



THE INNER LIFE

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C. F. ANDREWS

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THE INNER LIFE



CATALOGUED

By the Same Author

WHAT I OWE TO CHRIST
SADHU SUNDAR SINGH
JOHN WHITE OF MASHONALAND
CHRIST IN THE SILENCE
CHRIST AND HUMAN NEED

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON


THE INNER LIFE

By

C. F. ANDREWS

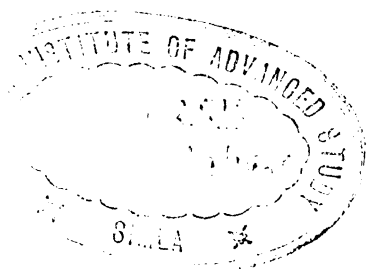
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TO
THE DEAR MEMORY
OF MY
FATHER AND MOTHER

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast,—
Glad when Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay;
Make all our moments calm and bright;
Chase the dark night of sin away;
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

FOREWORD

I AM never afraid of repeating a story which has proved of value to others: for time passes very quickly, and while some may be glad to have the incident recalled in a new way, others may be able to read it for the first time.

This book is based on a brief personal narrative which I had told in outline many years ago, but had never completed.¹ It describes the long struggle which I went through to keep the inner peace of Christ in my heart during times of great difficulty and trouble; and how His abiding presence became more and more the one reality, helping me to win the victory.

Many people have sent letters from different parts of the world telling me how the brief story of my own struggle had helped them in theirs. Therefore the impulse came very strongly to me to write again on the same subject, only at much greater length, not avoiding repetition where it was needed and also keeping the same personal note throughout. For on many journeys recently taken by sea and land in distant parts of the world I have seen how people

¹ See Introduction to *Christ in the Silence*, p. 17, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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everywhere are earnestly longing to find Christ more truly in their inner lives as their one Hope and Stay.

This new volume is being published at a price which I hope may make it accessible to poor people, and for reading in adult Bible classes. I am still further hoping that it may be studied, either in English or in a translation, both in Africa and the East, and also in Central and South America. At Tambaram, in December, 1938, where delegates from all over the world were assembled, speaker after speaker from different countries emphasised the one supreme need of realising the abiding presence of Christ in the daily life. The experience I had there, as one of the members of the World Conference, gave me a further incentive to write without any further delay.

The volume is dedicated to the dear memory of my father and mother, who first taught me by their own example to hold this implicit and essential faith in Christ, which could never afterwards be finally shaken, however great the shocks and upheavals which I have had to encounter. My mother in her own active life, amid all the daily drudgery of incessant service of others, never lost the one constant joy of Christ's abiding presence. That joy could be seen in her eyes, even in the darkest hours. My father's radiant temperament remained with him also right up to the last, in extreme old age and

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infirmity, while he waited patiently for the Lord whom he so passionately loved.

Along with this remembrance of my father and mother, which has been continually before me while I have been writing these pages, and has inspired much that is here written, I have tried to describe some of the lessons of quietness and peace which have come silently to me from the examples of Indian Christians, who were my friends, such as Susil Rudra and Sadhu Sundar Singh; and, further still, from the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi, who, though not themselves Christians, have wonderfully expressed the spirit of Christ both in their lives and actions. The former of these has given me permission to publish one of the best-loved of his poems, which has helped me most of all. Of this poem ("Here is Thy footstool") Leslie Weatherhead has written, "Whenever we read these words of Tagore's poem we think at once of Jesus Christ."

Through the kindness of my friends, J. C. Winslow and Nicol Macnicol, I have added some of their translations of the Christian hymns of Narayan Vaman Tilak, the poet-saint of Maharashtra. These, together with Ellen Lakshmi Goreh's hymn, "In the Secret of His Presence," will serve to show the tender devotional spirit of India, the beauty of which is only very slowly becoming recognised and appreciated in the West.

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I have referred in one chapter of this book, with deepest gratitude, to the help which I received through the Oxford Group, at Ermatingen in Switzerland, when my need was very sore indeed. In another chapter, I have acknowledged a similar debt to the Student Christian Movement, which has given me such abundant opportunities of coming face to face, and heart to heart, with the student world. I would thank also the Editor of the *Quiver* for allowing me to use an article which was published in that magazine in July, 1938; and J. Mathew, of the Syrian Christian Church, for his excellent typing.

C. F. ANDREWS.

CHRISTUKULA ASHRAM,
TIRUPATTUR, NORTH ARCOT DISTRICT,
SOUTH INDIA.

CHAPTER I

First Years in the East

(1)

WHEN I first came out to India, more than thirty-five years ago, one of the welcome and wholesome changes in my life which struck me at once, as a newcomer, was the relief from the incessant strain of continual engagements. There was ample room for quiet and solitude because the pace of the daily life was slower. This was especially true in the hot weather, when most of the active work of the day had to be finished in the early morning hours, and the long afternoon could be spent indoors in the silence of one's own room. In my own case, during the first eight years, there were still further periods of rest forced upon me by continual attacks of malaria, which required long convalescence for recovery.

As the years went on, a very deep longing sprang up in my own mind to seek much more earnestly than I had done in England to know Christ's presence in the retirement of the inner life and to spend more time in prayer. I had already reached my thirty-fourth year when I came out to India,

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and one whom I had deeply revered at Cambridge, Dr. Ryle, the President of Queen's College, had reminded me that our Lord Himself had completed His ministry on earth at that age. Yet out of the years that had made up the most perfect life that had ever been lived on earth, by far the greater part were spent in silent preparation with no haste and much prayer. When I looked back on my own life and thought of His, I could see with pain that there had been no true proportion in it between activity and rest. Above all, the time devoted to prayer had been much too short. Now in India, during long periods of illness, Christ Himself had laid His hand upon me in order to teach me that great lesson. And how tenderly He did it!

For He gave me, from the very first, a new and intimate friendship with Susil Kumar Rudra, the Principal of St. Stephen's College, under whom I was set to work, and this friendship made all the difference in my life. Susil had learnt, through much inward suffering, how to retire within himself and shut the door on the outer world while he communed with his heavenly Father in secret. No one could be with him for long without feeling the atmosphere of peace which encompassed his whole life. After a short time, he offered me the great privilege of living with him as one of his own family and in this way I was able to share his home as well as his closest friendship.

When we got to know each other well, he would

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smile at my over-eagerness to "get things done" and humour me while laughing over my impetuosity. But in sickness, when I was laid up with malignant malaria, he had all the tenderness of a mother and father combined. It was restful to have him by my side, and he would warn me faithfully that in the East impatience was an evil and not a virtue. Since he was older than I was, and had suffered much through continual disappointment, he had the right to speak as he did, and his words went home because they carried love with them. The quietness with which he spoke to me, and the affection he gave me, made the wisdom of his words all the more impressive.

(2)

Ever since early days in England, communion with Christ had been to me the very first axiom of the Christian life; indeed, I had known the joy of His presence as the incentive of each action done in His name. But I had not retained this joy in the restfulness of prayer and silence. There I had failed. The work that had to be done among the poor and oppressed for His sake had so filled my mind and occupied my attention that I had begun to grudge every moment of the day that was not spent on such active service. Thus the importance which I attached to "getting things done" became out of all proportion to the real value of such actions.

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One of my oldest friends had said to me just after I had gone up to College, "Charlie, you have a good way of going *at* things." That might be perfectly true, and I was very happy when he said this so sincerely: for he regarded it as a praiseworthy feature and encouraged me about it. But he little knew what a great amount of nervous energy was exhausted in the process and how little resulted from many of the things that were done in such a hurry. Each day had tended to become crowded up with engagements, all admirable in their own way, which I had not the heart to refuse: but my own quiet prayer-life suffered in consequence very grievous harm; and even now the subtle temptation to crowd in work, at any cost, comes back to me whenever I am off my guard. Then I am obliged to go through once more the arduous discipline of facing hard, unpalatable facts, and bringing this part of my life into subjection to the will of Christ, my Lord and Master.

I have told elsewhere the story, how once in the rush to reach in time the College Chapel at Cambridge, when I was living away at some distance, I had so overstrained myself that suddenly I had fainted in the middle of the service and fallen headlong on the stone steps in the sacred building itself, to the great distress and alarm of those who were present. This was entirely due to my crowding things in at the last moment. Such an occurrence as

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this had sobered me and shocked me for the time being in an effective manner. For it compelled me to think over very carefully indeed the meaning of it all. But while I was in England the round of continual activity soon began all over again. Almost in spite of myself I would find out that I was hurrying from one engagement to another, with the consequence that nothing was done as well as it ought to have been done in His service.

Along with this continuous dissipation of energy there had ensued a nervous physical strain which has left its mark upon me in a manner that I can feel even up to the present day. Thus the work that I was doing suffered and became unworthy of Christ's acceptance. For He had made the highest demand of all upon me when I came into His glorious service. He had said with regard to anxiety that we should have no anxious care for the morrow. We should rather seek to be perfect even as our Father in heaven was perfect.

It ought to have been possible for me, in the light of that perfect love of my heavenly Father, to rise above these daily cares, and to live in the serene atmosphere of His promised peace. But the need of this did not come home to me, in all the fullness of its importance, while I was still in England. It required an entire change of environment and a time of quiet in the East before I could realise how unbalanced my life had really become.

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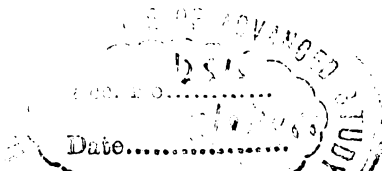
Susil Rudra had lost his wife, who had been all in all to him, soon after his youngest child had been born. He had never married again, though many who knew him had urged him to do so. His three children, Ila, Sudhir and Ajit, were still very young when I came to Delhi and shared his home. Since I was a bachelor and had no thoughts of marriage, his children became very dear to me indeed, as if they were my own children, and we shared all our joys and sorrows together. Even now, more than thirty years after, they look upon me as their own, and their children call me "grandfather." Indeed, throughout my life in India this earliest tie of intimate home affection has remained strongest. People have often wondered at the way in which Indian home life became so familiar to me: but here is the simple answer. The abiding friendship that I had from the very first with Susil Rudra made all the difference. He gave me a true outlook upon India as a whole and a true joy in the Indian home. All this brought me near to what is best in Indian character as it responds to the love of Christ.

During the College vacation each year, we used to go together into the interior, four or five days march beyond Simla along the Hindustan-Tibet Road. This brought us by easy stages right into the heart of the Himalayas, where the snow-clad peaks,

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towering up 26,000 feet into the sky, were always in front of us in a great panorama of beauty. Though the height of this range is not so great as that of Everest and Kanchanjunga further to the east, their immensity is hardly less impressive. They stand out against the sky more than a hundred miles distant and yet the air is so clear after the monsoon rains that they seem to be quite near at hand. From the top of Mount Hattu, the whole range can be seen, stretching in one vast sweep to the north, guarding all the passes into Tibet. The lesser ranges in the foreground, with their dark forests and deep valleys, are overtopped by these giant masses of snow which tower right up to heaven itself.

One of the highest parts of the whole range we used to call the "Cathedral" because of its remarkable shape, like a long cathedral nave with two spires. Sometimes the clouds would be gathered round the lower slopes and only the peaks would be visible. At other times the foreground would be free from cloud and mist, so that the vast stretches of snow could be seen right down to the snow-line itself. There was one special mile-stone on our march as we came near to Narkanda, where the narrow road went through a pass, which we called the "Gap." Here the distant mountains came suddenly into view in front of us, and heaven and earth seemed to meet. When, at sunset, the whole horizon was flushed with gold, the scene was like a



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city in the sky with its walls and gates and towers of jasper and amethyst and sapphire and emerald.

*“And I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem,
Coming down from God out of heaven,
Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”*

For in the sunset were all the jewelled colours mentioned in the Book of Revelation, and the billowy mists along the valley, as the evening light touched them, appeared as it were a great multitude of the heavenly host. The heavens truly declared the glory of God and the firmament showed His handiwork. God, the great Artificer, seemed to be painting anew with His many colours the mountains and the clouds, which every moment seemed to change their forms and shapes as the light flashed out upon them.

(4)

Here, one day, by a happy chance, we met Sadhu Sundar Singh, who had come out before us from the Plains and had heard that we were soon to arrive. He was still very young in years, though he had gone through a spiritual struggle which made him look much older than he really was. Even now he was preparing himself for his future journeys into the forbidden land of Tibet. For the call had reached him from Christ Himself to attempt the high adventure of crossing the mountain ranges by way

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of the Shipki Pass, beyond Pooi and Chini, where the Moravian missionaries had for some time past maintained their farthest mission stations.¹ He would have to go along a precipitous mountain track and cross over the pass itself, among the snows, at nearly 17,000 feet, entering the land where for a long time, in past years, no missionary had ever set his foot. He knew from the first that it might mean for him a martyr's death even to speak there the name of Jesus, and yet he was prepared to go forward alone. Already there was a far-away look in his eyes, as though his thoughts were absent, as he inwardly dreamt of the journey that lay before him. Yet from time to time a flash of joy would shine from his face as we earnestly talked together.

