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SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

CALLED OF GOD

SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

CALLED OF GOD

BY

MRS. ARTHUR PARKER

L. M. S. Trivandram

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA

MADRAS AL LAHABAD CALCUTTA RANGOON COLOMBO

1919

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To
my dear Husband
who through thirty years
has kept me faithful
to the best things
of life

Hast thou heard Him, seen Him, known Him
Is not thine a captured heart?
Chief among ten thousand own Him,
Joyful choose the better part.

What has stript the seeming beauty
From the idols of the earth?
Not a sense of right or duty,
But the sight of peerless worth.

Not the crushing of those idols,
With its bitter void and smart;
But the beaming of His beauty,
The unveiling of His heart!

'Tis that look that melted Peter,
'Tis that face that Stephen saw,
'Tis that heart that wept with Mary
Can alone from idols draw.

Draw and win and fill completely,
Till the cup o'erflow the brim;
What have we to do with idols
Who have companied with Him?

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FOREWORD

THIS little book was originally intended for the use of Christian women of the Malayalam country, but the writer has been persuaded to issue an English edition.

Nearly the whole of the matter has been the subject of conversations with the Sádhu himself, with whom we have enjoyed much inspiring companionship and with whose permission the book is issued.

This word picture of a true servant of the great Master should be an inspiration to all Christian men and women in India, and it does not seem too much to hope that Indians of all classes will see how truly Jesus Christ can manifest Himself in and through the people of this great land, and how worthy He is to be India's Lord and Saviour.

ARTHUR PARKER,
London Mission, Trivundrum.

A Letter from Sadhu Sundar Singh

(WRITTEN IN ROMAN-URDU).

Jab main is chhothi kitáb ka MSS dekh rahá thá to yih bāt safái so dekhne men ái ki Khudá ki Rúh ne kaise, ajíb taur se Mrs. R. J. Parker ki mabad aur hidáyat ki, ki sári báten bagair kisi galati ki likhín, aur mujhe yaqín hai, ki musannif ki mihnat Khudá ke jalál aur babuton ke ruháni faida ki bais hogi. Aur unko madad milegi jo mushkilát men hain, jis tarah ki main thá, aur kháss kar yih málum, karke, ki Khudawand kis tarah mujhe jaise bare gunábgár ko bachá kar apni muhabbat aur fazl se apni khidmat ke liye chun letá hai. Aj main shukarguzári ke sáth apne tajruha 13 baras ke experience se kah saktá hún ki Masih áj kal aur hamesha yaksán hai. (Hebrews xij, 8).

Meri duá hai ki Khuda in chand báton ke auron ki ruháni madad aur apni jalál ke liye istiamál kare. Amin.

(Signed) SUNDAR SINGH

September 3, 1918

TRANSLATION.

When I saw the manuscript of this little book I saw clearly in what a wonderful way the spirit of God had helped and guided Mrs. R. J. Parker so that she had written it without any mistake, and I am certain that the author's work will be for the glory of God and a means of spiritual benefit to many. Also that those who are in the midst of difficulties such as I was, will receive help, and especially will learn how the Lord saved so great a sinner as myself, and by His love and grace chose me for His service,

To-day I can say with thankfulness after thirteen years of experience that Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever. (Hebrews xiii. 8)

My prayer is that God may use these few words for His glory and for the spiritual help of others. Amen.

(Signed) SUNDAR SINGH.

INTRODUCTION

FEBRUARY 1918 is a time that will linger in the memory of Protestant Christians of all denominations in Trivandram, for the visit of Sádhu Sundar Singh was an unprecedented event that brought to many profound spiritual blessing. One of our missionaries rightly said 'Such a figure has never passed through the Indian Church before,' and in passing he left the deep consciousness that God had visited His people.

The fame of the Sádhu had preceded him, for a few had read the books published about his life and work, and of these some looked for a day of miracles to dawn. Most, however, were filled with desire to see and hear him that they might receive the spiritual blessings they believed possible from his ministry. That God did not disappoint these hopes there are numbers to-day who could give joyful testimony.

As the train bringing Sádhu Sundar Singh to Trivandram drew into the station, besides the missionary, a group of Indian Christians stood ready to accord a welcome to him; and upon arrival at the Mission House a crowd had gathered for the same purpose, and would hardly be persuaded to disperse in order to allow the Sádhu to get a wash and some food.

Barefooted and dressed in a long flowing saffron robe, with a scarf of the same colour thrown loosely over his shoulders and a turban to match, a man of six feet in height, very fair with handsome face, dark eyes and hair—a typical Sikh of the finest type—such is Sádhu Sundar Singh. Only twenty-nine years of age, very grave but with a captivating smile and unembarrassed manner, the impression that he might have stood for the figure of Christ in the new famous picture, *The Hope of the World*, deepens the more one sees of him.

There are many things in this old land that give a fresh understanding of the Bible, but no man of my experience has made us realize so fully how our Saviour lived and moved about in His day. During his visit to Trivandram whenever Sádhu Sundar Singh appeared in public wondering crowds followed him. Even the children gathered behind him that they might touch his yellow robe, and the sick were brought that he might pray with them. It is almost impossible to convince the people that he does not heal the sick, even when the assurance comes from his own lips.

At one of the Sádhu's meetings a pathetic incident occurred that brought vividly to mind how our Lord was sought. It was at a large open-air meeting. Some men appeared carrying a sick man on a bed. They placed it gently upon the ground in a place where the afflicted man could behold the face and hear the words of the Sádhu. He was a Christian from a village seven miles away, and had been brought in overnight so as to be present at this great gathering.

That very night another incident took place that reminded us of the visit of Nicodemus to our Saviour. At two o'clock, when all the world was locked in sleep, a low rapping at the Sádhu's door announced the arrival of his midnight guest. A caste man desirous of discussing religious matters had come to see him. When explaining that he had felt ashamed to come in the daylight the Sádhu replied, 'Jesus Christ was not ashamed to suffer for you on the cross in the daylight, so cannot you suffer a little for him?' At the service next day this gentleman took his courage in both hands, and appeared amongst the crowd of Christians to listen to the Sádhu preach.

Sádhu Sundar Singh has brought fresh visions of God and Christ to us all, and many of us realize how by close fellowship with Jesus and complete obedience to His will he has become so approximated to his Lord that wherever he goes people say, 'How like Christ he is!'

To see and hear Sádhu Sundar Singh makes one's

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heart beat high with hope for India's future, and to look forward with confidence to the day when the east will have some new aspect of our Saviour to discover to the western world. For thirty years we have waited for men to rise up who can reach the heart of India, and surely none has come nearer to doing this than this humble lover of the Cross, Sádhu Sundar Singh.

Chapter 1

Sadhu and Sanyasi

PERHAPS in no country in the world is more importance attached to the proper observances of religion than in India, and the greatest reverence is felt towards men who adopt a religious life. For ages Indians have learnt to place the man who renounces the world above him who rules and conquers it. The power of the priest is too well known to need mention here, and although the spread of western education has done much to undermine his influence, the family priest still reigns supreme in the homes of India. But outside the priestly caste there are numbers of men who take up a religious life, and chief amongst them are those known as *sádhus* and *sanyásis*. There is often confusion between these terms, and they are supposed to be identical. The main difference seems to be that the *sádhu's* is a life vowed to religion from the beginning, whilst the *sanyási's* may begin at any time, even at the end of life.

Many Indians desire to consecrate their last days to religion, when they cast off all family ties and worldly ambitions and responsibilities and for the remainder of their natural life practise the austerities of the *sanyási* life. It is generally understood that such men have fulfilled all the ordinary obligations of life, having married and had a family, and done a share of the world's work. A *sádhu*, however, early in life renounces the world and all its pleasures. He never marries or enters upon the ordinary occupations of the world.

The *sádhu* life is one of untold possibilities, of tremendous temptations: a life that commands the respectful attention of India, for it is a type of heroism which dares to lose the world and all the world may offer in its absolute self-abandonment. To one who perfectly carries out this ideal the proudest head in India will always bow in reverence and humility. Both *sányasi*

and sádhu adopt the saffron robe—the time-honoured dress which gives them the freedom of all India. The simplicity of their life is such that they have no home and carry no money, and amongst Hindus it is an act of religious merit to provide them with shelter and food.

From the earliest days this kind of life has held great attractions for the pious minds of India, and during the centuries men have voluntarily sacrificed the world and all it stands for, that by all kinds of hardships and self-denial they may satisfy the deep longings of the soul. Numberless times men of noble aspiration have by this means striven to obtain peace of soul and absorption in the deity.

The commonest sight in any of the holy cities of India is that of one or many sádhus practising the austerities of their chosen lot, either by swinging over a slow fire, holding up the right arm until it has stiffened and the nails have grown through the back of the hand, sitting on a bed of spikes, or under a vow of silence in meditation on the banks of some sacred stream. Unfortunately this kind of life has been subject to the most terrible abuse, and there is scarcely a more disgusting sight in the world than the filthy beggar who, donning the saffron robe, passes from house to house terrorizing the ignorant inhabitants, and cursing them when he cannot wring from their unwilling hands the gifts he asks.

