

The
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Collection

VISIONS

HEAVEN.

I HAVE had another vision. I thought I was safe landed in Heaven, where I had settled down all at once, quite at my ease, everything appearing so familiar and home-like.

It was a lovely place, strongly resembling in many respects the fairest of the countries I have travelled over during my salvation campaigns down here, and yet as far beyond them in every form of beauty and every source of delight as can possibly be conceived.

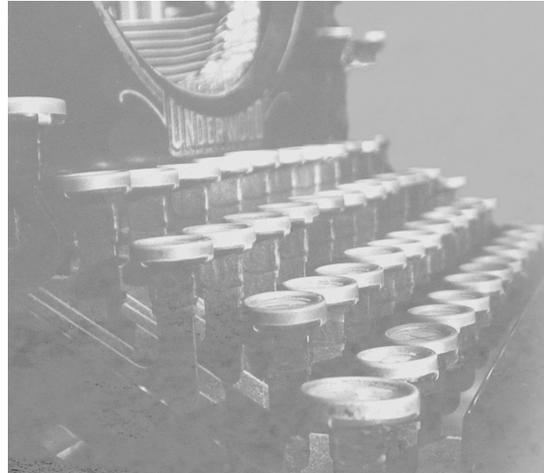
The blue skies, the towering mountains, the green valleys, the shady groves, the luxuriant vineyards, the charming flowers, the flowing rivers – I did not observe any sea – were all exquisitely beautiful beyond the power of language to describe. Then in, about, and indeed everywhere, were the loveliest of birds and the most graceful of animals, and I know not what else.

I was enraptured with the scene. I was certainly a little surprised to find these living creatures here, having been always rather sceptical as to the resurrection of the animal world. There, however, they certainly were. Still, you must remember it was only a vision.

But it was the intelligent inhabitants of that beautiful country that interested me the most. It is true that they resembled more nearly, in appearance at least, the expectations I had formed respecting them than many other creatures I found in the celestial land; but, oh! how much more glorious they were than any pen can set forth.

There were the angelic hosts, coming and going in procession up and down the golden streets, or clouding with their snowy pinions the skies overhead.

There were the blood-washed multitudes, busy about their respective duties, or wandering about the gardens, or reclining on the banks of the river, or worshipping before the Throne, or careering across the heavenly plains on their white horses.



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There were the children of all ages, who had died in childhood growing up to perfect man and womanhood, surrounded by the sublime examples, and taught by the unerring direction of the glorified spirits around them; and then through all, and above all, and upon all, was the glorious overshadowing presence of Heaven's eternal King.

And yet, notwithstanding all this celestial grandeur and unsurpassable beauty, curious to say, I had not been in the City very long before I felt that something strange – I was going to say something painful, if I could use such a word in connection with such a home of delight – had happened, or was going to happen. A kind of sadness sat on every countenance; nay, it seemed to be round about everywhere like a depressing atmosphere. As I thought upon this contradictory state of things, I was filled with amazement as to what it could mean.

The mystery was soon explained, for while I mused a scene, strange to me, and passing strange to Heaven itself, was enacted before my astonished gaze.

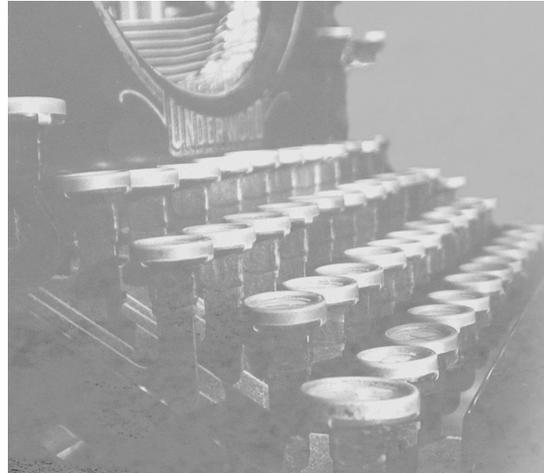
A solemn assembly had been called of all the ransomed men and women who had already entered the celestial kingdom. It was to take place in the great council chamber of the Holy City, which consisted of a vast amphitheatre surrounded by mountains, and capable of holding countless millions of the glorified hosts.

The saints assembled in the centre of the great arena, while the angels were seated tier above tier on the sides of the surrounding heights, all alike waiting with unutterable interest the revelation for which they had been called together, and of the nature of which they had already received some intimation.

And then my Lord – my Saviour Lord – came forth and stood revealed before those millions of wondering and adoring eyes.

I cannot describe Him.

I have all through my life in this lower world felt a strange revulsion to every effort that has attempted to delineate His sacred person as it appeared during the days of His



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humiliation on the ground of the difficulty of the task. How much more impossible would it be to present any adequate picture of our Saviour Lord, enthroned and crowned with the glory of His Father in His celestial home! I won't attempt the impossible task.

