

ing is intensely needed. Tearing from their context one or two phrases of St. Paul, and not observing what was his *whole method*, and that of all the other Apostles, there is a most mistaken tendency to *concentrate* religious thought and emotion far more exclusively than was ever done by those whose brows had been mitred with Pentecostal flame, upon the few hours of our Lord's agony upon the cross, instead of remembering that the Cross was but *one moment* of His great redemption, the brief prelude to the eternal exaltation. Read the glowing Epistle to the Ephesians, and you will see how St. Paul's thoughts turned habitually to Christ in the heavenly places. The conception of Christ during the first three centuries was habitually and predominantly that of the *triumphant* Christ, the *glorified* Christ, the *living* Lord of time and all worlds; the medieval and modern conception has been far too predominantly of the Christ convulsed, agonized, humiliated, dying, dead. It is a certain and unquestionable historic fact that many of the material representations of Christ which are now the most popular, and all but universal, would in the first three centuries have been regarded as repellant, and almost as blasphemous. This change came in the fourth and later centuries, when many of those perversions originated from which we draw our popular and unprimitive Christianity. The Christianity of multitudes, even to an extent short of actual heresy, was deeply affected by all sorts of Oriental, pagan, and Manichean influences, tending specially to the glorification of mere physical pain and self-torturing asceticism. These had their influence on art, and art in its turn reacted upon religion. In the thoughts and the art of the earliest Christians there are two profoundly significant principles: one that they *never* separate Christ's death from His life; the other, that they *never* disintegrate His humanity from His divinity.

This is why the Latin cross is not found as a Christian symbol till the middle of the fifth century; nor the crucifix, unless most rarely, till the seventh; nor a *painted crucifixion* till the Dark Ages. The first known representation of the Crucifixion dates from the year 586, and is in a private Syriac Bible painted in the Eastern monastery of Zagba; and this illumination was not intended for the multitude, but exclusively for the hands of priests. The early Christians felt, as we have ceased to feel, the force of St. Paul's words: "It is Christ that died; *yea, rather* that is risen again"; the force of His own meaning respecting Himself: "I am he that *liveth*—and was dead—and *behold I am alive for evermore.*" Never indeed, for one moment, do we forget that Christ died for us; but always with it we recall that He rose again, and that His death was the death of Death, was Death swallowed up in Victory. The *exclusive* and isolated dwelling upon His death led to morbid sentimentalism, and ascetic gloom, and a deification of misery presented to the groaning acceptance of mankind, instead of the eternal Peace and eternal Victory of which that brief disquiet was but the spasm of birth. The contemplation of the living,