

HEAVEN AND HEREAFTER

BY

SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

PREFACE BY ALFRED ZAHIR

Being an account of the life, experience and observances of the spiritual world and heaven of the very aged Christian Saint at Kailash in the Himalayas. In this little book we give a short account of the aged Saint whom Sundar Singh, the well-known Christian Sadhu of North India, has twice met at Kailash, a certain snow-clad peak of the great Himalayas.

The descriptions given in the pages of this book are merely an English rendering of what the writer had heard and noted down from Sundar's own lips. While on the one hand the Saint's account of heaven and its inhabitants will come as a great edifying and inspiring revelation to many, it will on the other hand, cause unprecedented consternation in the minds of several others who might find it rather difficult to give full credit to the Saint's assertions.

But this is entirely a matter of personal opinion and belief and every one is at liberty to think as he chooses. Hence, we leave these accounts entirely to the reader's own judgement and simply pass on with the remark that right or wrong as these accounts may be, they have been and will be a source of real spiritual help and uplift to many.

To prove the Saint's existence (especially when he professes to be 318 years of age) is another problem that can only be solved by someone going on a pilgrimage to the spot where he lives. It is a fact to be regretted that while so many are ready to criticise Sundar's statements about the Saint, few are ready to go on a walk of about 500 miles over the cliffs and crags of the Himalayas to prove or disprove once for all the Saint's existence. All that we can say in favour of the Saint's existence is that Sundar was a devoted servant of the Lord and a true man of God. And had so ungrudgingly given up his whole life in the service of his Master is hardly a person to be suspected or disbelieved.

In the end we beg the reader to beware of unscrupulous haste in passing his judgements on the accounts recorded herein. For he may find in them real food for his soul and a solution of many of the bewildering problems which volumes of theological lore and whole libraries of expository literature can do nothing to solve or explain.

On the success of this little book and the help of Christian friends who may feel moved by reading the wonderful things recorded therein, will depend largely on the production of a fuller and more exhaustive account of the Saint and the mysteries revealed by him. The writer will consider his work blessed if hearts have been touched and brought nearer the Light through the reading of these pages.

Since the above Preface was written, Sundar Singh himself has now disappeared in one of the Himalayan Mountains, and Mr Alfred Zahir has passed on.

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CHAPTER ONE

Sundar's unexpected interview with the Maha Rishi and a brief account of the conversion, subsequent career and present occupation of the venerable old Saint.

*O let my life be given,
My years for Thee be spent;
World fetters all be riven,
And joy with suffering blent;
Thou gav'st Thyself for me,
I give myself to Thee.*

Sundar Singh has travelled almost all over the country, but he has always had a peculiar attraction for the hilly regions of North India where the people are mostly ignorant and the authorities adverse to Christian influence and propaganda. A single reading of 'A Lover of the Cross' would be enough to show the reader the perils and dangers that beset the path of those who travel through these regions.

It was in the summer of the year 1912 that preaching through several hilly districts like Tehri Garhwal and Gangotri, Sundar was travelling towards Kailash, a certain cliff on the Himalayas which is very sacred to the Hindus, and is regarded as the home of various Hindu Rishis or seers. Somewhere on the way Sundar suddenly came across a stone cross fixed on a rock. He was absolutely amazed to see a cross, in a place popularly known as the haunt of Hindu gods, and it prompted him to go about in search of more. But a long and exhausting march of several miles round about the place only resulted in his bewilderment and losing the proper path.

After roaming aimlessly for several days Sundar was compelled to give up his search and return towards the plains. It was on his way back from Kailash that one day while descending a slope, the strong glare of the sun so completely dazzled his eyes that he could hardly see where he was walking. He was thus going aimlessly, when all of a sudden he lost his balance and rolling over the slope he fell a few yards below it. From the shock of the fall Sundar lay unconscious for a few minutes, but when he came to himself and opened his eyes he found himself right in front of a big yawning cavern at the entrance of which sat a hoary old man, a figure most dreadful to behold. Sundar was overwhelmed with fear at this uncanny sight that he very nearly relapsed into his former state of unconsciousness from which he had only just recovered.

Looking more closely at the figure before him, Sundar has now no doubt that he was beholding a human being, although on account of the long streaming hair all over his body he very much resembled a wild bear. This is the rough picture that Sundar draws of this old man. 'The hair of his head and beard were so long that they touched the ground, while his eyebrows formed a kind of screen over his face. His nails too, which he used for digging purposes were several inches in length. He wore no clothes, but the long hair completely covered almost every inch of his body.'

As Sundar had often heard about the existence of Hindu Rishis in these parts he felt sure that this man was some Hindu seer. All this time Sundar had kept quiet and was wondering how to start conversations. At last he took courage and addressed the man

in his own dialect. At first the man seemed to take no notice of Sundar's words and sat with his eyes closed as he had done all the time, but a minute or two after Sundar had spoken the man opened his eyes. 'These eyes' says Sundar, 'were so bright and piercing that they seemed to gaze through my very heart and read my thoughts.'

After the old man had opened his eyes he said 'Before we start our conversation, let us have a word of prayer.' Saying this he opened his voluminous parchment Testament and read out from the 5th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. The reading over, he knelt down to pray and prayed a most earnest and solemn prayer ending in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This was all very amazing to poor Sundar who had hardly expected to find any man in these desolate parts and much less a devout Christian and a man of prayer. At first he thought the man was deceiving him. But the conversation that now followed assured him that this was all done through Divine Agency. God had led him thither in order that He might reveal and teach him something which would add to his knowledge of spiritual things and make him a stronger and more faithful servant of His.

Now Sundar asked the old man to tell him his past history and to explain to him the circumstances that had led him thither. What follows is briefly the old man's history in his own words as he related it to Sundar.

THE OLD SAINT'S HISTORY IN HIS OWN WORDS

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:27-28)

Some 318 years ago, I was born in Egypt, Alexandria, of a Mohammedan family. At the age of thirty I renounced the world and became a hermit in order that through nightly vigils and daily meditation I might become more thoroughly acquainted with divine mysteries and obtain a perfect knowledge of spiritual things. But although I struggled hard to achieve my purpose and rest my troubled soul, yet nothing seemed to help me towards the end. On the contrary, as days and weeks went by, my soul grew more restless within me and I longed for something that would still the forces of inward warfare and bring peace and rest to my joyless heart.

I was yet in the middle of my spiritual sufferings when one day I heard that some Christian Saint had come from India, who went preaching about a Saviour Who, he said, had power to save sinners and give rest to the weary. When I heard this I also longed for an interview with him and to know if he could do anything to help me out of my difficulties.

