sick soldiers in the hospital, I would say to myself, ' This is my Holy Communion,' and would remember that Christ had said, ' I was sick and ye visited me.' I found it to be true."

Among the words of Christ in the New Testament which have helped me in my daily life, this text has given me most strength, comfort, and joy. Therefore it will be found constantly referred to in this book. For Christ has not been for me simply a great and noble ideal, embodied in an ancient Scripture. He has been to me a living Person, with whom I have held close communion. And during this period of moral perplexity about the war which I have mentioned, His voice, when I heard it at last, had all the authority of His own Passion behind it. At times, in the silence, I could almost audibly hear Him warning me against taking the broad road which led to destruction, and saying to me, " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."

It was at this time that a new thought began to take possession of my mind. Before the war, I had witnessed in Africa the racial treatment of the African people, and had

also seen the condition of the Indian labourers under indenture. The conviction had come upon me with great power that Christ, the Son of Man, was suffering in all this human misery. It was also clear to me that the war itself in Europe had been directly caused by these very evils of exploitation and commercial rivalry on a world-wide scale, wherein the weaker peoples had suffered. Now Christ was with the oppressed, and He was saying to them with pity, " Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

These thoughts were so powerful with me that I brought them before the poet, and found that he actually shared them with me. No one was more free from racial feeling than he was, and he greatly admired the West for her wonderful scientific achievements. But he condemned the West with all the greater severity for the racial arrogance and commercial greed which had marked her rise to pre-eminence. " Now has come," he said, " the bitterest harvest of death."

When I expressed the earnest hope that the war itself might be a purge, he replied, with a look of pity that I can never forget, " I wish, Charlie, for your sake and ours, that this might happen. But if the root of the evil, which is greed, is not removed, then after the war there may be a still more feverish haste to recover economic losses by further exploitation of the weak. It is this inward disease of greed which needs remedy, not merely the outward symptoms."

The words of Christ, " Come unto Me, ye weary and heavy laden," quite haunted me at this time. Then very slowly it came home to me that I had received a commission from Him to take part in a greater war than that which was being waged in the trenches of Europe. Christ's own war on behalf of the down-trodden peoples all over the world had to be fought, and He was calling me to enlist in His service. It was not sufficient to take up a negative attitude merely towards conscription and military service. There was a positive duty to perform, and I had to fight the good fight of faith on a wider battlefield.

Yet to reach this position, and to hold it fast, was not as simple as I have here described. The war itself was still exciting me while the campaigns, east and west, were swaying backwards and forwards, with victories and defeats; and I could not at all easily take up some positive duty which should set my mind at rest from this continual oscillation. Even with

regard to the treatment of other races and peoples in the world, I still went on feeding myself up with the hope that the record of my own country was a good one, and an exception to the general rule. The glowing faith which my father had was in my own blood, and it influenced me subconsciously, in spite of all that I had seen abroad.

My father had been born at the exact time when slavery was abolished and the great Reform Acts were passed. He had also inherited from his ancestors a stubborn love of freedom and a strong humanitarian tradition. This ran in our veins as an East Anglian family. There had been much in the early nineteenth century which had been akin to this spirit. It had been a great age in British history. The country that could produce Clarkson, Wilberforce, Livingstone, Shaftesbury, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler—to mention only a few names at random—had a great record of noble service in the cause of humanity.

But a subtle change had come in the early eighties, just about the time of the European scramble for African territory and similar acts of greed elsewhere; and this change had coincided with a hardening of colour prejudice and racial arrogance all over the world, which was utterly contrary to the Spirit of Christ. The "white" man had separated himself off from all other races, as a superior race, and this had led to bitter resentment. Now that I had been abroad I had realised, as my father had never been able to do, the demoralising effect of such a racial attitude, especially within the tropics, where things that bring shame may be done with a terrible and fatal impunity. Indeed, I knew full well that, apart from the presence of Christ with me in my daily life, I should have gone farther than others in racial contempt and selfishness, for I had the seeds of these evils within me.