The ordinary winter visitor to India cannot but be impressed by the numerous signs he sees in all the holy places he passes through, that many Indians are seeking God 'if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.' And whilst the sight of numberless filthy fakirs awakens a sense of disgust and repulsion, surely no Christian man can see the self-torture of many sanyásis without a deep yearning to discover to them the great secret of the peace they so arduously strive to find.

In India life can be lived at its simplest. The climate enables men to do with little clothing, and to live largely an out-of-door life. Except where the stream of western life has turned men aside to greater luxury, the

Indian still feels satisfied with a simple diet and life. Hence through the centuries, as earnest souls have gone in quest of greater spiritual things, it is not surprising that they have chosen the simplest possible life, and added to its hardships by self-imposed austerities.

To people of western nations, with their harder climate and different customs, such simplicity is not only impossible, but almost impossible to be understood. The true sādhu does not retire to a monastery where food and shelter are assured. He wanders homeless from place to place, possesses only the meagre clothes he wears and is utterly destitute.

Dr. Farquhar in his *Crown of Hinduism* says :

As long as the world lasts men will look back with wonder on the ascetics of India. Their quiet surrender of every earthly privilege, and their strong endurance of many forms of suffering will be an inspiration to all generations of thinking Indians. For nearly three thousand years the ascetics of India have stood forth, a speaking testimony to the supremacy of the spiritual.

The ideal is a great one. Christianize this ideal, make it a renunciation for the sake of others, that remaining 'in the world but not of it' a man 'shall endure all things' in an untiring search for other souls, and we have the noblest end attainable on earth.

Chapter II

Sundar Singh as Sadhu

The Christian Patriot, a Madras paper, recently published the following :

Sadhu Sundar Singh is the embodiment of an idea running in the veins of every Indian, and inherited by him from the distant past. Standing before men as the homeless Sādhu, not knowing where his next meal will come from, without worldly goods, he recalls to men's minds in these days the great ideal of renunciation.

But in this case this ideal is realized in perfection, since not for his own soul, but for the souls of others he 'counts all things but loss'; and his great renunciation, entailing untold hardship, privation, suffering and per-

secution in his daily offering to the Saviour who gave His life for him.

Obedying the wishes of his dead and greatly loved mother, Sundar unflinchingly faced the anger of his Hindu relatives, the ridicule of his Christian brethren and even the mild hostility of his European friends and became a Christian Sádhu. Thirty-three days after his baptism, when only a boy of sixteen he took this step in the firm belief that God had called him to this particular kind of life and work. Since that day he has never ceased to interpret the life of Him, who had not where to lay His head, to Indians who have been taught to revere a holy life of self-denial. Thus does he commend to his countrymen in truly eastern manner the great things for which the Saviour gave His life. This new method of preaching Christ has laid the Sadhu open to a considerable amount of criticism in the past, but in the form of a parable he explains that a Hindu will not drink water from a foreign vessel even when dying of thirst but if that same water be offered to him in his own brass vessel he will accept it.

It may be that the time has come when Indian Christians must venture upon new forms of spiritual enterprise, for they know the needs of their own countrymen, have received the same traditions and have the same outlook on life, and surely the Sádhu's new venture has brought untold blessing to many thousands all over this great land of India.

By adopting the recognized dress of the sádhu, Sundar Singh not only opens the door to all castes and classes of society, but also even to the sacred precincts of the zanana homes of India, where on various occasions he has had unique opportunities of speaking for his Lord to the great ladies of the land. His own words are :

The day I became a Sádhu I was wedded to these garments, and I will never divorce them of my own will.

He has frequently been asked how long he means to continue this life of self-abnegation, to which he replies,

As long as I am in this world. I have vowed my life to Him, and His grace abiding I shall never break my vow.

Never long in one place, he wanders over the length and breadth of India, meeting with all sorts and conditions of men, suffering the changes of climate from the steamy tropical heat of Travancore and Ceylon to the icy cold of Tibet. Without knowledge of how food or raiment or lodging shall be provided from day to day, carrying no money or worldly possessions, Sádhu Sundar Singh continues his pilgrimage in the service of his fellowmen and to the glory of his Master Christ. In cold or heat he wears the same clothes, and even in the bitter cold of farthest Tibet he wears no shoes, for by 'his bleeding feet he attracts men to Christ.' Wherever he goes he carries a small copy of the New Testament in Urdu, which with the help of nature and his own experience is all he needs to enforce his powerful teaching.

In his book *The Mind of the Master*, Dr. Fosdick says that 'Jesus must have been the most radiant Man of His time in Palestine.' Looking at Sadhu Sundar Singh it is easy to realize this, for to him suffering for Christ is a real joy, and his face is expressive of the deep peace and abounding joy he has in his dearest Saviour, Christ. During thirteen years of sádhu life Sundar Singh has known all manner of trials, and endured much suffering and persecution. Like his great predecessor Paul, he has been 'troubled on every side . . . perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest' in his body (2 Cor. iv. 7-10).

Chapter III

Sundar the Man

A WESTERN missionary who has loved India through a long life may perhaps be pardoned for writing this chapter. Ever since meeting Sundar Singh the question as to the great difference between him and most other

Christians and also his unusual power of drawing men to Christ has been uppermost in mind. Absolute loss of all things and an entire submission to the will of Christ together with a profound enthralling love for his Saviour gives at least a partial answer to the problem.

In India as in our Lord's day 'to the poor the Gospel is preached', and has found acceptance, and brought to many thousands a better life and a freer heritage. In some cases there is trouble and loss and even persecution, but the cases are painfully few and far between where absolute loss of all things is the price of following Christ.

But as will be seen in a succeeding chapter, the conversion of Sundar to Christ brought with it not only the loss of all things but great persecution and hardship. All he got by becoming a Christian was Christ; and this incomparable gift swamped everything else, so that since that time it has been an ecstasy of delight to Sundar Singh to suffer with and for his Master. When more of India's sons accept the Saviour in this spirit the Christian Church in this land will enter into her rightful heritage, and become the evangelizing power that shall bring India to her Saviour.

Wherein lies his power to draw men to Christ? Sundar Singh early in life had an awakened conscience and for long sought peace in the sacred books with which he was familiar. Failing to find in them what he sought he turned to the New Testament. Imagine his ardent and highly-strung mind intent on the story of Christ as related there! A new Book—not a worn-out creed, nor the story of how Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled, nor yet a thing he had read from a child and grown accustomed to! There was no staleness in the gospel story to him. Christ walked this earth again, lived and spoke in every line; and as he read the marvel of the story grew, until obsessed by the vision he counted all things as dross that he 'might win Christ and be found in Him.' He had no books to explain the New Testament or to cloud its meaning. There were just the New Testament, God and his own

highly attuned soul—a soul that had sought long and hopelessly for God, and had found here all, and more than he had sought.

The picture of this Hindu boy sitting under a tree out of sight of friend or foe, immersed in the reading of his Urdu Testament and sobbing over its contents, is one that brings tears to the eyes, and calls us to pause and ask ourselves, 'Have we so learned Christ?' It takes us back to foundation things, and stripped of our learning and knowledge we cry out for that same simple experience—just to meet Christ as he did.

From those days to the present Sundar Singh has wandered in company with his Lord over the length and breadth of India, with his Urdu New Testament in his hand and with Christ in his heart and a look of Christ upon his face.

In *The Goal of India* the Rev. W. E. S. Holland says :

India is the spiritual mother of half mankind. . . . No book that sets out to unveil for other peoples the heart of India could put anything else but religion in the very forefront. . . . To the Indian that is all that really matters . . . nothing else can ever satisfy his soul. The climax of India's religious ideal has ever been renunciation. There is something of the magnificent in the sádhu's measureless contempt for suffering and hardship. . . . Christ will redeem India's ancient ideal : India needs to see Christ as well as hear about Him. . . . India needs the simple Christian, who in a life of gentleness and patience, of lowly love and humble service will unveil to her the beauty of Christ.

Herein lies one great secret of Sádhu Sundar Singh's power over men wherever he goes. Taking the old ideal of renunciation he has spiritualized it, and men see in him a reflection of the great renunciation of Christ Himself—not seeking suffering for suffering's own sake as is the case with Hindu asceticism, but enduring it with cheerful acceptance as being the will of God for him.

In the words of Keshab Chandra Sen :

Behold Christ cometh to us as an Asiatic . . . to fulfil and perfect that religion of communion for which India has been panting—yea, after long centuries shall this communion be perfected in Christ.

Sádhu Sundar Singh in himself reminds men of this great fact, and looking beyond him they 'behold the Man' who 'for our sakes became poor.'