I was still planning an interview with the Saint, when to my great joy, he came to me himself one day and seeing me so sad and downhearted, spoke to me many a word to cheer and comfort my drooping spirit. And in the course of his conversation told me a good deal about the Lord Jesus, about the holy and exemplary life He had lived on earth, His power to save sinners and His love and care of the fallen and friendless. Somehow the love and sympathy of this man of God and the few things he told me about Jesus had a strange effect on my heart. And I became conscious of an inward

persuasion that the time was near when my trials would be ended and I should attain to that peace of mind and happiness of soul that I had so long been striving for, but all in vain.

After his first visit this Christian Saint paid me several others and taught me a lot more about Jesus Christ and His saving power. The more I heard and learnt about the Saviour, the more was my heart conquered for Him. At last, when I had no doubt left that Jesus and He alone could calm my troubled soul and grant me inward peace and joy, I received baptism from my teacher and became a Christian. At once a new joy entered my soul and I became restless with the desire to go about and tell others about the Saviour of my own soul. So I requested my teacher to allow me to follow him on his evangelistic tour through the country, so that I could also learn more and be strengthened in the faith. Happily my request was granted and I followed the Saint on his tour.

My revered teacher's name was Jernaus who was the nephew of the world-famed Francis Xavier,¹ (1506-1552) perhaps the greatest amongst the Jesuit Missionaries who laboured in the East. This Jernaus had travelled almost all over the world and had also spent several years in India, where besides others he had baptised the Emperor Akbar, and several other prominent men and religious leaders of the age. The parchment New Testament was also a gift from my teacher and is a very precious treasure to me. This is one of the very few copies of the New Testament, which were written in the time of the great Emperor Constantine. Francis Xavier had it himself for several years and on his death, it came into the possession of his nephew, my teacher.

After I had been with my teacher for some years, he left me alone and told me to go wherever I was directed and preach the Word of God. In accordance with his injunctions I went almost all over the world and for 75 whole years, that is till I was 105 years of age, I preached the Word of God from city to city and country to country. As a result of my working in so many different countries I am now thoroughly conversant with twenty-one different languages.

Reaching the great age of 105 when my physical and mental faculties began to decline, I felt that I should no longer be able to stand the strain of active work. So I decided to spend the rest of my days in entire seclusion and perfect rest from bodily labours and end my life in constant prayer, meditation and intercession for the Lord's servants engaged in active service.

With this intention I came to this part of India where I had toured in some former years.

The spot that I have chosen is miles away from any habitation and there is no danger of any human being ever-spoiling the ease and quiet of my solitary life. It is a perfect haven of peace and restfulness. All around me spreads nature's garden which abounds in numerous kinds of fruits and herbs, and it is on these I live. Some of them are

¹ Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was the most distinguished of all the missionaries of the Society of Jesuits to pagan lands, known as the 'Apostle of the Indies.' His charity was measureless, his courage heroic. His labours in India, Japan and other lands of the Far East were attended with astonishing results.

specifics for certain kinds of diseases, while others contain the very juice of life. It is by eating these that I have still got what strength there is in me.

In winter when it snows day and night a number of wild bears come into my cave, so we all lie huddled up and thus keep each other warm and cosy.

After I had been here for some years I thought that the time had come for me to leave this mortal tabernacle and make for my heavenly home. But although I was so far advanced in years yet I felt no decline in my physical or mental faculties. One day I was thus sitting and meditating and praying to God to soon call me Home if it was His will, when all of a sudden I heard a strange buzzing noise in the cave. It seemed as though hundreds of birds flew inside it. I looked up and I looked down but could see nothing.

When this noise continued for some time and yet I could not see anything I threw myself on my knees and prayed, 'O God, if there is some mystery hidden in this, reveal it to Thy servant and let Thy will be known unto me.' This prayer was still on my lips when I felt as though someone touched my eyes. No sooner did this happen and removed, than my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw that besides hundreds of angels that filled my cave, there was a whole army of them descending from heaven and singing hymns of praise and glory to God. Behind this army I saw their King, even Christ, descending from heaven and coming towards me. At this I fell on my face and worshipped Him.

But soon the Master took me by the hand and raised me up and then addressed me thus, 'My faithful servant, I now grant thee life everlasting for thou shalt never die, and will live in the body till my second coming which is now near at hand. Henceforth thou shalt spend thy time in praying and interceding for My Church now militant on earth and this will be thy special service.' After the Lord had finished speaking I was given a new heart, a heart cleansed from sin and all its pollutions, and I felt as though I was born anew. Then I was the Lord and His great army of holy angels departs towards heaven.

After they were all gone a number of saints came to me and wished me joy in my regeneration and the great privilege that had been bestowed on me. These were those who, having finished their course on earth, had now entered their eternal rest and won the crown of glory. Since that day some one of the saints is always with me and helps me to perform the duties that I have been appointed to by God. Now my only service is to pray and intercede for the different branches of the Church of Christ spread all over the world. I begin my day with hours of prayer, intercession, singing of hymns and psalms of glory to God and reading and meditating over the Holy Word.

There is also another special privilege that God has bestowed on me. That is the privilege of visiting every part of the world in spirit. For otherwise how could I intercede for different people and places in spirit, while my body remains lying behind in the cave?

*O Way Divine, through gloom and strife,
Bring us Thy Father's Face to see;
O heavenly Truth, O precious life,
At last, at last, we rest in Thee.*

CHAPTER TWO

The Communion of the Saints

*Let Saints on earth unite to sing
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King
In earth and heaven are one.*

Besides the great privilege of being allowed to go about in spirit independent of the body, the constant Communion of saints is also a source of great help and strength to me. In the Apostles' Creed you say 'I believe in the Communion of saints'. I do not only believe but see this wonderful communion every day and every hour with my own spiritual eyes. Only a little before you came, Saint Francis of Assissi, Polycarp and Lynus were present with me in the spirit. This Lynus is that saint who is the real author of the 'Imitation of Christ,' but which by common error is regarded as the work of Thomas-a-Kempis. But Lynus is not in the least concerned about the occurrence of this mistake because he says the only object of his work was that through it, His name may be glorified, and that object is being fulfilled. 'For,' said he, 'after all, who was I that I could have written such deep things; it was through His inspiration that I wrote those things, so Glory be to Him.'

THE INTER-RELATION OF BODY AND SOUL

In the course of his conversation the Rishi remarked that his spirit was not allowed to travel on earth only but that at times he found access to heaven too. Sundar was greatly surprised at hearing this remark and asked the Rishi how a spirit could travel independently of the body and then return to the same.

In answer to this the Rishi said 'There is such a fine relation between body and soul which human language cannot describe nor mind comprehend.' For a complete and final severance of the soul from the body the breaking of this 'fine' link is essential. The following texts will corroborate what I say and will also tell you that a temporary absence of the soul from the body is not an impossibility, even the Scripture bears witness to this. Notice carefully the following texts:

Ecclesiastes 12:6 - 'Or ever, the silver cord be loosed ... then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 - Where the Apostle says 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell). God knoweth how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.'

