

# THE CALIFORNIA MEDITATIONS

## THE WILL – LOVE

BY HELEN M. LUKE

The proper activity of the will is love, and all distortions and weaknesses of the will derive from impurity in the Love which moves it.

Where there is pure love the will is of necessity in union with God, - Or equally, where the will is completely abandoned to the Will of God, there is pure love in action.

Impurity in love is the admixture of a desire for any kind of dividend - physical, emotional, intellectual or spiritual.



### ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE

The common phrase “you asked for it” is used lightly in the sense “you deserved it” - But like so many other misunderstood habits of speech, it has an exact and literal meaning. We always ask for what we get, or get what we ask for, though we seldom know that we have thus asked, and reject violently in consciousness that for which in the unconscious we are yearning. Each man at the deepest level of all “asks” always for the will of God, and when it is given him at every moment of his life, he will, unless he has begun to walk in the way of surrender, call it “luck” good or bad, “injustice”, senseless chance or earned reward, instead of which each moment of life, even sin, is simply the answer to our asking at one level or another, individually or collectively, and presents us with a forever repeated “occasion” for love, opportunity for consciousness.

What of the suffering of children? The answer holds good, mystery though it is. Where there is no individual asking there is collective asking, for there is only one Adam, and the suffering for which the heart of creation yearns (since it is the price of redemption) when it is not borne individually, consciously, with free consent of the will, must be borne collectively by innocent and guilty alike. The great archetype of this is the massacre of the Holy Innocents. The world’s violent rejection of the Holy Birth, of the Saviour for whom it at the same time longed, is paid for by the death of those least guilty of that rejection.

Mankind craves a Saviour, but will not pay the price, accept the agony of consciousness, and so the suffering is diverted onto the unconscious level and the innocent die. Herod, as individual, refuses the greatest opportunity of his life, sees it as a mere threat to his personal supremacy, rejects love, is thrown instead into a panic of hate. No matter what is killed in the process, this deadly thing must be stamped out, lest he be forced to face his own nothingness. And not only Herod. - There must be few indeed who can look into themselves with open eyes and not see this very horror. But thanks be to God, we do not succeed. The innocents suffer but rejoice in Heaven, for the Divine thing is not stamped out - hidden in Egypt, yes, but gloriously to return.

Meanwhile there is the prayer of the Saints - of those who have not refused the price, and who being free and whole, are in union with Him who came freely to His death, in full consciousness on the Cross. These may choose to suffer still, thus lifting in their degree the collective burden, as He in a mystery carried the whole, and speeding who knows how many on their way to the liberty of the Sons of God.

## ASCETICISM

We are often revolted by the extreme bodily penances practised in the Middle Ages, and are apt to look askance at them as the custom of a less enlightened age. But the reason for this is surely obvious. The Desert Fathers and all their medieval successors lived in an age struggling to emerge from the absolutely unbridled sensuality of paganism and the dark centuries. The ego therefore was in general identified with the body and the life of the senses and it required an extreme discipline to separate it therefrom. The Saint must in each age bear the kind of penance which is the crying need of his contemporaries, even if he personally could do without it. Therefore when we dismiss these extremes as having no relevance to us, we have need to ask ourselves if we are bearing an equal burden of discipline and mortification in the regions where our own age is tied and bound. For our own identification with the mind and spirit is something much more dangerous than the pagan identification with the body, and the breaking of it demands a constant effort of penance and mortification every bit as searing and terrible as the hairshirt and the daily scourges.

And it may be that in every age the woman's hairshirt is the mortification of her feeling. For it is here in the sphere of relationship that a woman is almost always bound by her identifications. She partakes, of course, of the problem of her time, but basically she changes little.

The seven wounds which pierced the Mother of God were all shattering pangs of consciousness in the matter of her relationship to her Son. And to the traditional seven may be added the moment of His leaving home, and the moment of His public disavowal of a special personal relationship with her. "Thy Mother is without and asking for Thee" - "Who is my Mother?" - "They who do the Will of God."

How sharp a sword this in the heart of woman!