Can one wonder that whenever he makes his public appearances large crowds gather to hear him? India must be won for Christ by her own sons, and in Sádhu Sundar Singh we see a man whose appeal goes straight to the heart of an Indian, be he Christian or otherwise. His appearance, his utter self-abnegation and poverty, his presentation of the gospel message, even the manner of his conversion combine to make that appeal irresistible to the people of India. They understand and believe in such a man. Thus this son of India possesses a key to the hearts of his countrymen no foreigner can ever hope to have, however great his love for India and her people may be.

An Indian gentleman thus speaks of the Sádhu :

A tall young man in flowing toga and a short black beard delivering his message with the fire of a prophet and the power of an apostle! As the sweet words flowed from his lips the Sádhu stood before us as a symbol of the spiritual culture of the East set aglow in the resplendent light of the Gospel.

Whilst an American adds :

The beauty that he daily gazes upon draws the deep souls of Indians who have not yet beheld it, but have seen it in him. His life is his power, and that life has to be lived to make that power felt.

The *Young Men of India* for July 1918 publishes the following :

It is almost an impossible task to present any appreciation of him (the Sádhu) in words. He is a man who has taken up the life of a sádhu because he believes that God has called him to this method of labour for Him. He utterly disowns the idea that in the life of the sádhu there is any intrinsic and special holiness. . . . His addresses, like his personality, are radiant with a calm, deep and glowing faith in God, and it is impossible to be in his company without realizing that he is one to whom God is a familiar friend. . . . He conveys the message which is the heart of his own life through addresses filled with vivid and often piquant illustrations drawn from his own experience. . . and he presses home his points with unforgettable similes and illustrations. It is a fortunate thing for the Indian Church that the first man who has become widely known as a Christian Sádhu should be one of such simple humble faith, and so purely a Christian personality.

The Sádhu is not emotional or fanatical. Every gift he possesses he ascribes to Christ and to Christ alone. He belongs to no sect and is not a member of any order. In himself he calls Indians back to simplicity, self-sacrifice and a pure whole-hearted devotion to Christ, that seeks only after God and works perpetually for the souls of men. Life to him is only of value so far as it serves these great ends, and standing before men as the embodiment of these ideals his appeal to India is irresistible.

Chapter IV

Nationality and Birth

SADHU Sundar Singh is a Sikh by birth. The Sikh nation is for various reasons of peculiar interest. Arising first as a religious sect resolved to reform abuses and to lead men back to a simpler purer worship, it eventually developed into an organized military power, determined to avenge its wrongs and persecutions. Through the centuries its history knew many and bitter experiences, but pride of race, love of arms and a stiff clinging to their religious doctrines are to this day great characteristics of the Sikh nation.

Cunningham in his *History of the Sikhs* says :

During the sixteenth century whilst the Punjab was a scene of endless contention for power amongst foreign races, the religious sect of the Sikhs, humble in its origin, unpretending in its primitive character, silently arose amidst the tumult of arms, and in spite of persecution laid the foundations of a great state.

The home of the Sikhs is 'The Country of the Five Rivers', and a remarkable circumstance of the population of the Panjab is the comparative paucity of the Sikhs in a country ruled by them. The Sikhs do not form a numerous sect, yet their strength is not to be estimated by numbers, but by their unity and energy of religious fervour and warlike temperament. They will dare and endure much ; they are not easily discouraged

by defeat; and they look hopefully forward to the day when the double mission of Nanak and Govind Singh shall become a dominant religion.

Some further account of the Sikhs will be found at the end of the book, and from it will be seen some of the national and religious influences under which Sundar Singh was born. Captain Cunningham says :

A Sikh chief is not more distinguished by his stately person and manly bearing than a minister of his faith is by a lofty thoughtfulness of look, which marks the fervour of his soul, and his persuasion of the near presence of the Divinity. In religious faith and worldly aspiration they are wholly different from other Indians.

From such a stock sprang Sundar Singh. His father was Sirdar Sher Singh, a Sikh by descent, and to this day a wealthy landowner in Rampur, in the State of Patiala, where on September 3, 1889 Sundar was born—the youngest son in the family, but called to a higher destiny than them all. One of the family is Sirdar A. Nath Singh, commander of an Indian force in one of the Sikh States, while others have risen to even higher distinction still.

As a child Sundar was brought up in the lap of luxury. Every year as the hot weather drew on, he was taken with the family to spend the summer in the cooler air of the Himalayas, usually to Simla.

His mother was a refined and gifted lady; very broadminded in her sympathies. She was on friendly terms with the American Presbyterian Mission ladies and permitted their visits to her home. From his earliest days the relationship between Sundar and his mother was of the tenderest character. He was the youngest of the family and he seldom left her side. She would often say to him, 'You must not be careless and worldly like your brothers. You must seek peace of soul and love religion, and some day you must become a holy sādhu.'

So frequently did he hear such words as these from his mother's lips that he never contemplated any other life than this of which she spoke. Wherever she went her little son accompanied her and she never ceased

to teach him the best things she knew. By the time he was seven years of age he had learnt the *Bhagavadgītā* from beginning to end in Sanskrit. And then, at the age of fourteen Sundar lost his dearest earthly friend. How he missed her gentle companionship no one knows, but to-day when he speaks of her his voice grows tender and his eyes look sad. He believes that were she alive she would be satisfied to see him living and working as he is this day.

Chapter V

Called to Seek

IT has often been remarked that great men owe much to the early training given by their mothers, and in the case of Sádhu Sundar Singh this is especially true. From his earliest days the child not only accompanied his mother on her visits to the temples but was carefully taught by her to regard religion as the supreme thing in life. He saw her reverence for the holy men she often went to consult, and very early in life his impressionable mind seized upon the idea that, of all lives, that of a holy sadhu was the best worth living.

Sundar learnt from his devout mother that there was a peace of heart which needed earnest seeking, and which when found would be the greatest treasure on earth. So frequently did she speak of this to him that as he grew in understanding the desire to gain this precious gift grew in intensity. The little child who had 'rubbed his forehead on the temple door,' and sat at the feet of Hindu holy men now began to seek for the inestimable treasure he had learnt to regard as the one thing worth obtaining in the world.

The Granth of the Sikhs, the sacred books of the Hindu religion, and even the Qur'an of the Muhammadans, were all ceaselessly read and searched. Often when his family lay asleep Sundar would sit poring over the pages of one or other of these books. Many passages

and verses he learnt by heart, and yet with all his increasing knowledge there only came to him a deeper unrest of soul.

The priests of the temple, the sādhus he so often saw, and even his pious mother failed to bring him rest of heart, although they quoted many passages from their sacred books in the hope of helping him. Thus built up but unsatisfied with the faith of his fathers, and without knowledge of Christ and Christianity, Sundar was sent to learn at the mission school carried on by the American Presbyterians in his own village. Here every day the Bible was taught, and Sundar heard things that aroused in his mind feelings of the deepest antagonism.

His Sikh blood was roused on the very first day by his being told to read the Bible. 'Why should I? We are Sikhs and the Granth is our sacred book.' But Sundar with a friend of his own age and standing were persuaded to obey the rule of the school, and then he bought for himself a copy of the New Testament and began to read it, but his horror was only increased beyond bearing when he found its teaching utterly subversive of all he had learnt and treasured from his childhood. A deep inbred reverence for his own religion, almost amounting to fanaticism, roused him beyond endurance. Soon he became the ringleader of the boys who hated Christianity in the school. Openly he tore up the hated pages of his New Testament and burnt them in the fire. Hearing of this his father expostulated with him, declaring the Bible to be a good book, and telling him that he should have returned it to the missionary rather than have treated it thus.

Again Sundar turned to his own sacred books, this time with an abhorrence for Christ and a greater determination to find the peace his mother had taught him about. He was taken away from the mission school and sent to a government school three miles away from his home. The daily long walk in the fierce Indian sun soon began to tell on his health, and before long it became apparent that he must return to the mission school if he was to finish his education.

All this time he had been diligent in his search for peace, and the constant cry of his heart was for *Shanti*—that comprehensive Hindi term that means not only peace but a full satisfaction of soul. But the more he longed the greater was his disappointment when he found himself growingly filled with a deep soul-hunger that nothing would satisfy.

Back in the mission school Sundar once more found the gospel in his hand, and again listened to the daily teaching of the Bible. Then returned upon him his old hatred of Christianity, and the very name of Christ filled his mind with angry resentment. So strong were his feelings at that time that on one occasion, when the shadow of a Christian missionary fell across him, he spent a whole hour in washing away the pollution. Sundar speaks of this period as one of the most trying of his life, for he had come to the end of his own religion without discovering the *Shanti* he was in search of, and his deep-rooted hatred of Christianity prevented him from even looking into the Christian sacred book for this 'pearl of great price.'

Chapter VI

Called of God

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (Matt. v. 6).

Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest (Matt. v. 6).

