

Life & Visions

of Sadhu Sundar Singh of India



PUBLISHERS' PREFACE:

This document contains two parts:

- ① A short biography of Sundar Singh [first 14 pages]
- ② Singh's account of his visions which describe many details about life in heaven [pages 15-40]

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INTRO:

In the annals of Christian biography, Sundar Singh may not be one of the best known names, but surely one of the most astonishing, fascinating, riveting. Starting with a road-to-Damascus type of conversion at age fifteen [yes, Sundar Singh, like Saul of Tarsus, was persecuting Christians when he was only fifteen years old], Sundar lived a lifestyle probably just about as dedicated, devoted and dramatic as Paul's.

Birthplace: Rampur, Patiala, northern India.

In 1889, Sundar Singh was born into a wealthy Sikh family in the depths of Indian culture and religion. As a child, Sundar was taught about Hinduism, and attended Hindu temples. [Sikhs are a religion closely related to Hinduism. In the sixteenth century, Sikhs rejected Hindu polytheism and Muslim intolerance. They became a vigorous group with a religion of their own.]

By the age of seven Sundar had already memorized Bhagavad-Gita, a long and intricate poem containing songs of a blissful people and lessons of life. By the time he was fifteen, not only had he mastered the Veda, the ancient sacred books of Hinduism, but he had also read the Koran, the sacred book of Islam.

During the early part of his life, Sundar's mother would take him week by week to sit at the feet of a sadhu, an ascetic holy man, who lived some distance away in a rainforest. He also got acquainted with some Sadhus who taught him Yoga. [A Sadhu is a Hindu who devotes his entire life to his religion and forsakes worldly pleasures and possessions. In English, he might be called a *monk* or *pilgrim* or *saint*.] His mother feared God and foresaw Sundar becoming of a sadhu.

Starting when he was quite young, Sundar longed for peace in his soul, and sought it in his meditations, but he was never able to find it. His father worried, and he asked Sundar: "Why do you torment yourself over religious questions? You will twist your brain and ruin your sight." The boy answered, "I must have peace."

His mother was acquainted with some women from a British mission in Rajpur, and she enrolled Sundar in a school run by the

missionaries. It was there that Sundar was exposed to the Christian Bible, which he later rejected. Instead he buried himself in the occultic arts of Hinduism. However, at the school he learned English language.

Sundar sat at the feet of the sadhu. He wanted to flee the illusions of the world around him, to find the most assured knowledge of God. He was a devout Sikh, a devoted one among the devout ones, a lion among the lions. But, though he struggled with the teachings of the sadhu, he was unable to find peace that he was looking for in his soul.

Sikh priests taught him all they knew, but he was not satisfied. He could recite the entire Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, but even that didn't quench his thirst. He recited the Upanishads, the Darsanas, the Bhagavad Gita and the Shastaras of the Hindus; the Qur'an and the Hadis of Islam were known to him by heart.

In his quest, the boy asks the old sadhu in the jungle: "Sadhu-ji,¹ you say my hunger and my thirst are illusions, tricks of maya [illusion]. Only Brahma is truth. Brahma is the divine source of all things, you say; Brahma is God. You say I will see that I am part of Brahma, and that once I do, my needs will cease to concern me. Forgive me, Sadhu-ji, and do not be angry with me, but how can this be? If I am Brahma or have even a part of it, how then can I be deceived by maya? How can illusion have power over me? For if illusion has power over truth, then truth is itself illusion. Is then illusion stronger than truth?"

"Sadhu-ji, you say I must wait. You say I will gain knowledge of spiritual things as I grow older. My thirst will be quenched. But can it be so? Is not food the answer to hunger? Is not water the answer to thirst? If a hungry boy asks for bread, will his father answer, 'Go and play! When you are older, you will understand hunger and you will not need bread?' If you, Sadhu-ji, have found the understanding I seek, if you have found certainty and peace, please tell me how I can find it. If not, then tell me so, and I will continue my search. I cannot rest until I have found peace.

"Something is wrong. Why do the Shastaras [books of knowledge] no longer come alive before my eyes? Why does our holy book now seem so distant? Why do I return from the peace-of-yoga meditation to find my heart still burdened with unrest?"

Thus it was that as an adolescent boy, Sundar struggled to hold onto all that his mother had taught him.

However, his mother died when he was only fourteen years old. After

¹Sadhu-ji = beloved sadhu

that, young Sundar became more and more despairing and aggressive. It had seemed so natural and so simple while his mother was alive, but since her death the spiritual exercises require so much effort. Faith had become clouded by doubt. The words of the old sadhu in the jungle sounded like hollow promises. With boldness he challenged the sadhu's teaching. The words of the Vedas and of Guru Granth Sahib no longer answered the peace he was seeking. Instead, question after question stumble over one another, and all seemed so confusing. The lives of those around him seem fraught with hypocrisy. Where is the fire and clarity of the early Sikh believers? And now Christian missionaries bring still another truth, but their arrival brings Sundar only into further, deeper confusion.

“This is not the truth my mother taught me, or our ancestors, this new truth is not part of our culture. This is a foreign truth, one brought to us by outsiders who do not understand our ways and our culture. But why then does Father make me attend the Christian school? I would rather go to the state school. I am ready to walk the six miles through the desert. I am a Sikh. I will show them. I will show Father what I think of these colonialists and their western ways, their foreign faith...”

And so it was that young Sundar became convinced that Jesus' teachings were all wrong. When he was only 15 years old, he turned against the Christian missionaries, persecuted their converts, and ridiculed their faith. Finally, he called his friends together and publically burned a Christian Bible, tearing out the pages one by one. He threw stones at Christian preachers and encouraged his peers to do likewise. [Wasn't Saul of Tarsus guilty of the same acts?]

Then some elders came to his father, Sardar Sher Singh, and told him what Sundar was doing. “What!” Sardar could not believe his ears. “There must be some mistake. Quiet, respectful Sundar throwing stones at his teachers, disrupting classes, and mocking the missionaries – impossible!” When Sardar Sher Singh went and saw for himself, he could not believe his eyes. Yet there, in the courtyard of his own house, a group of teenage boys gather around his son, first tearing the Christians' holy book to shreds and then, in a frenzy of rage, hurling it into a fire. Never in the history of the village had anyone publicly burned a sacred book of any faith! And his own son!

Father Sardar rushed out in confusion and anger and grabbed Sundar. “Are you insane? Why would you do such a thing? Is this the respect for sacred things you learned at your mother's breast? Is this your thanks to those who teach you? You will not commit such blasphemy in my presence.

As your father and head of this household, I command you to stop such insanity. There will be no more book burning here!”

Later Sundar wrote: “Though at the time I had considered myself a hero for burning the Gospel, still my heart found no peace. Indeed, my unrest only increased, and I was miserable for the next two days.” So it was, the peace that Sundar had been seeking was totally gone. Who is left? His mother was dead, his father was shamed. The sadhu in the jungle has no more to say. The holy writings seemed remote and foreign. Meditation offers only temporary escape, but no resolution, no realization. The ritual bath cleanses the body, but all is still dark on the inside. The familiar words of the scriptures whirl in his mind: There is Guru Nanak saying: “I cannot live for a moment without you, O God. When I have you, I have everything. You are the treasure of my heart.” And there is Guru Arjim: “We long only for you, O God. We thirst for you. We can only find rest and peace in you.” That seemed to be the only hope, but where was God? Sundar concluded, “If there is a God, then let him reveal the way to peace. If there is no God, then there is no point in living.”

But none of those things brought the peace that he sought in his heart. He became so frustrated that he started considering suicide.

Three days after he burned the Bible, he woke up at 3 a.m., rose from his bed, and went out into the moonlit courtyard for the solemn ritual bath observed by devout Hindus and Sikhs before worshiping—chanting the ancient invocation as his mother taught him, and as he had done every morning for as long as he could remember. Getting ready to kill himself, he knew that this morning would be the last. He thinks of his mother and wonders if he will find her in the world beyond.

After the bath, he returned to his room, knelt down, bowed his head to the ground, and pleaded with God to reveal himself to him. He prayed, “Oh God, if you do exist, show me the right way, or I will kill myself.”

There was a train that passed at 5 a.m. every morning behind their house. Sundar was thinking of throwing himself in front of the train in the hope that he would find peace in a future incarnation.

A prophecy of a Sikh priest was nearing fulfillment, for had he not said to Sardar Sher Singh: “Your son is not like the others. Either he will become a great man of God, or he will disgrace us all by going insane.”

Again, Sundar repeated his prayer. Still, nothing happened. He did not know what to expect: a voice, a vision, a trance? The time for the train to come by was fast approaching.

It was just as he was trying to get up enough courage to step in front of

the train, he lifted his head and opened his eyes, and was surprised to see a faint cloud of light in the room. The first thing in his mind was that the room was on fire. But nothing happened. It was too early for the dawn, but to make sure the light was not the first rays of dawn, he opened the door and peeked out into the courtyard. Darkness. Turning back into the room he saw that the light in the room was getting brighter. Then he thought “This might be an answer to my prayer.” But, just as he was expecting one of the Hindu gods, Siva or Krishna or any of the other Hindu incarnations to appear to him, “...I saw a figure in the light, strange but somehow familiar at the same time.” As he later told it, “Then I heard his voice speaking to me in Urdu:² ‘Sundar, how long will you mock me? I have come to save you because you have prayed to find the way of truth. Why then don't you accept it?’” [How astonishing! When the Lord Jesus first appeared to Saul of Tarsus, he asked Saul the same thing: “Why do you persecute me?”]

“It was then I saw the marks of blood on his hands and feet and knew that it was Yesu (Jesus), the one that the Christians were proclaiming! I realized that he was not dead, but very much alive! In utter astonishment, I fell at his feet. I was filled with deep sorrow and remorse for my insults and my irreverence, but at the same time, I had a wonderful peace. This was the joy I had been seeking! This was heaven... Then the vision was gone, though my peace and joy remained.

“When I arose I immediately went to wake my father and tell him I had seen Jesus Christ the Messiah in a vision and heard his voice, and I said to my father: ‘From now on, I’m going to follow Jesus the Messiah’.