But all these brooding thoughts and questionings were soon to be brought abruptly to an end for the time being. The summer holidays had come at the Asram in May, 1915, and all the children and teachers had gone back to their homes. I had come up from Calcutta to Santiniketan in order to collect some papers. Suddenly, about five o'clock in the evening, illness set in, and in a very short time it was clear that I had an attack of Asiatic cholera in its worst form. No qualified doctor was there, and it was impossible to get one until the following morning. That night was one long agony,

but there came to me very often indeed the memory of the suffering of Christ, and His presence was with me.

The sight of the poet's face the next morning, when he hurried back from Calcutta to be with me in my illness, seemed to give me new life again. I had not realised how great my love for him was till that moment. I had felt the deepest reverence for him before, but this was something deeper still.

The disease of cholera is terribly contagious, and he himself, along with others who nursed me back to convalescence, knew that they were in hourly danger of infection. They risked their own lives for my sake. It was only their great love which carried me through.

After a long while, I was able to be moved to a nursing-home in Calcutta, and then to Simla, where I used to lie in a sunny verandah all day long, scarcely strong enough even to read.

There had come into my hands, however, a Blue Book on Indian indentured labour which had a special interest for me because of what I had seen in Natal. While glancing through it and turning over the pages, I saw some truly appalling statistics concerning the suicide rate of Indians under indenture in Fiji.

The Fiji Islands were right out of the way, in the South Pacific, and it appeared from the report that, owing to these demoralising conditions, accompanied by home-sickness, the number of suicides each year was almost incalculably in excess of those in India, among the same agricultural class.

These Fiji statistics were set over against those of Natal and other places where Indian indentured labour was sent out, and the difference at once was startling. The misery of indenture in Natal I had seen with my own eyes, so that I was able almost to judge the misery of Indians in Fiji. I closed the book; for I had very little strength even for reading; but the thought of what I had seen in print obsessed me.

Some time after this, one day about noontime, I was lying on the couch in the verandah. In front of me, very clearly indeed, I saw a vision of that poor Indian labourer in Natal when he shrank from me, with his back torn and bruised. He was looking towards me now in a most piteous manner. As I watched him with great sorrow, his face changed and I saw instead the face of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, which I had

loved and known from childhood days. The image was so clear that my whole heart went out in reverence and worship. As I lay back there, it was some time after the vision had faded before I realised that it had been a waking dream, created by my own intense imagination and objectively thrown outside of me by my subconscious mind.

The effect upon me was in a certain sense the same as if it had been a vision of the Lord Himself. We use these terms—objective and subjective—and we are obliged to do so; but the border-line between them must often be very thin, almost to a vanishing-point.

It was as clear to me as daylight that Christ was calling me to go out to Fiji, and that His call would be fulfilled. It came to me, without any question now, that this thing had to be done. So I began at once setting about the task of finding what was the best route to go by, and how long it would take. This thought gradually got firm hold of me, and helped me to get back my strength; for it had given me a new hope and a new purpose. When my strength returned, the poet gladly gave me leave of absence from his Asram, and, to my intense joy, I found that my friend, Willie Pearson, was ready to come with me. The poet's own generous heart was with us all along on our adventure, and we left India with his love and blessing.

When we reached Fiji, we found that things were even worse than we had anticipated from the Blue Book account. More than anything else, the condition of the poor Indian women under indenture was pitiable in the extreme. The very same moral evils existed, in what were called the "coolie lines," that had been notorious in Natal. But in Fiji the moral evil had gone far deeper. Since Indian men and women had gone out in thousands to different parts of the world as far distant from one another as Fiji, Mauritius, Natal, and British Guiana, and since a large yearly recruitment by professional recruiters in India was still being carried on, it was clearly time that the whole system should be brought to an end.