Thus far God had led Sundar by a way he knew not, and it seemed only to lead him into blacker night. Having studied line by line all the religions he knew, having heard from the lips of many religious teachers all they had to tell, and in spite of all still experiencing a deeper and more unsatisfied longing for the *Shanti* he believed possible, Sundar was led by God to see that in none of these things could he find what he sought. In the silent sanctuary of his own heart came the thought at last, that perhaps in the despised book he had so

furiously destroyed there might be some help, and so he yet again took the Testament in hand. Torn with anguish and driven to despair he read there 'Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest.' The words arrested him, and as he continued to read the story of the Cross the wonder grew. No longer did he join with His class-mates in their open abuse of the Christian religion. Sometimes he was discovered in quiet converse with the Christian teacher. Eventually these things were noticed and duly reported to his parents, but his father took little notice, for the boy had been well-grounded in the Sikh religion by his devout mother, and was imbued with its beliefs.

But the leaven of the gospel had entered his heart, and as he read 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life,' a whisper of comfort came to his sore heart. But still the burden of anguish prevented him finding rest. At last he felt he must put an end to the struggle. So one night he made a firm resolve that he would obtain peace before dawn—either in this world or the next. He knew that at five o'clock each morning the Ludhiana express passed at the bottom of his father's garden, and to end his misery seemed no sin to the Hindu boy.

In Hindu fashion he bathed, and with Testament in hand he retired to his room to spend the long night in reading, meditation and prayer. Just before dawn Sundar became conscious of a bright cloud filling the room, and in the cloud he saw the radiant figure and face of Christ. At that moment there flashed into his heart the great *Shānti* he had sought so long. Rising from his knees the vision faded, but from that hour Christ has remained with him, and *Shānti* has been his dearest possession. With a heart brimming over with joy Sundar went to his father's room and told him that he was a Christian. Unable to believe that his son could be in earnest, the father urged him to go to rest, and believing all was right he fell asleep again. But that memorable night the thorn-crowned Jesus had called

Sundar Singh to follow in His steps, and from that night the cross of Jesus was to be his joyous theme, until that cross shall lift him into the presence of his Saviour for evermore.

Chapter VII

Called to Suffer

A man's foes *shall* be they of his own household (Matt. x. 36).

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Phil. i. 29).

I count all things but loss . . . that I may know him . . . and the fellowship of his suffering (Phil. iii. 8-9).

For nine months from that night onwards Sundar Singh was to pass from sorrow to sorrow, until he had drunk the cup of suffering to its bitterest dregs, for all that time he remained in his father's house.

When it became known that he had chosen Jesus as his Master it seemed too heinous a thing for any member of his family to believe. That one of their number, belonging as they did to a proud and influential family should dream of joining the despised sect of the Christians, none could contemplate. The father with much earnest pleading and tenderness urged his son to put aside such degrading and foolish thoughts; to remember the high estate he had been born to, and the noble prospects that lay before him. He unrolled before the eyes of Sundar visions of wealth and honour, of high positions awaiting him; but, seeing these things made no impression, he portrayed to him the shame and disgrace that would befall his family if he persisted in his present course. The father knew his son's heart, and the love that heart still held for his mother and kindred.

None but Sádhu Sundar Singh can tell the temptations of that dreadful hour. Anguish filled his soul that he should bring reproach on those he loved. At that moment too was spread before him the temptations, ambitions and glitter of the world; and once more Sundar was to feel the power of earth's attractions and

earth's love. But God had not called Sundar from despair and darkness to let him fall a prey to these temptations. It seemed to him that Jesus whispered, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is no worthy of Me, and he that taketh not his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me.' Only when he saw his father's tears did poor Sundar's heart almost break, but even as he declared his love for his father he had strength given to speak of a greater love for One who had called him to follow Him, and whom he could not disobey. Such scenes of pathos are not to be dwelt upon in the pages of a book.

About this time, when it was fully realized that Sundar had made up his mind to follow Christ, a fresh attempt was made to turn him aside and to win him back to his old faith. An honoured uncle and the possessor of great wealth one day took him off to his large house, and led him to a deep cellar below the main building. Taking him inside the Uncle locked the door and Sundar wondered whether his last hour had come. But, taking a key, his uncle stepped forward and unlocked a large safe. Throwing open the door there was revealed to the boy's eyes such wealth as he had never dreamt of. Rolls of bank notes, priceless jewels and quantities of money were what he saw. His uncle then besought him not to disgrace the family name by becoming a Christian, and taking his *puggaree* from his own head he laid it on Sundar's feet, as the last and humblest supplication he could make, with the words, 'All these shall be yours if you will remain with us.'

Sundar felt this temptation keenly, for not only did the sight of such riches dazzle his eyes, but his heart was deeply moved by his uncle's condescension in thus humiliating himself to the youngest son of the household. Sundar's eyes filled with tears as he beheld the *puggaree* lying on his feet—marking the disgrace which he must bring on those he loved, and his honoured uncle standing bareheaded before him. But at that moment his heart became filled to overflowing with such love and devotion to Christ that refusal came easily to his lips,

and with it came such a sense of divine approbation and acceptance of his dearest Saviour as strengthened every holy resolution to be faithful to his Lord. After that his father made it plain to him that he was no longer a son of the house but an outcast.

Both Sundar and his Sikh class-mate had read the New Testament with the same result, that they found Christ. But they were not of an age to take the great step of confessing Christ publicly, and so were obliged to remain in their Hindu homes. The relatives of Sundar's friend brought a case into the law courts charging the American missionaries with compelling the boy to become a Christian. Upon appearing before the magistrate the boy bore steady witness to the faith that was in him, and being questioned, he took a New Testament from his pocket and holding it in his hand he replied, 'Not because of the Pádri Sáhib but by reading this, Injíl I believe on Christ, so let the Pádri Sáhib go. Thus the case fell through, and for sometime longer Sundar and his friend were forced to remain with their relatives until they were able to take the momentous step that was to mean so much to them both later on.

It is easy to see how, when all persuasion and the temptations of a great career failed to turn aside the boy from his set purpose, that the bitterest hostility was aroused amongst his people. His own brother proved his fiercest enemy, and day by day Sundar suffered bitter persecution at his hand. No language was too foul to be used against him and his 'Jesus', and with redoubled care he had to steal away where no eye could see him, if he was to refresh his soul by the reading of his precious New Testament. He was taken away from the mission school, which was eventually broken up and had to be closed because of the persecution. Not only this, but the open hostility of the village became so great that the small Christian community—no longer able to procure food at the shops—was obliged to withdraw to more friendly quarters, leaving Sundar alone and friendless,

As the storm increased in fury Sundar saw that it was impossible for him to remain in his father's house,

and so eventually he made his way to the headquarters of the American Presbyterian Mission in Ludhiana, where the missionaries received him kindly and took care of him. Special arrangements were made for the cooking of his food to prevent trouble with his family, and Sundar entered the high school to continue his education. The sensitive boy had high ideals as to what Christians ought to be, and before long he discovered that his school-mates were for the most part only nominally Christian, and the conduct of some of them caused him to leave the mission and retrace his steps homewards. Arrived at Rampur his parents naturally thought he had given up Christianity and received him with great kindness. But they were speedily disillusioned, for they soon found him to be a more determined follower of Jesus than before.

Sundar now took the final step that was to place him hopelessly outside the pale of his religion, community and family by cutting short his long hair--the sign to all that he was no longer a Sikh. Sikhs are instructed in their sacred book, the Granth, never to cut the hair, and every true Sikh glories in his hair. Among various races of India the long tuft of hair is regarded with special reverence, and is the last sign of Hinduism a caste man lays aside when he becomes a Christian. But Sundar in cutting his hair brought ostracism on himself, and at the same time it was an unmistakable declaration for Christ and His cross. Then fell on this poor boy the bitterest blow of all. He was to be disowned, cast out, treated only as the lowest of the low, and that by those who loved him best. As the Apostle Paul wrote, 'We are made as the offscouring of all things,' and this was the treatment meted out to a boy of sixteen, who up to this point had not entirely cast in his lot with Christians. He was no longer counted as one of the family. His food was served to him outside the house just as if he belonged to the 'untouchables', and he was made to sleep in the same place. The first time this was done the poor boy's eyes filled with tears, and the weight of his cross seemed more than he could bear.

Shortly after this happened, one of Sundar's brothers-in-law, who was in the service of the Raja of Nabha State took him for a day or two to stay at his own house, in the hope of bringing him to a different state of mind. It was then that the Raja heard of the matter, and he summoned Sundar to appear before the bar of the State Assembly (Durbar) to account for his conduct. The Raja used much persuasive language, and made glowing offers to him; moreover he made a stern appeal to his pride of race, reminding him that he was a Singh (lion) and that to be a Christian was to become a dog. Whatever answer he made it must have been given to him in that very hour what he should speak, for neither argument nor appeal nor yet offers of high position were able to move Sundar in his resolution to follow Christ at all costs.

He then returned home, and immediately all the pent-up anger of his father was let loose upon him. The helpless boy was cursed, disowned, and told that on the following morning he must go forth from his ancestral home. With a sorely wounded heart that night he lay down for the last time on his father's verandah to sleep. Before sunrise the following day he was cast forth with nothing but the thin clothes he wore, add enough money to take him to Patiala by rail. Homeless, friendless and utterly destitute Sundar turned his back on the home of his childhood.