We greeted him with words of love and told him how we had longed to have this opportunity of meeting him face to face. He spoke but little in return, and we were ready, on our side, to let him go his own way as much as possible. Even when he stayed with us, he would often retire into solitude and prayer. Sometimes for days together he would absent himself, and we used to hear that he had gone out into the forest, where he could be alone. When he came at last from one of these periods of retirement, where Christ had been his one Companion, his voice would be singularly low, as if it were

¹ They have now been obliged to retire, and the Salvation Army has taken over some of their work.

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difficult for him to come back into the ordinary world of our everyday conversation.

Sadhu Sundar Singh was always a born solitary. Even before he became a Christian (so he once told us) he had determined to live the life of a *sadhu*; and his mother, who was a deeply religious woman, had encouraged him in this thought. At the time when Susil and I first met him at Kotgarh he revealed to us a rare beauty of character such as I had hardly ever met with in the West. It had been once my very great privilege to stay with Bishop Westcott of Durham, who was one of the saintliest men I have ever known. But he was an old man, whose earthly life was very nearly at its close, while Sadhu Sundar Singh was not only very young in years, but also young in the Faith. For his sudden conversion was quite recent. Yet in this short time he had been so transformed from within by the love of Christ that his countenance had been changed until it bore a wonderful likeness to that of his Lord and Master.

Like some deep, shaded lake, he was able to reflect in the dark gleam of his eyes that vision of his Lord which he saw within his own soul. St. Paul has described this very thing in a remarkable phrase where he writes: "We all, with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

The more I got to know Sadhu Sundar Singh,

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while meeting him year after year in these mountains and also at Delhi, where he stayed with Susil Rudra, the more I learnt to realise the depth of the love of Christ which was in his heart.

That trait of absentmindedness which Susil and I had both noticed was not so much due to any aloofness on his part, though he loved solitude. No one could be more gentle than he was with young children. They ran up to him instinctively and made him play games with them. His solitude of spirit was rather due to the fact that he was thinking of Christ, His Lord and Master, and the work set before him. He saw visions and his mind continually dwelt on the things of another world. He was a mystic as well as a hero in action, a visionary as well as a practical man of affairs, a rare combination in one and the same individual. To him, in many ways, the inner life had become more real even than the outward. This was what gave him such calmness of spirit in the midst of all kinds of outward dangers.

A full ten years have now gone by since the Sadhu made his last journey by a different route into Tibet. For in April, 1929, he went by the Pilgrim Way which leads to Badrinath, and then turned off from that road along a less frequented mountain track to enter Tibet by the Niti Pass, instead of going along the Hindustan-Tibet Road and entering by way of Chini and the Shipki Pass. Since then, though there have been many rumours, there has been no certain

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news about him. The Rev. T. E. Riddle, of New Zealand, from Kharar, near Ambala, and Dr. Taylor, of Roorkee, made a perilous journey in search of him, but could find no trace of him.

A large number of the Sadhu's devoted followers still hold the pathetic belief that he is living somewhere in the remote recesses of the Himalayas, far from the haunts of ordinary men, and that he is praying there in solitude for the coming of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.¹ Though I cannot share the view that he is still alive, I can understand the spirit of devotion which makes those who love him cling to the thought that he is not really dead. In the end, his name will be added to those martyrs and confessors of the Indian Christian Church, who "loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. xii. 11).

¹ See *Sadhu Sundar Singh: A Personal Memoir*, published by Hodder and Stoughton.

CHAPTER II

The Simplicity of Christ

(1)

THESE periods of rest in the mountains along with Susil Rudra, Sadhu Sundar Singh, and others, which followed each year the College work in Delhi, gave me ample leisure to think out more carefully than before the full significance of the Christian Gospel in its Eastern setting.

When I was in Cambridge, nearly fifty years ago, the tradition of Westcott and Hort still held sway. They had carried on the noble teaching of F. D. Maurice concerning the religious treasures of the East, which were, in the fullness of time, to have their due place within the Kingdom of God. Now an opportunity had been given me of putting their abstract thoughts to the test, and finding out in the concrete what these treasures were.

From the new and intimate friendships, which had now come into my life in India, my eyes were gradually opened; and the first effect was a painful awareness of the weakness of my own Christian character. For the stress laid upon the inner virtues of quiet confidence and detachment from the outer

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world touched me just where I had been most blind; and when Susil pointed out to me that Christ and His Apostles had cherished these virtues most of all, I went back to the New Testament and found out that his statement was correct. The very tenderness of Susil's love made it easy for me to accept his implied rebuke; for he had the faithfulness as well as the sympathy of a friend.

It became, therefore, much more clear to me that the inner life in Christ, with its profound emphasis on humility, has a supreme place as compared with the outward activities which belong to the Christian calling. If these inner qualities are absent, all other benefits are literally of no account. As St. Paul would say, "They profit nothing." More and more I should have to revise my conception of the *range* of the Christian character as Christ set it before us. The perspective had to be altered.

(2)

If anyone had asked me, while I was at home in England, what part of the New Testament I should have regarded as of primary importance for anyone going out to India, I should have been puzzled to give a reply. My thoughts would probably have gone first to the Acts of the Apostles and to some of the letters of St. Paul, with their emphasis on the building up of the Christian community and their central theme of devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ.

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No doubt these have their very great importance, and I would not deny it for a moment. But since I have come to the East, I have been able to see things more from an Eastern standpoint.

In the first place, I find myself going back to the records of the life of Christ contained in the Gospels. These appear to me now, more than ever before, to be elemental and universal. They come out of the heart of humanity, as revealed in Jesus, the Son of Man; and they appeal at once on that account to the heart of the East. They need no long explanation, as St. Paul's Epistles do. For their atmosphere itself is Eastern. Still further, they create a heartfelt longing to get back to a life of simplicity and away from all artificial standards. They present in picture forms, that are easily grasped by poor people, fundamental spiritual ideas concerning God and Man.

In India these simplicities find their rightful place. For somehow, out there, the things of the Spirit seem so much nearer. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, entering in, do not so easily choke the good seed of the Word, though there are other obstructions, which will be referred to later, that have to be avoided.¹

Whatever the West may say concerning the unpractical character of Christ's teaching, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, in India this is not felt to be true. Obedience out there seems possible.

¹ See Chapter IV, p. 58.

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When Jesus rejoiced in Spirit and thanked His heavenly Father for revealing His truth unto babes, rather than to the wise and prudent, He was clearly referring to those country people who had flocked to hear Him. So, in India, there are those in the villages who literally "take no anxious thought for the morrow" and pay no heed to food and raiment. They know from a long tradition the pathway of renunciation, and delight in following that road, especially when life is drawing to its close.¹

In the second place, the Gospel and Epistles of St. John find a universal response in the East. They go direct to the heart of mankind. Their symbolic language of the new birth, the living water, the light of the world, the true vine, the washing of the feet, the bread which comes down from heaven, the good shepherd and his flock, are part of that picture language, which is the natural language of everyday use, whenever in these Eastern countries men speak of the things of the Spirit. The imagery here used is not strange: the fundamental ideas are familiar. They touch the note of general human appeal. What I found true of simple humble people in England I have found equally true in the East. The whole world is here akin.

Therefore when Jesus speaks in St. John's Gospel of the seed that must die in order to bring forth

¹ See, for instance, the story of the life of Narayan Vaman Tilak, the Marathi Christian poet, as told by the Rev. J. C. Winslow. Builders of Modern India Series, p. 116.

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much fruit, and goes on to say, "He that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hateth his life in this world shall find it unto life eternal," He is speaking with music in His words, which at once goes home to the Indian heart. Such thoughts are not foreign, but recall the age-long village songs and ancient wisdom. For there is an eager readiness to sink the temporal in the eternal, and many spend their lives in such a quest.

Those who followed Bishop Westcott at Cambridge had taught me much about this when I was studying at the University and preparing to go out, if it was God's will, to the mission field. A wonderful appreciation of Indian thought characterised his whole outlook on the Christian Faith; and he had sent in succession four of his own sons to India. The youngest, Basil Westcott, was my own most intimate friend, who went out before me to Delhi and met his death there from cholera, while tending a sick patient in the Fort Hospital. The Bishop of Durham, in his old age, would talk like an ancient seer, with a vision of the future before his eyes. He would prophesy that St. John's Gospel could only be fully interpreted by the Indian Christian Church, and that the intellectual and spiritual appreciation of that Gospel's message would come most fully and richly at last from great Indian Christian thinkers, when they had gone far beyond the period of tutelage from the West, and had learnt to think for

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themselves on these profound subjects. Both Susil Rudra and the Sadhu showed me clearly how true that prophecy was, and how quickly it was coming to pass.

(3)

After more than ten years had gone by, my own work at last called me away from Delhi to new surroundings in the depth of the country in Bengal, where I went to live with the poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This change was made with Susil Rudra's cordial consent. His own life had been one continual self-sacrifice from beginning to end, and now he made what was to him one of the greatest surrenders of all, when he strongly encouraged me not to stay on with him at Delhi any longer, as I had been prepared to do, but rather to leave his own home and join Rabindranath Tagore in his creative work.

"If you tell me to stay on with you," I had said to him, when the question had to be faced at last, "I will stay most gladly."

But he had answered, "No, Charlie. You are more needed there, and you must go."

This is not the place to explain why this call was obeyed. I have already done so in one of my earlier books.¹ The wrench to both of us was very great indeed. If I had known that he was already suffering

¹ *What I Owe to Christ*, Chapter VIII, p. 148. Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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from an almost incurable disease, I could not have left him when I did. But he never told me.

Our parting came just before the European War. His eldest son, Sudhir, who was like a son to me, went out at once to Flanders in order to do hospital and ambulance work under the Young Men's Christian Association. His younger son, Ajit, also went to France, enlisting in a British regiment and going through the Battle of the Somme until he was invalided. He is now a Major in an Indian Regiment. His daughter Ila was married.

All this was never even thought of when I left Delhi; but it meant that Susil, in his old age, was left almost alone, while his illness grew more serious. Yet he never complained, or asked me to return. Rather, he encouraged me in every way to go on with what I was doing; and whenever he could find any leisure from College work he would come down for a few days to Santiniketan. He was loved by everyone there because of his perfect character, which was Christ-like both in its strength and tenderness. Above all, he was loved by Rabindranath Tagore himself, who had at once found out his goodness.

Susil had made plans, after his retirement, to live with me at the Asram. No one would have been more warmly welcomed; for the young looked up to him as a father, and he had all the qualities which appeal most to the Indian mind. But while he paid

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many visits and found his place in the hearts of all, he was never able to carry out his long-cherished design.

(4)

The poet's Asram at Santiniketan had been founded on the very spot where his father had spent the last years of his long life in prayer and retirement from the world. There was thus an atmosphere of quiet already present there, when Rabindranath Tagore began slowly to build up, in the same surroundings, an open-air school for boys.

It was a great joy to me to have my own work there, in the midst of the country, after the crowded city life of imperial Delhi. The word *Santi-niketan* itself means "The Abode of Peace"; and the situation which his father, who was called "Maharshi" (Great Saint), had chosen in the depth of the country corresponded well with that beautiful title. The memory of Maharshi was still fragrant, and many stories were current in the Asram with regard to his saintly character and his entire devotion to God. His prayer-seat, under two ancient trees, covered with a white-flowering creeper, is still pointed out to those who come to take up their work as teachers and students. Peace pervades this quiet, secluded spot, where so much prayer has been poured forth, year after year, since Maharshi first chose it for his own retreat.

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In Rabindranath Tagore, who was much older than I was, another friend had now been given to me in God's good providence, whose love became almost as dear to me as that of Susil Rudra himself. It was my greatest joy to bring Susil to the Asram, where he met the poet Tagore for the first time and quickly learnt to love him as I did. Truly my whole life has been blessed by God with great and noble friendships and I cannot be too thankful for these wonderful gifts. We are told that "every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning" (Jas. i. 17). If I were asked what had been the best of all human gifts in a long lifetime, I should answer without a moment's hesitation, "The gift of noble friends who have trusted me with their love."

(5)

As I entered on my new duties at Santiniketan, life became still more restful for me. There was now a full opportunity of thinking out the meaning of all this fresh experience which drew me so closely to the heart of the East and made me realise how much we had still to learn of Christ's character as portrayed to us in the Gospels. The serene spirit of the poet himself, which he seemed to have inherited from his father and had kept unsullied in the midst of all kinds of temptation, was present in the Asram and

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enriched every part of this noble work of his own creation.

Was there not something here, I asked myself almost daily, that we in the crowded West had unconsciously left out of Christ's perfect message to mankind?