“He told me to go back to bed, saying, ‘Why, only the day before yesterday you were burning the Christians' holy book. Now you say you are one of them? Go and sleep, my child. You are tired and confused. You will feel better in the morning’.” Sardar Sher Singh tried to be understanding and patient, for he felt the boy was still distraught from loosing of his mother. So he discreetly avoided discussing Sundar's strange experience.

Sundar in turn spent most of his time in solitude and meditation, seeking penance and wondering how to atone for his mockery of the one who had revealed himself to him. Deep within, he sensed that release would only come if he would prepare to serve Yesu as one serves a master – to publicly declare himself a follower of the very being he had publicly insulted.

No one could have foreseen the outcry that followed. Robbed of their ringleader, Sundar's peers turned on their Christian teachers (and turned on

²Urdu=The name of his native language

Sundar himself), hurling abuse, accusing them of forcibly converting the boy—despite Sundar's repeated assertions that the teachers knew nothing of what had happened. Feelings ran so high that the school had to be closed, and the missionaries escaped to Ludhiana. At home Sardar Sher Singh tried everything he could to dissuade his son from his new-found faith. At first he exercised patience. Then he appealed to the boy's honor:

“My dear son – light of my eyes, comfort of my heart – may you live long! As your father, I appeal to you to consider your family. Surely you do not want the family name to be blotted out. Surely this Christian religion does not teach disobedience to parents. I call on you to fulfill your duty and to marry. I have chosen your bride, as is our custom, and everything is prepared. As an engagement present I will give you a legacy of 150,000 rupees that will provide enough interest for you and your family to live comfortably for a lifetime. Your uncle will add to it a chest of gold.

“I am not an unreasonable man, my child. But if you refuse me, I will know that you are determined to dishonor your family and I will have no alternative but to disown you. You wear the bracelet of the Sikh, you wear your hair uncut as is the custom of the Sikh, you bear the name of a Sikh. Have you forgotten the meaning of the name that our fathers adopted? Have you forgotten what it means to be a Singh?”

“No, Father; the name means ‘lion’.”

“You know the meaning of your name, yet act like a jackal of the desert. Why? The time has come for you to make your choice.”

Sundar Singh returned to his room and prayed. He knew he could never abandon Yesu; nor would his father stop trying to get him to abandon Jesus. He knew what he would have to do to convince his father that he was serious about following Jesus: cut off his hair, which a Sikh man would never do. When father Sardar saw him with his hair cut, he knew what it meant: He would lose his son; he would even have to kick him out of the house. His face had a dreadful look on it; frustration, desperation and shame caused rage to burn in him, and his eyes reddened. In the presence of the entire household, with his heart heavy with grief, he led his son to the door as darkness was falling. Already death had taken his wife and one son; now he was to lose his beloved Sundar. But Father Sardar saw no choice: the boy had made his decision. Now he spoke the fearful curse: “We reject you forever and drive you out from among us. You shall no more be my son. We will not know you any longer. For us, you are as one who was never born. I have spoken.” He closed the door behind Sundar.

Later Sundar wrote: “I will never forget the night I was driven out of my

home. I slept outdoors under a tree, and the weather was cold. I had never experienced such a thing. I thought to myself: “Yesterday I lived in comfort. Now I am shivering, and I am hungry and thirsty. Yesterday I had everything I needed and more; today I have no shelter, no warm clothes, no food.” Outwardly the night was difficult, but I possessed a wonderful joy and peace in my heart. I was following in the footsteps of my new master – of Yesu, who had nowhere to lay his head, for he was also despised and rejected. In the luxuries and comforts of home I had not found peace. But the presence of the Master changed my suffering into peace, and this peace has never left me.

In those days, there were many in India who took up the life of a pilgrim and traveled about the country doing good deeds. They wore saffron [yellow] robes. These men were mostly honored and respected. Sundar considered that the lifestyle of a Sadhu pilgrim was the best way to persuade India to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah, and he soon put on the saffron robe of a sadhu and began a life of spreading the simple message of love and peace and rebirth through Jesus. He carried no money or other possessions, except a New Testament.

For some time he stayed at a Christian leprosy home at Sabathu, not far from Simla, serving the leprosy patients there. The leprosy home became one of his most beloved bases.

When Sundar decided to be baptized, his family tried to prevent him, but he was determined. In 1905, on his 16th birthday, he was baptized in an English church in Simla.

It was at that time, he decided to become a Christian Sadhu and thus dedicate himself to the Lord. There were many sadhus wandering about India, but who ever heard of a Christian Sadhu? As a Sadhu, he lived on the charity of others, abandoned all possession, maintained celibacy, as well as wore a saffron robe. He was convinced that this was the best way to introduce the Gospel to the people of India, since they recognized sadhus as godly men and they would listen to someone who came to them dressed in a saffron robe and living that lifestyle. He was about 17 years old [October 1906] when he set out barefooted and without any provisions, on his nomadic life, traveling from village to village. He was following Jesus’ footsteps and lifestyle. As he walked on the road, a tall, handsome, vigorous teenager, wearing a saffron robe and turban, everyone stared at him.

Hindu sadhus were ascetics devoted to the gods, who begged their way on the roads or sat silent, remote (often filthy), meditating in the jungle or some lonely place. But young Sundar Singh was a sadhu with a difference.

There were hardly any who were followers of Jesus. Sundar said, “I am not worthy to follow in the steps of my Lord, but, like him, I want no home, no possessions. Like him I will belong to the road, sharing the suffering of my people, eating with those who will give me shelter, and telling all men of the love of God.”

Sundar remained single, jobless, and without any permanent residence. It was his mother who years before had first encouraged him to become a sadhu. She once told him, “Do not be selfish and materialistic like your brothers, but seek for your peace of mind and hold steadily onto your faith. Be a Sadhu.”

SUNDAR SINGH’S TRAVELS

After that, Sundar traveled India and Tibet, as well as the rest of the world, with the message that the modern interpretation of Jesus was grossly watered down, diluted—a luke-warm message.

Scarcely tough enough to meet physical hardship, the sixteen-year-old sadhu went northward through the Punjab, over the Bannihal Pass into Kashmiri, and then back through fanatically Muslim Afghanistan and into the bandit-infested North-West Frontier and Baluchistan. His thin, saffron robe gave him little protection against the snows, and his feet became torn from the rough tracks. In a few months, the little Christian communities of North India were referring to him as “the apostle with the bleeding feet.” This initiation showed him what he might expect in the future.

In his journeys, he was sometimes stoned or arrested. At one time, he was visited by a shepherd who talked with strange intimacy about Jesus and then was gone—perhaps an angel? One time he was left to sleep in a way-side hut but he discovered that he had a cobra for company.

Extreme opposites characterized young Sundar’s experiences in the next few years: the mystical and the sharply material; persecution and welcome. The villages in the Simla Hills lay at the foot of the snow-clad Himalayas and the rosy peak of Nanga Parbat. Beyond the Himalayas lay Tibet, a closed Buddhist land that missionaries had long failed to penetrate with the gospel.

Ever since his baptism, Tibet had beckoned Sundar, and in 1908, at the age of nineteen, he crossed its frontiers for the first time. That country attracted him just because it presented such great challenges against the message of Jesus. He thought: “There will be very strong opposition and

persecution there. Also, high above the tranquil, snow-clad Himalayan peaks, there will be a lot of time and opportunities to meet God and to study the Bible.”

Any stranger entering into this closed fanatical territory, dominated by Buddhism and devil-worship, risked both terror and death. Singh took the risk with his eyes and his heart wide open. The state of the people appalled him. Their airless homes, like themselves, were filthy. He himself was stoned as he bathed in some cold water because they believed that “holy men never washed.” Food was mostly unobtainable. He existed on hard, parched barley. Everywhere there was hostility. And this was only “lower Tibet” just across the border. Sundar went back to Sabathu determined to return the next year.

On his way to Tibet, he met an American missionary named Stoker, who also wore a saffron robe. Sometimes they spent the night together under a tree or in a mountain cave at an altitude of 5000 meters above sea level, without enough food. They endured all the hardship for the sake of spreading the gospel. While they were together, Sundar became ill and Stoker got him a place to stay with some Europeans. Sundar’s faithfulness towards God and his sincere love towards other people, so inspired the Europeans that his host repented of his sins and gave his life to serving the Lord.

There was still sharper disillusionment to come. In 1909 he was persuaded to begin training for the Christian ministry at the Anglican college in Lahore. From the beginning he found himself being tormented by fellow students for being “different” and no doubt too self-assured. This phase ended when their ringleader heard Singh quietly praying for him, with love in his tones and words. But other tensions remained. Much in the college course seemed irrelevant to the gospel as India needed to hear it. As the course drew to an end, the principal stated that he must now discard his sadhu’s robe and wear “respectable” European clerical dress, use formal Anglican worship, sing English hymns, and never preach outside his parish without special permission. “Never again visit Tibet,” he asked? That would be, to him, an unthinkable rejection of God’s call. With deep sadness he left the college, still dressed in his saffron robe, and in 1912 began his annual trek into Tibet as the winter snows began to melt on the Himalayan tracks and passes.

He had a great desire: to visit Palestine and re-live some of the happenings in Jesus’ life. In 1908 he went to Bombay, hoping to board a ship conveniently going that way. But to his intense disappointment, the government refused him a permit, and he had to return to the north.

It was on this trip that he suddenly recognized a basic dilemma of the

Christian mission to India. A Brahmin had collapsed in the hot, crowded carriage and, at the next station, the Anglo-Indian station master came rushing with a cup of water from the refreshment room. The Brahmin—a high-caste Hindu—thrust it away in horror. He needed water, but he could only accept it in his own drinking vessel. When it was brought, he drank and revived. In the same way, Sundar Singh realized, India would not widely accept the gospel of Jesus offered in Western guise. That, he recognized, was why many listeners responded to him when they saw him wearing the Indian saffron robe that Hindu sadhus wore.

As Sundar Singh moved through his twenties his ministry widened greatly, and long before he was thirty years old, his name and picture were familiar all over the Christian world.