1 Corinthians 5:3-4 - Where the Apostle says 'For I verily am absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present ...'

Colossians 2:5 - Where the Apostle says again 'For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.'

2 Kings 5:26 - Where Elisha says to his servant Gehazi who had gone running after Naaman 'Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?'

These texts from the Bible are sufficient authority to prove that the Rishi's claim to the privilege of roaming about in spirit independent of the body is no way contrary to reason or the Word of God. Besides, the Rishi related several incidents with the utmost precision that had happened to Sundar hundreds of miles away from Kailash. For instance he told him that he (i.e. Sundar) had once spent a night with a panther and that on another occasion he had met a singular man with a lamb. Besides these he related very accurately an accident that he had met with on his way to Kailash, how that Sundar had fallen down on the way and smashed the nail of his big toe. Moreover, he also told Sundar that several days before his arrival at his cave, he had known that he was coming that way and that was why he had found him there when he arrived. 'Otherwise, as a rule,' said the Rishi, 'I am absent from here about the time you came.'

THE RISHI'S NAME

And ye shall know that I am in My Father and ye in Me and I in you. (John 12:20)

Hearing these wonderful things which certainly none but a true devoted servant of God could know and speak about, Sundar felt sure that the old man was some great seer, and a deeply spiritual man. Hence in order to confirm these views by further research he asked the Saint a number of questions, to all of which he gave amazingly satisfactory and sagacious answers. But the explanation of his name is perhaps the most wonderful of all.

In answer to Sundar's question as to what his name was, the Rishi said 'When I was a man like other men of the world I had an earthly name, but since I am not quite the same now as other men, my name is "Christian". The word SIN which was my past condition, for then I was of a sinful nature as other human beings are, but now I (that is the self) has been removed and instead of I, O (that is, an illimitable Being which has no beginning or end) has come in. So that now instead of SIN, which was my past state, SON, that is the Lord Jesus, dwelleth in me. He Who has no beginning or end, but is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Now by His grace I am dead towards sin, but alive in my Saviour Jesus Christ to Whom be praise and glory both now and ever! Amen.'

CHAPTER THREE

The Relation of the Spiritual with the Temporal World

After the brief explanation of his name the Rishi described various observations that he makes while in spirit. A few of these are related below in his own words:

THE CONQUERED AND THE CONQUEROR

Many people seem to think that what they do in secret is not known to anyone else except themselves. But remember the words of St. Paul and also what our Lord Himself said 'For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known' (Matthew 10:26)

What our Lord and the Apostle thus taught the people I have seen with my own eyes. Once I remember having seen a man in Liverpool who was also present in spirit and saw that this man's elder brother and his grandmother, both of whom were very God-fearing people in their lifetime, were present in spirit and not only they but with them also an army of angels. Seeing him thus committing this horrible sin, the man's relations shed tears of bitter woe and grief at their unworthy relation. I too was greatly touched at this sad sight, when one of the angels said to me 'What this man is now doing will be brought back to his mind after his death, then will he repent and long for forgiveness but it will not be granted to him'

On another occasion I saw a man in Pittsburgh who was being assailed by a very strong temptation to sin, but instead of giving way to his desires this man fell repeatedly on his knees and prayed for divine help to overcome his evil passion. This was a terrific struggle, which several of his relations too were watching in great suspense. At last, through prayer, he overcame his temptation. At this his relations and hundreds of angels who were also witnesses of the scene, were greatly pleased and, singing hymns of praise and glory to God Who had saved a soul from falling into sin, flew back towards heaven.

THE DEATH OF A WIDOW'S ONLY SON

Our past relations and dear ones who have passed away from this transitory life follow the lives of us human beings with great interest. They share our joys, our sorrows and our sufferings and often come very close to us, although we can never see them with our human eyes.

I remember once seeing a very touching sight. A Christian widow in madras had an only son, and the same fell seriously ill and after some weeks died. The poor mother was greatly shocked at the loss of her young son and spent all her time in weeping and wailing. One day she was thus sitting and weeping her heart out for her dear son. I was also present there in spirit and saw her own son sitting in her lap and trying to comfort her by saying 'Dear mother, why do you so weep for me, for see I have entered my eternal rest and am happier than the world could ever make me. Do not grieve so much because I am no more with you, for only a short time and you will also be with me.' But these words of her son had no effect on the mother who could neither see him nor

hear his voice. At this the youth became very sad and broken hearted and begged permission to appear before he in body, so that he could explain to her the futility of her grief. But to his great disappointment such permission was not granted him.

The above descriptions will show the reader how our past relations watch and observe all our thoughts and actions. 'They long to appear to us in body' says the Rishi in order to warn us of the wiles of the evil one, and to guide our feet into the way of salvation. But this is seldom allowed them and God's reply to their petitions is invariably this. 'They have many of my chosen servants now living on earth; let them learn from their lives and teaching.' The reader will remember how our Lord Himself once taught a similar lesson. See Luke 16:21-31. When in order that his relations might be saved from the torments which were his lot, Dives (the rich man) prays Abraham that he would someone to his brethren 'that he would testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham's reply is 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS

'Every faithful servant of the Lord,' says the Maha Rishi 'is helped by his guardian angels who are appointed by God, to be constantly with him to succour and uphold him in his moments of weakness and despair.' No one can see these angels except those very few who become so immersed in Divine love that their spiritual eyes are partly opened, so that at times they catch a glimpse of the spiritual world and begin to understand the mysteries of the communion of saints.

Except a certain group almost all spirits enjoy perfect freedom to visit any part of the earth. It is not very often that one hears of good spirits appearing to human beings. This is not at all due to any restrictions put upon them by God, but the only reason is that their sinless and heavenly nature as a natural aversion towards the sin-stained nature of human beings. The very smell of sin as it were is repugnant to their celestial nature; hence it is a real discomfort and misery to them when they are ever called up by men. For instance, when Saul called up Samuel's spirit, Samuel said to Saul 'Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?' (1 Samuel 23:15)

On the other hand evil spirits are only too ready to interfere in human affairs and because their very nature is sin, they burn with a desire to satisfy their sinful nature. But since it is impossible for them to adopt human bodies themselves, their sinful lusts derive some gratification when human beings commit sin, they also derive a certain amount of pleasure for their own lustful passions.

Moreover the very knowledge of their fate after the Day of Judgement makes these spirits desperately miserable. They know that the day will soon come when they will be consigned to the perpetual torture of hell and so their one ambition and joy is to excite other human beings to evil works, so that they too, like them, may become the inheritors of hell. All spirits reap the fruit of the works they did on earth, but there are others who are not wholly responsible for their final fate.

A GOOD BOY AND A BAD GIRL

For instance, I was once present at the death of a girl in England, whose parents never took care of her and had allowed her to grow up in wicked ways. After death, when this girl entered the spiritual realm, she was told what her end would be. At this she became so passionate that in her anger and despair she began to scold and curse her own parents who had never checked her in her evil ways or warned her of their consequences.