When Jesus opened the Book in the synagogue of His own town at Nazareth, He read the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised: to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

After I had thought over these words very carefully in this new environment, it came home to me still more plainly than ever before that Jesus had been drawn most of all towards those multitudes of simple men and women who have always lived close to the soil. I could see how the insensate haste to get rich, at the cost of increasing the poverty of the very poor, had been one of the greatest sins of the modern age. In the rapid spread of large-scale industrial "civilisation" in Europe and America, men and women had tended to lose all count of those true riches which are to be found in simplicity and goodness. During those early days at Santiniketan, while we were struggling to make two ends meet and living

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in extreme poverty, we rejoiced that we had found therein a treasure which was above all worldly gain.

The sayings of Jesus, condemning those who trusted in riches and giving His own blessing to the poor, had always been there before my eyes; but in the West, with its modern standards of comfort, this word of the Gospel had been like the seed which fell among the thorns, that sprang up and choked it. The incessant over-activity of the West was chiefly due to the attempt to keep up a false standard of monetary values by means of reckless and cruel competition, leaving Christian morals out of account.

(6)

In the quiet of Santiniketan I often went back to the story of Jesus in the early Gospels—His silent preparation in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth; His hard, exacting work in order to earn the daily bread for those in His own home; His family duties, faithfully and quietly performed, which kept Him in retirement for so many years, while God's message was burning in His heart.

Only after He had passed the age of thirty had He gone forth at last in the power of the Spirit to establish on earth God's kingdom among men. Even then, when the crowds had pressed upon Him so insistently that His spiritual strength had become exhausted, He had gone apart into a desert place to

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rest awhile. Thus He had refused to go beyond the strength, which His Father had given Him, even though His heart was filled with compassion for the multitudes and He longed to shepherd them.

Meanwhile, to the weary and heavy-laden around Him He had promised that rest for the soul which was His greatest gift to mankind. Thus He had placed first the supreme need of the soul. "What shall it profit a man," He had asked again and again, "if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" No word of His was repeated more often than this, with almost tragic insistence, as He saw men eagerly seeking after the bread that perished and neglecting the Bread of Life.

On other occasions, He had put before those who were His closest friends and disciples the example of the flowers of the field and the birds of the air. Their perfect beauty gave mankind the divine pattern for its own troubled existence. In words that have cheered countless generations of nerve-worn people, He assured them, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

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righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 30-3).

(7)

With words such as these, which we Christians have all learnt from our childhood, but refused to put fully into practice, Jesus had tenderly rebuked His own closest companions, who had gathered round Him and shared His daily life in Galilee. He had chided them also when they were full of fear during the storm on the Lake and had said to the waves, "Peace, be still," and there was a great calm. He had told them how impossible it was to serve God and Mammon at the same time, and had shown them by His own example the joy that was their own, whenever they put their complete trust in their heavenly Father and served Him without fear. Later on, He had sent them out two by two preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, so that they might retain their confidence even when they were absent from Him.

For this freedom from restless anxiety and worldly care was not a romantic quality, divorced from the practical life, but a real gift from God, to be exercised most when the storms of life were threatening and death itself was staring them in the face. For He, their Lord and Master, who had commanded them to abandon fear, would prove to them the living truth of His words in the darkest hour of all,

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when the whole world was against Him and the powers of evil were assailing Him on every side. Even in that last hour of desolation, He would take the Twelve apart into the quiet of the upper room and shut the door upon the outside world, so that He might bestow on them His final gift of peace.

“Let not your heart be troubled,” He had said to them. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

On these great themes, my own mother had been my best teacher. She had taught me silently, each day of her life, by her own example. For she had been able to put Christ’s words into practice with her large family all around her. My father also carried a light heart and a radiant smile, wherever he went, because his inward faith in Christ was so complete. No one who saw him, or even met him on the road, could fail to note what happiness was in his heart.

Just before I went up to College, as I have already told, it had become my dearest longing to know more of this inward peace which Jesus gives to the soul. But I had lost sight of it in the complexity of modern life, where too many things are crowded into each day. Christ’s own promise was strangely neglected, amid the ever-growing pressure of meetings, engagements, and invitations to speak the

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message of the Gospel, along with many other kinds of activities.

In the East, however, this situation had now been relieved. The proportion of my time, that had before been given to external things, became gradually lightened. A much larger space was made available for prayer and meditation. The daily life ceased to be a perpetual rush from one engagement to another. The close personal friendship with generous Indian minds, that was so wonderfully offered to me, helped in the same direction. A haven had been reached at last at Santiniketan, where the vessel of my life had dropped its anchor.

CHAPTER III

Christ's Gift of Peace

(1)

YET it was not for very long that this precious opportunity for leisure at Santiniketan was allowed me. The gift of peace, for which I longed so much, had not yet fully come. For I had literally to put to sea again and again, during the years that followed, and was called upon to travel all over the earth to far-distant places in order to help Indian labourers who had gone abroad under indenture.

In these different voyages, every continent in the old world and in the new was visited in turn, and also Fiji, where many Indians had settled. After each voyage was over and this work was completed and a report written, it was a very great relief to be able to come back once more to Santiniketan and take up my old teaching work again in those peaceful surroundings.

(2)

On all the earlier journeys, Willie Pearson, who had been my friend and colleague both at Delhi and

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at Santiniketan, accompanied me as a fellow-worker and shared to the full every burden with me. Here, also, my life was blessed by a deep personal friendship. Willie was much younger than I was. He was the son of Dr. Samuel Pearson of Manchester, the celebrated Congregational minister. His mother was a Quaker, with a long Quaker tradition in her family. He had inherited much of her peaceful spirit and her manner of living. Meditation was a joy to him, and he gave much of his time to its practice. In this way, he entered more readily into the heart of India than I had been able to do. His was a rare gift of a mind at rest within itself combined with an active, joyous temperament. He would make everyone feel that he had leisure for them and could truly sympathise with their difficulties. There was no sense of haste or impatience about him in dealing with other people.

He had his own singular way of living among the students and sharing their pleasures with them. It was so unique that no one has ever been able to follow him since or to gain such a remarkable influence with the students. He had a genius for friendship, and used to share his affection with all the students rather than make friends with one or two, who would in that case have tried to monopolise all his time. He was very happy indeed at the manner in which the boys of the School had changed his English name Pearson into Priya Sen, meaning

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one who was dearly loved. Friendship was at the very centre of his character and the epithet *priya* admirably expressed this.

But just when he had reached the height of his very remarkable career, a terrible railway accident happened to him on a journey in North Italy. He was on his way back to India, and while travelling by an express train a door, which had been carelessly left unfastened, gave way as he leant against it, and he fell out of the carriage on to the railway line with such violence that his injuries proved to be fatal. After nearly a week of agony, heroically borne, he thus met his death. His loss to us all at Santiniketan was irreparable. For me, personally, it was one of the great sorrows of my life; for we had come near to each other in our Christian ideals and shared our hopes together. No one was more loved in India by students than he was, and his death was mourned throughout the colleges in the north of India, especially in Calcutta, as a personal loss.

Some years after the railway accident in Italy, whereby he met his death, the boys of the Asram were keeping the anniversary of this day in September. In the evening, some jars were placed along the road, which the boys had called Pearson Road, and lights were placed inside which threw their beams upward. The choir of the School went up and down the road singing the songs he loved.

At a meeting which followed I referred to the

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Pearson Road, along which we had just been walking up and down, singing our songs in chorus. This road, I said, ran direct from the Asram to the Santal village where Pearson had worked among the poor. Therefore, the row of lights pointed the way to the Santal village. We must go on with the work which he had thus left for us when he died.

Later on in the evening, a small boy came up to me, on the tip-toe of excitement, and said in Bengali, "I can tell a better story than that!" I was much amused by his eagerness and asked him to say what was in his mind.

"Why," he said, "the sun rises over here at the back of the Asram in the east, and the sun sets behind the Santal village in the west. Our Pearson Road runs thus from east to west; and he was always doing this. He was uniting east and west."

The story delighted me and I told the little boy that it was much better than my own, and that we must all try to live up to it.

Because Willie Pearson kept to the end the heart of a child, his gifts of love and service were most precious. Others have brought with them much learning. But the spirit of the child, frank, free and courageous, with infinite hope shining through the dull routine of daily life—this was a lavish gift, which Willie gave us, and therefore he will always be remembered, as one of the most Christ-like men we have ever known at Santiniketan.

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(3)

In South Africa, which I visited first of all in 1913, these inner qualities of patience, meekness and forbearance, so typical of India, were being exercised on a large scale and in a striking manner by Mahatma Gandhi and his followers. Willie and I had gone out together in order to assist him in his passive resistance struggle on behalf of the indentured Indian labourers in Natal, who had suffered a very grievous wrong.

Under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, all violence in thought and word and deed had been laid aside, and *ahimsa* (non-violence) alone had been practised as the one mighty power whereby this wrong might be set right and justice might be done. The sight of all the suffering that this involved brought me strangely near in spirit to those verses in the Sermon on the Mount—"Resist not evil," "Love your enemies"—which most of us, except the Quakers, had regarded as politically impracticable in the hard modern world wherein we live to-day.

Yet here, in South Africa, I found Mrs. Gandhi speaking with kindness of those who had been her jailors, when she had gone joyfully to prison and suffered great hardships along with Mr. Gandhi himself and thousands of others as passive resisters.

Mahatma Gandhi was not yet known in India

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except by repute. He had spent altogether twenty-four years of his life away from India, in Natal and the Transvaal, until he had become the one recognised leader of the Indian community out there. While I was with him in South Africa, we shared everything in common and very soon became like brothers together. We were nearly the same age. He represented to me Indian character, which I had learnt to love, at its best. He soon found out the restless strain in my own temperament and helped me to overcome it by protecting me from overwork and encouraging me to retire early in the evening in order to get up before the sunrise each morning. This has become a necessary part of my daily life and has often saved me from disaster.

It was my great joy, when in India, to be the first to introduce Mahatma Gandhi to Susil Rudra and Rabindranath Tagore. The mutual affection, which we all shared together, became a threefold cord binding us close to one another.

(4)

There was one other whom I have yet to mention. He was the brother of Rabindranath, whom we called "Borodada," which means "elder brother." His closing years were spent at his cottage in Santiniketan with a peacefulness around him that was a benediction to us all. Already he was nearly eighty when I first made his acquaintance. He would

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sit writing in the shade of his veranda for the greater part of the day, while the squirrels played round him and shared with him, along with the birds, his simple meal. In the evening, when his writing was finished, I used to visit him, and he would tell me all his thoughts about the eternal truths of life; for he lived very near indeed to the unseen world in his old age and his heart had remained as innocent as that of a child. To be with him was to realise the benediction of the pure in heart who see God face to face. Susil Rudra had a deep veneration for him and so had Mahatma Gandhi when he came to know him. Whenever I was in Santiniketan, I never missed these evenings with Borodada, which meant so much to me. There was a peace which could be felt in his presence.

Much of the quiet at Santiniketan was learnt during silent walks alone over the open country, which stretched far and wide on almost every side. When Susil was with me, he would share these walks, and his good counsel was ever ready to help me in difficult decisions. We would also sit together for long hours in the cool of the evening after the sun had gone down, while the stars came out one by one. Nowhere in the whole world is night more beautiful than in India, where for more than half the year the sky is almost cloudless, and the moon and stars are visible in all their glory. The habit of getting up before the dawn for quiet and prayer became more

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normal with me, and this brought strength and healing with it, even when the hardest problems had to be faced throughout the day.

(5)

Many other recollections come back to my mind with regard to this gift of peace which God was thus offering to me late in my Christian life. It remained with me on those long sea journeys which I had to undertake. For there is a quiet on board ship, when the crew and passengers are nearly all asleep and only the officer on the bridge and those who are helping him are awake. The open sky with its myriad stars overhead and the still ocean below seem then to be the symbol of two immensities between which the spirit of man is poised both in space and time. God is ready to speak to us out of that vast silence, if only we are in heart and soul attuned to "listen in" to His voice. The monotonous lap of the waves against the side of the ship seems only to add to the stillness.

Thus, little by little, instead of the old strained feeling, a new restfulness came flowing in. My happiness was this, that Christ's love and goodness had returned in their fullness, recalling once more those days which followed my conversion nearly forty years ago. I had felt His close companionship among the poor and the needy and the sick and suffering, in the loneliness of the stranger, and

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among the outcast and oppressed; and now I had found Him near to me through this ever-deepening peace. What had been fugitive before became more constant, and I longed for its completeness.

(6)

On coming back from the first voyage to South Africa, which I have described, I had gone back to the Asram after the school had broken up and everyone was away. Only a single servant was remaining near the house where I lived. Then, without a moment's warning, the dread disease of Asiatic cholera attacked me in its most virulent form just before night came on, and no medical aid was near. It was long before the doctor could arrive and life itself had almost ebbed away.

Yet in that desolate hour of suffering, as I entered the dark valley, Christ was with me. When the loving help both of doctor and friends came at last, I was already expecting death. I had known also the agony of great darkness, which seems to strike the soul when pain reaches its breaking point; but after it had done its worst, peace returned.