Jesus I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my All shalt be.

Chapter VIII

Called to Suffer

Thou art called, and hast professed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Tim. vii. 12).

As Sundar sat in the train the thought came to him that in Ropur there was a little colony of Christians—

some from Rampur, whither they had fled when persecution made life impossible in their own village—and so stepping out of the train he made his way to the house of the kind Indian pastor and his good wife. It was by the providence of God that Sundar did this, for very soon after his arrival he fell violently ill and a physician had to be called in. Then it became known that a deadly poison has been mixed in the food given him before leaving home. It was not the intention of his friends that they should be degraded in the eyes of the world, but rather that he should die in the train. All that night the good pastor's wife sat by his side waiting for the end to come, for the physician pronounced the case hopeless and departed with the promise to come in the morning to the funeral.

Sundar lay in mortal pain with blood flowing from his body and his strength ebbing fast. But as he lay, there came to him the profound belief that God had not called him out of darkness to die without witnessing to his faith in Christ, so he began to pray with all his remaining powers. When morning came he was still alive, though exceedingly weak. The physician came according to his promise and was amazed to find the boy alive. So deeply impressed was he that he took a copy of the New Testament, and began to study it himself. In this way the physician himself became a believer in Christ, and to-day is working as a missionary in Burma.

Sundar's friend in taking the same step received similar treatment, for his relatives also offered him poisoned food to eat. While Sundar lay between life and death his friend's short but heroic witness to the power of Christ came to an end, and he passed to the presence of his Redeemer to be 'for ever with the Lord.'

When Sundar was sufficiently strong to undertake the short journey to Ludhiana he went back to the kind care of the American missionaries there. Whilst there several attempts were made by his relatives to get him away, and violence was used on one of these occasions, so that the police had to be called in to quell the

disturbance. But the most trying occurrence to Sundar was when his aged father came to make a last appeal in the hope of drawing him away. The sight of the father's stricken face and figure made a deep impression on the boy, and as the old man spoke of the great love of his mother and happy days of his childhood, there passed in fleeting panorama before Sundar's mind all the happiness of his old home, and the love that had sheltered his early days. His tears scorched his cheeks, whilst a mighty struggle went on in his heart. But he was not left to struggle alone, for One stood by him and reinforced his soul's resolve to take up his cross and follow Him. As his father turned to go away the last great sacrifice was made, and Sundar stood as he does to-day—stripped of all that life can offer but accepted with his Lord. These long months, so full of trial and hardship had been a supreme test, and every fresh sorrow only added sweetness and firmness to the character of this remarkable boy.

After these events it became necessary for Sundar to go away where he would be protected from his enemies, and he was sent to the American Medical Mission at Sabathu, a small place twenty-three miles from Simla, where he was free from persecution, and able to give his mind completely to the study of his beloved New Testament. Set free from all earth's ties, he became increasingly anxious to confess Christ by baptism. Again and again he begged that he might be allowed to take this step, and eventually on his birthday, September 3, 1905 the Rev. J. Redman baptized him in the Church of England at Simla. Next day Sundar returned to Sabathu, and knowing that he was 'buried with Him in baptism . . . risen with Him through faith' (Col. ii. 12) his heart was filled to overflowing with happiness. The weary struggles of the past months faded in the presence of this new joy of bearing the name of the dear Master for whom already he had suffered so much.

His heart now became filled with a burning desire to make known to others the Saviour to whom he had given himself so unreservedly, and with eager joy he

began to look forward to the great work to which his life was to be dedicated. And now the day had come when he could make an utter self-surrender for Jesus Christ. He had long felt drawn to the life of a sádhu, and knowing what such a life involved, he willingly made the final sacrifice for it. His books and personal belongings were soon disposed of, and on October 6, 1905, just thirty-three days after his baptism he adopted the simple saffron robe that was to mark him off for all time as one vowed to a religious life. With bare feet and no visible means of support, but with his New Testament in his hand and his Lord at his side, Sádhu Sundar Singh set out on the evangelistic campaign that has lasted to this day.

Chapter IX

Called to Serve

It pleased God who . . . called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen (Gal. i. 15-16).

Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . in Jerusalem (Acts i. 8.)

Sundar was now embarked on a life of such complete self-abnegation and suffering as falls to the lot of few men in this world. His path from Hinduism to Christ had been one of thorns all the way. But, after his vision of the thorn-crowned Jesus and his acceptance of the peace his Saviour brought, nothing seemed too great to give up for Him. In the undying words of Dr. Watts :

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Nothing less than all sufficed to satisfy his ardent nature, and one cannot wonder that on entering the sadhu life in that spirit he determined, as he says, that ' His grace abiding ' he will live no other, so long as life is his to spend for Christ.

Though but a boy in years, the heart of Sádhu Sundar Singh then, as now was filled with a divine

passion for human souls, and his intense devotion and love for the Lord Jesus caused him to choose as his first field of labour his own village, from which he had been driven only a short time previously. Only a few months after his rejection by his own family the young Sádhu returned to the familiar streets of Rampur, and there in every street he bore faithful witness to the power of the Saviour and the new-found happiness he had in Him. Not only so, but even the zanana doors of Rampur were opened to him, and he went from house to house telling the women the same wonderful story. From there, and alone, he passed on the villages round about, and fearlessly testified to the people everywhere of the great peace only obtainable through Jesus Christ.

The Sádhu then continued his way through many other towns and villages of the Panjab, working his way up towards Afghanistan and Kashmir. This was a long and extremely arduous tour, and unused to the hardships of sádhu life Sundar suffered severely from the cold and privations of the way. Moreover the work was difficult, for his message met with no response from the hardened dwellers of Afghanistan. It was however at the ancient city of Jalálabád in Afghanistan that the Sádhu met some Patháns, who planning his destruction were eventually willing to receive his message, an account of which will be found in a later chapter.

Up to this point it seems as if God had little by little weaned Sundar from all that life holds dear. Relatives, wealth, home had all gone for Christ. Entering the new world of Christians the comfort and almost certain preferment that would have been his, were to count for naught to him who had set out on his first tour to make Christ known in the heathen villages amongst the mountains. The cold pierced his thin clothing, the thorns and stones cut his bare feet. The nights came with no certainty of shelter from the bitter winds and pouring rain, and the gray dawn often brought days of hunger and suffering such as he had never known. Even his fervent soul quailed at the hardship that seemed to bring so little return; for often his message was discredited

and he himself cast forth to spend a hungry night in caves or any poor shelter the jungle might afford. His sádhu's clothes gave him entrance everywhere, but often when it was discovered that he was a Christian, Sundar was driven hungry and helpless from the villages to live or die.

But nothing can discourage him. Incapable of drawing back in face of danger or death itself, Sádhu Sundar Singh continues his sublime mission in the darkest corners of India and the regions beyond. Year in and out he has laboured for the souls of men in plain and mountain, in city and village, and amongst the scattered peoples and wandering tribes on the frontiers of India. It has been amongst these peoples that he has suffered so severely, but amongst them too he has had the supreme joy not only of making Christ known, but of leading men to His feet. His chief work has been done amongst non-Christians, and to them he feels God's call to be clear and unmistakeable.

Chapter X

Called to Preach

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2).

Very weary after his long and hard journey through the Panjab, Kashmir, Baluchistan and Afghanistan the Sádhu retraced his steps and came to Kotgarh, a small place beyond Simla in the Himalayas, where he remained a time for rest. This little place will always be associated with Sádhu Sundar Singh, for early in his career he laboured there and it is to Kotgarh still that he retires for a brief rest between his tours, or before starting on his arduous journeys into the closed lands of Tibet and Nepal.

During the summer of 1906 the Sádhu met Mr. Stokes, who was staying near Kotgarh. This wealthy American gentleman had come to India to give his labours for her people and to the glory of God. Meeting the Sádhu

fired his heart and filled him with a desire to give his all and join Sundar in this arduous life of his choice. After prayer and thought Mr. Stokes took this step, and the two Sádhus took a journey together through the Khangra valley.

Food and shelter were difficult to obtain, and the two brothers suffered much, but their work was good and fellowship sweet. It was during this journey that Sádhu Sundar Singh fell ill. The two Sádhus had travelled together for some hundreds of miles, sharing the same hardships, often being obliged to seek shelter in the common filthy serais, and often subsisting on the barest and roughest diet, and little enough of that. They were passing through very unhealthy country when Sundar was seized with fever and severe internal pains. Shaking with ague, burning with fever and always in pain he dragged on until at last he could walk no longer. He sank on the path almost unconscious, and Mr. Stokes moved him into an easier position enquiring at the same time as to how he was. No complaint ever passes the lips of the Sádhu whatever his lot, and Mr. Stokes was not at all surprised to receive the reply he did. With a smile the Sádhu said in a feeble voice 'I am very happy. How sweet it is to suffer for His sake.' And those who know the Sádhu best know that 'this is the key-note of his life.'