Stories from those years are astonishing and sometimes incredible. Indeed there were those who insisted that they were mystical rather than real happenings. That first year, 1912, he returned with an extraordinary account of finding a three-hundred-year-old Christian hermit in a mountain cave—the Maharishi of Kailas, with whom he spent some weeks in deep fellowship. Other stories were more credible, even if more terrible. He had been sewn into a wet yak-skin and left to be crushed to death as it shrank in the hot sun ... tied into cloths laced with leeches and scorpions to sting him and suck his blood ... roped to a tree as bait for wild animals. At these and at other times he had been rescued by members of the “Sunnyasi Mission”—secret disciples of Jesus wearing their Hindu markings, whom he claimed to have found all over India.

When he was 23 years old [1912], Sundar decided to imitate Jesus’ seclusion and fasting for 40 days even though his friends advised him against it. He failed to fast for 40 days because he became weak. However the experience strengthened his spirit. He could thus overcome all doubts, anger and impatience. In the following years, he was often persecuted, but he was also miraculously delivered by the Lord.

At 25 [1914], Sundar preached in Nepal, a country with a very strong root of Buddhism. In the town of Rasa, he was sentenced to death by a local Lama on the grounds of spreading a foreign religion. He was thrown into a dry well the top of which was then covered and locked from the outside. He was without food and drink, naked inside the well together with corpses of executed murderers. He stayed in the horrible well for 2 days until a stranger came and helped him out of the well. After re-locking the well, the stranger left without saying anything. Not long after that, Sundar was recaptured and taken to the Lama. The Lama was very surprised since he had always kept

the only key to the well to himself. Realizing that Sundar was under the protection of a very powerful God, they became fearful of him and begged him to leave them.

At 29 [1918], Sundar visited Madras where thousands of people gathered to listen to him preach. There Sundar focused his preaching on Jesus Christ the Messiah, the redeemer. He testified, “Jesus’ presence always brought astonishing peace to me no matter how bad the situations I was in. Whenever I was in a prison, he was always there for me. He transformed the jail into a heaven and the burdens became blessings. There are many Christians who do not feel his glorious presence as something real. Because for them Jesus only occurs in their minds and not in their hearts. Only when someone surrenders his heart to Jesus can he find him.”

When he was about 30 [1918-1919], he journeyed all over India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, Japan, and China. The next two years, he went to Western Europe, Australia and Israel. He preached in many cities, among them: Jerusalem, Lima, Berlin and Amsterdam.

For a long time Sundar Singh had wanted to visit Britain, and the opportunity came when his old father, Sher Singh, came to tell him that he too had become a Christian and wished to give him the money for his fare to Britain. He visited the West twice, traveling to Britain, the United States, and Australia in 1920; and to Europe again in 1922. He was welcomed by Christians of many traditions, and his words searched the hearts of people who now faced the aftermath of the first World War and who seemed to evidence a shallow attitude to life. Sundar was appalled by the materialism, emptiness, and non-religiousness he found everywhere, contrasting it with Asia’s awareness of God, no matter how limited that might be. Once back in India he continued his ministry, though it was clear that he was getting more frail physically. He was about 30 years old at the time.

With the large number of “spiritual paths” and “techniques” facing the world today, it is of special value to consider the life and insights of one who truly embraced the simplicity, love and freedom offered through devotion to Christ the Messiah. Again he committed himself, “I am not worthy to follow in the steps of my Lord, but like him, I want no home, no possessions. Like him I will belong to the road, sharing the suffering of my people, eating with those who will give me shelter, and telling all people of the love of God.”

Someone else offered this report of a meeting with Sundar Singh. “I encountered Sundar Singh as he was walking down a mountain trail to proclaim the Gospel to us. He then sat on top of a tree, wiped the sweat off his face and sang a hymn about the love of Jesus to us. The audience was not

impressed by the song. One man came forward from the audience, pulled Sundar down from the tree and knocked him to the ground. Silently, Sundar got to his feet and began praying for these hostile people. He then told us about the love of Jesus who had died to redeem all sinners. Because of that I repented, and so did the man who attacked him.” That was not the only time that Sundar won souls for the Lord by adhering to Jesus’ instruction which says, “Do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek also.” [Matthew 5:39].

One day in Nepal, Sundar was ambushed by four robbers in the middle of a jungle. One of them brandished a sword. Meekly, Sundar bowed his head thinking that his life was about to end. This attitude surprised the perpetrators. Since he was penniless, they took his blanket away from him and let him go. But then, one of the robbers called him back and curiously asked his name. Sundar introduced himself, opened his Bible and started telling him the story of the rich man and Lazarus the poor man. The robber said that the end of the rich man’s life was unpleasant and asked what would happen to himself. Sundar then told him about the gospel and God’s forgiveness.

Sundar often used parables in his preachings. He once said, “One day after a long journey, I rested in front of a house. Suddenly a sparrow came towards me blown helplessly by a strong wind. From another direction, an eagle dived to catch the panicky sparrow. Threatened from different directions, the sparrow flew into my lap. By choice, it would not normally do that. However, the little bird was seeking for a refuge from a greater danger. Likewise, the violent winds of suffering and trouble blow us into the Lord’s protective hands.”

Sundar remained modest despite his fame. Sundar never thought of himself. He only desired to follow Jesus’ example: to repay evil with kindness and to win over his enemies by love. This attitude often caused his enemies to feel ashamed of themselves.

Once, he was preaching in a public market when a fanatic from a different religion suddenly punched his right cheek. Calmly, Sundar turned his left cheek towards the assailant. The attacker left. But that night Sundar received a message from the attacker asking for forgiveness. On another occasion, Sundar told some harvesters about the parable of the weeds. They became annoyed and cursed him. One of them threw a stone at Sundar’s head. At that instant, the stone thrower was struck by such a painful headache that he had to lie down on the ground. Without hesitations, Sundar took over

that man's chore and helped them harvest the crops. They soon became friendly to him and invited him home. Their hearts were then open to the gospel. The next day after Sundar left, they noticed that their harvest became more abundant.

Sundar manifested in his life what Jesus said in Mark 8:35 which says, "For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the Gospel will save it."

Whether he won many continuing disciples of Christ the Messiah on these hazardous Tibetan treks is not yet known. For the Tibetan it was Buddhism or nothing. To acknowledge Jesus Christ the Messiah was to ask for death. But the Sadhu's own courageous preaching could not have been without effect.

He described in terms of a vision a struggle with Satan to retain his humility, but he was, in fact, always human, approachable and humble, with a sense of fun and a love of nature. This, with his 'illustrations' from ordinary life, gave his addresses great impact. Many people said: "He not only looks like Jesus, he talks like Jesus must have talked." Yet all his talks and his personal speech sprang out of profound early morning meditation, especially on the Gospels. Some of the stories from these tours were as strange as any of his Tibetan adventures. He had power over wild things, like the leopard which crept up to him while he stood praying and crouched as he fondled its head. He had power over evil, typified by the sorcerer who tried to hypnotize him in a railway-carriage and blamed the Bible in the sadhu's pocket for his failure. He had power over disease and illness, though he never allowed his healing gifts to be publicized.

His gifts, his personal attractiveness, the relevance of Christ the Messiah as he presented him to his Indian people could have given Sundar Singh a unique position of leadership in the Indian church. But to the end of his life he remained a man who sought nothing for himself, but only the opportunity to offer Christ the Messiah to everyone. He was not a member of any denomination, and did not try to begin one of his own, though he shared fellowship with Christians of all kinds. He lived (to use a later phrase) to introduce his own people to "Christ the Messiah of the Indian road".

In 1923 Sundar Singh made the last of his regular summer visits to Tibet and came back exhausted. His preaching days were obviously over, and in the next years in his own home or those of his friends in the Simla hills, he gave himself to meditation, fellowship, and writing some of the things he had lived to preach.

In 1929, against all his friends' advice, Sundar determined to make one last journey to Tibet. In April he reached Kalka, a small town below Simla, a prematurely aged figure in his saffron robe among pilgrims and holy men who were beginning their own trek to one of Hinduism's holy places some miles away. Where he went after that is unknown. That was the last time he was heard of. Whether he fell from a precipitous path, died of exhaustion, or reached the mountains, will remain a mystery. Sundar Singh had been seen for the last time. But more than his memory remains, and he has continued to be one of the most treasured and formative figures in the development and story of Jesus' church in India.

As a Christian witness he had been rejected as well as welcomed, persecuted, and even left for dead. By many missionaries and even Indian Christian leaders, he had been regarded as a highly eccentric convert, totally out of step with contemporary Christianity as he wandered the roads in his saffron robe and turban. It is very probable that he has done more than any man in the first half of the twentieth century to establish that "Jesus belongs to India." He made it clear that Christianity is not an imported, alien, foreign religion, but is indigenous to Indian needs, aspirations, and faith. He remains one of the permanently significant figures of Indian Christianity.

Sundar Singh was about 40 years old when he was last heard of.

Sundar Singh's Writings and Visions

Below is Sundar Singh's own account of the visions that depicted many details of what the eternal life will be like.

PREFACE

by Sundar Singh

From the original publication of 1926:

In this book I have attempted to write about some of the visions which God has given me. Had I considered my own inclinations, I would not have published the account of these visions during my lifetime; but friends, whose judgment I value, have been insistent that, as a spiritual help to others, the publication of the teaching of these visions should not be delayed. According to the wishes of these friends, this book is now presented to the public.

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At Kotgarh, while I was praying, my eyes were opened to a Heavenly Vision. So vividly did I see it all that I thought I must have died, and that my soul had passed into the glory of heaven; but throughout the intervening years these visions have continued to enrich my life. I cannot call them up at will, but, usually when I am praying or meditating, sometimes as often as eight or ten times in a month, my spiritual eyes are opened to see within the heavens, and, for an hour or two, I walk in the glory of the heavenly sphere with Christ Jesus the Messiah, and hold converse with angels and spirits. Their answers to my questions have provided much of the material that has already been published in my books, and the unutterable ecstasy of that spiritual communion makes me long for the time when I shall enter in permanently to the bliss and fellowship of the redeemed.