Though it was extremely difficult for the planters themselves to see this point of view, the Indian Government felt the force of public opinion in India, and Mahatma Gandhi, together with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, made "Abolition" the principal political issue. The ladies of

India took up the cause of their sisters in these far-off lands. Lord Hardinge, as Viceroy, accepted the evidence which we had collected in our report, and this helped to turn the scale in favour of a great reform measure, called the "Abolition of Indenture."

This Abolition Act was passed soon after the publication of our report in India on our return from Fiji. The facts which we brought back, concerning the terrible moral conditions on the plantations, were so convincing that the Viceroy had no difficulty in gaining the consent of the Secretary of State for India to proceed with the Abolition Act in its final stages as quickly as possible. But a modification was included at the request of the Colonial Office, which caused us much misgiving. For it was stated that "some delay would be needed" in order to bring about the "necessary adjustments."

In the universal rejoicing over the passing of the Abolition Act, this single clause was almost overlooked. Yet its effect was so serious, that it involved the re-opening of the whole issue a year later. For we discovered that an agreement had been reached in London to continue recruiting for five years more while adjustments were being made, and during that period to devise some other system which would bring back indenture, only under another name. This could not be countenanced for a moment now that the evils had been openly acknowledged. Therefore the struggle was renewed.

When I look back with great joy and thankfulness to this first voyage to Fiji, and can trace in it the guiding hand of Providence, there is one experience there which stands out beyond all others. It summed up, in a single glorious Deed, the standing miracle of the Christian faith, which is witnessed afresh in every land where the Spirit of Christ has influenced the lives of men and women in His service.

There was a saintly missionary there, named Mr. Lelean, belonging to the Methodist Church, who had learnt to love the Fijian people with all his heart. He asked me to take part in an act of Holy Communion, at which young Fijian Christians would partake, some of whom were soon to go out to other islands, among the Solomon and New Hebrides groups, where savagery still existed. We met together there, as in the days of the first apostles, and shared in the fellowship and the "breaking of bread." There was a hymn we

sang together to Fijian music, which had been composed by one of the Fijian Christians present. I can only remember the refrain, which ran thus :

What is the voice which comes to me
Across the sea, across the sea,
The voice that is calling you and me,
" Come ! Come over and help us ! Come ! "

There was an indescribable tenderness of pathos as the Fijian congregation sang it, while they remembered those who had already gone out, some of whom had laid down their lives for Christ. The wonder of what I saw was enhanced when I was told that many of those who that day had received the Sacrament with me were the sons and daughters of those who had taken part in cannibal orgies—so recent had been the conversion of the whole Fiji Islands to the Christian faith. Some of these young Fijians were actually on the point of going out " across the sea," where the Voice was calling them to go to help others who were still living in savagery. Some might never return. After the Sacrament was ended, I was able, through an interpreter, to tell the Fijians, with whom I had received the Sacrament, my love for them in Christ, which was bringing over in my heart ; and they came forward to me and took my hands in theirs.

It was at times like these—and there have been many such in my life since—that I have seen how man-made rules and ordinances about denominational differences break down completely in the sunshine of Christ's love. If it is said that these boundaries between Anglicans and other bodies are sacred and divinely ordained (as I used to do in my High Church days), then the answer is clear that the Sabbath was sacred and divinely ordained in Christ's own days ; yet when God's love came in between, or an act of human kindness, Christ swept aside its strict observance with a gesture of impatience. He declared for all time, while doing so, the Magna Charta of Christian liberty in these words : " The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." It was an English bishop who said, " Charity is above rubrics," and he had Christ's own authority behind him.

With all my heart I would urge that our thoughts of God's love should go much wider still. If Christ's words are really

true, and God is truly " Our Father," and all of us, of whatever race or caste or creed, are truly brethren—children of the same Father—then it should not only be possible, but our duty as Christians, to offer fellowship as wide as the embrace of God's love. Only in so doing can we realise the freedom with which Christ Himself has made us free. And we shall find, among those who are not called by His name, but have His Spirit and follow His commandment of love, many who will be first in the final Day of Judgment, while those who have professed and called themselves Christians, but have not kept His word, will be rejected.