On another occasion I saw a boy who had been very carefully bred and brought up by his good religious parents. At his death, when he found that he had inherited eternal joy and peace, he felt deeply grateful to his good father and mother who had guided his feet aright and led him onto the path of everlasting joy.

*The mother in her office holds the key
Of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin
Of Character and makes the being who would be a savage
But for her gentle care, a Christian man.*

CHAPTER FOUR

The End of the Ungodly and Agnostics

*Fool : All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure
What entered into Thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel run back or stops;
Potter and clay endure.*

Talking about the spiritual world the Saint related the following touching incidents describing the end of those who deny the existence of God.

A SCIENTIST OF GENEVA

A certain scientist of Geneva by name of Sutton denied the existence of God. He believed that soul and life are one and the same thing and that there is no such thing as a life hereafter. Strange to say this man's wife was a very pious and deeply religious lady, and his children too who had been bred and brought up entirely under her influence, were likewise religious and God-fearing. This man's wife and children often tried to bring their relation around and to convince him of the existence of God but Sutton only laughed at what they said and called them stupid and superstitious.

It so happened that Sutton's wife and his children all died one after the other. A few years afterwards Sutton also died. According to his belief there was no life after death, so when the time of his death approached he thought that he would be no more after he had breathed his last on earth. But as soon as he left the world he was surprised to find himself transported into another life although the body, which he had tenanted on earth, was left behind. At this Sutton, at once thought of his wife and children, who had often tried to persuade him that after the earthly there was also a heavenly life. He no sooner thought of them than his wife and children all appeared before him.

But to his great disappointment, he saw that there was a great gulf between him and his dear ones, which made it impossible for either of them to cross over to the other side, although they could see and hear each other quite clearly and distinctly. Seeing his wife and children in such a glorious and happy state and comparing their condition with his own filthy and detestable state tears came into his eyes and he began to weep bitterly. Whereupon Sutton's wife shouted out 'O my dear husband, you were sad at my death and mourned for several days, but did I not tell you on my death-bed that I was only passing into another life and would see you again after some time? But you did not believe my words and persisted in your own ways. Now we stand parted forever. That parting was only temporary, but this is eternal.' Hearing these words from the lips of his own beloved wife Sutton jumped from his place and tried to reach her, but I saw that instead of approaching any nearer to his wife he sank deeper and deeper where he stood. While his wife and children sadly turned their backs on him and marched towards heaven whence they had come.

Some people think that those servants of God who are now in heaven must feel very sad and miserable at finding their sinful relations agonising in the torturous pain of hell. But to understand that it is not so, let me tell something more about Sutton and his wife and children. As Sutton's wife and children strolled back towards heaven, whence they had come, they were feeling so very broken-hearted and miserable at Sutton's fate that before they entered the gate of Heaven they said to God 'O God, what joy can we have by staying in heaven when our dear one has been consigned to eternal torture and perpetual punishment?' Nothing was said in reply to their cry of grief and they were quietly led towards their Home. As soon as they entered heaven they forgot everything about their relation and began to rejoice and make merry as though they had never faced any sorrow or grief. The very atmosphere of Heaven is free from pain and grief.

The children of Satan have nothing to do with the children of God, for the former see nothing except torture and everlasting death before them, while the latter know no sorrow or trouble and rejoice in their heavenly freedom.

VISIT OF AN EVIL SPIRIT

Besides the Saints, at times some evil spirits too find their way to me. Once had a visit from the spirit of an atheist of Rohtak - a town in the Punjab. This spirit seemed to be very miserable and restless and told me that while on earth he scorned religion, completely denied the very existence of God and led a most lascivious and luxurious life, 'Because' said the spirit 'I believed that there was no life after death. But passing from my life on earth I found myself in another life. Now although like other kindred spirits I enjoy perfect freedom and am at liberty to go anywhere and everywhere, yet this freedom is worse than imprisonment. Because the consciousness of what is in store for me rankles at my heart and makes me desperate with grief and despair. I seek relief, but find it not, I call for death, but it cometh not.' I was greatly touched at finding this miserable spirit twisting in the coils of tragedy. 'But why do you not repent?' I asked. "And pray for another chance for repentance?"

THE COMING OF A GOOD SPIRIT AND AN ANGEL

I had hardly finished my question when I saw another good spirit come to me. This was the spirit of a good man of New York. In reply to my inquiry the evil spirit said 'It is no use, for now I have lost my opportunity.' Hearing this I thought perhaps I could do something for him and so I prayed to God on his behalf. Hearing my prayer an angel came down from heaven and said 'There is no hope for this being now because there is no possibility of changing his nature which was formed during his life on earth.' But as I continued entreating the angel to do something for the wretched spirit, the angel took him before God. Since God knew his condition, He appeared in a very faint light, but even that faint light was too dazzling for this child of darkness and he fell flat on his face.

At this, the good man of New York who had been standing absolutely quiet till now, thus explained this enigma to me. 'While an earthen vessel is still wet it is possible to beat it into shape, while any attempt to do so after it has once been baked in the furnace would break it.'

‘Likewise, death is also a ripening of life, so that no one may change his nature after death. That is why it is written in the book of Revelation 12:11 - ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still.’

‘No one’s life can by any means be changed after death. An evil life can in no way be converted into a good life or an infernal into an angelic life. For every spirit from head to foot is just such as his love is, therefore just such as his life. And to convert this life into its opposite is to destroy the spirit completely. Man after death continues to be such as his life had been in the world. No one in the spiritual world can resist his lust, because his lust belongs to his love and his love belongs to his will and his will belongs to his nature and every one acts according to his nature.’

At death, although man leaves his body behind, yet he retains and carries with him his nature that is his life into the spiritual world, hence the annihilation of his nature means the annihilation of his very existence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Jerusalem on High - Part 1

*Blessed city, heavenly Salem,
Vision dear of peace and love.
Who of living stones are builded
In the height of Heaven above.*

MAGGIE'S DEATH SCENE AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS

Talking about the spiritual realm the Rishi thus related another interesting and inspiring incident:

One day it was my turn to pray for France. As I was praying, all of a sudden I saw some angels hurrying towards the city of Paris. On asking I was told that they were going to receive a spirit and escort it to heaven that was to leave the world that very day. Hearing this I begged permission to follow the angels so that I could also see how spirits were received into heaven. My request was granted and I followed the angels to a poor woman's house, where a young girl of twenty-one lay on her deathbed, surrounded by her weeping relations.

When only fifteen more minutes were left of Maggie's life one of the angels touched her eyes with his hand. At once Maggie's spiritual eyes were opened and she saw that a vast army of angels had come for her reception and with them, several of her own past relations. Looking a little higher she also beheld a golden ladder leading up to Heaven, down which was descending another enormous army of Cherubim singing hymns of praise and glory. Right at the very end of this golden ladder she saw an enormous portal, over which these words were written in bright letters of gold 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.' As soon as Maggie read these words she remembered that these were the words that the Lord had Himself spoken with His own lips. No sooner had she thought this than she saw the Lord Himself standing in the portal, His Face shining with resplendent brightness.

