



This is the account of a remarkable and alarming vision, received by *General William Booth*, founder of the Salvation Army. General Booth was outstandingly courageous and zealous in his life and service for his Lord and for his fellow-men.

There may be certain parts of this vision and testimony with which you will not agree. However, do not allow these differences to keep you from receiving the admonition, the warning and inspiration which God has for you here. Is this your life and its results which are envisioned here?

Is This Your Life?

I had a very strange vision the other day. And I have been greatly perplexed as to whether or not I should tell it to others. The chief difficulty I find concerning it is that it seems to lay me open to the charge of being too severe, in seeming to shut out of heaven a great multitude who are expecting to go there. Because I portray the gate narrower than the Bible is supposed to make it.

In this it will be considered, perhaps, that the vision I received is at fault, and therefore, somewhat misleads. But on its behalf I may suggest that as heaven is, as the negro said, "a mighty big place," it may be only some special part of the vast Continent of Blessedness that is referred to.

In my vision I thought that so far as the world was concerned, Agur's prayer was answered in regard to me, for I had neither poverty nor riches. All my wants were supplied. I had leisure, and friends, and home, and all that was necessary to make me happy.

Then also, I thought that I was a Christian. Most of my close friends professed to be the same. We visited together at each other's homes, joined in amusements, business, politics and many other things. In short, we bought and sold, and married, and acted as though the world we were in were going to last forever.

In this vision I was one who was active in religious activities. In fact, I considered myself to be quite a shining light. I always attended church on Sunday. And I taught in the Sunday School. Now and then, though not very often, I visited the sick. And in addition to these good deeds I gave a little money to support Christian work.

In all this I was quite sincere. I had no idea of playing the hypocrite. It's true that I didn't stop to consider what Christianity really was, although I talked freely enough about it at times, and pitied people who didn't profess to be Christians.

I seldom, if ever, considered what Jesus Christ required. Nor was I very concerned about the lost, although I heard these matters occasionally discussed in my presence. I had gotten into a definite rut in thought and action and profession. And I went on from day to day, hoping that everything would turn out all right in the end.

But in my vision I thought that without any apparent warning a dangerous fever

Page Two

seized me. I became terribly sick all of a sudden. In fact, in just a few hours I was brought to the very brink of death. This was serious business, indeed. Everyone about me was in great confusion. And those who loved me were paralyzed with fear.

Some took action. The proper medicines were administered. There were consultations among several physicians. And the members of my family hurried to my side from far and near. Friends and acquaintances came.

I was given the best medical care possible—but all proved in vain.

I could feel that the medicines weren't helping. And yet I didn't feel anything very much. I don't know whether this was because of the suddenness of the sickness or the deadening character of the narcotics which the physicians gave me. But strangely enough I seemed to be the least disturbed person in the place.

I felt as though I were in a dream. I knew I was ill—dangerously ill—because a relative had insisted on my being informed of my real condition. And yet I was not disturbed about the fact. I thought I would recover. Most people do, I suppose, until the hand of death is actually upon them.

And if I did not recover, I had no reason to be terribly concerned, because, wasn't I a Christian? Hadn't I been converted? Didn't I believe the Bible? Why should I fear?

Page Three

And wasn't I continually hearing hymns being sung and prayers offered that I might be restored to health, and if not, that I might pass away without suffering, and have a good time of it in heaven?

But even so, disquieting thoughts did cross my mind—because I couldn't keep out questions that kept arising as to whether I had truly followed Jesus Christ and had done my duty to a perishing world with my time and influence, and money and family. And questions would come and go that were very difficult indeed to answer. Yet it was all in a dreamy way. How could it be otherwise, with the burning fever lapping up the vital current, and my brain all benumbed, and my energies laid prostrate.

So when I complained that I didn't have much joy or assurance, I quite naturally agreed readily to the suggestion that my condition prevented this. And I felt, moreover, that if I were not "ready" I had neither the time nor energy to begin so serious a business over again as the salvation of my soul. Besides, how could I confess that I had been mistaken all these years, and that my life had been a failure? No! It was too late, and I was too ill for any such confession.