The occasion for which the Lord of Life and Glory had assembled this remarkable gathering was to make a communication and to prefer a request. I can only refer to them. Amid the profoundest hush the Blessed Saviour spoke His message. It may be summarised as follows: –

"The great object for which His life on earth had been given was in dire difficulty. The world had grown worse and worse. The ignorance, the vice, the cruelties, the wars, the unbelief, the hypocrisies, the cold formalism, and ten thousand other evils had swelled to such proportions as to pain Him to the heart, and compel Him to make one more desperate effort for their overthrow and for the salvation of the world.

"In trying to stamp out the rebellion against His Heavenly Father, and stem the rising tide of iniquity, His brave warriors had been so seriously outnumbered, outmanoeuvred, and overcome in the conflict that reinforcements on a large scale had become absolutely necessary, and must be had, if His armies were not to be beaten and routed, and driven from the field.

"Therefore, to help His struggling forces He had resolved to send to their assistance a million of the inhabitants of Heaven, selected from the multitudes who had already fought below.

"Once more they would have to be clothed in flesh and blood, to endure humiliation, hardship, and contempt. Nay, in view of all the possibilities of the conflict, they must at the onset embrace lives of persecution, and be prepared to suffer stripes and imprisonments, if not death itself."

Then, standing up, and showing the marks of His passion, He pleaded for reinforcements on these lines, proposing to the glorified host before Him the question, "Who will go?"



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This thrilling announcement, I need not say, was listened to in silence, and with breathless attention; but the moment He ceased speaking a scene followed which made my heart stand still.

The whole multitude, with a shout like the roar of many waters, rose up and, with burning eagerness, volunteered for the fight.

And then a signal from the Master again secured the most perfect silence, while a wave of His sacred hand made the selection, and THE MILLION SPIRITS required for the holy enterprise, at the invitation of their Lord, stood forth, the envy and admiration of every being present, while acclamations from the encircling angels rent the celestial sky.

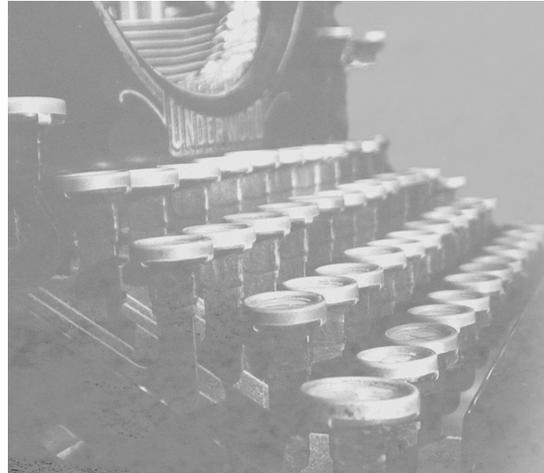
Another pause ensued, and then the Master made another statement, and preferred a further request: –

"The warriors were ready," He said. "They would be on the field of conflict right away, and would, He had never a doubt, acquit themselves worthy of their mission.

"But they were going forth under human conditions, and supplies necessary for their outfit and maintenance during the fight would be required.

"You," He said, with inimitable force and sweetness, "will remain behind under this blue canopy in the company of your precious comrades, possessed of all the joys of duty, and love, and worship; but these," pointing to the chosen band, "will be engaged in heart-breaking toils and sufferings in yonder world of misery." And then He asked the question, "Who will sympathise with them in their undertaking, and pray for their success; and who, out of their celestial possessions, will contribute generously to their support?"

The scene that followed is beyond my powers of description. For here the vision became suddenly clouded, and what I saw I saw only imperfectly, while innumerable sounds, strange, though harmonious, arose in all directions. As I listened I fancied that



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I heard the voices of men, women, and children – for the children were there – all crying out in glorious confusion. One was saying: "Allow me the high privilege of helping my Lord in this heavenly warfare;" and another: "Take all I have, dear Saviour, to assist my brave comrades;" while another was crying: "Let me go with these blessed volunteers, and work for them, beg for them, or in some way minister to their needs."

At this point, however, the vision became still more indistinct, and gradually faded away altogether. As the last glimpse of the glorious scene disappeared from my eyes, a loud song of praise burst upon my ears, in which saints and angels appeared to unite. And the burden of their song was "Glory and praise and honour to our Saviour Lord for the million spirits He has chosen for this grand enterprise, and for the provision of a million times more than is required for the supplying of their every need!"

Comrades, I leave my vision with you.

You will see its application without any explanation on my part. The Salvation Army is fighting for God and the rescue of the human race from sin and misery and hell on innumerable battlefields. My Lord has as surely selected, and anointed, and despatched this army of warriors as though the whole business had been transacted in the council chamber of the skies, after the fashion set forth in my vision.

They are making a noble stand in the face of unnumbered difficulties and countless foes. Their trials are many, and some of them hard to be borne; but they are fighting a good fight. I KNOW THEM WELL. They are worthy of being assisted generously. My Saviour asks that it shall be so. Will you not, dear reader, give them your hearty support?