Seeing this Maggie's heart overflowed with joy and she began to comfort her weeping relations by saying 'Do not mourn for me, for I am about to enter into a place of great rest and joy. Hundreds of bright angels have come hither to fetch me, yea, not only they, but also even the Lord Himself is waiting for me at the door. Instead of weeping you should rejoice, for quitting this life of misery I shall soon enter the realms of everlasting rest and joy.' But these words did not in any way comfort her weeping relations. They thought she was raving in her unconsciousness. When Maggie's time came to die she cried 'Lord I entrust my soul into Thy hands' and breathed her last. As soon as her soul quit its earthly tabernacle she saw that her beloved mother embrace her dead body and burst into most piteous howls and shrieks, while the other relations too cried very bitterly.

Seeing this Maggie's heart was also filled with great sorrow, so in order to console her dear ones she spoke to them many words of cheer and comfort. But when she

discovered that they did not seem to hear them she was greatly surprised. Then she tried to touch her body and feel her existence but to her great amazement she found that her body was not such as could be either felt or touched. Presently Maggie was told that her time was over and that she could no longer stay on earth.

Now the angels conveyed her towards heaven. Her way was lined all through with rows of angels on both sides, while after every furlong or so she met whole companies of them singing psalms and hymns to the accompaniment of various musical instruments. Reaching the gate of Heaven some of the prime angels came out to receive her, but the Lord Himself was present here and stretching forth His own blessed Hand, He received Maggie into His own loving Arms and entered heaven. Tears of joy filled Maggie's eyes at this great honour that the Lord had done to her and repeatedly she asked, 'Lord, what have I done to deserve all this gracious reception, for after all I was a sinner?' In her lifetime this young girl had always tried to walk in God's ways and did several little pious deeds, which she thought little about. So she was told that all this honour was her due reward for what she had done for God while she was on earth. And that just as man does now evil work that God does not remember, similarly man received his due reward for every little good that he does on earth.

THE HEAVENLY MANSIONS

*Ah me! Ah Me! That I
In Kedar's tents here stay;
No place like that on high;
Lord thither guide my way.*

As I had never before entered Heaven, I asked permission to follow Maggie and her party in order that I may get some idea of it. Permission was granted and so I followed her into heaven and this is what I saw:

As soon as I entered heaven I saw lofty, magnificent mansions stretching for long distances around. But these were neither built of bricks, clay and mortar, nor of glass, crystal, or any other substance - for unlike earthly things they have no palpable existence. They are neither limited nor unlimited and yet they exist and are so transparent that the eye can pierce through thousands of them. In short, they are mansions that no human language can describe nor imaginations exhaustively comprehend.

When Maggie saw these beautiful and imposing mansions she was struck with great surprise and asked her angel guides as to who were the inhabitants of these stately habitations. In reply she was told that these were the dwellings of those saints who had fought and won their battles on earth and had now entered their heavenly mansions which had been prepared for them while they were yet in the world.

Going a little further the angels stopped at another magnificent mansion. Surprised at its amazing grandeur, Maggie wanted to know if this belonged to some great potentate. In reply the angels said 'No, for there is no distinction here. The king and the beggar are on an equal footing. The grandeur of these houses depends on the

merits of God's servants. This dwelling is for you and it has only just been completed today. Entering her house of everlasting joy and peace, Maggie saw that there was a crown placed inside. It was set with four sparkling gems. When she asked who this crown was for and what these four gems signified, it was told her that the crown was her own and the four sparkling gems were the four souls which her Bible teaching had won for the Lord. Hearing this Maggie broke forth into raptures of joy, singing hymns of praise and magnifying the Name of the Lord, she entered her mansion there to dwell in everlasting joy and abiding peace.

CHAPTER SIX

Jerusalem on High - Part 2

*Who the multitudes can number
In the mansions of the blest,
He can weigh the joys eternal
By those ransom'd ones possess'd
Exiled now on earth no longer,
They have gained the Home of rest.*

THE THREE GRADES OF SAINTS

After the angels had escorted Maggie to her heavenly mansion, they told me a few other things about these mansions. Pointing towards these they showed me one wherein sat a saint wearing a golden crown. 'This' they said 'is the saint who while on earth had lived in the faith and fear of God and spent all his life in doing good.' Then they showed me another one wherein sat a saint whose crown was set with shining gems and rubies. 'This' they said 'is another saint who did not only live a righteous life but saved several other souls and brought them into the way of Salvation. The number of gems in his crown signify the number of souls he saved and they shall ever shine like stars in his crown and be a lasting witness of his work on earth. Do you remember what the prophet Daniel said? And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever (Daniel 12:3).'

Then I was shown another mansion wherein sat a saint whose whole body was covered with shining stars. 'This' the angels said 'is one of those saints who had suffered persecution and martyrdom for Christ's sake, and now every mark of the bruises and blows dealt to them shines as bright stars on their heavenly bodies.'

*Lo! These are they from sufferings great
Who came to realms of light;
And in the Blood of Christ have wash'd
Those robes that shine so bright ...*

THE THREE STATES OF HEAVENLY MANSIONS

Looking over these mansions I noticed that some of them were uninhabited, some incomplete, while of others only the foundation had yet been laid. When I asked why that was so, I was told that since the mansions were meant for God's chosen servants only, the progress in their erection depended entirely on the spiritual progress of His servants. 'Just' said the angels 'as His servants go on progressing in good works and advance in life; their heavenly mansions too are made more complete. The incomplete mansions which you see here belong to those servants of the Lord who are still warring on earth, and have many a day more of labour and toil before they enter heaven.'

Then pointing towards an untenanted mansion I asked why that remained without any tenant. In reply one angel said 'The owner has finished his course this very day and is about to enter heaven.' The angel had no sooner finished speaking that I saw a number

of angels escorting saint to the empty mansion I was asking about. Oh, how glorious! For all faithful stewards of the Lord will one day leave this mortal world and be mansioned in their heavenly Home, as St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:1 - 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

Interviews with some of the Inhabitants of Heaven

*Jesus my Shepherd is,
'Twas he that loved my soul,
'Twas He that washed me in His blood
'Twas He that made me whole.*

THE YOUNG SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

Besides what I have seen of heaven with my own eyes I know a few other things which spirits have told me from time to time.

Once I had a visit from the spirit of that young son of the widow of Nain whom the Lord raised from the dead. This is briefly the account in his own words.