One thing I could do, and that I did. I cast myself, with what force of soul I had left, on the mercy of my Savior. And again and again I repeated a verse which had al-

Page Four

ways been a favorite of mine:

"I am a poor sinner, just nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

It was with this sentence on my lips—a sentence taken up and reproduced at my funeral service—that a cold numbness seemed to come creeping over me, and a great difficulty of breathing seized me. My friends were alarmed. I read it in their faces. Some prayed, while others wept. And my dear ones moistened my lips and kissed my brow.

Meanwhile a strange faintness seized me. I lost consciousness. My next sensation was altogether beyond description. It was the thrill of a new and celestial existence. I was in heaven.

After the first feeling of surprise had somewhat subsided, I looked around me, and took in the situation. It was way beyond anything of earth—positively delightful. And yet some of the more beautiful scenes and sounds and feelings of the world I had just left appeared to be repeated in my new experience in enchanting fashion. Still no human eyes ever beheld such perfection, such beauty. No earthly ear ever heard such music. No human heart ever experienced such ecstasy, as it was my privilege to see, hear, and feel in the celestial country.

Above me was the loveliest of blue skies. Around me was an atmosphere so balmy that it made my whole physical frame vibrate

Page Five

with pleasure. Flowing by the bank of roses on which I found myself reclining was the clearest and purest water of a river that seemed to dance with delight to its own murmurings. The trees that grew upon the banks were covered with the greenest foliage, and laden with most delicious fruit—sweet beyond all earthly sweetness. And by lifting up my hand I could pluck and taste.

In every direction above and around me the whole air seemed not only to be laden with the sweetest perfumes coming from the fairest flowers, but filled with the fairest forms. For, floating about me were beautiful beings whom I felt by instinct were angels and archangels, seraph and seraphim, cherub and cherubim, together with the perfect blood-washed saints who had come from our own world. They were sometimes far, and again coming nearer.

The whole sky at times seemed to be full of white-winged, happy, worshiping, joyous beings. And the whole country, apparently of limitless extent, was filled with a blissful ecstasy that could only be known by being experienced.

You may perhaps imagine my sensation. At first I was swallowed up with a sort of ecstatic intoxication, which feeling was immediately enhanced by the consciousness that I was safe, saved, to suffer and sin no more.

Page Six

And then suddenly, a new set of feelings began to creep over me. Strange as it may seem, I felt somewhat lonely and a little sad, even in the midst of this infinite state of bliss. Because up to this moment I was alone. Not one of the bright beings who were soaring and singing in the bright ether above me, nor the ones who were hastening hither and thither, as though bent upon some high mission, had spoken to me or approached me.

I was alone in heaven! Then, in a still stranger and mysterious way, I appeared to feel in myself a sort of unfitness for the society of those pure beings who were sailing around me in indescribable loveliness. How could it be? Had I come there by mistake? Was I not counted worthy of this glorious inheritance? It was indeed a mystery.

My thoughts went back to earth. And all before me, as though unfolded by an angel's hand, the record of my past life was unrolled before my eyes. What a record it was! I glanced over it. And in a glance I seemed to master its entire contents—so rapidly, indeed, that I became conscious of a marvelous quickening of my intellectual powers. I realized that I could take in and understand in a moment what would have required a day with my poor, darkened faculties on earth.

With my quickened mind, I saw, to my delight, at that very first glance, that this

Page Seven

register of my earthly existence—the Divine biography of my life—contained no record of any misdeeds before my conversion. Indeed, that part of my life seemed to be very much of a blank. I further perceived that neither was there any record of the sins I had done since that time. It was as though some friendly hand had gone through the roll and blotted out the record of the evil doings of my life. This was very gratifying. I felt like shouting praises to God, who had delivered me from the pain of having these things staring me in the face in this beautiful, holy land, among all these holy beings, where it seemed to me that the very memory of sin would defile.

Nevertheless, a further glance at my record appalled me, for there was written therein—leaving out, as I have said, the sins of commission—there was written the exact daily record of the whole of my past life! In fact, it went much deeper, because it described in full detail the object for which I had lived. It recorded my thoughts and feelings and actions—how and for what I had employed my time, my money, my influence, and all the other talents and gifts which God had intrusted me with to spend for His glory and for the salvation of the lost.

Every chapter of this record carried my thoughts back to the condition of the world

Page Eight

I had left. And there came up before my eyes a vivid picture of its hatred for God, its rejection of Christ, its wickedness, with all the wretchedness and destitution and abomination. It utterly appalled me. Also into my ears there came a hurricane of cursing and blasphemy, and a wail of anguish and woe that stunned me.