Some may consider that these visions are merely a form of spiritualism, but I would emphasize that there is one very essential difference. Spiritualism does presume to produce messages and signs from spirits out of the dark, but they are usually so fragmentary and unintelligible, if not

actually deceptive, that they lead their followers away from, rather than to the truth. In these visions, on the other hand, I see vividly and clearly every detail of the glory of the spiritual world, and I have the uplifting experience of very real fellowship with the saints, amid the inconceivably bright and beautiful world made visible. It is from these angels and saints that I have received, not vague, broken and elusive messages from the unseen, but clear and rational elucidations of many of the problems that have troubled me.

This Communion of the Saints was a fact so real in the experience of the early Church, that it is given a place among the necessary articles of their faith, as stated in the Apostles' Creed. Once, in a vision, I asked the saints for a proof from the Bible of this communion of saints, and was told that it was to be found clearly given in Zechariah 3:7-8, where "those that were standing by" were not angels, but saints in glory; and God's promise, on condition of Joshua fulfilling his command, is that he will be given "a place of access to walk among them (the saints) that stand by," and these are his "fellows," the spirits of men made perfect with whom he could commune. There is repeated mention of Spirits, Saints and Angels in this book.

The distinction I would make between them is that spirits are good or bad, who after death exist in a state intermediate between heaven and hell. Saints are those who have passed on through this stage into the higher sphere of the spiritual world, and have had special service allotted to them. Angels are those glorious beings to whom all kinds of superior service have been allotted, and among them are included many saints from other worlds, as well as from this world of ours, who live together as one family. They serve one another in love, and, in the radiance/effulgence of God's glory, are eternally happy. The World of Spirits means that intermediary state into which spirits enter after leaving the body. By the Spiritual World is meant all spiritual beings that progress through the stages between the darkness of the bottomless pit and the throne of the Lord in light.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Rev. T. E. Riddle of Kharar, Punjab, who translated the original book from Urdu into English. My thanks are again due to Miss E. Sanders for having corrected the proofs.

signed: Sundar Singh  
Subathu, July, 1926.

## **LIFE**

There is only one source of Life—an Infinite and Almighty Life, whose creative power gave life to all living things. All creatures live in him and in him will they remain forever. Again this Life created innumerable other lives, different in kind, and in the stages of their progress man is one of these, created in God’s own image that he might ever remain happy in his holy presence.

## **DEATH**

This life may change but it can never be destroyed, and though the change from one form of existence into another is called Death, this never means that death finally ends life, or even that it adds to life, or takes away from it. It merely transfers the life from one form of existence to another. A thing that disappears from our sight has not thereby ceased to exist. It reappears, but in another form and state.

## **MAN CAN NEVER BE DESTROYED**

Nothing in this whole universe was ever destroyed, nor can it ever be, because the Creator has never created anything for destruction. If he had wished to destroy it, he would never have created it. And if nothing in creation can be destroyed, then how can man be destroyed, who is the crown of creation, and the image of his Creator? Can God himself destroy his own image, or can any other creature do it? Never! If a man is not destroyed at death then at once the question arises, where will man exist after death, and in what state?

I shall attempt to give a brief explanation from the visions I was given, though it is not possible for me to describe all the things which I have seen in visions of the spiritual world, because the language and illustrations of this world are inadequate to express these spiritual realities; and the very attempt to reduce to ordinary language the glory of the things seen is likely to result in misunderstanding. For this reason, I have eliminated accounts of all those spiritual visions for which only a spiritual language is adequate. I am presenting only a few simple and instructive incidents that will prove profitable to everyone. Since at some time or other every one will enter into this unseen spiritual world, it will be profitable if we become familiar with it.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH?**

One day when I was praying alone, I suddenly found myself surrounded by a great concourse of spirit beings, or I might say that as soon as my spiritual eyes were opened I found myself bowed in the presence of a considerable company of saints and angels. At first I was somewhat humbled, when I saw their bright and glorious state and compared with them my own inferior quality. But I was at once put at ease by their real sympathy and love-inspired friendliness. I had already had the experience of peace in God’s presence in my life, but the fellowship of these saints added a new and wonderful joy to me. As we conversed together, I received from them answers to my questions relating to my difficulties about many things that puzzled me. My first inquiry was about what happens at the time of dying and about the state of the soul after death. I said, “We know what happens to us between childhood and old age, but we know nothing of what happens at the time of death or beyond the gates of death. Correct information about it can be known only by those on the other side of death, after they have entered the spiritual world. “Can you”, I asked, “give us any information about this?”

To this one of the saints answered! “Death is like sleep. There is no pain in the passing over, except in the case of a few bodily diseases and mental conditions. As an exhausted man is overcome by deep sleep, so comes the sleep of death to man. Death comes so suddenly to many, that it is only with great difficulty that they realize that they have left the material world, and entered this world of spirits. Bewildered by the many new things that they see around them, they imagine that they are visiting some country or city of the physical world, which they have not seen before. It is only when they have been more fully instructed and realize that their spiritual body is different from their former material body that they realize that they have, in fact, been transferred from the material world to the realm of spirits.”

Another of the saints who was present gave this further answer to my question, “Usually,” he said, “at the time of death, the body loses its power of feeling. It has no pain, but is simply overcome by a sense of drowsiness. Sometimes in cases of great weakness, or after an accident, the spirit departs while the body is still unconscious. Then the spirits of those who have lived without thought of, or preparation for, entering the spiritual world, being thus suddenly transferred into the world of spirits, are extremely bewildered, and in a state of great distress at their fate, so, for a considerable period, they have to remain in the lower and darker planes of the intermediate state. The

spirits of these lower spheres often greatly harass people in the world. But the only ones that they can injure are those who are like in mind to themselves, who of their own free will open their hearts to entertain them. These evil spirits, allying themselves with other evil spirits, would do immense harm in the world were it not that God has appointed innumerable angels everywhere for the protection of his people, and of his creation, so that his people are always safe in his keeping.”

“Evil spirits can injure only those in the world who are in like nature to themselves, and then they can do it only to a limited extent. They can, indeed, trouble the righteous, but not without God’s permission. God sometimes does give to Satan and his angels permission to tempt and persecute his people, that they may emerge from the trial stronger and better, as when he allowed Satan to persecute his servant Job. But from such a trial there is gain rather than loss to the believer.”

Another of the saints standing by added in reply to my question, “Many whose lives have not been yielded to God, when about to die, seem to become unconscious; but what actually happens is that when they see the hideous and devilish faces of the evil spirits that have come around them, they become speechless and paralyzed by fear. On the other hand the dying of a believer is frequently the very opposite of this. He is extremely happy for he sees angels and saintly spirits coming to welcome him. Then too, his loved ones, who have died before, are permitted to attend his deathbed, and to conduct his soul to the spiritual world. On entering the world of spirits he at once feels at home for not only are his friends about him, but, while in the world he had long been preparing himself for that home by his trust in God and fellowship with him.”

After that a fourth saint said, “To conduct the souls of men from the world is the work of angels. Usually Christ the Messiah reveals himself in the spiritual world to each one in degrees of glory differing in intensity according to the state of each soul’s spiritual development. But in some cases he himself comes to a deathbed to welcome his servant and in love dries his tears, and leads him into Paradise. As a child born into the world finds everything provided for its wants, so does the soul, on entering the spiritual world find all its wants supplied.”

## THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

Once in the course of conversation, the saints gave me this information. “After death the soul of every human being will enter the world of spirits, and every one, according to the stage of his spiritual growth, will be placed with spirits of like mind and nature to himself, either in the darkness or in the light of glory. We are sure that no one in a physical body has ever entered into the spiritual world, except Christ the Messiah and a few saints, whose bodies were transformed into glorious bodies. However, it has been granted to some people, while still living in the world, to look into the spirit world, even heaven, as Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians 12:2: “I know a man in Christ the Messiah who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.” So it is that some people cannot tell whether they enter Paradise with their bodies or in the spirit.”

After this conversation these saints conducted me around and showed me many wonderful things and places. I saw that from all sides thousands upon thousands of souls were constantly arriving in the world of spirits, and that all were attended by angels. The souls of the good had with them only angels and good spirits, who had conducted them from their death-beds. Evil spirits were not allowed to come near to them, but stood far off and watched. I saw also that there were no good spirits with the souls of the really wicked, but about them were evil spirits, who had come with them from their death-beds, while angels, too, stood by and prevented the evil spirits from giving free play, in spite of their malicious natures, in harassing them. The evil spirits almost immediately led these souls away towards the darkness, for when they were in the mortal body, they had consistently allowed evil spirits to influence them for evil, and had willingly permitted themselves to be enticed to all kinds of wickedness. For the angels in no way interfere with the free will of any soul.

I saw there, also, many souls who had lately come into the world of spirits, who were attended by both good and evil spirits, as well as by angels. But before long the radical difference of their lives began to assert itself, and they separated themselves--the good in character towards the good, and the evil towards the evil.

## **SONS OF LIGHT**

When the souls of men arrive in the world of spirits, the good at once separate from the evil. In this world all are mixed together, but it is not so in the spiritual world. I have many times seen that when the spirits of the good--the sons of light enter into the world of spirits, they first bathe in the intangible air-like waters of a crystal-clear ocean, and in this they find an intense and exhilarating refreshment. Within these miraculous waters they move about as if in open air, neither are they drowned beneath them, nor do the waters wet them, but, wonderfully cleansed and refreshed and fully purified, they enter into the world of glory and light, where they will ever remain in the presence of their dear Lord, and in the fellowship of innumerable saints and angels.

## **SONS OF DARKNESS**

How different from these are the souls of those whose lives have been evil. Ill at ease in the company of the sons of light, and tormented by the all-revealing light of glory, they struggle to hide themselves in places where their impure and sin-stained natures will not be seen. From the lowest and darkest part of the world of spirits, a black and foul-smelling smoke arises, and in their effort to hide themselves from the light, these sons of darkness push down, and cast themselves headlong into it, and from it their bitter wails of remorse and anguish are heard constantly arising. But heaven is so arranged that the smoke is not seen, nor are the wails of anguish heard, by the spirits in heaven, unless any of them for some special reason should wish to see the evil plight of those souls in darkness.