‘Quitting the world when I stepped into the spiritual realm, I began to feel very miserable and restless, because although in my lifetime I had heard a good deal about the Lord, yet I had never taken much notice of Him. When, on coming here, I discovered that without Jesus no one could be saved I was greatly disappointed. I cried to God for one more opportunity to be given me, so that I could go back to the world whence I had come, spend all my life in serving Him and so become an inheritor of heaven.

This was entirely against the laws of heaven, but because Christ was to be glorified through my restoration to life, my petition was granted and I was allowed to return to the world whence I had come. Returning to the world I was amazed to find that the same Lord Whom I had seen up above was standing beside me down below too. This was so amazing to that soon after the Lord left me to my mother, I told it to others but they all laughed at me and called it a dream. Since nobody would believe what I told them about heaven and my observations there, I kept all these things to myself. After my resurrection I spent the whole of my life in serving the Lord and I was one of those seventy disciples whom He sent two by two to preach the Gospel over all the world.’

After this he described heaven, its inhabitants and its mansions exactly as I had seen with my own eyes, which fully revealed the meaning of the words of the Lord when He said ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would told you.’ (John 14:2)

INTERVIEW WITH THE SPIRIT OF A FAMOUS PHILOSOPHER OF ATHENS

One day I had a visit from the spirit of a leading philosopher of Athens who told me the story how he had obtained salvation.

‘Being well versed in my sciences I felt a great longing to know something about the unseen world and to find whether the soul was a reality or only a human imagination. I was seeking information from different sources when somebody told me of the son of

the widow of Nain whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Coming to this man, I asked him what he had seen up above. Hearing his description of heaven and the omniscience of Christ, I was greatly impressed and immediately accepted Jesus as the Saviour of mankind and the true Son of God. Now I feel very happy and thankful that God gave me such a precious opportunity, so that I found Jesus while I was yet on earth. Glory be to His Name for I am truly a happy man.'

INTERVIEW WITH THE SPIRIT OF A ROMAN PHILOSOPHER

This man, Phinehas by name, was also once a philosopher, in whose time Christ Himself was present in the world. He had heard a lot about Christ and the wonderful works He wrought and so was filled with a great desire to see Him. The following is a description of his interview with Christ in his own words.

'Reaching Canaan I went about searching for Christ, but almost everyone whom I met on the way said that I should not be able to see Him because there was always an enormous crowd of people round Him. This disappointed me very much but as I neared the place where Christ was said to be, I met a man on the way who was carrying his bed. I asked him where he was coming from and he told me that he was returning from the place where Jesus was. I was greatly encouraged at this and asked him how he ever managed to approach Him. He laughed at this question and said, 'It is not in the least difficult for those who go to see Him with good intention never return disappointed. Look at me, for full forty-one years I lay at the pond of Siloam. But because I had no one to help me I never had the chance of jumping into the pond when its water moved. One day as the Lord happened to pass that way he saw me and said 'Take thy bed and go thy way.' No sooner had He said these words than up I jumped from my bed hale and hearty and went my way praising and glorifying His most Holy Name. So don't be afraid, for many of those who cannot even see Him, He calls by their names and listens to their requests. He knows the secrets of men's hearts, He heals many by calling them unto Him, while hundreds are made whole by the very touch of the hem of His garment.

These things encouraged me even still more and I went my way rejoicing. Coming to the place where Jesus was, I found a huge crowd gathered round Him. Pushing my way through the throng I reached near enough to be able to see the Lord's face and hear Him. The Lord's face came clear out of the crowd and caught my eyes, nay my imagination too. I stood absolutely captivated by the charm of His face and by the humility and gentleness that shone in His eyes. He was eyeing the crown round about Him with a wistful and compassionate look.

As I beheld His face I saw someone from the crowd go to Him. This was a man with a withered hand. At the man's request to be made whole all that the Lord said was 'Go, thy sins are forgiven thee.' And the man's hand was restored. This man, as I was told afterwards, had once been a treasury clerk in the temple and used to embezzle large sums of money. This sin of his had been punished by the withering of his hand. But as sin had become his very nature it had never occurred to him that the withering of his hand was due to his dishonesty. But now that the Lord said 'Go, thy sins are forgiven thee.' He perceived instinctively that his sins were the cause of his misfortune. As soon as they were taken away his hand was immediately healed too. I often noticed that in

most cases of healing Jesus said nothing but this. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' by which He proved that sin was at the root of disease and that the destruction of sin would result in a natural destruction of the disease.

Besides the above I saw the Lord work many more miracles. I had now made my way nearer the Lord, but could not yet catch His eyes, although I was burning with the desire to speak to Him. When reading the thoughts of my mind the Lord Himself called me to Him. Hearing His voice I hastened towards Him and reaching Him, fell at His feet and worshipped him. Then He Himself raised me up, granted me forgiveness of my sins and blessed me by putting His holy hand on me. Rejoicing in my new life I returned to my country and although in those times an open confession of His Name meant death to His followers, yet I feared nothing and openly proclaimed that Jesus and He alone was the Saviour of mankind.

DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

Since the Saint has witnessed various death scenes, he knows a good deal about heaven. This is what he says happens after death. Man hardly sees any difference in himself for a few minutes immediately after his death, but when the angels tell him that he has been transformed, he is surprised to discover that although he has an existence, yet he has no palpable body. This might be called the first state.

In the second state spirits see two different ways before them. One luminous and bright, the other dark. Good spirits are attracted naturally to the luminous path, while the evil ones, because they cannot tolerate light, naturally run into darkness to keep away from the light. (John 3:19-21)

Then the third state is when spirits are told of their future. The good spirits as mentioned elsewhere, are escorted to heaven, installed in their mansions, given their crown and told their various privileges. While evil spirits as they examine their spiritual bodies, find them full of sores, filthy and leprous, as the result of the sins committed in their earthly bodies. Then, because they are the children of darkness, they naturally run towards the dark lane. 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.' (John 3:20) Then they are told that after the Day of Reckoning they will be cast into hell. After that they are set free and given absolute liberty to roam about anywhere they please. Just as angels come to receive good spirits as they leave the world, similarly evil angels too run to receive evil spirits. The only difference being that while the righteous rejoice at the prospects of entrance into heaven, the evil ones curdle with fear and trembling as they see the dreadful faces of satanic angels and instinctively understand their end.

On entering the spiritual realm the evil spirits seek an opportunity for repentance, but do not get it as written: 'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.' (Hebrews 10:26-27)

On the other hand the few sins - for after all man's nature is sinful - that the good spirits bring with them are at once washed away in the blood of the Lamb and they are made spotless.

Some think that spirits after once entering heaven, have no more work to do. But this is not true, for besides praying, worshipping and praising God, their duty is to encourage and embolden the servants of God so that they may continue in their good works and serve the Lord all their lives.

THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

The glory of God is something beyond description. He does not appear seated on His glorious throne only, but the brightness of His face illuminates every niche and corner of heaven and its mansions so much so that He is seen enthroned in the heart of every saint. Moreover, rays of glaring light and streams of heavenly power are seen shining out from every part of His glorious Body, which spread far and wide, even down to the earth where they enter the hearts of His chosen servants and reflect His face there. It is these streams of heavenly light and power that sanctifies the hearts of all His saints.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The World of Spirits and the Day of Judgement

FOUR CLASSES OF SPIRITS

It has been explained in the foregoing chapters that almost all spirits enjoy perfect liberty to visit any part of heaven or earth they please and that good spirits, since contact with sin is revolting to their very nature, very rarely visit the earth. But besides the distinctly good or bad spirits there is also a third class of spirits who are not allowed any freedom to roam either in heaven or earth, but are kept in a certain portion of heaven where they are taught about Jesus Christ. These spirits may not leave the listed area till they have passed the stage of instruction. Under this category come the spirits of four kinds of people.

1. Infants and Sucklings : Who had died before being able to comprehend the mysteries of heaven or earth.
2. The Lunatic and the Ignorant : Who had not the power of understanding, even if they had heard about Jesus Christ.
3. The Blind, the Dumb and the Deaf : Who were physically unfit to know and understand the things of God.
4. Those who never heard of the Name of Jesus or those who were born before His time.

You will remember what Christ said unto the malefactor who believed on Him on the Cross, not that 'Thou shalt be with me in heaven,' but that 'Thou shalt be with me in paradise.' For paradise is the place where souls are kept under instruction and this is the place where Christ went and preached after His death on the Cross. The spirits in paradise had been in waiting for ages and were so impatient to have Christ in their midst preaching to them that they rushed to receive Him as He died on the Cross. As it is written 'And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves ... And went into the holy city and appeared unto many.' (Matthew 17:52-54)

All evil spirits will be consigned to the flames of hell after the Day of Judgement, while all good spirits live in happy expectation of the Great Day, for after that they will begin to reign with the Great Potentate and live in eternal joy and happiness.

THE SAINT'S VIEW OF THE DAY OF RECKONING

*For nation shall rise against nation,
And kingdom against kingdom;
And there shall be famines and pestilences
And earthquakes in diverse places
All these things are the beginning of sorrows*

(Matthew 24:7-8)

The great Judgement Day about which we read in the Bible is now at hand. Besides me there are several other servants of the Lord who are patiently waiting for it. These are

those who will be lifted up in the clouds with the Lord, their mortal bodies will be changed into celestial ones and they will follow the King to His Throne where they shall rule with Him world without end and enjoy life everlasting.

For a thousand years after this great Day the Lord will reign on earth and His throne will be placed on the very spot where He was crucified.

During these thousand years the Devil and his accomplices will be kept in prison, then for 3½ years after this long period the Devil and his army will be set free. At the expiree of this short period there will be a judgement of all those who had either rejected or despised the Lord Jesus. And after this judgement they will be all cast into the fire of Hell with their leader the Devil, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE PRESENT GREAT WAR

On being asked what he thought of the present Great Conflict of Nations the Saint said 'The old prophecies are now being fulfilled.' Remember the Lord's words 'For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.' Men have become so proud of their knowledge and learning that many even deny the very existence of God, but now even through knowledge, lives are being destroyed.

The end of the World is very near and the Great Coming of the Lord is at the door. The angel who will blow the trumpet on the Last Day has only recently been posted at the gate, and on the first signal from the Lord he will blow his trumpet. But alas! For although the Day is near, yet His people are slow in getting ready. The Lord through His great mercy for mankind, daily delays His coming and is patiently allowing time for His creation to be prepared but He will not tarry much longer now and his Day will soon be here.

Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

*Lord, though parted from our sight,
High above yon azure height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Following thee beyond the skies,
There we shall with Thee remain,
Partners of Thine endless reign.
There Thy face unclouded see
Find our heaven of heavens in Thee*

THAT CHRIST STILL APPEARS IN HUMAN FORM

*The healing of His seamless dress lay by our beds of pain
We touch Him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again.*

The old Saint says that even in the present days the Lord Jesus Christ comes to earth in human form, but because He appears in the form of one in deep poverty, or humble circumstances, no one thinks it possible that it might be Christ. And so he is not

recognised. But He gave several instances of His coming unrecognised into this world, two of these are related below.

One day in England a very ordinary looking man went to a certain minister and desired his permission to preach on Sunday in the Church. At first the minister was unwilling to grant the request, seeing that he was totally unacquainted with the stranger, and indeed, had never even heard of him. But after some conversation he became assured of the fact that here was a humble, true, God-fearing man and, therefore, gave the desired permission. He arranged that he should preach the following morning. The sermon that was preached made a wonderful impression upon the people. It seemed as if the man spoke with such spiritual force, as one in authority, and his admonitions were felt to be impressive and touching. After the service was over the congregation passed out quickly wishing to meet with the wonderful stranger. But as soon as the preacher reached the door of the church, he vanished from sight. Those who noted this were filled with astonishment and thought it must have been an angel, but the old Saint believes that it was the Lord Himself in human form.

In a large church in one of the big towns of England, just before worship had started, a poor man came and took his seat in the front pew that was rented by a rich man. The minister, seeing this, removed him. The poor man, in great humility and self-abasement, went to the end of the church and took a seat upon the last bench. The service being ended, everyone went outside and began to talk in friendly groups. But this poor man stood all alone and no one even took any notice of him. But a little girl who had been steadily regarding him for some time, said to her mother 'Dear mother, come and speak to this poor man and ask him if he does not need some kind of help.' At this both went forward to him and were so greatly impressed by his manner and speech that they asked him to accompany them to their home. Shortly after arrival they sat down to dinner. When the man arose from the place assigned him and, going to the little girl who had been so considerate about him, he put his hands upon her head and blessed her. Even while in the act of doing this, he vanished from sight and the rest looked at each other in astonishment. The Saint says that this man too was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

*So near to me and yet how often I forget
And in the follies I deplore am daily found
So near to me, ah! Yes so near to me, to bless!
His life and mine for evermore in one are bound*

W.H. Parker

CHAPTER NINE

The Saint's Interview with John the Baptist In the Spirit World

*Ah Lord, enlarge our scanty thought
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought;
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Thy love immense, unsearchable*

Once the old Saint met suddenly with the spirit of John the Baptist and the entrancing story of that meeting he tells thus:

One day I met with John the Baptist in the spirit world and he told me of several experiences that he met with during the time of his work on earth. But the story of his interview with Jesus Christ is the most beautiful and helpful.