It will be best to conclude rapidly in this chapter the story of the final struggle which had to be undertaken in order to get the indenture system of Indian labour completely abolished.

When it was clear that some revival of the old evil system under another name would be attempted, the Indian leaders asked me to go out once more to collect further evidence, so that no loophole might be left for the renewal of a curse which had already done untold moral harm, and stirred up bad blood between India and Great Britain.

On this occasion, I had to go out entirely alone, and during a stay of nearly a year in the South Pacific I suffered much from ill health, and encountered far more serious hostility than Willie Pearson and I had done on our former visit. It was a time of very great depression and spiritual loneliness, with little of the joy I had experienced on the first visit. Yet the result of this visit was much greater than that which went before; for the evidence which I brought back this time was so overwhelming that practically no defence was possible.

One of the happiest remembrances of this second visit was the admirable way in which the women of Australia took up the cause of the Indian women in Fiji. I had gone round to all the leading cities in Australia telling the Women's Associations about the evil consequences of indentured labour for the poor Indian women, who were recruited by all kinds of fraud and suffered a terrible fate on the plantations; how they were forced to lead immoral lives, which ended in murder, suicide, and a destruction of all decent family life.

At first, what I had reported seemed unbelievable. So they sent out Miss Garnham, as their own representative, to

study the facts independently. She brought back a report that the conditions were even worse than I had stated. Therefore the women of Australia took immediate action, and insisted that no more recruiting for such purposes should be carried on. Two Australian ladies, members of the Theosophical Society, Miss Priest and Miss Dixon, went out to live in Fiji in order to help the Indian women, and did very noble service. In India, a deputation of Indian ladies, organised by Mrs. Jaijee Petit, waited on the Viceroy, and obtained from him a promise that he would do everything possible to expedite the abolition.

In the end, on January 1st, 1920, the whole system was finally abolished, and those Indian men and women who were still under indenture were set free. This date is called Abolition Day in the Colonies, and it is remembered also in India with rejoicing.

Quite recently I have met in London those who have come from Fiji. Everything they told me has confirmed my own impression that a very great advance has been made, not only in material prosperity, but also in moral and educational welfare. The old evil social conditions, and the utterly bad environment of the old "coolie lines" under indenture, had both tended to disappear now that freedom had been established. A new and wholesome family life had sprung up in their place.

The love and goodness of Rabindranath Tagore upheld me on this last journey to Fiji. The memory of the peace of Santiniketan and his own home there, where he sat each morning long before the break of day in quiet meditation, was a wonderful comfort in times of utter loneliness and bitter hostility. His letters also were always an inspiration to me, and it was a "red letter day" in my own life when the mail brought one from him to cheer me.

But, while this human love had now become the most precious gift I had received from God on this earth, the Divine Love itself went ever above and around and beyond it, pointing me onward to the abiding and eternal truth which enfolds the world. It was to this eternal truth—the Santam, Sivam, Advaitam*—that the poet always pointed, and I found it embodied for me in Christ.

* "The All Peace, the All Good, the One." This is the ancient name in India for the Divine, which the poet often uses in his writings.

IN the year 1916, Rabindranath Tagore took me with him, along with Willie Pearson, to Japan. On the voyage out, I looked forward to this visit with an eager confidence. I had always greatly longed to see China and Japan, where human civilisation had run such a noble course in past ages. For it had forms and ideals of its own which were worthy of intense and special study by those from the West who wished to know mankind. Beyond this I was certain that I should find links with India ; for the Japanese writer, Okakura, had taught me how for centuries past Japan and China had been very deeply influenced by the Buddhist faith, which had reached the Far East, not indirectly merely, but from India itself.

During these years the parallel between the Buddhist civilisation of the Eastern world and the Christian civilisation of the West had absorbed much of my thought and study. It seemed to give the clue to that organic unity of higher religion in the human race which must be the postulate of any rational view of human history. In this connection, I had been trying to trace out, ever since I had met Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, the kinship between the Indian ideal of Ahimsa,* which Buddhism had so profoundly assimilated, and the Christian doctrine of love. It seemed to me that, if facts would bear out this kinship to the point of demonstration, a new corner-stone would have been laid in the temple of human unity on which future generations might build.