## **DEATH OF A CHILD**

A little child died of pneumonia, and a party of angels came to conduct his soul to the world of spirits. I wish that his mother could have seen that wonderful sight, then, instead of weeping, she would have sung with joy, for the angels take care of the little ones with a care and a love that no mother ever could show. I heard one of the angels say to another, "See how this child's mother weeps over this short and temporary separation! In a very few years she will be happy again with her child." Then the angels took the child's soul to that beautiful and light-filled part of heaven, which is set apart for children, where they care for them, and teach them all heavenly wisdom, until gradually the little ones become like the angels.

After some time this child's mother also died, and her child, who had now become like the angels, came with other angels to welcome the soul of his mother. When he said to her, "Mother, do you not know me? I am your son Theodore," the mother's heart was flooded with joy, and when they embraced one another, their tears of joy fell like flowers. It was a touching sight! Then as they walked along together he kept on pointing out, and explaining to her the things around them, and during the time appointed for her stay in the intermediate state, he remained with her, and, when the period necessary for instruction in that world was completed, he took her with him to the higher sphere where he himself dwelt.

There, on all sides, were wonderful and joyous surroundings, and unnumbered souls of men were there, who in the world had borne all kinds of suffering for the sake of Christ the Messiah, and in the end had been raised to this glorious place of honor. All around were matchless and exceedingly beautiful mountains, springs and landscapes, and in the gardens was abundance of all kinds of sweet fruits and beautiful flowers. Everything the heart could desire was there. Then he said to his mother, "In the world, which is the dim reflection of this real world, our dear ones are grieving over us, but, tell me, is this death, or is this the real life for which every heart yearns?" The mother said, "Son, this is the true life. If I had known in the world the whole truth about heaven, I would never have grieved over your death. What a pity it is that those in the world are so blind! In spite of the fact that Christ the Messiah has explained quite clearly about this state of glory, and that the Gospels again and again tell of this eternal kingdom of the Father, yet, not only ignorant people, but many enlightened believers as well, still remain altogether unaware of its glory. May God grant that all may enter into the abiding joy of this place!"

## **DEATH OF A PHILOSOPHER**

The soul of a German philosopher entered into the world of spirits and saw from afar the incomparable glory of the spiritual world, and the boundless happiness of its people. He was delighted with what he saw, but his stubborn intellectualism stood in the way of his entering into it, and enjoying its happiness. Instead of admitting that it was real, he argued thus with himself, "There is no doubt at all that I see all this, but what proof is there that it has objective existence, and is not some illusion conjured up by my mind? From end to end of all this scene I will apply the tests of logic, philosophy and science, and then only will I be convinced that it has a reality of its own, and is no illusion." Then the angels answered him, "It is evident

from your speech that your intellectualism has warped your whole nature, for as spiritual, and not bodily, eyes are needed to see the spiritual world, so spiritual understanding is necessary to comprehend its reality, and not mental exercises in the fundamentals of logic and philosophy. Your science that deals with material facts, has been left behind with your physical skull and brain in the World. Here, only that spiritual wisdom is of use which arises out of the fear and love of God.” Then said one of the angels to another, “What a pity it is that people forget that precious word of our Lord, ‘Unless you are changed and become like little children, no way will you enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 18:3). I asked one of the angels what the end of this man would be, and he replied ‘If this man’s life had been altogether bad, then he would at once have joined the spirits of darkness, but he is not without a moral sense, so for a very long time he will wander blindly round in the dim light of the lower parts of the intermediate state, and keep on bumping his philosophical head, until tired of his foolishness, he repents. Then he will be ready to receive the necessary instruction from the angels appointed for that purpose, and, when instructed, will he be fit to enter into the fuller light of God in the higher sphere.’”

In one sense the whole of infinite space, filled as it is with the presence of God, who is Spirit, is a spiritual world. In another sense the world also is a spiritual world, for its inhabitants are spirits clothed with human bodies. But there is yet another world of spirits after they leave the body at death. This is an intermediate state – a state between the glory and light of the highest heavens, and the dimness and darkness of the lowest hells. In it are innumerable planes of existence, and the soul is conducted to that plane for which its progress in the world has fitted it. There, angels especially appointed to this work, instruct it for a time, that may be long or short, before it goes on to join the society of those spirits – good spirits in the greater light, or evil spirits in the greater darkness – that are like in nature and in mind to itself.

## **UNSEEN HELP**

Our relatives and dear ones, and at times the saints as well, often come from the unseen world to help and protect us; but the angels always do. Yet they have never been allowed to make themselves visible to us, except at a few times of very special need. Using ways we don’t recognize, they influence us towards holy thoughts, and incline us towards God and towards good conduct, and towards God’s Spirit which is dwelling in our hearts. His spirit in us completes that work of perfecting of our spiritual life, which others have not been able to finish.

The greatness of any one does not depend upon his knowledge and position, nor by these alone can any one be great. A man is as great as he can be useful to others, and the usefulness of his life to others depends on his service to them. Hence, in so far as a man can lovingly serve others, just so far is he great. As the Lord said, “...whoever will be great among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:26). The joy of all those that dwell in heaven is found in this: that they serve one another in love, and thus, fulfilling the object of their lives, they remain forever in the presence of God.

## **THE CORRECTION OF ERROR**

When people earnestly desire to live lives pleasing to God, the readjustment of their views, and the renewal of their lives, begin in this world. Not only does the Spirit of God teach them directly, but in the secret chamber of their hearts they are helped by communion with the saints, who, unseen by them, are ever at hand to assist them towards the good.

But, as many Christian believers [as well as non-Christian seekers after truth] die while still holding false and partial views of truth, their views are corrected in the world of spirits, provided that they are not obstinately welded to their opinions, but are willing to learn, because neither in this world, nor in the next, does God, or any servant of his, force a man to believe anything against his will.

## **THE MANIFESTATION OF THE MESSIAH**

I saw in a vision the spirit of an idolater on reaching the world of spirits began at once to search for his god. Then the saints said to him, “There is no god here except the one true God, and Christ the Messiah, who is his manifestation.” At this the man was a good deal astonished, but being a sincere seeker after truth, he frankly admitted that he had been in error. He eagerly sought to know the correct view of truth, and asked if he might see the Christ the Messiah. Shortly after this Christ manifested himself in a dim light to him, and to others who had newly arrived in the world of spirits, because at this stage they could not have endured a full exhibition of his glory, for his glory is so surpassing that even the angels look on him with difficulty, and cover their faces with their wings. When he does reveal himself to anyone, he takes into account the particular stage of progress to which that soul has attained, so he appears dimly, or in the fuller light of his glory, that the sight of him may be endured. So, when these spirits saw Christ the Messiah in this dim but attractive light, they were filled with a joy and peace which is beyond our power to describe. Bathed in the rays of his

life-giving light, and with the waves of his love, which constantly flow out from him, flowing over them, all their error was washed away. Then with all their hearts they acknowledged him as the Truth, and found healing, and, bowing in lowly adoration before him, thanked and praised him. And the saints, who had been appointed for their instruction; also rejoiced over them.

## **A LABORER AND A DOUBTER**

Once I saw in a vision a laboring man arrive in the spirit world. He was in great distress, for in all his life he had given no thought to anything but earning his daily bread. He had been too busy to think of God, or of spiritual things. At the same time he had died, another had also died, who was a doubter, obstinate in his opinions. Both were ordered to remain for a long period far down in the world of spirits in a place of darkness. In this, being in distress, they began to cry for help. Saints and angels, in love and sympathy, went to instruct them that they might understand how to become members of the kingdom of glory and light. But in spite of their distress, like many other spirits, they preferred to remain on in their dark abode, for sin had so warped their whole character and nature that they doubted everything. They even looked with suspicion on the angels who had come to help them. As I watched I wondered what their end would be, but, when I asked, the only answer I got was from one of the saints, who said, “God may have mercy on them.”

We can form an estimate from the depravity of man’s perverted nature from this, that, if an evil report about another goes round, even if it is false, a man whose outlook is distorted by sin will at once accept it as true. If, on the other hand, a good and perfectly true report is received, for example that such and such a man is a devout man, who has done this or that work for the glory of God and for the good of his fellows, then, without hesitation, such a hearer will say, “It is all false. So-and-so must have some hidden or ulterior motive.” Should we ask such a man how he knows that the former case is true and the latter false, and what proof he can give, he will have not the slightest proof to put forward.

All that we can learn from such an attitude of mind is, that, as his mind is tainted with evil, he believes evil reports because they fit in with his evil nature, and he thinks good reports are lies, because they do not fit in with the evil of his heart. By nature a good man’s attitude is the opposite of this. He is naturally inclined to doubt an evil report, and to believe a good report, because this attitude best fits in with the goodness of his nature. Those who in this world pass their lives in opposition to the will of God will have rest

of heart neither in this world nor in the world to come. On entering the world of spirits they will feel bewildered and distressed. But those who in this world are conformed to the will of the Lord will be at peace on reaching the next, and will be filled with unspeakable joy, because here is their eternal home, and the kingdom of their Father.

## **THE JUDGMENT OF SINNERS**

Many have the idea that if they sin in secret then none will ever know about it, but it is altogether impossible that any sin should remain hidden forever. At some time or other it will certainly be known, and the sinner will also receive the punishment he deserves. Also goodness and truth can never be hidden. In the end they must triumph, though, for a time, they may not be recognized. The following incidents will throw light on the state of the sinner.

## **A GOOD MAN AND A THIEF**

Once in a vision, one of the saints recounted this story to me, “Late one night a godly man had to go a distance to do some necessary work. As he went along he came upon a thief breaking into a shop. He said to him, “You have no right to take other people’s property, and to cause them loss. It is a great sin to do so.”

The thief answered, “If you want to get out of this without being harmed, then get out quietly. If you don’t there will be trouble for you.”