I had seen these sights and had heard these sounds before, not too often, it is true, because I had hid myself from them. But now they blinded and stunned me. They appeared a million times blacker and more vile, more wretched and piteous, than they had ever seemed before!

I felt like putting my hands before my eyes, and my fingers in my ears to shut these things out from sight and hearing, so intensely real and present did they seem. They wrung my soul with sorrow and self-reproach, because on the "Record of Memory" I saw how I had occupied myself during the few years which I had been allowed to live amidst all these miseries, after Jesus Christ had called me to be His soldier. I was reminded how, instead of fighting His battles, instead of saving souls by bringing them to His feet, and so preparing them for admission into this lovely place, I had been on the contrary, intent on earthly things, selfishly seeking my own, spending my life in practical unbelief, disloyalty and disobedience.

Page Nine

I felt sick at heart. Oh, if at that moment I could have crept out of the "land of pure delight" about which I had sung so much in the past, and could have gone back to the world of darkness, sin and misery, which I had just left—if I could but spend another lifetime among the lost and dying, and truly follow my Lord!

But that could not be. My opportunities of earth were past. Heaven must now be my dwelling forever. And contradictory as it may seem, this thought filled my soul with unspeakable regret.

And then came another thought, more wild than any that had gone before it. (You must remember that it is a vision I am relating.) It was this: Would it be possible for me to obtain permission to go back to the world, to that very part of it from which I had come, clothed in some human form, and live my earthly life over again—live it in a manner worthy of my profession, worthy of my Christ and my opportunity? Could this be?

If at that moment an answer in the affirmative had been brought to me, I would have gladly given up my heavenly blessedness. I would have gladly undergone ages of hardship, ignominy, poverty and pain. I would have given up a million dollars in money. Yes, I would have gladly given a world, if it had been mine to give! But I could see

no hope for a second probation. What was to be done?

I had not been musing in this way for many seconds, for thoughts appeared to flow with remarkable rapidity, when, quick as a lightning flash, one of those bright inhabitants which I had watched floating far off in the clouds of glory, descended and stood before my astonished gaze.

I can never forget the awe-struck feelings with which I beheld this heavenly being. Describe the shape and features and bearing of this noble form I cannot, and I will not attempt it. He was at the same time angelic and human, earthly and yet celestial. I discerned therefore at a glance that he was one of the "blood-washed multitude" who had "come out of the great tribulations of earth." I not only judged from a certain majestic appearance which he bore, but from instinct I felt that the being before me was a man, a redeemed and glorified man.

He looked at me. And I could not keep from returning his gaze. His eyes compelled me. And I confess I was ravished by his beauty. I could never have believed the human face divine could ever bear so grand a stamp of dignity and charm.

But far beyond the entrancing loveliness of those celestial features was the expression which filled his total countenance, and shone through those eyes that were gazing upon

me. It was as though that face was only a sunlit window, through which I could see into the depths of the pure, kindly and tender soul within.

I don't know how I looked to my beautiful visitor. I don't know what form I had. I had not seen myself in a mirror since I had taken on immortality for mortality.

It was evident that he had a deep interest in me. But it was an interest which seemed to bring sadness to him. His features seemed to me to grow almost sorrowful as I sat there with my eyes fixed on him in a fascinated spell.

He spoke first. Had he not done so I could never have summoned courage to address him. His voice was soft and musical, and fitted well with the seriousness of his bearing. I understood him almost before I heard his words, although I cannot tell now what language he spoke. I suppose it was the universal language of heaven.

This was the substance of what he said: My arrival was known throughout a certain district of the celestial regions, where were gathered the ransomed ones who had come from the earthly neighborhood where I had lived. The tidings of my arrival had been flashed through the heavenly telephone, which spoke not in one ear only, but in every ear in that particular region. My name had been whispered in every hillside and

Page Twelve

echoed in every valley, and had been spoken in every room of every mansion. It had been proclaimed from every tower and pinnacle of the stupendous temple in which these glorified saints day and night present their worship to the great Father.

All who had known me on earth, all who had any knowledge of my family, my opportunities for helping forward the Kingdom of Christ, whom they worshipped and adored, were burning to see me and hear me tell of the victories I had won and the souls I had blessed while on earth. And all were especially anxious to hear if I had been the means of bringing salvation to the loved ones they had left behind.