I had also heard much about the chivalry of the Japanese people and their great moral bravery as a race. Therefore it seemed certain that their welcome to the Indian poet, whom they had invited as their guest, would be full of sympathy and understanding.

In the long run, and after further visits to the Far East, I have found all that I have outlined here to be correct. But the poet's first visit to the Far East was made at an unfortunate time. For the war fever was at its height, and there was apparent on every side a repetition, forced on Japan, of those very things that were destroying the foundations of society in the West.

* Ahimsa means harmlessness, or refusal to take life. It is equivalent to the Law of Compassion in Buddhism.

One day I went with the poet and Willie Pearson to see an infants' school in Kobe. Personally, I was much amused at seeing the tiny children toddling about in uniform and doing military drill. But the poet's finer sensitiveness was deeply hurt, and he pointed out to Willie and me the wrong done to innocent childhood by such methods of war propaganda. He also pointed to the trophies of war which had been hung on the school walls as national symbols.

The strident sounds of harsh military preparations were heard in every town. Troops marched incessantly up and down. The newspapers were militant, and the whole atmosphere was full of war and excitement. When we spoke about this to leading Japanese, who came to meet the poet, they deeply regretted the fact, but said to us that there was no other help for any nation in the East so long as the huge military armaments of the West were continually being increased.

But the longer we stayed in the country the more we found that this exterior, however ugly in appearance, had not reached so far inward with its corrosion as to destroy the soul of Japan. That was still intact. One deeply touching incident occurred. At a small wayside station, in the heart of the hill country, the train halted for a few moments, by instructions from the railway authorities, as the poet passed through. A group of Buddhist priests, who were clad in sacramental robes, came forward to welcome him and offer their gifts. Their faces were marked with lines of gentle compassion. They were bearing in their hearts the burden of their Master—compassion for the sorrow of the world. Around them stood groups of Japanese officials in military uniform, while here before us there was a vision of serenity that appeared to come to us from another world—the beautiful sight of the poet's face, radiant with sympathy, and the look of reverence and peace on the face of the Buddhist monks.

Here again, at this wayside station in Japan, I seemed to be brought into the presence of Christ by what I saw, just as I had felt His presence in the faces of the Indian passive resisters in South Africa. The Spirit was one and the same.

The climax of militarism was reached during our visit in a careless epithet hurled at the poet by the newspapers after a series of lectures which he gave at the Imperial University. He had condemned severely the growth of aggressive

nationalism which was destroying the beauty of the true Japanese civilisation. They were daring lectures for the poet to deliver at such a heated moment, and they did not pass without comment. The newspapers warned the Japanese people not to listen to the voice of this " prophet of a defeated nation," lest Japan should be subjected to a foreign yoke, as India had been.

The poet had come to Japan with nothing but love in his heart for the Japanese people. He wished to speak to them the message which God had given him, and to learn from them afresh the universal principle of Compassion which the Buddha had proclaimed to the world. In the first few weeks of his visit the Japanese had received him with immense public enthusiasm. It was estimated that a quarter of a million people came out to welcome him at Tokyo station. Yet when it was discovered that his mind was not racial and national, and also that he hated war, the newspapers began their propaganda against his message, and in a short time the poet was isolated, where before he had been tumultuously received.

The epithet " defeated " when applied to his own country deeply hurt his sensitive nature, but he finely rose above it and glorified in the name, and sang the " Song of the Defeated,"* which reads thus :

My Master has bid me, while I stand at the roadside, to sing the song of Defeat, for that is the Bride whom He woos in secret ;
She has put on the dark veil, hiding her face from the crowd, but the jewel glows on her breast in the dark ;
She is silent, with her eyes downcast ; she has left her home behind her ; from her home has come that wailing in the wind.
But the stars are singing the love-song of the eternal to a face sweet with shame and suffering.
The door has been opened in the lonely chamber, the call has sounded, and the heart of darkness throbs with awe because of the coming tryst.