For many days, I was hardly conscious of the outside world while I hovered between life and death. The human love of Rabindranath Tagore himself and the affection of those who waited on me with such courage and compassion, brought very near to me the love of Christ Himself. For He was by

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my side and the veil of outward things had become so thin that at times I felt that I could almost see Him face to face.

Out of that semi-consciousness, through which I passed in a kind of dream for many days, I awoke at last into a strangely different world. Old things had passed away and much of my former restlessness had gone. For after I had begun to recover some of my earlier strength, the sense of God's protection and mercy filled my heart with thankfulness. Truly I could say with the Psalmist:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Ps. xl. 1-3).

(7)

For this illness in the long run proved a blessing to me. Indeed, looking back, I can see that it was one of the greatest blessings of my life. For throughout all the weary days of convalescence, I had time and leisure to think slowly. During the long hours of the day, as I lay out on the veranda propped up with pillows and unable to read much, I used to dream about the future.

It was then that I received the call to go out to

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Fiji in order to help the Indian labourers. This call came in such a distinct manner that it could not be disobeyed.¹ It opened up other wider prospects also. Indeed, out of that illness and its convalescence my whole life purpose was shaped anew. For I had then full time to listen to the voice of God. He had taken me apart for that very purpose and "set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." He had also "put a new song in my mouth." His love had come closer to me than ever before.

Other illnesses followed. For this first attack of cholera, which was so very nearly fatal, had left a chronic weakness behind it, and something of the same kind returned to trouble me on several occasions later. But, for the time being, Santiniketan was a perpetual refreshment to me. New friendships were formed there, as the years passed by, which kept me close to the heart of India. For I was in the midst of the most lovable people in the world, and I knew that I had won their love as they had won mine.

¹ See *What I Owe to Christ*, Chapter XVII, p. 274.

CHAPTER IV

Storm and Stress

(1)

WHEN, in a much later period of my life, I came back to the West once more and had to travel and lecture in Great Britain, Europe and America, the fact that struck me most of all, after living for so many years in the East, was the acceleration of the pace at which human life had been "speeded up." The unnatural and cruel strain of the World War, and the high nervous tension that followed, had made the rivalry of one nation with another, both in the race of armaments and in modern inventions, appear to be a necessary part of human existence, as the West had got used to regard it.

For instance, what at once engaged my attention was such an elementary thing as to keep myself from being run over in the streets of London, and to learn how to avoid the traffic! While there was excitement about all this, the strain began to tell almost in the first few days. Though I had been a townsman before and was used to busy streets, I was quite unprepared for the change which had come so suddenly in the

matter of speed and noise. The pace had enormously increased. The quiet which I had found in the East was soon dissipated in the whirl of requests for engagements, that commenced at once to come in when people knew that I had returned from India. The telephone, telegraph and post brought continual messages, which had to be answered promptly. It was most difficult to know what to accept and what to refuse. The cost in time and money mounted up, with very little corresponding benefit.

I can vividly remember one day in London taking an Indian friend, who had just disembarked at Tilbury, through a crowded part of London near the Euston Road. As he stood there on the pavement watching the motor cars and omnibuses rush past him at a furious speed, his whole body began to quiver with excitement. I had to hold him in check to prevent him from trying to make a dash across the road, which might have proved fatal.

What further impressed me was the fact that in America the speed at which life was being lived had become even faster than that of Europe. For in great cities like New York and Chicago the pace was far beyond that of Paris or London or Berlin. There is, indeed, among the young a peculiar pleasure in this enhanced speed which modern science has accomplished. Fine courage and daring faith seem in some way to be wrapped up with it, and these always appeal to the temperament of youth. Nor can they

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be left out of count by those who are eager to set forward the coming of the Kingdom of God.

I had always recognised this, and had no wish to be set down too soon among the cautious and elderly people who have no sympathy with great adventure and high spirits. But when I looked more closely at the faces of those whom I met and noticed their strained looks, where peace ought to be enthroned, I could not help wondering how long this killing pace would last. The loss of balance was already quite obvious. There was a feverish anxiety to be occupied all the while with the surface of things, as though one dreaded to go deeper. Among the women whom I met the tension appeared to be greatest of all. No doubt, their lot to-day is even harder than that of the men, owing to this ever-increasing strain.

(2)

Since I had been living all these years in the East in what was practically a different world of space and time, wherein the "tempo" was much slower, it was possible for me keenly to appraise what was taking place in modern Europe and America. Not only had technical invention brought about these rapid changes, but the atmosphere of the West had become so unsettled that it seemed supercharged with movement. One crisis had followed another, until the foundations of modern society had begun to crumble.

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Still greater changes were likely to follow, bringing still further perplexity. We seemed to be on the eve of a catastrophe, not unlike that which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem.

Just as in our Lord's time, so again to-day, men's hearts were "failing them for fear and for looking after those things which were coming on the earth." The powers of heaven were being shaken (Luke xxi. 26). In such a "Day of the Son of Man," Jesus warns us that His true disciples must not give way to craven fear, but lift up their heads. While they might have to meet face to face with tribulation, such as the world had not seen before, they must still be of good cheer. In patience, they must win their souls (Luke xxi. 19).

These prophetic words of Christ, as He saw men rushing to destruction in His own generation, have come back constantly to my mind in our own modern revolutionary days; for it has become clear to those who think seriously that judgment is at the door. The militarist basis of society in the West, wherein armaments of the most destructive character are being made with furious haste, has increased a hundredfold the nervous tension and still further quickened the pace of every form of activity by land and sea and air. The strain, which seemed already to have reached the breaking point, has been aggravated and prolonged. If ever in human history the perfect quietness and confidence of Jesus

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were needed in our midst, in face of impending disaster, they are needed most of all to-day.

(3)

In writing thus openly about the dangers that now confront the West, I would not forget those persons, in every part of the world, who are far less favourably situated than I have ever been.

The crowded homes of the very poor in the London and Calcutta streets are very well known to me. In such areas, solitude and rest are literally impossible. Also, confronting multitudes of common labourers in every land, there are incessant hours of drudgery which can never be escaped. Laborious duties, such as the constant care of the sick and dying, in the hospital wards and nursing homes, have to be undertaken almost without a break, till human nature itself gives way beneath the strain. My own mother, with her very large family of young children, had a daily task to perform which left her hardly any relief.

For all such as these and others also there are surely compensations which God in His universal loving-kindness freely gives. He never lays upon us a burden too heavy for us to bear, and He knows our needs. But such exceptions as these only prove the rule; and they ought never to be brought forward as an excuse for those like myself who have the free choice of rest and retirement offered to us if only we are willing to make use of it.

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The East has serious dangers of its own: but these differ almost fundamentally from the West. There is a lethargy of ages, in the face of intolerable injustice and wrong-doing, which has become

*“heavy as frost
And deep as life itself.”*

There is also a fatalist indifference in the atmosphere which hangs over many Eastern lands and acts like poison-gas, choking man's nobler spirit. While there is the strain of over-activity and ceaseless change in the West, there is a passivity and often also a stagnation in the East which makes such hoary abuses as temple prostitution and “untouchability” linger on, when the deathblow ought to have been given to them long ago.

No! There can be no cause for boasting, either in the East or in the West, concerning human life as it is being lived to-day. For the end of all these things is death, when the mischief has gone so deep that it taints the pure springs of the good life.

(4)

It was with such experiences as these in view that I had written my earlier book, *What I Owe to Christ*. In it I had dwelt more on the objective side, while telling the story of what had happened. I had also sought, in speaking about my own younger days, to appeal to that energising enthusiasm of youth, which

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is a precious gift, meet for the Master's use. When the book was published, I was in South Africa pleading the Indian cause. Only after I had come back to England was the good news told me that it had made a deep impression.

Then, to my great surprise, letters began to come in from all quarters setting before me many new problems. For what I had said about my own life had touched the hearts of unknown men and women whose needs were the same as mine. Thus, unawares, a new pathway of future work had been opened out before me, which gave a fresh direction to many of my thoughts and plans. Some of these letters afforded me a first insight into the nervous, spiritual suffering which tortured humanity was enduring in the Western world, often harder to bear than even the physical struggle with poverty, that was so painfully apparent on the surface. Thus I was compelled to look more deeply into the misery which had become chronic in many countries since the World War. There seemed to be some disease at the heart of Western civilisation, which only the infusion of new life could stanch and heal.

One letter came from America: "Will you not explain to us more about your inner life? My own spirit is now so starved, for want of time to cultivate it, that prayer is becoming a burden to me instead of a joy, and I never seem to find time for quiet."

There is also the memory still with me of one late

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evening in New York, when a small group of leading Christian men and women of the younger generation met me, and one of them said to me with singular abruptness: "Don't tell us about India: teach us how to pray."

The void within the heart which this denoted startled me. Clearly, the foundations of the inner life in Christ would have to be built up again, where things had gone so far that these elementary things of the spiritual life had been neglected by those who were teaching others.

Christ tells us that it is wise, if one builds a tower, to reckon up the cost and see whether there is a sufficient fund in hand to complete the work. I knew how my own inner life had been shaken and this thought troubled me a very great deal. "Can the blind," Christ asked, "lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?"

But I remembered also His own parable of the one talent hid in a napkin, and the rebuke which came from the Lord of that servant when the talent remained unused. This personal experience of mine in the East had been just such a talent given me by God, which was intended by Him to be used. If I had remained in England, instead of coming out to India, my inner life would have had none of these great fresh draughts of peace which were so lavishly bestowed on me in the East.

Thus God had placed me in a singularly favourable

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position to help others. Who was I, that I should resist His will or make light of His bounty? At a time when men and women, in their perplexity, were seeking something that I might be able to give them, and asking me in letter after letter to do so, how could I refuse to place before them whatever I had to offer, even though it might still be inadequate when put to the test?

CHAPTER V

The Oxford Group

(1)

THOUGHTS such as these had already begun to disturb me while I had been engaged in London, during the Round Table Conference, struggling with an overcrowded programme which had been arranged for Mahatma Gandhi. He had exerted himself to the uttermost in order to keep up with our Western ways. It seemed as though it was quite impossible to avoid the strain, and yet it had clearly led to unsatisfactory results. There is a Swahili proverb, which I picked up in Kenya and have often remembered. It means: "There is no blessing in haste." We all found this to be true, but we neglected its homely wisdom.

From London I had to go again to South Africa and there I found more leisure again for patient thinking. The speed of modern life out there has not yet outstripped man's capacity for wise consideration before action is taken. I was called back later to England, and had begun to make plans for my next book and to work out its different chapters, when a sudden call came from the poet, Rabindranath

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Tagore, asking for my assistance. His only grandson had gone to Germany in order to study art printing at Leipzig and had been stricken down with tubercular disease in both lungs so that his life was in danger. He was still quite young and very highly gifted as a member of the Tagore family. His father was with him in Leipzig, but his mother was still in India with the poet. She was ready to start at once on her long sea journey, through the worst of the monsoon weather, and I was to meet her at Genoa.

In another place,¹ I have told in full the story, how during that autumn, at a sanatorium in the Black Forest, he lingered on between life and death. The spot itself, amid the pine trees, was full of beauty and the autumn flowers were filling the air with their brightness and fragrance. Yet, all the while, at the very centre was this never-ceasing pain, so cruel and inhuman. Every circumstance which surrounded this illness was deeply pathetic, and the disease itself was so far advanced that there had been practically no hope of any cure from the first. There was also little that could be done to relieve the suffering. Soon the physical and spiritual tension together became almost more than I could bear. For I had been in need of rest when the cable came from India asking me to go to Germany. Nothing could have exceeded the gentle kindness and gracious sympathy

¹ *Christ in the Silence*, p. 35.

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of those dear South German people, who did everything that could be done to make the burden of the father and mother lighter, and to assist them to the utmost of their power.

All through that time I was brought in spirit very close to Christ Himself, and my waking thoughts and prayers were continually with Him. Without His presence, I could have done nothing to bring any real help at such a time of trouble, but with Him by my side I was able to give comfort. The old truths concerning the redeeming grace of Christ, through the Cross, came home to me with a fresh fullness of meaning. I lived with Him more closely; and, along with this renewed spiritual strength, I found to my exceeding joy that there had come into my life a much greater power to cheer and comfort others.

The mother and father asked me to take the prayers in the churchyard on the hill, at the edge of the forest, where the body was laid to rest; and the pastor of the village, who had been kindness itself throughout, gladly allowed me to do so. We left the place with hearts filled with tenderness and peace.

(2)

One further experience of quite a different character awaited me, before I returned to England. It meant very much to me in those days and therefore I would like to write about it.

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In the little town of Ermatingen on the shore of Lake Constance, the leaders of the Oxford Group, with whom I had been associated for some years, had assembled together in order to wait upon God in quiet communion and prayer. They were seeking a new way of life and a fuller vision of God's loving purpose for mankind.

Some of my own companions had urged me to be with them there; and Mrs. Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh, who had always been like a mother to me, had invited me beforehand to be her guest at this gathering, if I were able to join them.