All this was poured upon my soul. I didn't know which way to look. Again and again I remembered my life of ease and comfort. What could I say? How could I appear with the record of my life before these waiting ones? What was there in it except a record of self-gratification? I had no martyr stories to tell. I had sacrificed nothing worth naming on earth, much less in heaven, for His dear sake!

My mind was running in this direction, when I think my visitor must have discovered something of what I was thinking, and felt pity for me. Seeing my consternation he spoke again.

"Where you find yourself is not actually

Page Thirteen

heaven," he said, "but only its forecourt, a sort of outer circle. Presently, the Lord Himself, with a great procession of His chosen ones will come to take you into the Celestial City itself. There is where your residence will be if He deems you worthy; that is, if your conduct on the battlefield below has pleased Him.

"Meanwhile, I have obtained permission to come and speak to you concerning a soul who is very dear to me. I understand he lives in the neighborhood where you recently lived, and from which you have just come. Our knowledge of the affairs of earth is, for our own sakes, limited, but now and then we are permitted to get a glimpse.

"Can you," he said, "tell me anything about my son? He was my only son. I loved him dearly. I loved him too much. I spoiled him when a child! He had his own way. He grew up willful, passionate and disobedient. And my example didn't help him."

Here a cloud for a moment came over the beautiful brow, but vanished as quickly as it came. "Memory has been busy, but that has all gone," he said, as though talking to himself. And then he finished the story of his prodigal son. He, the father, had been rescued, washed, regenerated. He had learned to fight for souls, and had won many to the blood-stained banner. Then he had suddenly been taken in death by an accident at his

work, and was taken to heaven.

"And now," he added, "where is my boy? Give me tidings of my boy! He lived near you, and had business dealings with you. What did you do for him? Is there hope? Tell me what his feelings are today."

He stopped speaking. My heart sank within me. What could I say? I knew the boy. The story of the father's death and his prodigal son had been told me. I had never spoken one serious word to the boy about his soul or about his Savior. I had been busy about other things. And now, what could I say to his father, who stood before me? I was speechless!

The cloud that I had noticed before again came over the face of my visitor, but with a dark shadow this time. He must have guessed the truth. He looked at me with a look in which I felt that disappointment to himself and pity for me were combined. He then spread his wings and soared away.

I was so intently gazing after his retreating form that I hadn't noticed a second fair being, who had descended from above, and who now occupied the place abandoned only a moment before by my last visitor.

I turned and looked upon the newcomer. This was a spirit of the same class, of the same ransomed multitude who once were dwellers of earth. There was a dignity of bearing, the same marvelous expression of

inward power, and purity, and joy. But in this case there was a beauty (which I could have imagined) of more delicate and entralling mold.

Beautiful as I thought my first visitor to be, more beautiful than conception or dream of earth could be, yet here was a beauty that surpassed it—not, perhaps, if judged from heaven's view, but judged from my standpoint, for it must be remembered that I was still a man. My former visitor I have said was a glorious man—this one was evidently the glorified form of a woman.

I had, when on earth, sometimes thought that I could have wished for the privilege of beholding Eve in the hour when she came forth from the hands of her Maker. And I had imagined something—only something, of what her beautiful form must have been as she sprang into being on that bridal morning, young and pure and beautiful—the fair image of her Maker—perhaps, the sweetest work of God. Now, here I saw her—I saw Eve reproduced before my eyes as young, pure and beautiful, even more beautiful than her first mother could possibly have been, for was not this His finished work?

But I was soon awakened from my dream by the voice of the fair creature who, from her manner, evidently wished to speak to me on some matter of great importance.

She told me her name. I had heard it on

earth. She was a widow who had struggled through great difficulties. Her husband's death had resulted in her conversion to Christ. Converted, she had given herself up unreservedly to fight for the Lord. Her children had been her first care. They had all been saved, and were fighting for God, except one.

The mention of that name brought the same saddening cloud on her lovely face which had dimmed the bright face of my first visitor. But the cloud vanished almost as soon as it came. That one, that unsaved one, was a girl who had been her mother's delight. She had grown up beautiful, the village pride, but alas! had gone astray. It was the old story of wrong, and of being seduced into evil ways. And then of utter abandonment to that way of life, and all the consequent train of miseries.