In that hour, my whole heart went out in deepest love towards the poet, and I knew what he had suffered. It

* Taken from Rabindranath Tagore's *Fruitgathering*, published by Macmillans, by kind permission of the author and publisher.

recalled to me a "defeated nation" to which my Master, Christ, belonged, and how He Himself had been "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

On another voyage, at a later date, the poet visited China. I was with him during a part of this journey also. At Pekin, with forceful words of prophetic warning he had spoken out against bowing down to worship the material successes of the West. "Do you dare," he said to the students, "to say might is right, and that you have learnt this lesson from the West? Long ago, in ancient India, one of our greatest writers said, 'By unrighteousness men may prosper and gain their desires, but *they perish at the root.*' Just as civilisation in the past has gone down into oblivion which did not put moral truth before material power, so the West is standing in terrible danger to-day. 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

Here again the poet's pointed utterance at such a time of public excitement in China was finely courageous, and only one who had the age and wisdom and moral character of Rabindranath Tagore could say it effectively.

Both in China and Japan he ultimately won his way, owing to his singular purity of heart and moral goodness; and whenever he has returned to these countries in recent years he has been welcomed as a true prophet and listened to with reverent affection.

It was necessary for me, on account of serious ill health, to return to India, while the poet went on with Willie Pearson to America. On the voyage back, which I made on a Japanese ship, I was entirely alone with my own thoughts. My mind was deeply engaged with the one problem of religion in the history of man. What had been its effects on man's development in the past? What would be its place in the days to come? Where was its unity to be found?

On this voyage, and on another occasion, I stayed in Java. There I visited Boro-Budur, the Hill of the Great Buddha, and spent some days alone in that wonderful place, profoundly moved. Its sculptures were a revelation to me. They gave me the clue which I had long been seeking concerning the organic unity of the religious history of man in East and West. For it was possible to recreate, while

traversing the long corridors, the vivid story of the past which they portrayed.

There, at every turn of the great galleries, was the calm figure of the Buddha, who had attained peace. In the rock-sculptures were carved the different incidents of the life of the Buddha and the spread of the Buddhist faith. Through them all ran the same thought of Compassion. At one point the Buddha is surrounded by the birds and beasts who have come to hear the Law of Compassion. In others, the disciples of the Buddha are preaching the same Law of Compassion to the aboriginals. It became clear to me from the witness of the rocks that the Buddhist movement had humanised the East in a way not unlike the humanising of barbarous Europe by Christian influences during the Dark Ages of the West.

In each historical instance the ultimate message, which had wrought the profound spiritual change and had sweetened human life at the heart's core, had been one in its moral significance. It had been the one message of the supreme beauty of goodness and love as altogether mightier than brute force. It declared, in terms which had touched the heart of mankind—now in the East and now in the West—that the sacrifice of one's own life, voluntarily, to save others is the highest act of man's spirit.

It was the "old commandment" that "was from the beginning," about which St. John speaks in his Epistle—the old commandment which is ever new—that love, shown forth in deeds, is the greatest thing in all the world. "Beloved," St. John the aged writes, "let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God. For God is love."

Many times over since then I have been obliged to take long voyages and land journeys to distant parts of the earth on different enterprises, sometimes with the poet, sometimes on behalf of Indian settlers in distant lands.

This present journey which I am now undertaking on board the *Kenilworth Castle* is bringing me to South Africa for the seventh time; East and Central Africa have become almost as well known to me as South Africa. Between these different voyages I have lived with Rabindranath Tagore, for whom my reverence and love have grown deeper year by year. There, at Santiniketan, the Abode of Peace, I have learned

to understand the spiritual beauty which underlies Indian life, keeping it sweet through all the ages, in spite of cruelties and wrongs which have gone unredressed.