When I first thought it over, after the strain which I had just passed through, it seemed impossible to go there, though the distance was not very great. I dreaded any new emotional appeal, when my whole nature was crying out for rest; and at Ermatingen I should be obliged to meet many new faces among a young and eager company of those who had not known what I had just been through and might not be able to understand it. But, on the other hand, there were special reasons which made me determine at last to go to the house-party; and this deeper instinct proved to be the true one after all. For I found in a remarkable manner, in the Oxford Group, both the sympathy which I so badly needed and also a true refreshment of spirit. I had already known this in South Africa, where those who had identified themselves with the Oxford Group had

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stood out for reconciliation between the races and a complete surrender to Christ. Some of my old South African friends were present at Ermatingen and some also whom I had known in Germany and France and Holland. Racial and national barriers were entirely broken down in that fellowship in Christ Jesus.

Above all, my greatest cause of thankfulness was this, that I had come, owing to the Oxford Group, into the closest touch with the young, whom I could not have met so simply in any other way. After half a lifetime spent in the East, this meant to me more than I can describe. Their first glowing experience of the love of Christ within the heart had turned their whole life into a song. They radiated happiness and unselfishness all round them, and the beauty of their eager desire for loving service in His name was transparent. When they got up, one by one, at the gatherings near the Lake and related their own clear personal testimony to the power of Christ's love in their inner lives, they touched a responsive chord in all our hearts and made those of us who were old feel young again with them.

The peace of Lake Constance itself during those cloudless sunny autumn days, as I watched it hour after hour from a lonely retreat in the mountains, overlooking its still waters, was a healing influence and there was leisure for silence. It was easy there to dream of India and to look back on those days with

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Susil Rudra and Sundar Singh in the Himalaya Mountains. The quiet memory of earlier years came back to me and I was able to speak about them to those present. After the meeting was over, there were eager young faces looking up into mine and asking me, "Won't you tell us something more about the Sadhu? Do you think he is still living in those mountains?" I thanked God again and again that I had not shrunk from coming to Ermatingen, and also for the help that those who had just come to know the "first love" of Christ, as their Saviour, had given me. They had helped me, more than they were aware, by renewing in me my own love for the same Lord, whom we served.

The Lake itself, in the circle of the hills, brought to our minds those early days of Christ's own ministry in Galilee, when the first young disciples, Peter, James and John, and the others with them, had been called to follow their Lord and had obeyed His call. We seemed to have come once more, as we met together in His presence, to the fresh vision of those early days when the bright radiance of the Christian Faith shone in every face and the blessing of Pentecost was received within the heart.

For the Oxford Group itself represented to us a movement in the heart of the young. The whole atmosphere, on the shore of Lake Constance, was filled with the spirit of youth. Miracles once more

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seemed to become possible. Christ was being born anew in a new age. The constant peals of happy laughter at the meetings, so free from pious convention and formal religion, brought with them a glorious sense of relief after the strain I had just been through. It did not jar upon me, as I had feared, because it was so utterly sincere. The simple directness of approach to God, as a child approaches its father and mother with absolute trust, was a joy to me to share to the full.

One evening, when I spoke about India with grave anxiety in my heart and in my voice, a young girl who was present came up to me and said, "Don't be so anxious, Mr. Andrews, God will take care of things!" The bright simplicity of her faith took away my doubts in a moment and I thanked her for her message! The enthusiasm of ardent devotion to Jesus Christ, as Lord and Master, which was everywhere present, dispersed the last shadow from my own mind. All things seemed again to have become possible to the eye of faith in this younger world.

Christ has truly come to us to-day as the Lord of Life. Mighty events have been happening around us and we older people are still almost dazed by the revolution that has taken place before our eyes. Every continent has been shaken by upheaval, as if an earthquake had suddenly burst through the crust of civilisation and the molten lava were cutting its own fresh channels through the hard soil.

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Those who are still young must be the pioneers of this Christian Revolution, and we who have grown old must on no account stand in the way, but rather help forward the work that has to be done. Young and old alike have to take their places in the ranks of the triumphant army of the Living God, among those who in our own generation are called upon to march forward to victory. Ours is never for one moment a defeatist struggle, though we may be driven down to our knees or called upon to lead a forlorn hope. We are the heirs of those who "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turning to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 33).

Susil Rudra, Sadhu Sundar Singh, and other pioneers of the Christian Faith have passed on, but still the marching orders must be obeyed. *Vexilla Regis Prodeunt*. "The royal banners of the Cross go forward." The divine love within our hearts constrains us to ever-fresh sacrifice and devotion.

(3)

Late that same autumn, in Switzerland, on one of those still evenings at Ermatingen, while I was seated up above the Lake in my retreat thinking over all that had gone before, I made up my mind

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that many other things must be put on one side in order that I might meet, as far as God gave me the power, the needs of these young students and workers who were being called upon to face such tremendous odds in a divided and distracted world.

We, of the older generation, had lost much of the courage of our faith. The leaders of the next generation, which came in between, had laid down their lives in sacrifice in the Great War. The hope of the world now lay with the young, both men and women, who, with a splendid courage, were making themselves ready to meet the upheaval of the modern age. But up to the present far too few had as yet sought afresh the springs of the fountain of life that give strength and healing from Christ Himself when victory over sin and weakness is sorely needed from within.

There was, indeed, on every hand, "a removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." This new revolution in world history was not unlike the upheaval of that first age of the Church when the author of Hebrews wrote his Epistle. But among those things that could not possibly be shaken was this abiding and sustaining love of Christ as Lord and Master of the soul. I had known this as the bedrock certainty of my own life, and now my one great longing was to pass it on to others. Freely and generously, Christ had given me

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work to be done among the young whom I had taught. For both in India and at Cambridge the student world had been my world and I had lived all my life among them. Whatever, therefore, I had received from God I must give back, in return, to His service. Above all, I must seek to offer that confidence of inward peace which makes strength doubly strong and good work doubly secure.

It was with this intention in my own mind that I wrote the different books which followed, and tried first to tell the story in full concerning one of the youngest among the heroes of faith in the East, Sadhu Sundar Singh. In the second place, I wrote a memoir of John White of Mashonaland (in Southern Rhodesia), whom Arthur Shearly Cripps had truly called the "Apostle to the Mashona people." I had long admired his splendid courage and his sympathy for those who were oppressed. At last I met him at Kingsmead Close, Selly Oak, where he was suffering from his last long illness of cancer. He was much older than I was and had gone through great pain. But in spite of this his heart was as young to the last as that of a little child, and it went out in sympathy to all the young people who came to see him during his illness. His ministry of love towards them was one of the most fruitful periods of all his missionary undertakings in Christ's name. So wonderfully does the work go forward!

John White had watched with very great joy and

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gladness the revival that had come among the young through the Oxford Group. He believed that it was the Lord's doing and that it was "marvellous in our eyes." One young Christian had gone with me, where he lay, to ask for his blessing. John had come at that time so near to the lad's heart, that before we three had parted, his hand had been laid upon the boy's head, and the eyes of all three of us were filled with tears as he gave him the benediction.

This young lad was quite ready from that day forward to go out as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and to "serve faithfully under His banner against the world, the flesh and the devil to his life's end."

I cannot conclude this chapter without repeating a letter,¹ which I received from one of these young students, who was studying medicine at the University, because it gives a vivid picture of the difficulties that are felt by the noblest among them to-day as they seek earnestly to keep their inner life in Christ loyal and true to their Lord.

"Experience," he wrote to me, "of hospital life had implanted an ever-growing questioning in my mind. Was the Christianity, which I was just feeling in its first youthful glow, adequate for disease? I was doing surgery, and many remarkable and rapid cures brought to me the wondrous joy of healing. Yet, in the background, was the grim problem of the

¹ See *John White of Mashonaland*, p. 278, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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incurables—the quiet, patient men and women, who came to us in simple trust for healing and were sent empty away.

“Was Christianity adequate for this? They were so afraid, these simple people. Many of them were terrified. Was it adequate, not merely for resignation, but for creative acceptance? That was what I wanted for them! Was it possible?”

“My experience of Christ, strong as it was, had not yet been purified by the fire of discipline sufficiently for me to answer that question. And then John White came into my life and answered my question.

“I understood the Master better through contact with him, who was surely one of His most honoured servants. One phrase of Scripture which seemed to reach the very core of my problem, was translated by what I saw into vital flame:

“‘Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame.’”

“In our Lord’s presence, disease was not grappled with in grim defiance: it was turned into creative witness. Suffering was transmuted into joy. Death was swallowed up in victory.”

Surely the living witness of that young medical student is just what the world needs most in our own day. We long for the final assurance that all the agony of doubt and fear which humanity is obliged to endure in such exceeding measure in face of untold cruelty and wrong will not last for ever, but

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rather be like a nightmare dream which the sunshine drives away. Only as we set our gaze on Him our Saviour, who has sounded the lowest depths of human suffering and risen triumphant from them, can we look up once more with courage and go on our way rejoicing. This was the hope and faith of the first age of the Christian Church, and it may be ours also.

CHAPTER VI

Round the World

(1)

THE word that had come to me at Ermatingen that I should seek to hand on to the younger generation the gift that I had received from Christ in my own inner life, filled my thoughts and occupied my mind night and day. At last the call came to me in a singular manner to go out on a tour round the world to the universities in different countries, especially in the new world of Australia and New Zealand. I was to meet the students personally and speak to them concerning the love of Christ, and His living and abiding presence in the daily life.

This is how it came about. I had been asked to give a series of addresses on "Prayer" and "Bible Reading" at Cambridge University, as a preparation for the University Mission in the Lent Term of 1936, and had been called upon also to take some part during the days of the Mission itself. The result of this Mission was so encouraging that the Student Christian Movement at the end of it gave me its own commission and sent me forth on this world tour.

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The prayers and longings of the Christian students in Great Britain were behind me and this gave me joy and strength.

The route which I took was through the Panama Canal, direct to New Zealand; and the Mission began in the bitter cold of midwinter in Dunedin, which is the centre of a large Medical Faculty and University. The warm hearts of the students made up for the coldness of the climate; and we began in the least sensational manner possible by apportioning most of the time, not to public addresses, but to personal interviews, where one student after another came to tell me of his or her own trials and difficulties in the Christian life, especially with regard to prayer and quiet.

The same course of procedure was followed at every University Centre, both in New Zealand and in Australia, through the rest of the year. In this manner, I was able to find out, from first-hand testimony, how eager the younger generation in these new countries had become to get down to realities, and to stand away from the outworn formulas of conventional religion. Sincerity was the note that everywhere impressed me most; and as such it has surely the sympathy of Christ, whose sternest words were uttered against the hypocrites in religious matters.

At the same time, I came away with a sense of the profound change, which the new mechanical and

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technical age of speed and continual motion had already brought with it, reducing men and women to the extreme limit of human capacity and endurance. It has had its marked effect on the spiritual life of the West. Nerves were everywhere being frayed, even among the young. The pace of human existence had become so intense that the delicate filaments of the nerves within the body showed signs of wear and tear at a very early age. The emotional strain and stress had become much more acute also, leading even to mental disorder.

(2)

That which I had felt so deeply in my own life, as a crucial fault, was present on all sides, and I was told at every University that the place which had before been given to prayer was being crowded out. There were some who spoke to me with all the joy and freshness of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose inner experience was like that I had met with at Ermatingen and in other places; but speaking generally I missed that "joy and peace in believing" which was one of the primary marks of the Church in the earliest days.

Those who were teaching the University students in the different Colleges and Churches had received the same testimony from them that I had met with. It was noticeable, however, that there was not a single instance, all through the tour, of any active

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and blatant hostility to the Christian message; and I received everywhere a very courteous hearing.

By far the most important opportunities that were given me were these personal interviews. The one cry of the soul, from beginning to end, was "Lord, increase our faith"; or that other cry, equally pathetic, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." The large numbers who came for these private personal talks impressed me greatly.

For one person who brought forward intellectual difficulties, at least five or six set before me their own practical problems. These were chiefly the perpetual pressure of exams: the impossibility of ever being left alone; the sheer physical fatigue or inertia; the mental instability; the deadness of the soul. The old evangelical phrases, which meant so much to an earlier generation, had clearly to be translated again into the terms of a new and younger world. Evidently they did not ring as sound and true as they did before; and the practical testing of them on the part of the average student was severe. Woe to anyone whom they detected using merely "lip" phrases! There was at once a revolt of indignation, in which Jesus Himself might have shared.

(3)

The great need of the human spirit in this new hemisphere—whether it be in America or Australia—is for the recovery of that simplicity, which is one of

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the foundations of true childlike faith.¹ Like the man in the Gospel story, who "had great possessions," which he was not willing to surrender, so, to-day, the modern world has its own "great possessions" of a strangely new character, which it will not yield up for Christ's sake. It must have its cinema, its radio, its motor, and even its aeroplane. It must also have its money to purchase comforts and to keep up its "high" standard of living. But when these so entirely absorb the attention that there is no place left for prayer and very little consideration for the poor, then there must be something terribly wrong with the life of the soul. The great renunciation will not be made: for these inventions have then become a part of life itself, as one of its driving forces.