I listened. I had known some of the sad story on earth, but I had turned away from hearing any more about it, as being "no concern of mine." Little did I ever think that I would be confronted with it in heaven!

And now the bright spirit turned those eyes on me that, beaming with love and concern, were more beautiful than ever. She said again: "My daughter lived near you. You know her. Have you saved her? I don't know much about her, but I do know that

one earnest and determined effort would save her, and win her to Christ."

And then again she asked me, "Have you saved my child?"

I must have cried out in agony. I know I put my hands over my eyes, because I could no longer bear to meet her intent look, which now turned to one of pity for me.

How long she continued to look on me, with an expression of concern almost greater than she had shown for her lost child, I do not know. But when I uncovered my eyes she was gone, and the silvery sheen of her white wings marked her out to my seeking eyes like a speck on the distant blue.

Then I cried out, "Oh, my God, is this heaven? Will these questionings go on forever? Will the meanness and selfishness of my past life haunt me throughout eternity? What shall I do? Can I not go back to earth, and do something to redeem myself from this wretched sense of unworthiness? Can I not live my life over again?"

This question had hardly passed through my mind when there was another rush of wings, and down beside me alighted another form, surprisingly resembling the first that had spoken to me, and yet, oh so very different! But I will not take time to describe him; you must imagine it.

He introduced himself much in the same

Page Eighteen

way as my former visitors. He had been a great singer, but was awakened and won to Christ only a short while back. Having had much forgiven, he had loved much. All his desire after his conversion was to get free from the entanglements of business and to devote himself a living sacrifice to the saving of men.

When just on the threshold of the realization of his wish, he had been sent to heaven. And here he was, a spirit of glory and joy, coming to inquire of me concerning the church group among whom he had labored, and of the crowd of companions he had left behind. Was I acquainted with his little church? Their place of worship was near my place of business. Had I helped them in their difficulties, and in their service and testimony for Christ? Had I done anything for his old mates, who were drinking and cursing their way to hell? He had died with prayers for them on his lips. Had I stopped them on their way to ruin?

Again I could not speak. What could I say? I knew his church. But I had never given them any encouragement or help. I knew of the hovels in which his old mates lived, and the dens of hell in which they spent their time and money. But I had been too busy, or too proud, or too cowardly to seek them out with the message of the Savior's love.

Page Nineteen

I was utterly speechless. He guessed my feelings, I suppose, because with a look of sympathy he left in sadness—at least in as much sadness as is possible in heaven.

As for myself, I was in anguish—strange as it may appear, considering I was in heaven. But so it was. Wondering whether there was not some comfort for me I involuntarily looked around. And I saw a marvelous phenomenon on the horizon at a great distance. All that part of the heavens appeared to be filled with a brilliant light, surpassing the blaze of a thousand suns at noonday. And yet there was no blinding glare making it difficult to gaze upon, as is the case with our own sun when it shines in its glory. Here was a brilliance far surpassing anything that could be imagined, and yet I could look upon it with pleasure.

As I continued to gaze, wondering what it could be, it appeared to come a little closer. Then I realized it was coming in my direction. I was still reclining on the banks of the beautiful river.

And now I could distinctly hear the sound of music. The distance was a great many miles, after the measurement of earth, but the atmosphere was so clear, and I found my eyesight so strong, that I could easily see objects at a distance which, on earth, would have required a powerful telescope.

The sound came closer. It was music, be-

yond question—and such music as I had never heard before. But there was a strange commingling of other sounds which all together made a marvelous melody, made up, as I afterwards discovered, by the strains that came from the multitude of musicians, and the shouts and songs that proceeded from innumerable voices. This phenomenon was approaching rapidly. But my curiosity was so strongly aroused to know what it was that a few minutes seemed an age.

Finally I was able to make out what it was. It was astounding! But who could describe it! The whole firmament was filled, as it were, with innumerable forms, each of beauty and dignity, far surpassing those with whom I had already made an acquaintance. Here was a representative portion of the aristocracy of heaven accompanying the King, who came to welcome into the heaven of heavens the spirits of men and women who had escaped from earth, who had fought the good fight, who had kept the faith, and had overcome in the conflict as He had overcome.