It was a wild and jungly place where this happened, and Mr. Stokes was in great difficulty, but he succeeded in getting the Sádhu to the house of a European some miles away, where he was nursed to health again. The kind host was at that time without any care for religion, but day by day he saw the example of the Sádhu and heard such things from his lips as caused him to think deeply, until he became a truly converted man, and thus was this illness blessed to the saving of one soul who found joy and peace in Christ Jesus.

Mr. Stokes possessed a magic lantern, and this the Sádhu borrowed and used in Rampur and other places for street preaching at night, when large numbers of people gathered to see the pictures and hear the explana-

tion. Thus unweariedly night and day the two Sádhus passed from place to place doing most of their travelling by night, because the sun was too fierce for Mr. Stokes to bear on his unprotected head. It was at this time that Mr. Stokes spoke so appreciatively of the work of the Sádhu, who thought not much more than a boy was so filled with his message, that wherever he went people were under a strange compulsion to listen to what he said.

In 1907 the two Sádhus went to work in the Leper Asylum at Sabathu, and later in the year they went down to Lahore to labour amongst the plague-stricken in the Plague Camp there. They laboured unremittingly day and night, only allowing themselves brief hours of respite, and even these were spent lying on the ground amongst the sick and dying.

The next year Mr. Stokes went to America on furlough and the Sádhu was once more left alone. From Lahore he went on to Sindh returning through Rajputana to North India again, and then as the hot weather drew on the Sádhu made his first journey into the closed land of Tibet. In all these places the Gospel was preached incessantly, and no man who came across the Sádhu went away without hearing that Jesus had come into the world to save sinners.

After his return from Tibet he had a great desire to go to Palestine in the belief that to see the place where his saviour had lived and died would inspire him to fuller and better service. But when he reached Bombay he found it impracticable, so in 1909 he returned to North India through the Central Provinces, preaching as he went.

Chapter XI

What wisdom is this ?

From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him . . . ? (Mark vi. 2).

That Sundar Singh was taught of God in these early days was unmistakeably witnessed to by the wonderful

hearing he got amongst non-Christians thus early in his career. It was recognized amongst his friends that he possessed unusual powers, and that his presentation of the gospel held people by its attractiveness and persuasiveness. This was so much the case that it was felt desirable to widen the scope of his operations by including the Christian community along with the already great work he was doing. It was considered necessary that some preparation for this important work should be made. He therefore sat for and passed the examination given to divinity students at the end of their first year in College, and he immediately entered on the second year's course at St. John's Divinity College at Lahore. The years 1909 and 1910 were spent in study, and during vacation time the Sadhu continued his evangelistic work as heretofore.

Sundar still wore the saffron robe. The sádhu idea for a Christian was something quite new at that time, and was a cause of considerable doubt to many. But Sundar never swerved from his first resolution, although the criticism he was often subjected to tended to make these years hard for him.

Whilst Sundar was in college Mr. Stokes returned from furlough, having gone to England and there started the idea of a brotherhood, whose work should be exclusively for the glory of God and the help of man, in whatever form it might present itself—not necessarily the work of preaching. The humbler and harder the labours the better! The Archbishop of Canterbury was approached on the matter, and seemed to think it would be a good thing, so that after Mr. Stokes returned to India this brotherhood was started with five persons, the only Indian being the Sádhu. The brotherhood was inaugurated in a solemn service in Lahore Cathedral, when two of the five took the vows, but the Sádhu remained a novice, having already vowed himself to the life of a sádhu for Christ's sake.

Upon leaving college Sundar was recommended for deacon's orders by the Diocesan Mission Council and was granted a licence to preach. Soon after leaving

college his heart turned to Tibet, whither he went for the six months of hot weather, returning to Kotgarh, where he worked in connexion with the Church Missionary Society for some time.

Like the great English preacher, John Wesley, the Sádhu looked upon the world as his parish, and he preached everywhere and to all who would give heed to his message. It was not long before dissatisfaction was expressed at his methods of work. He was told that in deacon's orders it was undesirable and that as a priest it would be impossible to continue working in this way. The pure and simple spirit of the man never for a moment staggered or stayed to contemplate what would be the result if he declined to obey. The sheltered life of a priest with its possibilities of preferment held no temptation for Sundar. On his knees and in the quiet of his own spirit he settled the momentous question, and then took the step that for ever set him free of all sects. He returned his licence to preach to his Bishop, explaining that he felt called to preach to all and wherever God sent him. Bishop Lefroy (now Metropolitan of India) with a generous large-heartedness, accepted the reason with the licence.

The great crisis of his career was safely past. From that day Sádhu Sundar Singh made himself the possession of Christians of all creeds, and also set himself free for a mighty work amongst non-Christians all over India.

Chapter XII

Early Experiences as a Sadhu

He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin (James v. 20).

Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (Luke xv. 7).

The years 1911 and 1912 were spent in touring in Garhwal, Nepal, Kulu, the Panjab and many other places, whilst each year during the six months of hot weather the Sadhu went alone to Tibet. The following



THE SADHU READING HIS NEW TESTAMENT

incidents give some idea of the Sádhu's life and work at that time.

Sádhu Sundar Singh was one day making his way to a certain village when he caught sight of two men in front of him, one of whom suddenly disappeared. A little further on the Sádhu overtook the remaining man who accosted him, and pointing to a sheeted figure on the ground told the Sádhu that this was his friend who had died by the way, and he had no money to bury him. The Sádhu had only his blanket and two pice which had been given him for the toll bar, but these he gave to the man and passed on his way. He had not gone far when the man came running after him, and sobbed out that his companion was really dead. The Sádhu did not understand, until he began to explain that it was their custom to take it in turns to prey on the public by pretending one of them was dead. This they had done for years, but that day, when the man went back to call his friend, there was no response and on lifting the cloth he was horror stricken to find him actually dead. The wretched man sought the Sádhu's forgiveness, being assured that here was some great saint whom he had robbed of all he had, and thus had the dire displeasure of the gods fallen upon them. Then Sundar spoke to him of the Lord of life, and in that penitent moment the man accepted the message. The Sádhu sent him to a mission station near Garhwal, where in due time he was baptized.

On one of his long journeys in the mountains the footpath divided at a certain point, and he was in doubt as to which to take. He chose the wrong one, and upon arrival at a village he found he had gone eleven miles out of his way. Turning back he met a man with whom he entered into conversation, when the Sádhu began to speak to him of Christ. Then the man produced from the folds of his clothes a copy of the New Testament, which he confessed to having hidden when he saw the Sádhu coming, in the belief that he was a Hindu sanyási. The man had doubts to which he could find no solution, and the Sádhu dealt with them so that

the man found Christ, and in speaking of this to the writer he remarked: 'Then I knew why I had gone astray, for Christ had sent me to help this anxious soul.'

At Markanda the Sádhu found some men reaping in a field. Joining them he spoke to them as they worked of Jesus and eternal things. At first they listened with indifference and then with disapprobation. They had no mind to hear about a strange religion. Some of the men began to curse and threaten him, and one took a stone and hit the Sádhu on the head. After a time the man who had thrown the stone was seized with a severe headache and had to stop work. The Sádhu then took up the scythe and reaped with the others. This softened their hearts and at the end of the day the men invited him to accompany them home. In the quiet of the evening a better opportunity was afforded for the giving of his message, and then the Sádhu went away. The reapers, having rested began to take stock of the harvest gathered that day, and to their astonishment found a greater yield than they had had in previous years. They were then afraid, and declared amongst themselves that a holy man had visited them and this increase was proof of it. Then they strove to find the Sádhu, that they might give better heed to his message, but found him nowhere.

This incident was published in a North Indian paper, *The Nur Afshán*, by one of the men present on the occasion, who made an appeal through its pages to the Sádhu to return amongst them that they might receive his message.

At the ancient city of Jalálabád the Sádhu found himself amongst a cruel and treacherous people, who seeing he was a Christian laid a plot to take his life. Sitting to rest himself, the news was brought to him by one less evil-disposed than the rest, but as he had done nothing to warrant such a thing he found it difficult to believe it possible. However he decided to take the warning and to seek a safer retreat. Only the common serai, infested with mosquitoes and viler insects still, remained and to this he went. Next morning when he

had lit a fire and was drying his wet clothes a number of Pathans arrived. Much to his amazement the foremost of these men came in and fell at his feet. The Pathán then explained how they had sought to take his life, but seeing him had altered their intention, for instead of his being frozen as they had expected, he was well and none the worse for his experiences. They were driven to believe that here was one favoured of Allah, and they begged that he would accept of their hospitality and accompany them home. The Sádhu spent a very happy week with them, and they gave good heed to his teaching, so that the Sádhu believes there will be fruit of his labours amongst these rough and hardened men.

Chapter XIII

Obedience by Suffering

Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. v. 8).