The good man persisted in his efforts, and, when the thief would not listen, he began to shout and raised the neighbors. They rushed out to seize the thief, but as soon as the good man began to accuse him, the thief retaliated and accused the good man. “Oh-yes”, he said, “you think this fellow is very religious, but I caught him in the very act of stealing”. As there were no witnesses both were arrested, and locked up together in a room, while a police officer and some of his men hid themselves to listen to their conversation. Then the thief began to laugh at his fellow prisoner.

“Look”, he said, “haven’t I caught you nicely? I told you at first to get out or it would be the worse for you. Now we’ll see how your religion is going to save you.” As soon as the officer heard this he opened the door and released the good man with honor and a reward, while he gave the thief a severe beating, and locked him in a prison cell.

So, even in this world, there is a degree of judgment between good and bad men, but the full punishment and reward will be given only in the world to come.”

## **SECRET SINS**

The following was also related to me in a vision. A man in the secret of his own room was committing a sinful act, and he thought that his sin was hidden. One of the saints said, “How I wish that the spiritual eyes of this man had been open at the time, then he would never have dared to commit this sin.” For in that room were a number of angels and saints, as well as some spirits of his dear ones, who had come to help him. All of them were grieved to see his shameful conducts and one of them said, “We came to help him, but now we will have to be witnesses against him at the time of his judgment. He cannot see us, but we can all see him indulging in this sin. Would that this man would repent, and be saved from the punishment to come.”

## **WASTED OPPORTUNITIES**

Once I saw in the world of spirits a spirit who, with cries of remorse, was rushing about like a madman. An angel said, “In the world this man had many chances of repenting and turning towards God, but whenever his conscience began to trouble him, he used to drown its prickings in drink. He wasted all his property, and ruined his family, and in the end committed suicide, and now in the world of spirits he rushes frantically about like a mad dog and writhes in remorse at the thought of his lost opportunities. We are all willing to help him, but his own perverted nature prevents him from repenting, for sin has hardened his heart, though the memory of his sin is always fresh to him. In the world he drank to make himself forget the voice of his conscience, but here there is no possible chance of covering up anything. Now his soul is so naked that he himself, and all the inhabitants of the spiritual world, can see his sinful life. For him, in his sin-hardened state, no other course is possible but that he must hide himself in the darkness with other evil spirits, and escape some of the torture of the light.”

## **A WICKED MAN PERMITTED TO ENTER HEAVEN**

Once in my vision a man who had lived an evil life entered at death into the world of spirits. When the angel and saints wished to help him, he at once began to curse and revile them, and say, “God is altogether unjust. He has prepared heaven for such flattering slaves as you are, and casts the rest of mankind into hell. Yet you call him Love!” The angels replied, “God certainly is love. He created men that they might live forever in happy fellowship with him, but men, by their own obstinacy, and by abuse of their free will have turned their faces away from him, and have made hell for themselves. God neither casts anyone into hell, nor will he ever do so, but

man himself, by being entangled in sin, creates hell for himself. God never created any hell.”

Just then the exceedingly sweet voice of one of the high angels was heard from above saying, “God gives permission that this man may be brought into heaven.” Eagerly the man stepped forward accompanied by two angels, but when they reached the door of heaven, and he saw the holy place enveloped in light, and the glorious and blessed inhabitants that dwell there, he began to feel uneasy. The angels said to him, “see how beautiful a world is this! Go a little farther, and look at the dear Lord sitting on his throne.” From the door he looked, and then as the light of the sun of righteousness revealed to him the impurity of his sin-defiled life, he started back away in an agony of self-loathing, and fled, rushing headlong so that he did not even stop in the intermediate realm of the world of spirits, but like a stone he plunged through it, and cast himself headlong into the bottomless pit.

Then the sweet and ravishing voice of the Lord was heard saying, “Look, my dear children, none is forbidden to come here, and no one forbade this man, nor has anyone asked him to leave. It was his own impure life that forced him to flee from this holy place, because, ‘Unless a person is born again, he cannot see God’s kingdom’ (John 3:3).

## **THE SPIRIT OF A MURDERER**

A man, who some years before had killed a Christian preacher, was bitten by a snake in the jungle, and died. When he entered the world of spirits, he saw good and bad spirits all around him, and because the whole aspect of his soul showed that he was a son of darkness, the evil spirits soon had possession of him, and pushed him along with them towards the darkness. One of the saints remarked, “He killed a man of God by the poison of his anger, and now he is killed by the poison of a snake. The old Serpent, the devil, by means of this man, killed an innocent man. Now, by means of another snake, which is like him, he has killed this man, for ‘he was a murderer from the beginning’ “ (John 8:44).

As he was being taken away, one from among the good spirits, who had come to help him, said to him, “I have forgiven you with all my heart. Now can I do anything to help you?” The murderer at once recognized him as the same man whom he had killed some years before. Ashamed and smitten with fear, he fell down before him, and at once the evil spirits began to clamor loudly, but the angels who were standing at a distance rebuked and silenced them. Then the murderer said to the man whom he had killed, “How I wish that in the world I could have seen your unselfish and loving life as I see it

now! I regret that through my blindness, and because your real spiritual life was screened by your body, I could not then see the inner beauty of your life. Also by killing you I deprived many of the blessing and benefit that you would have given them. Now I am forever a sinner in God's sight, and fully deserve my punishment. I don't know what I can do except hide myself in some dark cave, because I cannot bear this light. In it, not only does my own heart make me miserable, but all can see every detail of my sinful life."

To this the man who had been murdered replied, "You should truly repent, and turn to God, for if you do, there is hope that the Lamb of God will wash you in his own blood, and give you new life that you may live with us in heaven, and be saved from the torment of Hell."

The murderer said in reply, "There is no need for me to confess my sins for they are open to all. In the world I could hide them, but not here. I want to live with saints like you in heaven, but when I cannot bear the dimness of the self-revealing light in the world of spirits, then what will be my state in the searching brightness and glory of that light-filled place? My greatest hindrance is that, through my sins, my conscience is so dull and hardened that my nature will not incline towards God and repentance. I seem to have no power to repent left in me. Now there is nothing for it, but that I shall be driven out from here forever. Alas for my unhappy state!" As he said this, fear-stricken, he fell down, and his fellow evil spirits dragged him away into the darkness.

Then one of the angels said, "See! there is no need for anyone to pronounce a sentence of doom. Of itself the life of any sinner proves him guilty. There is no need to tell him, or to put forward witnesses against him. To a certain extent punishment begins in the heart of every sinner while in the world, but here they feel the full effect of it. And God's arrangement here is such that goats and sheep, that is, sinners and righteous, separate on their own.

"God created man to live in light, in which his Spiritual health and joy are made permanent forever. Therefore no man can be happy in the darkness of hell, nor, because of his sin-perverted life, can he be happy in the light. So wherever a sinner may go, he will find himself in hell. How opposite to this is the state of the righteous, who freed from sin, are in heaven everywhere!"

## **THE SPIRIT OF A LIAR**

In the world there was a man so addicted to lying that it had become second nature to him. When he died and entered the world of spirits, he tried to lie as usual, but was greatly ashamed because even before he could speak, his thoughts were known to everybody. No one can be a hypocrite there, because the thought of no heart can remain hidden. The soul as it leaves the body bears in it the imprint of all its sin, and every part of it become a witness against it. Nothing can blot out that stain of sin except the blood of Christ the Messiah. When this man was in the world, he regularly tried to distort right into wrong, and wrong into right, but, after his bodily death, he learned that there never is, and never can be, a possibility of twisting truth into untruth. He who lies injures and deceives no one but himself, so this man by lying had killed the inner perception to truth which he had once possessed. I watched him as, inextricably tangled in his own deceit, he turned his face away from the light from above, and hurried away far down into the darkness, where none could see his filthy love of lying, except those spirits who were like in nature to himself. For Truth is always Truth, and it alone gave this man the sentence of his falseness, and condemned him as a liar.

## **THE SPIRIT OF AN ADULTERER**

I saw an adulterer, who had shortly before arrived in the world of spirits. His tongue was hanging out like a man consumed by thirst, his nostrils were distended, and he beat his arms about as if a kind of fire burned within him. His appearance was so evil and loathsome that I revolted at looking at him. All the accompaniments of luxury and sensuality had been left behind in the world and now, like a mad dog, he ran frantically around, and cried, "Curse on this life! There is no death here to put an end to all this pain. And here the spirit cannot die, otherwise, I should again kill myself, as I did with a pistol in the world in order to escape from my troubles there. But this pain is far greater than the pain of the world. What shall I do?" Saying this he ran towards the darkness, where there were many other like-minded spirits, and there he disappeared.

One of the saints said "Not only is an evil act sin, but an evil thought, and an evil look is also sin. This sin is not confined only to trafficking with strange women, but excess and animalism in relation to one's wife is also sin. A man and his wife are truly joined together, not for sensualism, but for mutual help and support, that they with their children may spend their lives in the service of mankind and for the glory of God. But the married man who departs from this aim in life is guilty of the adulterer's sin."

## **THE SOUL OF A ROBBER**

A robber died and entered the world of spirits. At first he took no interest in his state, or in the spirits about him, but, as his habit was, he at once set about helping himself to the valuables of the place. But he was amazed that in the spirit world the very things seemed to be speaking and accusing him of his unworthy action. His nature was so perverted that he neither knew the true use of these things, nor was he fit to use them rightly. In the world his passions had been so unbridled, that, for the most trifling cause, he, in his anger, had killed or wounded anyone who offended him. Now in the world of spirits, he began to act in the same way. He turned on the spirits, who came to instruct him, as if he would have torn them to pieces, like a savage dog will do even in the presence of its master. At this one of the angels said, "If spirits of this kind were not kept down in the darkness or the bottomless pit, then they would cause immense harm wherever they might go. This man's conscience is so dead, that even after he has reached the world of spirits, he fails to recognize that, by murdering and robbing in the world, he has wasted his own spiritual discernment and life. He killed and destroyed others, but in reality he has destroyed himself. God alone knows if this man, and those who are like him, will remain in torment for ages or forever."