Yet Christ asks continually the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" He also tells us, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The "riches" that Christ referred to, in these startling phrases, were not merely monetary. They were also what He has called, "the lusts of other things entering in," and among these "other things" are surely those material comforts and contrivances, which enervate our lives and sap our energy while

¹ See, on this same subject, Chapter II, "The Simplicity of Christ."

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poor people starve or die of malnutrition. We need to-day, as in the earliest days of the Church, the absolutely reckless sacrifice of all we have for the sake of others; for, as Jesus Himself said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses" (Luke xii. 15).

(4)

For some it may be difficult to trace the connection between this "deceitfulness of riches" and the choking of the good seed of the Word of God. But if our inner life in Christ is to be everything to us—the one heavenly treasure, the pearl of great price, for which a man will sell all that he has, in order to obtain it—then it cannot brook a rival. These new worldly riches and comforts, of whatever kind they are, keep the heart of man fixed upon the surface of things—the externals of life—so that he becomes dependent on them, while that which is spiritual withers away for lack of use. "The thorns spring up and choke it."

So in Australia and New Zealand, and more still in America, I found that the rapid increase of material things had so forced up the rate of living to its highest point, that simplicity had become regarded as of little value. The hunger and thirst of modern times have become not so much after truth and righteousness, as to keep up a certain standard of living that should not fall below that of

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X. or Y. or Z. Very few, I found, placed the emphasis that Jesus did upon the inner life, which should become a part of His own life, as the branches are part of the Vine. Yet no one condemned more than Jesus did, those who *trusted* in their riches. He claimed that we should be ready to be detached from them at a moment's notice without a wrench or pang. For He knew only too well how this clinging to outward things injured the inner life of the soul. This is what He meant by His first Beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

It seemed to me that, up to the present, in this new part of the world, where such brave and generous hearts had been enkindled by the Christian Faith, new problems were being faced with confidence and courage. But there was still needed, if Christ's full message were to be brought home, some deep and lasting experience of sorrow such as the old world has known to the full from the long ages of the past. Very soon these new people would be drawn into the bundle of human life more closely than they were at present: for the whole world is growing smaller every day; and though residing in the southern hemisphere, they are becoming linked up by climate and aeroplane communication, and also by geographical position, with the immemorial East and all its countless millions, who have lived and suffered there for thousands of years.

I was able to give some of these thoughts at first

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hand, because my life had been spent in the East and I had learnt from it more than I could ever express of those deeper lessons which the East has still to teach to the West. When I spoke about these things, there was a whole-hearted and immediate response, combined with a sincere humility, which touched me very deeply indeed.

(5)

When I went on from Perth and Fremantle, in Western Australia, direct to Ceylon, I had come back to the East once more. It had been my full intention to go round to the colleges in Ceylon and afterwards in India, giving the same message concerning the presence of Christ in the daily life, which I had already delivered in New Zealand and Australia and Fiji. But my health, which had been precarious all through the tour, would not allow me to do so, and instead of this I was able to remain for several weeks at Trinity College, Kandy, writing my book on *Christ and Prayer*, which contained many of the thoughts that I had intended to explain in person.¹ A few opportunities were offered me of speaking and writing to the students in India and Ceylon, and then I had to get back to the Quadrennial Conference of the Student Christian Movement in Birmingham, where I had been asked to

¹ Published by the S.C.M. Press, 38 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.

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give a series of addresses on Prayer. These I was able to deliver, and abundant opportunity was offered me of meeting individual students and talking over with them their difficulties.

But when I went on a little later to the Oxford Group House Party, at Malvern, I was obliged to spend the whole time in bed, where I was surrounded with every possible loving-kindness. A full term at Cambridge followed, and thus my journey round the world was completed.

Looking back, I can see that I had been again attempting too much and that the old nervous distress had in a measure returned in consequence. Yet I thanked God again and again for His infinite goodness towards me; and even though I had failed, the failure itself was not so serious as before. The power to help others had grown with the growth of years, and the joy of such a service of love had increased.

CHAPTER VII

The Wonder of His Love

(1)

WHILE I was at Simla in August, 1937, after a period of very great strain and ill health, a choleraic attack, similar to that which I have mentioned in an earlier chapter, but not quite so severe, suddenly came at nightfall and brought back all the agonising pain to which I had become accustomed. For I had had many similar attacks in the long interval, but this was the worst of them all. I should not bring it into this narrative, but the sequel was so remarkable and so full of joy that I long to hand it on to others instead of keeping it to myself.

After a night of anguish, there came to me, as I was lying in the hospital, a new realisation of the love of Jesus with all the gladness which such love has always brought with it into my life. There may be someone who may read of this incident and share with me the joy of it when passing through the same conditions of pain, and I may be able to stretch out a hand across the dark and say, "All is well." This has already happened to one in Australia, who was dying of cancer, and was able to see the manuscript

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of an article which I had written to the *Quiver* before she passed away. Such things are surely meant to be shared by others when they happen in the Christian life.¹

First of all, when I knew that the crisis had come, which might at any moment prove fatal, there was very little fear. There was, indeed, a fear of still greater pain than I could bear: for I had been through the same illness of cholera before and knew from that experience what the pain might be. I *did* shrink back from that, and mercifully that extreme agony was spared me. The exhaustion, however, became so great that consciousness very nearly left me altogether for the time being.

Then came some long-drawn-out days in the hospital, where the tender nursing I received can never be forgotten. During the night there was an Indian attendant who came in a moment, at the least touch of the bell, and eased the pain by massage in an understanding manner. How I thanked God for such a ministry of gentle kindness which bound our hearts together!

(2)

There was one further trial still to be endured that I had never expected: for just when I had begun to

¹ What follows in this chapter is based on the article I wrote to the *Quiver*. Through the kindness of the Editor I have been able to use the same material.

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recover strength, but was still very weak indeed, a telegram came from Santiniketan to tell me that Rabindranath Tagore had been taken very dangerously ill and his life was despaired of. Those who sent the telegram had not yet heard of my own illness, because I had asked that no news should be sent to him, and that it should also be kept from the Press. For I knew, in his weak state of health, how troubled he would be. Letters had already informed me about his weakness and I had already been anxious about it, for he was nearing his eightieth year.

All this I knew quite well; and now the telegram came which seemed to tell me that he could not possibly recover. My own mind was still weak and fanciful through illness, while the imaginative faculty had become abnormally strong. For a short time the mental anxiety I went through seemed almost to take the place of the physical agony from which I had recently suffered. It appeared to me as if I must be by his side, though every rational consideration told me that this was impossible.

Soon, when the first shock of the news was over, I found rest in prayer and this marked anxiety slowly passed away. As I look back on that time, it is easy for me to see that the mental strain which I went through was more than three parts physical. The nerves for a time had got control, though reason still looked on and had the last word.

Along with each telegram, bringing the news of

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his recovery, there came intense relief. At last, he was able to send me a letter written with his own hand. "I have realised once again," he wrote, "that I have my fund of consolation in your love, and I am deeply thankful." He wrote again: "Your loving and anxious letters have moved me very deeply. Is it not strange that both of us should have had the same experience, and almost at the same time?"

(3)

With such good tidings, is it any wonder that my anxiety was changed into joy? Health came pulsing back, and soon after this the end of the monsoon brought with it glorious days of sunshine. But what happened within was much more the cause of refreshing health than anything else.

For, quite literally, a new life had begun, and along with it a further experience of that love of Christ which passes knowledge. The clear sky above, the lattice work of leaves overhead through which the sunbeams passed, the snow-clad mountains in the far distance, the green earth with its flowers, washed with the recent rains—all these were glowing with a fresh brightness.

Yet this was not merely due to the sudden uprush of health quickening the nerves and the blood. There was something within the soul which was ever so much deeper than that! It was closely akin to the joy of that "first love" long ago when I gave my

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heart to Christ. In an earlier book, *What I Owe to Christ*, I have tried to describe it—how Nature seemed echoing a song of joy in harmony with that inner melody which was ringing in my mind.¹ So it was with me once again, here in Simla that autumn, nearly fifty years after.

In every sacrament of the divine life, there is always an outward and visible sign as well as an inward and spiritual grace. If I may dare to write it, all Nature was at this time my Holy Communion, wherein I found the living presence of Christ. Day after day, as strength came back, and I was able to walk along the shady mountain paths, the joy at times was complete. The lilt of music and song came instinctively to my lips and fashioned itself into a refrain:

“O the wonder and the glory of His love.”

So the refrain ran, and I put some simple words to it, which were not meant for a poem, but only for a song of joy. A tune ran through my mind along with them, but I am not musician enough to put it down in any notation. It has no value except as the upwelling of the heart that could not help singing for sheer happiness.

The hymns which formed such a large part of the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century must

¹ See *What I Owe to Christ*, Chapter VII, p. 282, published by Hodder and Stoughton, London.

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have come spontaneously out of the depth of such an experience as my own; and when we read, in the Book of Revelation, that "they sung as it were a new song before the throne . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Rev. xiv. 3) may it not point to an utterance not altogether unlike this? For I, too, seemed to hear a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters and "the voice of harpers harping with their harps." Out of the depth of this illness I had been permitted by His abounding grace to learn some notes of that song of praise which is ever ascending to the throne of God in worship, adoration, and blessing.

(4)

Clement of Alexandria speaks of the hidden life of Christ as bringing with it a "perpetual spring-time." That phrase is one of the most beautiful in all early Christian literature, and I have often quoted it; but now I had experienced something more of its real meaning. For that "spring-time" had returned into my own life.

There is an extravagance in the love of Christ which marks it off from all the "middle paths" of virtue. It breaks through conventions and is by far the most beautiful thing in human life. It raises mankind above the dead mediocrities, and brings man near to the creative heart of God, who sends

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His sunshine and rain upon the just and on the unjust. It goes far beyond any formal, legal code of exact requital. There is joy in heaven, Christ tells us, over "one sinner that repenteth." God, the Shepherd, will even leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after the one lost sheep until He finds it.

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke xv. 5-6).

So homely is the heart of God. The love of Jesus is large like that, not narrow and formal. His followers are to have the same width of vision. Their forgiveness is to be unto seventy times seven—quite unlimited in its perfection. They are to do *more* than others. If the publicans love their friends, Christ's followers must do still more. They must love even their enemies. "What do ye *more*?" He asks insistently; and the Greek word means "to excess."¹ How do you show, He asks us, the *extravagance* of your love?

The plainest way to make clear what this true love means is to turn once again to the story in St. Luke's Gospel where Jesus contrasts the lavishness of the love of the "woman who was a sinner" with the rudeness of the Pharisee, Simon, who was the host.

Think for a moment of the extravagance of her

¹ The Greek is *perisson*.

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love as she kneels at the Saviour's feet. Her very silence tells its own story. Her heart is far too full for words, though not for tears.

Jesus, who had watched her from the beginning, with eyes that had taken in every movement, at last addresses Simon. Let us read together the passage:

“And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven” (Luke vii. 40-48).

One more perfect story must be told also at this

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point which shows the same extravagance of love in another form:

“And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had” (Luke xxi. 1-4).

(5)

Wordsworth has told us in one of his most beautiful sonnets, on King’s College Chapel, Cambridge:

*“Give all thou canst. High heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more.”*

Surely something from God, entirely new, came into the world with Jesus. “God so loved the world that He *gave*”—His gift to us was Jesus Christ. Could any act of giving be more extravagant than that? When we repeat, in the great hymn, the last verse,

*“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all,”*

we are not saying a single word too much. Rather

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we are recounting only a very slight part of the debt we owe to Him for His infinite loving-kindness.

No wonder that St. Paul's language is never able to keep within its boundaries, when he speaks of the love of Christ. He has to coin new words, which carry his thought on to excess, while he tries so hard to tell us of "the *exceeding* riches of His grace," and "the *exceeding* greatness of His power," and to pray "unto Him that is able to do *exceeding* abundantly above all that we ask or think." Here, in this last phrase, the superlative is doubled, as he seeks to express himself; and yet he finds it almost impossible to discover a word strong enough to do so.¹

It was in the same language as those superlatives and super-superlatives of St. Paul that I longed to express my joy in the love of Jesus, which came into my life in such full measure during that time of convalescence in Simla after my serious illness.

(6)

To-day the world is dark once more with overwhelming sin and evil, as it was in those early apostolic days. We may not quite be able to say with St. John, "We know . . . that the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John v. 19), because somehow we trust that progress has been made in certain respects in these nineteen Christian centuries. But

¹ The Greek word is *hyper-ek-perissou*.

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when, on the other hand, we look abroad at the incalculably vast armaments, for land and sea and air, piled up for murderous slaughter, we shrink back at the dread certainty that further evil is being contemplated by the leaders of men even more cruel and brutal and hideous than that which ever went before.