I stood filled with awe and wonder. Could it be possible? Was I at last actually to see my Lord and be welcomed by Him? In the thought of this rapture I forgot the sorrow that only a moment before had reigned in my heart, and my whole nature swelled with expectation and delight.

And now the procession was upon me. I had seen some of the pageants of earth—displays that required the power of mighty monarchs, and the wealth of great cities and nations to create—but they were each, or all combined, as the feeble light of a candle to a tropical sun in comparison with the tremendous scene which now spread itself before my astonished eyes.

On it came. I had sprung up from my reclining position, and then had fallen prostrate as the first rank of these shining heavenly spirits neared me. Each one looked in himself, to my untutored eyes, like a god, so far as greatness and power could be expressed by the outward appearance of any being.

Rank after rank swept past me. Each turned his eyes upon me, or seemed to do so. I could not help feeling that I was somewhat an object of pity to them all. Perhaps it was my own feelings that made me imagine this. But it certainly appeared to me as though these noble beings regarded me as a fearful, cowardly soul, who had only cared for his own interests on earth, and had come up there with the same selfish motives.

On they came. Thousands passed me, yet there appeared to me to be no diminishment in the numbers yet to come. I looked at the procession as it stretched backwards, but my eyes could see no end to it. There must have

been millions. It was indeed a "multitude that no man could number."

All were praising God, either in hymns expressive of adoration and worship, or by recounting, in songs of rapture the mighty victories which they had witnessed on earth—or describing some wonderful work they had seen elsewhere.

And now, the great central glory and attraction of the splendid procession was at hand.

I gathered this from the still more dignified character of the beings who now swept by, the heavier crash of music and the louder shouts of exultation which came pealing from all around.

I was right, and before I could prepare my spirit for the visitation, it was upon me. The King was here! In the center of circling hosts—which rose tier above tier into the blue vault above, turning on Him their millions of eyes, lustrous with the love they bore Him—I beheld the celestial form of Him who once died for me upon the cross. The procession halted. Then at a word of command, they formed up instantly in three sides of a square in front of me, the King standing in the center immediately opposite the spot where I had prostrated myself.

What a sight that was! Worth toiling a lifetime to behold it! Nearest to the King were the patriarchs and apostles of ancient

times. Next, rank after rank, came the holy martyrs who had died for Him. Then came the army of warriors who had fought for Him in every part of the world.

And around and about, above and below, I beheld myriads and myriads of spirits who were never heard of on earth outside their own neighborhood, or beyond their own times, who, with self-denying zeal and untiring toil had labored to extend God's kingdom and to save the souls of men. And encircling the gorgeous scene, above, beneath, around, hovered glittering angelic beings who had kept their first estate, proud, it seemed to me, to minister to the happiness and exaltation of these redeemed out of the poor world from which I came.

I was bewildered by the scene. The songs, the music, the shouts of the multitude that came like the roar of a thousand cataracts, echoed and re-echoed through the sunlit mountains. And the magnificent and endless array of happy spirits ravished my senses with passionate delight. All at once, however, I remembered myself, and was reminded of the High Presence before Whom I was bowed, and lifting up my eyes I beheld Him gazing upon me.

What a look it was! It was not pain, and yet it was not pleasure. It was not anger, and yet it was not approval. Anyway, I felt that in that face, so inexpressibly admirable

Page Twenty-four

and glorious, there was yet no welcome for me. I had felt this in the faces of my previous visitors. I felt it again in the Lord's.

That face, that Divine face, seemed to say to me, for language was not needed to convey to the very depths of my soul what His feelings were to me: "Thou wilt feel thyself little in harmony with these, once the companions of My tribulations and now of My glory, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves in order that they might bring honor to Me and salvation to men." And He gave a look of admiration at the host of apostles and martyrs and warriors gathered around Him.

Oh, that look of Jesus! I felt that to have one such loving recognition—it would be worth dying a hundred deaths at the stake. It would be worth being torn asunder by wild beasts. The angelic escort felt it too, for their responsive burst of praise and song shook the very skies and the ground on which I lay.