No one but Sádhu Sundar Singh himself knows how great have been his sufferings during his years of service for his Master. He admits that very often he goes without proper food, being reduced to eating the berries and produce of the jungle, and many a night he has been driven from the villages and been obliged to sleep under trees or in caves of the earth. The parts of India where the chief of his work has been done are no places for such a life, so that it is not surprising that on more than one occasion the Sádhu has shared his miserable shelter with a snake or wild animal.

At a village in the district of Thoria the people behaved so badly to him that his nights were always spent in the jungle as long as he was working amongst them. On a particularly dark night, after a discouragingly hard day, the Sádhu found a cave where he spread his blanket and spent the night. When daylight came it revealed the horrible spectacle of a large leopard still asleep close to him. The sight almost paralysed him with fear, but once outside the cave he could only reflect

upon the great providence of God that had preserved him while he slept. His own words are: 'Never to this day has any wild animal done me any harm.'

On another occasion, being driven out of a certain village Sundar went to meditate on a rock close to a cave. Deep in contemplation, it was some time before he noticed that he was being stealthily observed by a black panther that was crouching not far away. Filled with fear but putting his trust in God, he quietly rose and walked forward as if nothing were there. He got away safely to the village, and when the people knew of his escape they declared he must be a very holy man, since this very panther had killed several people from that vilage. They then gathered round to receive the message which they had spurned before, and so Sundar again thanked God and took courage.

One morning a number of sádhus were gathered on the banks of the Ganges at a place called Rishi Kesh amidst a crowd of religious bathers, and amongst them stood Sádhu Sundar Singh, Testament in hand, preaching. Some were listening in a mildly interested way, whilst others joked and scoffed at the man and his message. Unexpectedly a man from the crowd lifted up a handful of sand and threw it in the Sádhu's eyes, an act that roused the indignation of a better-disposed man, who handed the offender over to a policeman. Meanwhile the Sádhu went down to the river and washed the sand from his eyes. Upon his return he begged for the release of the culprit and proceeded with his preaching. Surprised by this act and the way the Sádhu had taken the insult the man, Vidyánanda, fell at his feet begging his forgiveness, and declaring a desire to understand more about what the Sádhu was speaking about. This man became a seeker after truth, and afterwards accompanied the Sádhu on his journey, learning with meekness from his lips the story of redeeming love.

Very early in his pilgrimages Sundar travelled through a number of villages, one of which was called Doliwala. The day had been a hard one, the march very long, and the Sádhu arrived utterly exhausted and

badly in need of food and rest. Walking down the village street he asked again and again for some shelter where he might spend the night, but in every place—when it was discovered that he was a Christian—he was driven away. Heavy rain was falling and it was bitterly cold. Wearied almost to death Sundar sought refuge in a ruined hut of two rooms, without doors or windows. At least he was out of the rain, and thanking God he laid his blanket in the driest spot and went hungry to bed.

Soon he fell asleep, and did not wake until the chilly gray dawn came. In the half-darkness he saw a black object coiled up in his blanket close beside him, and looking closer he discovered that a huge cobra had also sought shelter and warmth beside him. Speedily he escaped from the hut, leaving the snake asleep, but on further thought he returned. Seizing a corner of the blanket he shook it free of the venomous reptile, who sluggishly wriggled off to the furthest corner of the room. Sundar then took his blanket with a feeling of great thankfulness that God had taken care of him in the hours of sleep, and spared him for further service.

An educated Arya Samaj gentleman relates how on one day, when he was descending a mountain he met a young Sádhu going up. Curiosity prompted him to watch what would happen, so instead of joining the Sádhu for a talk as he at first thought of doing, he waited and this was what he saw. When the Sádhu got to the village he sat down upon a log, and wiping the perspiration from his face he commenced singing a Christian hymn. Soon a crowd gathered, but when it was found that the love of Christ was the theme many of the people became angry. One man jumped up and dealt the Sádhu such a severe blow as felled him to the ground cutting his cheek and hand badly. Without a word the Sádhu rose and bound up his bleeding hand, and with blood running down his face prayed for his enemies and spoke to them of the forgiving love of Christ. In writing of this incident this gentleman adds that he himself, by seeing the Sádhu's conduct, was 'drawn out of the well of contempt and brought to the fountain of life.' The man, Kripa

Rám, who had thrown the Sádhu down, sought long and earnestly for him, in the hope that he might be baptized by 'that wounded hand,' but not finding him, he openly confessed Christ by baptism, and still hopes to see Sádhu Sundar Singh some day.

Chapter XIV

The fast

When thou prayest . . . pray to thy Father which is in secret (Matt. vi. 6).

When thou fastest . . . appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret (Matt. vi. 17, 18).

Towards the end of 1912 Sádhu Sundar Singh went down to Bengal, and a proposal having been made to send him to Canada as a missionary to the Sikh community living in that country, he was prepared to undertake the work. It was however found impossible at that time for an Indian to procure a passport for Canada, and the idea had to be abandoned.

He then worked his way across the country from Calcutta to Bombay, and eventually north again. After his baptism he had had two strong desires, one being to visit Palestine, the scene of our Saviour's life and work, and the other to imitate Jesus in fasting forty days and forty nights. By these means he hoped to obtain fresh spiritual enlightenment. To achieve the first in 1908 he made his way to Bombay, but found that for various reasons the journey at that time was impracticable. Some four years later, when the proposed visit to Canada fell through, the Sádhu's mind turned to the idea of retirement for prayer and fasting, in the belief that these things would minister to the great need for a close communion with God and increased power for service.

It was about this time that the Sádhu came in contact with a Roman Catholic medical man, a Franciscan, by name Dr. Swift, and travelling with him up north they discussed the idea of a fast, the latter striving to dissuade the Sádhu from attempting it, and declaring

that death would surely result if he did. Seeing, however, that the Sádhu still desired to accomplish it, this doctor begged him to give to him the addresses of his chief friends, that he might communicate with them. This was done, and the two men parted, the doctor with the intention of joining a Catholic fraternity and the Sádhu with the determination to seek retirement that he might give himself to fasting and prayer. Away in the jungly country between Hardwar and Dehra Dun, Sundar Singh went alone to meet his God.

The days grew into weeks and no news of him reached the outside world. When the second week had passed his Catholic friend felt so sure that he had succumbed, supposing him to be dead somewhere in the jungle whither he had retired, either he himself or through a friendly priest wired to the Sádhu's friends that he was dead. As the days grew into weeks the probability of this seemed so reasonable that it became an accepted fact. Obituaries appeared in the various papers, a memorial service was held, and money contributed for a tablet to be placed in the Church at Simla.

Meanwhile the Sádhu remained in the jungle without food and growing weaker day by day. Having been warned as to what might happen to him, the Sádhu made provision for increasing weakness by collecting forty stones, one of which he dropped each day in order to keep the count, but at length he was unable even to do this. His hearing and sight left him, and he lay as one in a trance, conscious of what was going on about him but unable to make any outward sign of life. As physical powers declined and extreme exhaustion set in he felt within himself a great quickening of the spirit, and in this state his complete dependence upon God and other matters of intense spiritual importance were revealed to him, so that since that time none of the doubts that once assailed him have had any power over him.

In this condition he was found by some bamboo-cutters, who seeing his saffron robe lifted him into his blanket and conveyed him to Rishi Kesh and then on to Dehra Dun. From thence he was sent in a carriage

to Annfield. So altered was he in appearance by what he had passed through that he was not recognized by his Christian friends at Annfield, and they only knew who he was by the name in his New Testament. These friends nursed him back to life, and by March he was well enough to continue his travels, when he went up to Simla and heard the story of his reported death.

This fearful experience did bring the spiritual enlightenment the Sádhu had believed it would, and although count of time was lost and the fast certainly could not have lasted for forty days, this enlightenment was gained almost at the loss of his life.

Chapter XV

Further Journeys and Persecutions

Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death (Phil. i. 20.)

After his recovery from the effects of the fast, Sádhu Sundar Singh went again to Tibet for the six months of the hot weather of 1913, and returning he spent the cold season touring through North India. Early the following year he was again in Bengal, and working his way up to Darjeeling he entered Sikkim. Small Native States bordering Northern India, chief of which are Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan are ruled by princes of their own and are as hostile to Christianity as Tibet itself. The people are superstitious and ignorant, and the preaching of a foreign religion is strictly prohibited within certain areas. In 1914 Sádhu Sundar Singh entered Nepal knowing that he ran every risk of ill-treatment and possible death. For some time however, in spite of opposition and threats, he went from place to place publishing the good news until he came to a town called Ilom. He had not been there long when he was told he must discontinue preaching or some evil would befall him.

An order was issued for his imprisonment, and

whilst delivering his message he was seized and hurried off to the common prison, to spend his nights and days with murderers and thieves. Here was opportunity for him to speak for his Master, and soon he began to tell the unhappy prisoners of the power of Christ to change men's hearts and to bring peace to their consciences even within the dismal walls of a prison. Many believed his message of joy and accepted Christ, and thus were these fearful days converted into seasons of blessing both to the Sádhu and to those whom he taught.