The holy Apostle related it thus:

'I was quite conscious of the fact that the Holy God had sent me before His dear Son, that I might prepare the way for Him, therefore to the utmost of my ability I fulfilled that work. In the fear and guidance of God devoted both heart and soul to the work and travelling about I continued to preach repentance of sins to the people. But when the time was fulfilled and the dear Lord Himself came in the prime of His life and received baptism at my hands, then I thought in my heart that my work must now be finished. Because He of Whom I had been preaching, He Whom I had announced to the world, had Himself arrived and was present with us. Consequently He will now take up His own work and carry it out unto the end. So, a short time after his baptism, I went in search of Him that I might meet Him and ask Him what other work there was for me to do. For some days I sought Him but did not find Him till after a while I came to a great lonely wilderness. There, in the exact centre of this wilderness, where Satan after temptation the Lord left Him and went away - what saw I?

The dear Lord seated upon a rock while around Him and above Him and below Him was a wondrous throng! Observing this I hid myself behind a tree at some little distance away so that I might have a good opportunity to observe all that passed without interrupting Him.

Now listen to the account of this wonderful Durbar that the King of kings and the God of all gods (although oh the pity of it rejected of men) was holding.

Cherubim and Seraphim, singing psalms and praises to God, were descending from heaven. Around Him in the air was a gathering of holy angels who with every kind of musical instrument were rejoicing with uplifted voices, full of gladness, exultation, praise and thanksgiving and the glory and light of Christ was shining round about on all.

Besides the angels and the heavenly Army, there was another band consisting of all the Prophets and the Saints of olds, such as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, and so forth, and even Adam himself was present. This entire company with great reverence and

self-abasement was standing before the presence of the Lord in wrapt devotion and prayer. Besides these companies there was also another consisting of every kind of wild animal, reptiles and birds, standing by His feet in submission to their Master. The desire of every one seemed to be to reach their Lord and to press forward to His sacred feet.

But the Lord was engaged with other thoughts. He was preparing for His life's work and arranging the programme. When the angels and the Prophets realised what that programme was going to be they became greatly astonished and full of grief and sadness.

At length one from the Army of angels could restrain himself no longer and thus addressed the Lord. 'Oh Master! We all are ready at every time for Thy service. Service for Thee is life for us! Choose one from among us that he may go and give his life in Thy stead. Oh Master of all in Heaven and in the spirit world. Why is it necessary that Thou Thyself shouldst bear this pain and be crucified?'

Hearing this the Lord smiled and said 'You do not understand this mystery and it is not given you to fathom it. The work that my Father has entrusted to me - it is necessary for Me to fulfil. Your death could in no wise save sinners and for this reason it is necessary that I myself should suffer and be killed, that all men may be freed from the bonds of Satan and the whole creation be redeemed.'

This answer satisfied the angels, but they said to each other 'We knew well that God's love was vast, unending and inconceivable. Past all knowledge, but we never knew that He loved to this extent. That He would not be sorry even to give His own Son in order that He may show His great love for the world. O Lord Almighty! To Thee be the glory! Amen! Hallelujah! World without end.'

While the angels were thus discoursing together Adam, who was standing in the crowd of Prophets and Saints, began to say 'O dear Lord, the sin was mine, and for this reason I also should bear the sin of the whole world. Send me that I may go and take the punishment that I deserve.'

At this the Lord replied 'No, you can only die for yourself and not for another. And then your death could have no power to save a single soul. It is necessary that I die in order that I may become the atoning sacrifice for the whole world.'

Hearing this Adam also relapsed into silence.

Then Moses, Elijah and the other prophets cried out, 'Lord will it not be well if we go instead of Thee?' But the Lord replied to them also, 'No, you have all completed your course and your life work is done. Besides, you cannot go into the world a second time. For this great work of redemption there is no one strong enough but the Son of God and without the shedding of His Blood, the salvation of the world cannot be accomplished.'

As the Lord finished speaking the three bands (prophets, Saints and angels) vanished from sight and the animal creation alone remained. Like Balaam's ass they also found a

tongue and thus made their appeal to the Lord of earth and righteousness. 'Oh Lord, it was Adam who sinned. Why then do we also suffer death seeing that we are innocent?'

The Lord replied 'In the first place, you are not without fault. Because you kill and devour one another and also do much injury in the world. Secondly, when Adam sinned he who was created in such honour, and into whose hand authority was given, all the rest of creation had to take up his punishment.' When all these creatures had paid obeisance unto their Lord, I, John who was watching all, desired that I also might go forward and worship Him. But I was only a man and I feared those wild animals. But the Lord knowing my fear, called me by name. I was greatly encouraged at this and so I advanced towards Him and what did I see? The animals whom I feared of themselves retired from my path and made way for me. And when I went forward and fell at the Lord's feet to worship Him, they all vanished from sight.

After worshipping Him I said 'O dear Lord, my first work is finished. What then hast Thou further for Thy servant to do? Command, for Thy servant is ready to obey and let me know if I may retire from this world and go to the prepared place, there to await Thy coming.' But the Lord answered 'No, John! Your time has not yet come. You have yet to win the Martyr's priceless crown. Go and continue your work until my time is at hand. You were chosen to commence this work before Me that you might prepare the way before Me. Now see, you will reach the spirit world before Me and there also your work will be to prepare the spirits for My arrival.'

So just as the Lord said it happened to me. Some time after I was martyred and leaving the mortal world, I arrived in the heavenly world and there gave the good news of Jesus Christ to the spirits and prepared them for what was to come. And when the day came upon which the dear Lord gave His life, many of those spirits rejoiced to come to earth and meet him and pay Him reverence. Is it not said in Matthew 27:52-53 'And the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints who slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many'?

When I had received this command of the Lord, my heart became filled with joy. And for this I gave Him thousands of thanks - that He gave me twice over this great honour of preparing the way before Him. Falling before Him I worshipped and adored Him. When I arose and lifted up my eyes, I saw the Lord seated on a great and wonderful throne of majesty, with millions of bright angels ranged on every side of Him. As it is written 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.' (John 3:13) I also saw that round about the Lord's throne were many thrones, and upon them sat His holy ones, wearing bright and glittering crowns. Looking upon these thrones my eyes fell upon one that was vacant and upon which no man sat. I was wondering in my mind what this could mean when an angel told me that this throne belonged to that proud angel who, setting up his banner, rose in rebellion against the King of Heaven and that his disobedience and his name of 'Satan' is now well known. The angel also said 'This throne at the end of the world will be given to that man who during his life on earth has been the humblest and the kindest.'

For some time I contemplated this boundless work of the Lord and looking at His dignity and glory was filled with gladness. After a short time, when this vision faded from my eyes, I again worshipped my Lord and paying Him honour, I left His pure presence and came away.

*Thou art coming! Thou art coming!
We shall meet Thee on the way
We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
All our hearts could never say
What an anthem that will be ringing out our love to Thee
Pouring out our rapture sweet at Thine own all glorious feet
O the joy to see Thee reigning, Thee my own Belov'd Lord
Every tongue Thy name confessing
Worship, honour, power, blessing,
Brought to Thee with one accord
Thee, my Master and my Friend, vindicated and enthroned
Unto earth's remotest end, glorified, adored and owned.*