Then the King turned His eyes on me again. How I wished that some mountain would fall upon me and hide me forever from His presence! But I wished in vain. Some invisible and irresistible force compelled me to look up, and my eyes met His once more. I felt, rather than heard, Him saying to me in words that engraved themselves as fire upon my brain:

Page Twenty-five

"Go back to earth. I will give thee another opportunity. Prove thyself worthy of My name. Show to the world that thou possess-est My spirit by doing My works, and becoming, on My behalf, a savior of men. Thou shalt return hither when thou hast finished the battle, and I will give thee a place in My conquering train, and a share in My glory."

What I felt under that look and those words no heart or mind could possibly describe. They were mingled feelings. First came the unutterable anguish arising out of the full realization that I had wasted my life, that it had been a life squandered on the paltry ambitions and trifling pleasures of earth—while it might have been filled and sown with deeds that would have produced a never-ending harvest of heavenly fruit. My life could have won for me the approval of heaven's King, and made me worthy to be the companion of these glorified heroes.

But combined with this self-reproach there was a gleam of hope. My earnest desire to return to earth was to be granted. Perhaps it was in response to the longings I had felt ever since the realization of my earthly failures had dawned upon me that this favor was granted to me. I could have the privilege of living my life over again. True, it was a high responsibility, but Jesus would be with me. His Spirit would enable

me. And in my heart I felt ready to face it.

The cloud of shining ones had vanished. The music was silent. I closed my eyes and gave myself over, body, soul and spirit, to the disposal of my Savior—to live, not for my own salvation, but for the glory of my Christ, and for the salvation of the world. And then and there, the same blessed voice of my King stole over my heart, as He promised that His presence should go with me back to earth, and make me more than conqueror through His blood.



This was only a vision General William Booth received. Do not expect that when the time comes for you to leave this life that you will have another chance. The Bible teaches, "It is appointed unto man, once to die, but after this the Judgment." Hebrews 9:27. General Booth was already zealously serving God at the time he received this vision. Therefore, the warning of the vision was not for himself, but for him to tell, as a warning and admonition to others.

The account of this vision by General Booth has brought warning, challenge and inspiration to many. The writer of the words you are now reading was likewise brought up short to realize his true position when he read the account of this vision years ago.

I was a young man, professing faith in Christ. I had been baptized, joined the church, was active in the choir, in Sunday School work, youth work, etc. But my main interest was in promoting my own interests.

But—you may be thinking—that wouldn't affect one's salvation if one is truly trusting in Christ. We are not saved by works.

That is true, that we are not saved by works, but we must truly be born again, or we are lost. And to be born again means to be truly converted from self to Christ. The person whose main interest is ease, comfort, pleasure and the attaining of certain coveted goals for self in this life is not converted from self to Christ. Such a one is not truly born again no matter how much that one is trusting in Christ for salvation.

Your trust and faith in Christ must move you to obey Christ, and to live for Him and please Him—or your faith is vain.

If you are to receive God's forgiveness you must believe on Christ as Lord as well as believe on Him as Savior. And you don't really believe on Him as Lord unless you have truly surrendered your life and will to Him. He is not your Lord unless He is your Lord indeed.

You are not saved by your good works, but the living of your life will tell whether you are truly converted, and therefore truly born again. The person who is not a Chris-

tian is living a life that is in rebellion toward God. And the person who professes to believe in Christ but who will not surrender his life and will to Him is likewise living in rebellion toward God. And the same condemnation hangs over that one as hangs over the one who makes no profession at all.

In the eighth chapter of Mark it's recorded that Christ stated, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." A cross is an implement of death. Christ calls us to death! It must be death to the self life in order that we may become alive to Him to do His will. It is when we die to self and become alive to His will for us that we are born again and are truly converted.

Is this really true in your life?

In the next verse the Lord says, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

Do you wish your life to be saved? Do you wish your life to continue forever in the blessed presence of God, in the unspeakable glories of Heaven? Then be dead indeed to self and sin, and surrender yourself without reservation to Christ as your Lord.

You may be reasoning in your mind right now that this scripture is speaking of those who wish to receive rewards in Heaven for the life they have lived for Christ on earth.

You may argue, as so many do, that this means that if a Christian lives his life on earth for himself that he will have no rewards in Heaven. He will have wasted and lost his opportunities.

But will you read with me what the very next verse says? The Lord continues, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Is He talking about rewards here or is He talking about the matter of eternal life or eternal death? Surely if you will be honest with yourself and with God you must admit that in these verses He is speaking of losing one's own soul by having lived a life for self. What other conclusion can we come to if we study the meaning of these three sentences from Christ honestly?