The theme which this book has been trying to record—what I owe to Christ—has contained many fresh chapters during these crowded years. But these must be told, if opportunity is given to write them, at another time. The story would repeat with new phrases what Christ, my Master, has led me forward to discover all the way—the depths of His love.

One story of Africa remains to be told, and I have kept it till the last; for it is the most beautiful and significant of all.

I had been in hospital in Namirembe, overlooking Lake Victoria Nyanza, just above Kampala, and had been slowly recovering health once more. The kindness of the Christian missionaries there had touched me very deeply indeed, and I had come into intimate contact with young Baganda Christians, who welcomed me to their country as a friend. From Kampala I had gone on to Jinja, at the head of the lake, near the Ripon Falls.

Then, one day, I had been asked by the Indian community to accompany them to a small township, called Iganga, where a few Indian traders were having difficulty about their shop sites.

We motored out to Iganga. Two Hindu friends and one Parsee accompanied me. When we had gone a considerable distance into the interior, they asked me to turn aside from the road in order to visit a mission station of the White Fathers in the bush.

There we met an aged Roman Catholic priest and two equally aged Sisters of the Poor who were out there in the bush, surrounded by little children who had learnt to love them. All around was primitive savagery, naked and unashamed, wild and untamed. There, in the midst of it all, without a single earthly comfort or convenience, these three good souls would live on, with no thought of ever returning home or changing their lot, until a simple cross under the shelter of their church would mark their graves. I have seen and visited such stations, not here alone, but in other parts of the primitive world of mankind, and they have always filled me with awe and wonder at the power of Christ's Spirit

of love to sustain weak, mortal human nature through the hardest sacrifices of all with utter joy.

My Hindu and Parsee companions explained to me that they had to visit Iganga regularly on business, but they could never pass that way without making a turn away from the main road to pay them a visit.

The old Catholic Father told me from his side how generous these friends had been to them, and how more than once they had saved them and their primitive people from destitution in hard times. As he said these words, I could see the tears start from his eyes. His speech showed me, as he talked on, that he had come from Ireland; and one could see how his heart had remained the warm, tender Irish heart he had when he was a boy, only softened and sweetened by old age.

The Sisters of the Poor busied themselves trying to find something in their slender store to offer us to eat before we passed on, and we accepted their hospitality with some anxiety, lest we should be depriving them of what little they had. But their joy was so great in serving us that we could not deny them their pleasure. The children who came round us in great numbers were absolutely free from any fear or alarm. They loved the Father and the two Sisters with a touching devotion, and made friends at once.

As I watched them, the story of Father Damien at Molokai, in the Pacific, among the lepers, came back to me, and it was an inexpressible joy to me to think that all over the world there were simple souls like these pouring out their lives richly with all goodness in sacrifice for Christ's sake.

Once, when I was at Oxford, an Indian student spoke to me very earnestly indeed. "I can understand," he said, "the motive power of patriotism, which can drive men and women to do deeds of mighty heroism for their country. But there is one thing I *cannot* understand, and I want you to explain it to me.

"I have read of Father Damien's life among the lepers, and here at Oxford I have heard of men and women of the highest intellect gladly sacrificing life itself, unknown and unheard of, not for their own country, but for the sake of some of the most primitive savages on earth. What is the spiritual power which makes this possible? What is this power of Christ of which they speak?"

I could only tell him from my own experience that it was

the daily presence of the living Christ, claiming them by His love, that had wrought this love in return. For Christ had said, "I was an hungered and athirst, naked and sick, in prison. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

That Catholic Father at Iganga and those two Sisters of the Poor could never have sustained this radiant joy right on to the end, till their faces shone with the light of another world, unless they had known that most intimate of realities, the living Presence of Christ with them in their daily labour of love.