After this the angels appointed to that duty took him and shut him down in the darkness from which he is not permitted to come out. The state of evildoers in that place is so terrible, and so inexpressibly fierce is their torment, that those who see them tremble at the sight. Because of the limitations of our earthly languages, we can only say this: that wherever the soul of a sinner is, always and in every way, there is nothing but pain that does not stop for a moment. A kind of lightless fire burns forever and torments these souls, but neither are they altogether consumed, nor does the fire die out. A spirit who was watching what had just happened said, "Who knows but that in the end this may not be a cleansing flame?" In the dark part of the world of spirits, which is called Hell, there are many grades and planes, and the particular one in which any spirit lives in suffering is dependent on the quantity and character of his sins. In fact God made them all in his own image (Genesis 1:26, 27; Colossians 1:15), yet by their connection with sin they have disfigured this image, and have made it ugly and evil. They have, indeed, a kind of spiritual body, but it is exceedingly loathsome and frightful, and if they are not restored by true repentance, and the grace of God, then in this fearful form they must remain in torment forever.

## **THE GLORIOUS STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

Heaven, or the kingdom of God, begins in the lives of all true believers while still in this world. Their hearts are always filled with peace and joy, no matter what persecutions and troubles they may have to endure; for God, who is the source of all peace and life, dwells in them. Death is no death for them, but a door by which they enter forever into their eternal home. Or we may say that though they have already been born again into their eternal kingdom, yet when they leave the body, it is for them, not the day of their death, but their day of birth into the spiritual world, and it is for them a time of superlative joy as the following incidents will make clear.

## **THE DEATH OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN**

An angel related to me how a true Christian, who had wholeheartedly served his Master for thirty years, lay dying. A few minutes before he died God opened his spiritual eyes that, even before leaving the body, he might see the spiritual world and might tell what he saw to those around him. He saw that heaven had been opened for him, and a party of angels and saints was coming out to meet him, and at the door the Savior with outstretched hand was waiting to receive him. As all this broke upon him, he gave such a shout of joy that those at his bedside were startled. "What a joy it is for me," he exclaimed, "I have long been waiting that I might see my Lord, and go to him. Oh friends! Look at his face all lighted by love, and see that company of angels that has come for me. What a glorious place it is! Friends, I am setting out for my real home, do not grieve over my departure, but rejoice!" One of those present at his bedside said quietly, "His mind is wandering." He heard the low voice and said, "No, it is not. I am quite conscious. I wish you could see this wonderful sight. I am sorry it is hidden from your eyes. Good-bye, we will meet again in the next world." Saying this he closed his eyes, and said, "Lord I commend my soul into thy hands", and so fell asleep.

As soon as his soul had left his body, the angels took him in their arms, and were about to go off to heaven, but he asked them to delay a few minutes. He looked at his lifeless body, and at his friends, and said to the angels, "I did not know that the spirit after leaving the body could see his own body and his friends. I wish my friends could see me, as well as I can see them, then these would never count me as dead, nor mourn for me as they do". Then he examined his spiritual body and found it beautifully light and delicate, and totally different from his gross material body. On that he began to restrain his wife and children who were weeping and kissing his cold

body. He stretched out his delicate spiritual hands, and began to explain to them, and with great love to press them away from it, but they could neither see him, nor hear his voice, and, as he tried to remove his children from off his body, it seemed as if his hands passed right through their bodies, as if they were air, but they felt nothing at all. Then one of the angels said, "Come, let us take you to your everlasting home. Do not be sorry for them. The Lord himself, and we also, will comfort them. This separation is but for a few days."

Then in company with the angels he set out for heaven. They had gone forward only a little way when another band of angels met them with cries of "Welcome." Many friends and dear ones, who had died before him, also met him, and on seeing them his joy was further increased. On reaching the gate of heaven, the angels and saints stood in silence on either side. He entered, and in the doorway was met by Christ the Messiah. At once he fell at his feet to worship him, but the Lord lifted him up, and embraced him, and said, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." At that the man's joy was indescribable. From his eyes tears of joy began to flow, and the Lord in great love wiped them away, and to the angels he said, "Take him to that most glorious mansion that, from the beginning, has been prepared for him." Now the spirit of this man of God still held the earthly idea, that to turn his back on the Lord as he went off with the angels would be a dishonor to him. He hesitated to do this, but, when at last he turned his face towards the mansion, he was astonished to see that wherever he looked he could see the Lord. For Christ the Messiah is present in every place, and is seen everywhere by saints and angels.

In addition to the Lord, he was delighted that all of his surroundings brought him joy. Also he noticed when those of lower rank met those of higher rank, they were without envy, and those whose position is more exalted count themselves fortunate to be able to serve their brethren in lower positions. That is what the kingdom of God is all about: love. In every part of heaven there are superb gardens which all the time produce every variety of sweet and luscious fruit, and all kinds of sweet scented flowers that never fade. In them creatures of every kind give praise to God unceasingly. Birds of beautiful hue, raise their sweet songs of praise, and such is the sweet singing of angels and saints that on hearing their songs, a wonderful sense of rapture is experienced.

Wherever one may look there is nothing but scenes of unbounded joy. This, in truth, is the Paradise that God has prepared for those that love him, where there is no shadow of death, nor error, nor sin, nor suffering, but abiding peace and joy.

## **THE MANSIONS OF HEAVEN**

Then I saw another man of God examining his appointed mansion from a great distance. When this man, in company with the angels, arrived at the door of his appointed mansion, he saw written on it in shining letters the word "Welcome," and from the letters themselves "Welcome, Welcome," in audible sound was repeated and repeated again. When he had entered his home, to his surprise he found the Lord there before him. At this his joy was more than we can describe, and he exclaimed, "I left the Lord's presence and came here at his command, but I find that the Lord himself is here to dwell with me." In the mansion was everything that his imagination could have conceived, and everyone was ready to serve him.

In the near-by houses, saints of like mind lived in happy fellowship. For this heavenly house is the kingdom which has been prepared for the saints from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34), and this is the glorious future that awaits every true follower of Christ the Messiah.

## **A PROUD MINISTER AND A HUMBLE WORKMAN**

A minister who looked on himself as an exceedingly learned and religious man died at a ripe old age. And without doubt he was a good man. When the angels came to take him to the place appointed for him by the Lord in the world of spirits, they brought him into the intermediate area, and left him there with many other good spirits, who had lately arrived. He was in the charge of those angels who are appointed to instruct good souls, while those who brought him went back to usher in another good spirit. In that intermediate heaven there are many grade levels—right up to the higher heavens. The grade into which any soul is admitted for instruction, is determined by the nature and godness of his life on earth.

When the angels, who had put this minister in his appointed grade level, came back conducting in the other soul, for whom they had gone, they brought him up beyond the grade in which the minister was, on their way up to a higher plane. Seeing this the minister in a blustering voice called out, "What right have you to leave me half-way up to that glorious country, while you take this other man away up near to it? Neither in holiness, nor in anything else, am I in any way less than this man, or than you yourselves."

The angels replied, "There is no question here of great or small, or of more or less, but a man is put into whatever grade he has merited by his life and faith. You are not quite ready yet for that upper grade, so you will have to remain here for a while, and learn some of the things that our

fellow-workers are appointed to teach. Then, when the Lord commands us, we will, with great pleasure, take you with us to that higher sphere.”

He said, “I have been teaching people all my life about the way to reach heaven. What more do I have to learn? I know all about it.”

Then the instructing angels said, “They must take him up now; we can’t detain them; but we will answer your question. My friend, do not be offended if we speak plainly, for it is for your good. You think you are alone here, but the Lord is also here though you cannot see him. The pride that you displayed when you said, ‘I know all about it’ prevents you from seeing him, and from going up higher. Humility is the cure for this pride. Practice it and your desire will be granted”. After this, one of the angels told him, “The man who has just been promoted above you, was no learned or famous man. You did not look at him very carefully. He was a member of your own congregation. People hardly knew him at all, for he was an ordinary working man, and had little leisure from his work. But in his workshop many knew him as an industrious and honest worker. His Christian character was recognized by all who came in contact with him. In the war he was called up for service in France. There, one day, as he was helping a wounded comrade, he was struck by a bullet and killed.

Though his death was sudden, he was ready for it, so he did not have to remain in the intermediate state as long as you will have to. His promotion depends, not on favoritism, but on his spiritual worthiness. His life of prayer and humility, while he was in the world, prepared him to a great extent for the spiritual world. Now he is rejoicing at having reached his appointed place, and is thanking and praising the Lord, who, in his mercy, has saved him, and given him eternal life.”

## **HEAVENLY LIFE**

In heaven no one can ever be a hypocrite, for all can see the lives of others as they are. The all-revealing light which gloriously flows out from Christ the Messiah makes the wicked in their remorse try to hide themselves, but it fills the righteous with the utmost joy to be in the Father’s kingdom of light. There, their goodness is evident to everybody, and it ever increases more and more, for nothing is present that can hinder their growth, and everything that can sustain them is there to help them. The degrees of goodness reached by the soul of a righteous man is known by the brightness that radiates from his whole appearance; for character and nature show themselves in the form of various glowing rainbow-like colors of great glory.

In heaven there is no jealousy. All are glad to see the spiritual elevation

and glory of others, and, without any motive of self seeking, try, at all times, truly to serve one another. All the innumerable gifts and blessings of heaven are for the common use of all. No one out of selfishness ever thinks of keeping anything for himself, and there is enough of everything for everyone. God, who is love, is seen in the person of Jesus sitting on the throne in the highest heaven. From him, who is the “sun of righteousness,” and the “light of the world,” healing and life-giving rays and waves of light and love are seen flowing out through every saint and angel, and bringing to whatever they touch vitalizing and life-giving power. There is in heaven neither east or west, nor north nor south, but for each individual soul or angel, Christ the Messiah’s throne appears as the center of all things.

There also are found every kind of sweet and delicious flower and fruit, and many kinds of spiritual food. While eating them an exquisite flavor and pleasure are experienced, but after they are assimilated, a delicate scent, which perfumes the air around, exudes from the pores of the body.