Nevertheless, the Saviour of the world, who faced at Jerusalem human wickedness at its worst and gave His life to redeem mankind, bids us still lift up our heads with joy and take our share with Him in the world's redemption. And if we obey His voice, we shall find deep in our inmost hearts the pledge of His loving friendship. We shall hear His cheering word, "Well done!" And this will be to us a gift more precious than any other that life can bestow.

CHAPTER VIII

The Radiance of the Christian Faith

(1)

WHAT was it, then, that made these first Christians, in the days of St. Paul and St. John, able to rise so high above outward circumstances and in the end gain the victory over them?

How did they surmount, in such a marvellous manner, one difficulty after another, with such a glorious power, that literally nothing could stand against them?

What was this first radiance of the Christian Faith, which even to-day still shines out so brightly from every page of the New Testament that we can feel the glow of it as we read the sacred words nearly 2,000 years after they were written?

I have put these questions separately, for emphasis; but they make us face one and the same historical fact. The Apostles called this new power, "the gift of the Holy Spirit." They were sure that it was the Spirit of Jesus. They marked this Spirit

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off at once from any false spirit of the world. The proof was the change of *moral character* in those who had received this gift from God.

St. Paul, for instance, in writing to the Christians in Corinth, where evil was everywhere rampant, sets down a most terrible list of moral offences, which shocks us even to read over, and then adds the words,

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. vi. 11).

He writes later in the same chapter:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (verses 19–20).

That which made all the difference was the new power *within*. This new power of the Spirit forced its way outward, like a pure spring of water rising up and gushing fresh and clean out of the muddy soil.

“Christians,” said an unknown writer to Diognetus in the middle of the second century, “are not distinguished by country, by language, or by customs from other men. . . . They are in the flesh, yet live not after the flesh. Their life is spent on earth, but

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their citizenship is in heaven. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are ignored and condemned; put to death—and made alive. They are dishonoured, and in their dishonour glorified. They are reviled—and bless; outraged—and honour men. Doing good, they are punished as evil-doers: when punished, they rejoice.”

The great historian, H. M. Gwatkin, under whom I studied at Cambridge more than forty years ago, translated this passage which I have just quoted, and then adds his own comment in the following words:

“The very slaves were no longer despised as base creatures, but honoured as men for whom Christ died the death of a slave. They too were sons of God and heirs of life. Nor did they quit themselves less worthily. Euelpistus, the slave, went to his death as bravely as the philosopher Justin; and Felicitas, the slave-woman, stood hand in hand with the matron Perpetua before the slaughter. St. John himself never threw down a bolder defiance to the majesty of the world and Rome than the insignificant slave-girl Blandina on the last of her long days of suffering for Christ, when she was brought into the arena naked before the furious crowd, covered with burns and scars from former torments, yet still with a smiling welcome for the crowning horrors that were facing her. Even the hardened populace of the amphitheatre could not refuse her the admiring

epitaph, "never woman suffered such things as this one."

"No wonder if the Christians made an impression out of all proportion to their numbers. Conviction in the midst of waverers, fiery energy in a world of disillusion, purity in an age of easy morals, firm brotherhood in a loose society, heroic courage in time of persecution, formed a problem that could not be set aside, however polite society might affect to ignore it: and the religion of the future turned on the answer to it. Would the world be able to explain it better than the Christians, who said it was the living power of the risen Saviour?"¹

There were other sides, where evils occurred, which do not make such pleasant reading.

"The early Christians," he writes, "were men of their own age and subject to all its influences, with nothing but their faith to make them better than their neighbours. Even the apostolic age was no golden time of purity. There were shortcomings enough, and scandals not a few."²

Yet these men and women, who thus confessed by martyrdom their Christian faith, had reached an incomparably higher level of moral life than those who were their contemporaries, and it was this

¹ H. M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History to A.D. 313*. Vol. I, p. 233. Published by Macmillan, London.

² P. 243.

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moral advance that won right through at last to final victory. No other resistance could have overcome that Roman world, without even striking a single blow in self-defence.

(2)

It has been well worth while quoting this early Christian document, and also the words of the Cambridge historian, because both appear to me to prove convincingly that the radiance of the Christian Faith was due, not to any mere alteration in outward conditions, but rather to a transformation slowly wrought from within. The spiritual dynamic that effected it, was a changed character, starting from the centre. Its moral impetus was from within. It grew to moral victory from within. That is why John the aged could write in his Epistle:—

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John v. 4).

For the Christian Faith is not some new technique, or a new system, or even a new social order as such, though it transforms society. It is rather an inward power from Christ Himself, starting in the heart, and creating a new life there.

“The kingdom of God,” says St. Paul, “is not food or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

God’s kingdom, that is to say, is not primarily

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dependent on any mere outward concerns, such as "food and drink," but on an entire change of heart that makes this inner life in Christ the true source of all the later miraculous growth. He, who has once known that power, will not lower his standard or put his trust in anything less potent. I have repeated this point again and again in order to drive the message home.

While thus laying stress upon the power within, there is one thought that must be put away from us with all earnestness, if we are to be true to Christ. The inwardness of Jesus does not imply for a moment that Christians may retire from the world into a realm of their own, wherein they may seek to save their own souls, while leaving their fellow men and women outside their own area to perish. Those first Christians never did that; and any doctrine of that kind, whenever it appears, is such an utter travesty of the Gospel of Christ, that it only needs stating to be repudiated as quite unworthy of His name. He tells us Himself that those who seek to save their own souls shall lose them, while those who are ready to lose their souls, by going into the centre of the battle against evils, even as He did, shall save them. The true Christian is known, not by his isolation from that vast conflict against evil which leads to the Cross, but by preparing himself with silence and prayer for it, and the plunging into the thick of the fight with no other weapons in his hand but

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faith and love to be used for the healing of mankind.

(3)

It was this supreme moral and spiritual leadership of Jesus, as contrasted with mere reliance on any outward power, which occupied most of my thoughts in India during the fateful year, 1938. Health and strength had been returning to me very slowly after the serious illness I had in Simla during the previous year,¹ and so it was arranged that I should stay quietly with Rabindranath Tagore, at my home in Santiniketan, during the first part of the year, and then go south to the Nilgiri Hills and Bangalore.

The world crisis in the West was drawing rapidly to a head. Incredible misery was rife everywhere in China and in Spain; and it was clear that both Europe and Asia were now being driven to the very brink of another world war. Tagore spoke out his whole heart in his answer to Yone Noguchi, who had written to him asking him to support Japan. Tagore's indignation was stirred to its depth by such a shameless request from a poet and a man of letters. For his sympathy from the first had been altogether with the oppressed people in China, and his very love for Japan made him all the more indignant. He declared to Noguchi in the strongest terms possible that nothing could extenuate the

¹ See Chapter VII, p. 84.

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¹ See Chapter VII, p. 84.

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crime of the murder of innocent women and children which was being perpetrated by the bombing aeroplanes sent from Japan, to which China in her helplessness could offer no resistance.

“This, Charlie,” the poet said to me one day, in the extreme bitterness of his heart, “is what modern civilisation has come to! Surely it is a desecration of the very name of Christ and all that Christian religion stands for!”

I could understand his bitterness when such fruits as these appeared. Yet no one had been a more ardent champion of scientific knowledge than he had been, and he still cherished the hope that human life would right itself in the end.

With his very sensitive nature (now rendered even more nervously acute by his recent illness), he felt the anguish through which humanity was passing as if it had been his very own. He was greatly troubled also at the utter selfishness which had been displayed by the ruling classes in Great Britain, whereby one weak country after another had been sacrificed to financial interests and then left to its fate. That, at least, was his own reading of events and it needs to be recorded. The complete betrayal of Abyssinia had hurt him most of all, and he sent messages to the Press and also to the Emperor himself. He hated war with all the intensity of his fine nature: but the callous greed, falsehood and hypocrisy practised with impunity by those who

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professed to be upholding the cause of peace, made his inward agony all the greater. Life itself had become a burden to him under such conditions, and he lamented at the same time the fallen state of his own country which had not been able adequately to respond to Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in such a whole-hearted and united manner as to make it effective.

(4)

I have already told the story how my own mind had been finally converted, during the Great War itself, to what I held to be the doctrine of the "Sermon on the Mount" with regard to "non-resistance" and love, even of enemies.¹ By this time, I had become a Christian pacifist without any reservations. Ways must be found of showing a loving spirit even to those who were bitterly hostile to the things I held most dear and of keeping my thoughts quite clean from hate. However lacking in what the world calls "realism" such an attitude might seem to be, I had to grasp firmly its supreme inward strength which came from God alone. It might mean suffering beyond anything I had ever known before; but in the end it would bring nearer the victory, not of my own country, or of any other country, but of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

¹ See *What I Owe to Christ*, Chapter XVII, pp. 275-91.

(5)

It is not possible to tell here the whole story, how each day, as the world crisis came nearer, I was brought still more to find in Christ and Christ alone the Way, the Truth and the Life, as He pointed to a redeemed humanity which should draw its new springs of spiritual power from within.

At Bangalore, I had been called upon to give a series of addresses on the Life of Christ, during the month of September, 1938, and all through July and August I had been working at this one subject and studying afresh Christ's attitude towards such evils as internecine war, greed for worldly riches, and arrogance of race. This study, in the light of what was happening, was most revealing. A Christian solution was needed in our own age and among our own people.

A very precious letter had come to me from Interlaken, in Switzerland, from Mrs. Alexander Whyte, carrying with it a long list of the autographs of my dearest friends who were leaders in the Oxford Group, and telling me that they wished me to join them daily in prayer for the "peace of the world" and also for "guidance from God" as to what steps ought to be taken by Christians as a whole at this most critical moment in human affairs. It was, I believe, at this house party that

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the phrase "Moral Rearmament" was first used, which has meant so much since. The two words struck me, from the very first, as forming a basis on which all lovers of mankind might unite, under the inspiration of Christian leadership—with Christ, the great Lover of mankind, as their Example. Mrs. Whyte's letter had come to me almost from the edge of the abyss in Central Europe. It made the situation far more vivid and real to me. Yet it gave me at the same time the sure witness of a band of Christ's disciples who were ready to put into His hands these issues of life and death, and to trust implicitly in His guidance.

While I had been studying the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ in the light of these events, I could see how in the spotless purity of His soul He had met the same forces of evil. He had been ready to face the utmost horror of outward defeat rather than swerve a hair's breadth from His own inner principles. The cry that was wrung from His heart, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" showed the intensity of His love and the depth of His agony, drawn together in one great purpose, to suffer for the sins of His people.

I had not yet reached the point where I could be calm in the face of dangers so vast as these, and every morning after seeking God in prayer I would go down to the railway station, which was close at hand, in order to get the newspaper which arrived

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by the first train from Madras. Letters from my sisters at home brought the sense of the danger still more acutely near, and I spent a large portion of each day alone in silence. The presence of Christ was with me; and as I read His words and studied more closely His Life and His Passion, my own pathway became gradually clearer, and the temptation to rely on outward things and look for outward results was less powerful.

(6)

The days that followed the crisis itself brought me no relief, because I could not help but feel deeply in the bitterness of my heart that a further betrayal had taken place, however much it might be smoothed over with plausible words and phrases. All these excuses rang hollow, the moment they were analysed and put to the test, in the light of actual facts. Who could truly find *relief*, while Czecho-Slovakia, the land of Huss and the bulwark of freedom in Central Europe, was being crushed into submission and at the same time the persecution of the Jews was intensified?

(7)

Much of the remainder of the year 1938 was spent along with Dr. Mott, preparing for the World Conference at Tambaram. He stayed with his daughter and son-in-law and grandchildren at

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Nagpur and from there went over with me to Segaon in order to have two very important interviews with Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Mott had asked me to arrange these interviews for him and himself took infinite pains about them. The report of them was published throughout the whole of India and also abroad.

The greatness of what happened at Tambaram, and also at Oxford and Edinburgh earlier in the year, can hardly yet be grasped in its full historical perspective. When I have tried to sum up my own clearest impressions, those times of united prayer and devotion each morning stand out far beyond the long hours of discussion. The deepest moments of all were those of united communion as we broke the one bread and shared the one cup together in memorial of our Lord. No man-made divisions were able to stand out against that drawing of our hearts together in His worship and service.

One unforgettable occasion, which brought tears of joy to my eyes, was when the leader of the Japanese delegation as he conducted our devotions asked the Chinese Christian leader, who was present, to pray in his own tongue the prayer that was in his heart. Though we were all conscious of the vast power of injustice in the world, that was still cruelly holding us apart as nations, and also of the deep-seated evil that was still lurking in

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our own hearts, yet, as one family, meeting together from every continent, we were able to grasp firmly the power of that supreme unity in Christ which crossed all barriers of man's devising.

Each morning, as I went to the daily celebration of the Holy Communion in the Chapel of the Bishop Heber Hostel and knelt side by side with fellow Christians of every race to receive the Sacrament of unity in Christ, the inner life in Him became wonderfully confirmed and strengthened.