Tennyson gives us the graphic picture of the nurse in the children's hospital ward who is taunted by the doctor's rough word as he tells her that "the good Lord Jesus" has *had* His day. She replies from the depth of her own heart's love for the Saviour:

Had? *Has it come? It has only dawned. It will come by and by.*
Oh, how could I serve in the wards if the Hope of the World were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and loathsome smell of disease,
But that He said, "Ye do it to Me when ye do it to these"?

Human life would sink back incredibly far, beyond all recovery whatsoever, if it were not for this supreme miracle of grace which Christ's presence has brought to mankind.

CHAPTER XIX CHRIST IS ALL

WE who have been born in the Christian faith, and have inherited many centuries of Christian experience, can now look back to each fresh generation in turn and watch this miracle of grace renewed, whereby the life of Christ perpetuates itself in the hearts of men and women and renews its victories of love in every age.

There are, in evidence, concrete acts of fiery martyrdom which each generation has known, whereby the Christian faith itself has been tested, and has proved itself to be pure gold, refined seven times in the fire.

"I have fought the good fight," says the apostle Paul, "I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." "These are they," the Apocalypse records, "that have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The seer speaks of the white-robed army of martyrs who endured the first terrible persecutions under Nero and Domitian. Human endurance could hardly go further than what they had to suffer.

"Now I begin to be a disciple," cried Ignatius, as he went joyfully on his way to Rome to be torn to pieces in the arena by the wild beasts. Perpetua, a Christian lady, otherwise unknown, speaks of her love for Christ as she goes to suffer the same fate. These were among the first children of the Christian faith of whom the world was not worthy. They were destitute, afflicted, tormented, but counted it all joy to suffer for their Lord.

Known and unknown, the same story is told over and over again; the same miracle of love is wrought over and over again. Suffering is turned to joy. Faith reigns triumphant over death. Hope rises on wings above the grave of dark despair.

Not only have there been shining examples of heroic sacrifice recorded in the pages of history, but also the beautiful devotion of countless men and women, unrecorded and forgotten, who in Christ's name, and out of pure love for Him alone, have silently endured the loss of all things, gladly offering life itself in His service. These have been the salt of the earth in every fresh generation, living humbly, praying silently, enduring manfully and womanly, lifting the world's burden of pain and redeeming mankind in Christ.

We find this secret of the Christian's true strength told in immortal words of love by the saints who have suffered most, and therefore have experienced most deeply the fullness of Christ's joy. They have sung songs which never grow old. Next to the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, their songs of devotion to Him have gladdened the hearts of men and women in whatever language they have been translated. The hymns of St. Bernard, the *De Imitatione Christi*, the *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, the *Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence—these all tell the same story of the Kingdom and the Cross. Perfect joy, they tell us, can be found here and now in this present world by those adven-

turers and lovers who are prepared to listen to the voice of Him who calls, " Follow thou Me."

And when we come down close to our own times, we can still trace in every land the same unquenchable yearning of the Christian soul to suffer with the Lord Jesus. Livingstone's solitary death in Central Africa, as he knelt fever-stricken in prayer with his New Testament open before him : Coleridge Patterson in Melanesia, loving to the end those who in their ignorance put him to a cruel death ; Hannington of Uganda, dying in the same manner ; Sadhu Sundar Singh, determined at all cost to enter into Tibet ; Kagawa of Japan, burning his own life away like a flame of sacrifice for the poorest of the poor ; Aggrey of Africa, toiling beyond human strength to heal by Christian love the wounds which racial contempt had made ; and those unknown lads in Uganda who followed Christ to martyrdom, singing with their last breath the songs of love to their Redeemer—all these, and numberless others besides, men, women, and young children, have borne witness to their Lord in years so recent that we may almost take them by the hand and look into their eyes and learn their secret from their own lips. It is the open secret of love for the One Master, who died for them that they might live to Him.

In this company of humble and heroic souls I would dare to place with deepest reverence and surest confidence of hope, the saintly lives of my own father and mother, who first of all revealed to me by their own self-sacrifice and devotion the beauty of the Christian Life. What I owe to Christ, I owe to them, who by their own examples bound me to His service.