

THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST TO ME

BY LOUISE NANKIVELL

It was at the close of the General Council in Minneapolis in September 1941 that I went into a complete physical collapse. I was unable to sit up, to hold up my head, to eat any food whatever, or to sleep. Although I had collapsed once before, about six weeks prior to this, my condition had now become so serious that I was taken to a hospital with what the hospital reported as "in labored breathing". I was apparently dying. My body was literally gone to pieces. My blood was "gone." The body chemistry had failed. The internal organs were in a condition spoken of by physicians as being "burned out." It was not just one organ - it was all of them.

BODY PREMATURELY OLD

My husband's brother in St. Paul sent an outside doctor in to the hospital to look me over. After an examination, he made some brief explanations about my state to nurses at my bedside. Then he turned to me, and in a gruff, harsh voice, admonished, "You're too young, too young to be in this condition. You have no business being this way."

Strangely enough, I was in the same condition as an aunt of mine, a dear, precious saint of God, in Chicago, my home city. But she was old, up in her eighties, and her body was worn out; her organs would never function again. The doctors had been carrying her along for a while by artificial aids they were giving her. When she passed away, the same things, which had been

done for her, were being done for me.

GIVEN UP TO DIE

I realized that I was dying, and that statement, "You're too young to be in this condition," rose up before me, and created a bitter spirit toward the Lord within my heart. No, I wasn't afraid to die. I can honestly say that. But I thought of the years of service I could still have for the Master, and I didn't want to go. The doctor did not prescribe anything, and no attempt was made by the hospital to give me food or drink. In fact, nothing was done for me, except that shots were given in the arm to keep me quiet at night, and a nurse watched me constantly.

I sank very low and my suffering was unbearable. Oh, how could a mortal endure such torture, such torment in body and survive! Would I ever live through another night? It would never do to go into the presence of the Lord with a bitter soul. And so, expecting momentarily that my spirit would take its flight, I yielded myself into the hands of the Lord, and the Lord made me willing to die.

My husband had been sent for, and stayed with me after I rallied until it was safe to take me down to Chicago, as I was too ill to get home alone. Much prayer was offered for my healing, but no change came in my physical condition. From the first, I had daily been given as large a quantity of sleeping drugs as could be safely administered, but after a year and a half had

elapsed, I was still too ill to sleep most of the time, even with drugs, and was still being "carried along" on artificial aids that were being given. In fact, at this time, in desperate attempts of faith for healing, when these aids were laid aside, I was unable to sit up, to eat any food whatever, or to even drink milk. There was a burning within my body, and as the doctors were silent on the cause of my trouble, we thought I had a cancer.

Feeling that I might just as well be facing the facts, I asked the physician point blank one day, "Do I have a cancer?" "No," came the prompt reply. "If you did, you would have been in a box three months." I questioned further as to why I did not get better. It was then he told me I was in the same condition as another patient he was treating, who was suffering from pernicious anemia and could not last much longer. Pernicious anemia with complications! An incurable condition! A fatal disease!

RESOLUTION TO SEEK GOD

I began to do some serious thinking. If the time of my earthly sojourn was limited, a good way to go would be praying. So despite unbearable suffering, I offered myself to my blessed Lord in hours of constant prayer for days and weeks. But the heavens were as brass. There seemed to be no ray of light. Approximately one year and nine months had gone by since I had become seriously ill and I was in the same dreadful condition.

THE VOW TO PREACH IN SACKCLOTH

In desperation, one day I humbled myself repeatedly before the Lord, and made a secret vow to preach in sackcloth, if He would bring me out of my living death. "Lord, I've preached your Gospel for years.

You've been faithful in healing many sick in the meetings. I know I'm unworthy, but surely, after seeing many healed by Your Hand in my own ministry, it wouldn't be that I cannot be healed, that I shall have to go to an untimely grave. Oh, Lord, if you will bring me out of my hopeless condition in a short time by some supernatural act of Divine intervention, so that all can see that YOU have done this, I'll go out and preach your Gospel dressed in sackcloth."

Two or three weeks went by and a Saturday night came. After retiring, I talked with the Savior. "Lord, all I am, all I have, my life, my health is in Your hands; I rest it all with You."

VISION OF THE LORD JESUS

That same night, or rather in the hours of Palm Sunday morning, our Lord Jesus appeared to me in a "vision of the night." I thought I was praying. The next thing, I thought I had gone into a trance. This "going into a trance" was as definite a transition as though I had gone through a door, stepped from one room into another. I seemed to be saying to myself, "Why, I've gone into a trance and I've never been in a trance before," when suddenly the Lord Jesus Christ appeared. He stood in front of me as plainly as any person I have ever seen. Oh, how beautiful He looked. More beautiful than any words of mine can adequately describe! His raiment was white and flowing. He did not have a halo over His head as I have so often seen in pictures, but from around His form, there emanated a strip of radiant light. The light followed in a continuous glow around the profile of His body—head, shoulders, arms, sides—appearing to be diffused from within. There was a stately splendor about His person, and such a placid calm. I could not see His form all the way down, as He was

standing behind a table. Suddenly Jesus vanished as quickly as He had appeared, and my disappointment was overwhelming.

JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN BRINGS DELIVERANCE

Within three days the change in my body was so great that I was like another person. I went to the physician and related my story of what had happened. He said that it could be accounted for through the appearance of Christ. He told me there had been cases known to medical science where through an "apparition," as he termed it, the whole course of the human body had been changed. He would attribute my healing to an "apparition" and write it down in the records. And now I was faced with a vow which I never expected to keep, as I never expected to get well. I told my husband, also the pastor of our Assembly and his wife, and all agreed the only thing to do was fulfill it, as it was made in all good faith.

WHY THE VOW?

But why should a person make such a vow? Before I had become ill, while ministering in white, I had seen the ever-deepening shadows of spiritual darkness falling upon this sinful and adulterous generation. I had read in the Bible how prophets, kings, common people, men, even women and children in olden days had put on sackcloth when the people had departed from the Lord. At one time a whole city put on sackcloth—at another, a whole nation. (Why the day will even yet come when in awful darkness and tribulation the Lord will permit two witnesses (Rev. 11) to prophesy clothed in sackcloth.) So one night in a revival meeting, I spoke on the subject "Sackcloth and

Ashes." Suiting the action to the word, I wore a sackcloth dress for the occasion.

Now I was incurably ill. If the Lord would raise me up, how gladly would I minister in sackcloth, not as an illustrated sermon, but as an act of humiliation and heartfelt gratitude. I would call America to put sackcloth and ashes upon her heart. Thus has come about this present ministry. And the Lord hath spoken unto me, "Go and tell how great things I have done for thee. No case is beyond My help. I can do as much and more for others as I have done for you. 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' In My Name, bind the powers of darkness and disease, and the diseases will no longer be able to operate in the bodies of the people." I could see diseases of every kind like so many soldiers standing up against a wall, bound so that they could not move. The Lord is loosing the people from all manner of sicknesses and infirmities, confirming His Word by doing mighty signs and wonders. All praise be alone to His matchless Name!

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