This, to me, was the chief message to the Church which Tambaram brought with it; and I have heard from those who were present at Oxford and Edinburgh that this was their contribution also.

(8)

Before closing this story of my one deep, earnest longing to realise more truly and intimately the abiding presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in my own inner life, I have to make a confession which has already been acknowledged from time to time as this narrative has gone forward.

It has not been mine as yet to sustain without any break or interruption that peace and quietness of spirit about which I have been writing. For the old ways of restlessness into which I had drifted, before I came out to India, in 1904, have been like old

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clinging habits hard to disentangle. They have shown, right up to the present time, a disheartening tendency to return. Even though it has been possible to gain the mastery over them, through the power of Christ within the soul, the weakness still remains.

To give one instance only. I have had for a long time a constant nervous anxiety about other people—especially those who are near to me—which makes it difficult for me entirely to leave them in God's own loving keeping as I ought to do. Instead of this, I often become so nervous about them that the anxiety seems for a time to get the better of me and to fill my mind with useless alarms and fears. As long as it lasts, the strain on the nerves becomes acute; and the inner peace, that is so ample at other times, is then lost for the time being. When I wrote about this, as a weakness which I would never wish to hide, I stated that it was possible to look back and say with thankfulness that it had been partly overcome.¹ That was nearly six years ago; yet even now the complete victory has not been given to me, and I have once more to acknowledge this partial inward defeat. But I should be a poor Christian, if I yielded on that account to despair, or gave up the struggle.

Among those who read these pages, in many different lands, there may be some, here and there,

¹ See *Christ in the Silence*, p. 60.

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who have had a burden of unruly "nerves" somewhat similar to mine. It is for their sakes that I have ventured to write in such a personal manner. For it is surely by thus helping, in however small a degree, to bear one another's burdens, that we fulfil the law of Christ.

(9)

The simple story which I set out to tell has now been told, and I have not been in the least afraid of repeating some of the things that I have said before; because only in this way could I give a consecutive narrative of what I owe to Christ in my inner life and how I have sought there to find Him. By telling the story thus in different ways I hope to come in touch with a still wider circle of readers. In conclusion I would invite anyone—however far distant—to write to me quite freely with regard to any difficulties in their own experience. I would assure them in return that as far as health permits I will gladly answer any letter addressed to me at Santiniketan, Bengal, India, which will be forwarded to me wherever I may be.

By the time this book is published, I shall have reached the fiftieth year since I gave my heart to Christ; and my one hope is that I may be able to pass on something of the joy to others which He has given to me. When I think for a moment of what my life would have been without Him, and

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then what it has meant to me to have Him daily as my Lord and Master and Friend, how greatly I long in the short time that now remains to give myself wholly to His service.

NOTE A

The Place of Quiet in the Christian Life

IN order to explain by a brief example how this subject might possibly be taught, in the young Indian Christian Church, I give below a meditation, which was translated for me into Tamil at the Christukula Ashram, Tirupattur, by Dr. S. Jesudason, at the time of evening worship, called *Sandhya*, when the young members of the Ashram were seated in a circle in the open air at sunset. One hymn preceded the meditation and another hymn followed it. The rest of the time was kept in silence as the sun declined.

“When I was young, as you are, and lived in England, I was very active and used to spend the day in ceaseless activities. Indeed, I would almost grudge the time that I spent in quiet and prayer and meditation. At that time, I was working among the poor in South London, and the work itself was Christ’s own work; so I said to myself, ‘This work is surely the work of Christ. Let me do it with all my heart and take up all my time in doing it.’

“With this thought in my mind I used to work night and day, with hardly any pause or time for

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rest. In doing so, I forgot that Christ Himself went into retreat and retirement when He was working actively among the poor. But I did not realise the need of this while I was in England. Yet it was a grievous blunder. For it was causing my own character to be much too restless.

“But when I came out to India, at the age of thirty-four, I noticed a great difference here between India and England. In India, I had more time for leisure and rest and prayer. But that was not all. For, from the first, I had a great friendship with a very noble Indian Christian, named Susil Kumar Rudra, and my friendship showed me how different he was from myself. How quiet he was, how patient, how gentle! His whole life was more balanced than mine! Love can notice these things very quickly.

“When I became at last his true friend, he used to tell me about this side of my character which he had noticed: and he would say that he was quite certain that Jesus meant us as His followers to have peace and calm, and not to be so hurried and restless and over-anxious to get things done.

“Then we used to go together in the hot weather to the Himalaya Mountains and there I met Sadhu Sundar Singh. I saw his face, and it was so peaceful and full of joy. I also watched his life—how he spent long hours in prayer and meditation. He did not talk much, but he was wonderfully full of love for Christ, and I saw that he had something which I

had not got and I used to question him also about it. He silently taught me in his own remarkable way—though he was very much younger than I was—how Christ brings to us this peace even in the midst of the troubled anxieties of the world around us.

“Later on, I stayed at Santiniketan with Rabin-dranath Tagore, and even though Tagore was not a Christian he had this same calmness of spirit; and I used to watch him also and see how different he was from what I was myself. Sometimes when I got up in the night, before daybreak, I would see Tagore already seated in quiet meditation. He would remain there, silent, in the moonlight, very, very early—perhaps for two or three hours before the day’s work began.

“So I said to myself, ‘Here is something I must learn. I must come to Christ and ask Him to teach me.’ And then I found He was ready to teach me so kindly. He said to me, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my *burden is light*’ (Matt. xi. 28–30). So, little by little, those who were my dearest friends, such as Sadhu Sundar Singh, Rudra, and Tagore all taught me, in their own way, this lesson of quietness and peace.

“But I think the greatest of all lessons, which I learnt, was through illness; because, while I was at

THE PLACE OF QUIET

Santiniketan, I was attacked by cholera and was so near to death that for many weeks I was lying at death's door. In that time, I had my own simple and tender teaching from God Himself.

“Don't mistake me. I haven't learned those lessons even yet. There are times when I get very restless about little things that I ought not to be worried about; nevertheless, God has given me, time after time, that inward peace, which is the greatest blessing in my life. And so I wanted to hand on this one lesson to you, while you are young, so that you may not make the same mistake that I did, many years ago, but find Christ in quietness of spirit and love Him as I have tried to do, but with more perfectness. For to be with Him brings joy and peace in the heart, which is the greatest treasure in all life. It is the pearl of great price, which is worth all the rest of the treasures of life put together.

“Believe me, now that I have reached old age, when I say that this love of Christ in the heart is the truest and best and greatest treasure that anyone can possibly find in this life of ours. Jesus Himself said, ‘What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’

“The meaning of that is really just what I have been trying to say this evening. It means that if we do not give our time and our earnest longing to find Christ in the silence of our inner lives, then we shall

THE INNER LIFE

lose our *true* life altogether. We may gain other things, but we shall lose the best thing of all.

“So let us, in this Ashram, be active in doing our work, in the hospital, in the day school, and in the night school—do not let us fail there. Let us find Christ there. But, more than this, let us remember to find Him in this time of silence at *Sandhya* each evening, while we sit together; and also in our solitude, in the inner chamber of our hearts, when we are praying and are all alone. And if we find Him thus, both in action and in rest, we shall indeed win the victory.”

NOTE B

Indian Religious Poetry

(1) **W** E have no version, in English, of any Indian religious poetry so perfect as Tagore's own translation of those songs which he wrote himself and called "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings). This little book of Tagore's needs to be continually by our side and read slowly over, until the full beauty both of the words and the music comes home to the heart. I know no way of feeling the spirit of the East, at its noblest and best, that is equal to this. Here, I would venture only to quote one poem, which has meant most of all to me because of its closeness to the spirit of Christ:

*Here is Thy footstool and there rest Thy feet where live
the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.*

*When I try to bow to Thee, my obeisance cannot reach down
to the depth where Thy feet rest among the poorest,
and lowliest, and lost.*

*Pride can never approach to where Thou walkest in the
clothes of the humble among the poorest, and lowliest,
and lost.*

THE INNER LIFE

*My heart can never find its way to where Thou keepst
company with the companionless among the poorest,
the lowliest, and the lost.*¹

(2) The poems which follow are by Indian Christians, but owe their translations to different Western writers. What is perhaps the most distinguishing feature is the note of passionate love and devotion, at the thought of the closeness of the union between the human soul and its Lord. Those which I have chosen are from Narayan Vaman Tilak, the Indian poet of Maharashtra, in the West of India, who became a Christian in his youth and holds a place of high honour as a poet in his own country. He took as his poet's title, *Dāsa*, which means "Servant." The translations of the first three I have chosen are by Nicol Macnicol and the last three by Jack Winslow.

A CRADLE SONG

*Hush thee, hush thee, baby Christ,
Lord of all mankind;—
Thou the happy lullaby
Of my mind.*

*Hush thee, hush thee, Jesus, Lord,
Stay of all that art;—*

¹ Quoted by kind permission of Macmillan & Co., London.

INDIAN RELIGIOUS POETRY

*Thou the happy lullaby
Of my heart.*

*Hush thee, hush thee, Home of peace,—
Lo! Love lying there!—
Thou the happy lullaby
Of my care.*

*Hush thee, hush thee, Soul of mine,
Setting all men free,—
Thou the happy lullaby
Of the whole of me.*

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

*Hast thou ever seen the Lord, Christ, the Crucified?
Hast thou seen those wounded hands? Hast thou seen His
side?*

*Hast thou seen the cruel thorns woven for His crown?
Hast thou, hast thou seen His blood, dropping, dropping
down?*

*Hast thou seen who that one is who has hurt Him so?
Hast thou seen the sinner there, cause of all His woe?
Hast thou seen whom He to save suffers thus and dies?
Hast thou seen on whom He looks with His loving eyes?*

*Hast thou ever, ever seen love that was like this?
Hast thou given up thy life wholly to be His?*

THE INNER LIFE

[There is a singular likeness here to the theme of the greatest of all the "Negro Spirituals"—"Were you there, when they crucified my Lord?" The complete independence of these two hymns makes this likeness all the more significant.]

PRAYER

*Prayer to a heart of lowly love
Opens the gate of heaven above.*

*Ah, prayer is God's high dwelling-place
Wherein His children see His face.*

*From earth to heaven we build a stair,—
The name, by which we call it, prayer.*

*Prayer is the gracious Father's knee;
On it the child climbs lovingly.*

*Love's rain, the Spirit's holy ray,
And tears of joy, are theirs who pray.*

*To walk with God, to feel His kiss,
Yea, prayer, His servant owns, is this.*

LOVE'S ECSTASY

*Ah, Love, I sink in the timeless sleep,
Sink in the timeless sleep:*

*One Image stands before my eyes,
And thrills my bosom's deep:*

INDIAN RELIGIOUS POETRY

*One Vision bathes in radiant light
My spirit's palace-halls:
All stir of hand, all throb of brain,
Quivers, and sinks, and falls.
My soul fares forth; no fetters now
Chain me to this world's shore.
Sleep! I would sleep! In pity spare;
Let no man wake me more!*

[The two next poems were written by Tilak during his last illness.]

THE LAST VALLEY

*O Brother, on my shoulder rests Thy hand,
And fearless waits my soul;
O Way, erect on Thee I take my stand,
And radiant gleams my goal;
O Truth, within the warmth of Thine embrace,
All doubts dissolving die;
O Life, before the sunshine of Thy face,
Death perisheth, not I!
Thy servant saith, To-day there draweth near
That latest valley—and wherefore should I fear?*

THE LAST PRAYER

*Lay me within Thy lap to rest;
Around my head Thine arm entwine;
Let me gaze up into Thy face,
O Father-Mother mine!*

THE INNER LIFE

*So let my spirit pass with joy,
Now at the last, O Tenderest!
Saith Dāsa, Grant Thy wayward child
This one, this last request.*

(3) The last that I shall quote is a hymn, written in English, by the daughter of Nehemiah Nilkantha Goreh, whose life was saintly, like that of her father before her. Its childlike simplicity gives it a rare beauty:

IN THE SECRET OF HIS PRESENCE

*In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide.
Oh how precious are the lessons that I learn at Jesus' side.
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low,
For when Satan comes to tempt me to the secret place I go.
When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His
wing
There is cool and pleasant shelter and a fresh and crystal
spring.
And my Saviour rests beside me and we hold communion sweet,
If I tried I could not utter what He says when thus we meet.
Only this I know: I tell Him all my doubts and griefs and
fears.
Oh! how patiently He listens and my drooping soul he cheers!
Do you think He ne'er reproves me? What a false friend He
would be,
If he never, never told me of the sins which He must see.*

INDIAN RELIGIOUS POETRY

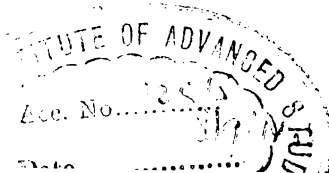
*Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the
Lord?*

*Go and hide beneath His shadow: This shall then be your
reward.*

*And when'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting
place,*

*You must mind and bear the image of your Master in your
face.*

ELLEN LAKSHMI GOREH.



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