You have great ambitions for yourself. Maybe you are one who has even attained to many of those ambitions. But what do you really have, or what have you really accomplished, even if you have gained all of the world that you desire? What does all of this amount to, all the pleasures, all the satisfaction, all the ease, comfort and security, if it means that your soul will be LOST, because your life is wrapped up in yourself instead of being wrapped up in Christ and in doing what He would have you do.

To become a Christian one must first realize that he is a sinner, and that self has dom-

inated his life thus far. He has refused real obedience to God as his rightful Governor. And his condemnation is to be forever separated from God. "For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. And, "This is the second death." Revelation 20:14.

The sinner must then realize, as revealed in God's Word, that his only hope is to become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. And that reconciliation is not of the mind only but also of the heart. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Romans 10:10.

God sent His Son to die on Calvary's cross for our sin, that we might be forgiven. But God imparts forgiveness only when both mind and heart have received Christ. With our mind we receive the record of what Christ has done for us, and with the heart we dethrone self and enthrone Christ in our life, receiving Him to be our Lord and Ruler in very truth. When Christ is thus believed on and received, then true conversion and the new birth has come to that life, and that sinner has been reconciled to God.

But for the one who wishes to receive Christ only as Savior but not as Lord—that one is not yet converted. He is still in rebellion toward God.

You may argue that we can have no real assurance of salvation if we believe that obedience to Christ is necessary for acceptance

with God. You may be one who has said, "All we have to do is believe. Anything more than that is works. And we are not saved by works."

Yes, it's true that no good works on our part can in any way cancel our guilt of sin. Only the death of Christ atones for sin. But besides the cancelling of the guilt of sin there must be a change of heart. And unless that has happened, and unless Christ has become your Lord in truth there has not been real conversion, you are still not reconciled to God, and you are not saved.

As to assurance—only the one who has surrendered his life and will to Christ can have genuine assurance that all is well with his soul. The apostle John, inspired of God, wrote—

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." I John 2:3-5.

I John was written to give assurance to true believers, to show them that they could know that they had eternal life. It also shows the one with false hope that his hope is without foundation.

John also said, "He that hath the Son

Page Thirty-two

hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I John 5:12. The only way you can have the Son of God enter your life is to receive Him completely, without compromise, without reservation. "If He is not Lord of all He is not Lord at all."

If you have sought to enter Heaven's gate without real conversion of heart and life to Christ will you not surrender to Him now? And serve Him with even greater zeal than you ever served self, when you sought earthly pleasures, ease and riches. And the Christ who lives and works through His true servants will likewise live and work through you to the salvation of others.

"Only one life. 'Twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ shall last." I am thankful that God awakened me when He did. I trust He has likewise spoken to you.

7 he one who has handed this booklet to you or has sent it to you in the mail, or has possibly made it available to you in some other way, is concerned that you make your calling and election sure, and that you receive a glorious and rich entrance into that glorious kingdom. And if you are one who was already converted to Christ before receiving this booklet, the giver desires that you will be challenged as never before by the message here.

"The pen is mightier than the sword." Share in the distribution of this booklet that many others in turn may be challenged and blessed by its message as you have been.

If you are not sure that you are right with God

we invite you to send for a gift copy of our booklet entitled "Here's How". We have published millions of copies of the booklet "Here's How" in many lands of the world. Many have found their way to the Lord through its message. And also, if you are one who is already rejoicing in the assurance that Christ is your Lord, and you would like a copy of the soul-winning booklet "Here's How", we will be glad to likewise send you a gift copy. Write to us at the address below.

THERE'S MORE!

We have many other dynamic little books like this one . . . some illustrated, some not. But each one has a fascinating, dynamic message. A SAMPLE PACKET, each book containing a different, vital message, is available to you for only \$3.00. Take action on this now! Obtain these from your Christian bookstore or directly from Life Messengers.

Published by

LIFE MESSENGERS

Box 1967, Seattle, Wa. 98111

You may purchase copies of this book at your local bookstore or directly from the publishers.

Mail orders must total \$2.50 or more.

30 books	\$2.50	1,000 books . . .	\$65.00
100 books	7.50	2,000 books . . .	124.00
500 books	34.00	10,000 books . . .	600.00