In short the will and desires of all the inhabitants of heaven are fulfilled in God, because in every life, God’s will is made perfect, so under all conditions, and at every stage of heaven, there is for every one an unchanging experience of wonderful joy and blessedness.

## **THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF CREATION**

A few months ago I was lying alone in my room suffering acutely from an ulcer in my eye. The pain was so great that I could do no other work, so I spent the time in prayer and intercession. One day I had been thus engaged for only a few minutes, when the spiritual world was opened to me, and I found myself surrounded by numbers of angels. Immediately I forgot all my pain, for my whole attention was concentrated on them. I mention below a few other subjects on which we conversed together.

## **NAMES IN HEAVEN**

I asked them, “Can you tell me by what names you are known?” One of the angels replied, “Each of us has been given a new name, which none knows except the Lord and the one who has received it (Rev. 2:17). All of us here have served the Lord in different lands and in different ages, and there is no need that any know what our names are. Nor is there any necessity that we should tell our former earthly names. It might be interesting to know them, but what would be the use of it? And then we do not want people to know our names, lest they should imagine us great and give honor to us, instead of to the Lord, who has so loved us that he has lifted us up out of our

fallen state, and has brought us into our eternal home, where we will forever sing praises in his loving fellowship—and this is the object for which he has created us.”

## **SEEING GOD**

I asked again, “Do the angels and saints who live in the highest spheres of heaven, always look on the face of God? And, if they see him, in what form and state does he appear?” One of the saints said, “As the sea is full of water, so is the whole universe filled with God, and every inhabitant of heaven feels his presence about him on every side. When one dives under water, above and below and round about there is nothing but water, so in heaven is the presence of God felt. And just as in the water of the sea there are uncounted living creatures, so in the infinite being of God his creatures exist. Because he is infinite, his children, who are finite, can see him only in the form of Christ the Messiah. As the Lord himself has said, “He that has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). In this world of spirits, the spiritual progress of anyone governs the degree to which he is able to know and feel God; and Christ the Messiah also reveals his glorious form to each one according to his spiritual enlightenment and capacity. If Christ the Messiah were to appear in the same glorious light to the dwellers of the darkened lower spheres of the spiritual world as he appears to those in the higher planes, then they would not be able to bear it. So he tempers the glory of his manifestation to the state of progress, and to the capacity, of each individual soul.”

Then another saint added, “God’s presence can indeed be felt and enjoyed, but it cannot be expressed in words. As the sweetness of the sweet is enjoyed by tasting, and not by the most graphic descriptive phrasing, so every one in heaven experiences the joy of God’s presence, and every one in the spiritual world knows that his experience of God is real, and has no need that any should attempt to help him with a verbal description of it.”

## **DISTANCE IN HEAVEN**

I asked, “How far from one another are the various heavenly spheres of existence? If one cannot go to stay in other spheres, is he permitted to visit them?” Then one of the saints said, “The place of residence is appointed for each soul in that plane to which his spiritual development has fitted him, but for short periods he can go to visit other spheres. When those of the higher spheres come down to the lower, a kind of spiritual covering is given to them, that the glory of their appearance may not be disconcerting to the inhabitants

of the lower and darker spheres. So when one from a lower sphere goes to a higher, he also gets a kind of spiritual covering that he may be able to bear the light and glory of that place.”

In heaven distance is never felt by any one, for as soon as one forms the wish to go to a certain place he at once finds himself there. Distances are felt only in the material world. If one wishes to see a saint in another sphere, either he himself is transported there in a moment of thought, or the distant saint arrives in his presence.

## **THE WITHERED FIG TREE**

I inquired of them, “Everything is created for some purpose, but it sometimes appears that that purpose is not fulfilled. For instance, the purpose of the fig tree was to produce fruit, but, when the Lord found it fruitless, he withered it up. Can you enlighten me as to whether its purpose was fulfilled or not?” A saint replied, “Undoubtedly its purpose was fulfilled, and was fulfilled more fully. The Lord of life gives life to every creature for a certain specific purpose, but if that purpose is not fulfilled, he has power to take back the life in order to fulfil some higher purpose. Many thousands of God’s servants have sacrificed their lives in order to teach and uplift others. By losing their lives for others they have helped them, and thus fulfilled the higher purpose of God. And if it is lawful, and a most noble service, for man, who is higher than fig trees and all other created things, to give his life for other men, then how can it be unjust if a mere tree gives its life for the teaching and warning of an erring nation? So through this fig tree Christ the Messiah taught this great lesson to the Jews, and to the whole world, that those whose lives are fruitless, and who fail in the purpose for which God created them, will be altogether withered and destroyed.”

And the facts of history make it abundantly plain. The bigoted and narrow-minded Jewish national life of that day withered away because of its barrenness—like the fig tree. And in the same way the fruitless lives of many others, though outwardly they may appear fruitful, are a cause of deception to others, and will be cursed and destroyed. If any one should object that when the Lord cursed this fig tree, it was not the fruit season and figs should not have been looked for, then he should reflect that for doing good there is no fixed season, because all seasons and times are equally appointed for good works, and that he himself should make his life fruitful and thus fulfil the purpose for which he was created.

## IS MAN A FREE AGENT?

Again I asked, “Would it not have been far better if God had created man and all creation perfect, for then man could neither have committed sin, nor because of sin would there have been so much sorrow and suffering in the world; but now, in a creation made subject to vanity, we have all kinds of suffering to undergo?”

An angel who had come from the highest grades of heaven, and occupied a high position there, replied, “God has not made man like a machine, which would work automatically; nor has he fixed his destiny as in the case of the stars and planets, that may not move out of their appointed course, but he has made man in his own image and likeness, a free agent, possessed of understanding, determination, and power to act independently, hence he is superior to all other created things. Had man not been created a free agent, he would not have been able to enjoy God’s presence, nor the joy of heaven, for he would have been a mere machine, that moves without knowing or feeling, or like the stars that swing unknowingly through infinite space. But man, being a free agent, is by the constitution of his nature, opposed to this kind of soulless perfection—and a perfection of this kind would really have been imperfection—for such a man would have been a mere slave whose very perfection had compelled him to certain acts, in the doing of which he could have had no enjoyment, because he had no choice of his own. To him there would be no difference between a God and a stone.”

Man, and with him all creation, has been subjected to vanity, but not forever. By his disobedience man has brought himself, and all other creatures, into all the ills and sufferings of this state of vanity. In this state of spiritual struggle alone can his spiritual powers be fully developed, and only in this struggle can he learn the lesson necessary to his perfection. Therefore, when man at last reaches the state of perfection of heaven, he will thank God for the sufferings and struggle of the present world, for then he will fully understand that all things work together for the betterment, for the benefit of those who love God (Romans 8:28).

## THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD’S LOVE

Then another of the saints said, “All the inhabitants of heaven know that God is love, but it has been hidden from all eternity that his love is so wonderful that he would become man to save sinners, and for their cleansing would die on the cross. He suffered thus that he might save men and all creation which are in subjection to vanity. Thus God, in becoming man, has shown his heart to his children, but had any other means been used, his

infinite love would have remained forever hidden.

“Now the whole creation is earnestly expecting, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, when they will be again restored and glorified. But, at present, they, and all creation, will remain groaning and travailing till this new creation comes to pass. And those also who have been born again groan in themselves, waiting for the redemption of the body. The time is approaching when the whole creation, being obedient to God in all things, will be freed from corruption, and from this vanity forever. Then will it remain eternally happy in God and will fulfil in itself the purpose for which it was created. Then God will be all in all” (Romans 8:18-23).

The angels also conversed with me about many other matters, but it is impossible to record them, because:

- ① there is in the world no language, no simile, by which I could express the meaning of those very deep spiritual truths
- ② they did not wish me to attempt it, for no one without spiritual experience could understand them, and
- ③ there is the possibility that, instead of their being a help, they would be to many a cause of misunderstanding and error.

I have, therefore, written only a few of the simplest of the matters talked over, in the hope that from them many may get direction and warning, teaching and comfort. Also, that time is not far distant when my readers will pass over into the spiritual world, and see these things with their own eyes. But before we leave this world forever, to go to our eternal home, we must with the support of God’s grace, and in the Spirit of prayer, carry out with faithfulness our appointed work. Thus shall we fulfil the purpose of our lives, and enter without any shade of regret, into the eternal joy of the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

The above account was partly taken from:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~brink/sadhu.html> and

<http://www.northnet.com.au/~noah/visions.html>

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## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF SUNDAR SINGH

- 1889 - Born at Rampur, Punjab
- 1903 - Conversion — age 15
- 1904 - Cast out from home — 16
- 1905 - Baptized in Simla; begins life as a sadhu — 17
- 1907 - Works in leprosy hospital at Sabathu — 19
- 1908 - First visit to Tibet — 20
- 1909 - Enters divinity college, Lahore, to train for the ministry
- 1911 - Hands back his preacher's license; returns to the sadhu's life
- 1912 - Tours through north India and the Himalayas
- 1918 - 1922 - Travels worldwide — 29-32
- 1923 - Turned back from Tibet — 33
- 1925 - 1927 - Quietly spends time writing — 36-38
- 1927 - Sets out for Tibet but returns due to illness — 38
- 1929 - Attempts to reach Tibet and disappears — about 40

I (the publisher of this book) have another book written by Sundar Singh. If you wish to read it, please write me and ask for it. You may write me at: 4912 Lancer Drive, Knoxville, TN 37921-3014  
Most Sincerely, your brother James

### Further Reading

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In Australia: KOORONG Books do an excellent little paperback called "Sadhu Sundar Singh"

Woodbridge, John. More Than Conquerors. Australia, 1992.

Do you ever wonder what heaven will be like? Read this man who had many visions of heaven and what life will be like there.

In the annals of Christian biography, Sundar Singh may not be one of the best known names, but surely one of the most astonishing, fascinating, riveting. Starting with a road-to-Damascus type of conversion at age fifteen [yes, Sundar Singh, like Saul of Tarsus, was persecuting Christians at the time], Sundar lived a lifestyle probably just about as dedicated, devoted and dramatic as Paul's.