The news that he was changing the hearts of his fellow-prisoners was told in high places, and on this charge Sundar was removed from the prison and taken to the public market for punishment. Here he was stripped of his clothes and made to sit on the bare earth. His feet and hands were fastened into holes in upright boards (stocks) and in this crippled position, without food or water he was made to remain all day and the following night. To add to his tortures a number of leeches were thrown over his naked body, and these immediately fastened upon him and began to suck his life-blood. He carries the marks of this horrible treatment to-day, so that of him it may be truly said, 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' A mocking crowd stood round to watch his torture and none offered him even a drink of water to relieve his physical misery. In speaking of this experience to the writer the Sadhu said 'I do not know how it was, but my heart was so full of joy I could not help singing and preaching.'

Through the long night he agonised, growing hourly weaker with loss of blood, but when morning came he was still alive. When his persecutors saw the Sádhu's tranquil face they were filled with superstitious dread, and being sure that he held some strange power they did not understand, they took him out of the stocks and set him free. This dreadful experience had made the Sádhu so weak that he fell unconscious and only after some time and many attempts did he manage to crawl away from the spot. In that place were some secret believers belonging to the Sanyási Mission

(spoken of in a later chapter) and these kind people received their wounded brother and cared for him until strength returned.

The Sádhu's brief record of his days in the prison of Ilom will be found in a later chapter, and as in his case it is to be expected, he ascribes his great joy in that dreary place to the near companionship of his never-failing Friend, Jesus Christ.

At Srinagar in Garhwal Sundar had a most unexpected experience. He knew that this was a dangerous place in which to speak of Christ, but one day when he was preaching outside the city some young men taunted him by saying he dare not say such things inside the city. He felt impelled to accept the challenge, and entering the city he went to the market-place and there started to preach. Upon seeing this some of the bystanders hurried off to bring the pandit of the place, hoping he would controvert the Sádhu's statements and put him to shame.

When the pandit arrived he went up to Sundar, and in front of all the people he placed his two fore-fingers in the Sádhu's mouth with the words, 'I have done this to prove that we are brothers, and not enemies as you suppose, for we both believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour.' The effect upon the crowd was electrical, and before many minutes had passed all his enemies had vanished away. Sundar then passed one of the happiest days of his life in conversation with this good man, discovering, much to his joy, that the pandit only prolonged his stay in that dark place in order to bring others to the light. Already he had by God's grace secretly won sixteen souls, and intended to carry on this work so long as it was God's will he should.

In the wild and inhospitable regions which Sádhu Sundar Singh often needs to pass through in the course of his missionary journeys, he naturally has varied and often most extraordinary experiences. One such occurred when he was passing through the thickly wooded forests of Bhulera, which is a favourite haunt of thieves and murderers. Four men suddenly inter-

cepted him and one rushed on him with a drawn knife. Unable to protect himself and believing the end had come he bowed his head to receive the blow. This unexpected conduct caused the man to hesitate, and to ask instead that the Sádhu should hand over all he had. He was searched for money but finding none his blanket was seized and he was allowed to pursue his way.

Thankful to escape with his life he went on, but before he had gone far one of them called to him to return, and now certain that death awaited him he turned back. The man then enquired who he was and what was his teaching. Sundar told him that he was a Christian Sádhu and opening his Testament he read to him the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The man listened attentively, and in reply to the Sádhu's question as to what were his thoughts he replied that the end of the rich man had filled him with dread, adding that if such a terrible punishment followed so small a sin what would become of greater sinners.

The opportunity thus afforded was quickly seized by the Sádhu. He immediately opened up the riches of God's grace to man, and listening the man's heart was deeply moved. He poured out a miserable story of guilt and sin amidst many sobs and tears. He then took Sundar to his cave, prepared food for him and begged him to eat. After some more conversation and a short prayer the two men retired to rest. Very early next morning the man awoke Sundar and bringing him outside took him to a cave where there was a ghastly heap of human bones. With loud weeping he pointed at the bones and said, 'These are my sins; tell me, is there any hope for such as me?' The Sádhu's heart was touched by the man's anxiety and contrition, and he told him of the thief who was forgiven on the cross. Then they knelt together and the poor sinner sobbed out his repentance to God. Before the Sádhu had finished with him the man had made a start on the strait and narrow way, and together they went to Labcha, Sakkum, where he was handed over to the missionaries and eventually baptized.

The other three men also gave up their bad life and took to honest occupations, and thus was the Sādhu used for the help of four great sinners.

Chapter XVI

Tibet

The Chumbi valley on the northern side of Darjeeling is an indescribably lovely and seductive spot, and is one of the approaches to the barest and most inhospitable country of Asia—Tibet.

Tibet has not always been a closed land. Until the end of the eighteenth century only physical obstacles stood in the way of entry into Lhasa itself. Jesuits and Capuchins reached Lhasa and made long stays there, and were even encouraged by the Tibetan government. As early as 1325 it is known that foreigners visited the country, but the first Europeans to reside in Lhasa arrived there in 1661.

Two centuries ago Europeans might travel in remote parts of Asia with greater safety than is possible to-day, for now the white man inspires fear where he used only to awaken curiosity. At the end of the eighteenth century the Nepalese overran Tibet and the Chinese were called in to aid, and almost annihilated the Gurkhas. From that time China practically ruled in Lhasa. The policy of strict exclusion dates from that time. Since the decline of China's power, a Tibetan Mission to Russia supposedly of a religious character, brought Tibet somewhat under her influence. Several Buriat lamas had been educated in Russia, chief of whom was one Dorjjeff, who headed the Russo-Tibetan Mission of 1901. Dorjjeff and others inspired dreams of a consolidated Buddhist religion, under the spiritual control of the Dalai Lama, backed by the military power of Russia; this was believed possible because the ignorant lamas imagined Russia to be a Buddhist country.

Tibet is a mysterious country with an ancient but arrested civilization; a land where prayer flags flutter

in the wind, and where men spend half their time in turning mechanical prayer wheels. The people are mediaeval in government. Witchcraft, incantations and ordeals by fire and boiling are still common. The entire population is only about six millions.

In Lhasa the home of the Buddha and the Dalai Lama is a superbly detached building on a hill of rock called the Potala. 'Its massive walls, its terraces and bastions stretch upward from the plain to the crest, and are crowned with glittering domes shining with turquoise and gold. At its feet lies the squalid city of Lhasa. Buddhism holds all life sacred, yet this place, where dwells the divine incarnation, has witnessed more murder than even the bloodstained castles of mediaeval Europe.'

The Buddhist religion is the one thing that keeps the nation together and every family must contribute one son to the priestly order of Lamas. Hundreds of years ago a Buddhist saint predicted that Tibet would one day be invaded and conquered, and Buddhism would become extinct. Thus it is that a blind fear and fanaticism combine to keep all doors of entrance closed to this land, and the teaching of a foreign religion more than anything else brings down on the head of the offender the severest persecution and even the most cruel death.

Chapter XXVII

Sundar in Tibet—I

When I came . . . to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord (2 Cor. ii. 12) . . . a great door . . . and there are many adversaries (1 Cor. xvi. 9).

Their feet are swift to shed blood . . . and the way of peace have they not known (Rom. iii. 15-17).

Born and bred in the far north and familiar with the mountainous regions of the Himalayas, Sundar's heart turned to the dark places where no vision of Christ has come.

Feeling as he does about Christ it is not surprising that the Sádhu eventually made choice of the most difficult and dangerous fields 'where Christ is not named' as his peculiar sphere. It therefore seems quite a natural thing that the mind of Sádhu Sundar Singh should have turned to the closed land of Tibet soon after he set out to preach the gospel. For more than a century the vast continent of India had had its missionaries, and hundreds of thousands of India's children had responded to the call of Christ, many of whom in their turn had become messengers of peace to their own people. In his own words, 'There are many to preclaim the truth in India,' but as he turned towards Tibet and the contiguous country of Nepal, his heart went out to the people who have no means of hearing of Christ.

Foreign missionaries are debarred from entering the country, and it is scarcely easier for an Indian, for he must not only face the inhospitality of the bitter climate but the active hostility of a half-civilized and wholly fanatical people. But to suffer for his Master's sake has been a great mark of the life of Sádhu Sundar Singh, and so undismayed by what probably lay before him he set out on his first journey into that land of bigotry and darkness.

Christ the Son of God hath sent me
Through the midnight lands,
Mine the mighty ordination
Of the pierced hands.

Unfortunately the Sádhu has not kept any connected account of his work and journeys through Tibet, so that all there is to tell is in the shape of fragments of his experiences and sufferings, and also of his success in that fascinating and yet terrible land.

On his first journey in 1908 when he was scarcely nineteen years of age he started alone and was unacquainted with the language spoken in Tibet. He was very glad to avail himself of the help offered to him by two Moravian missionaries working at Poo, a little frontier town. He stayed a week with these good men, and

then they gave him a worker of their own who was to accompany him for some distance, and instruct him in the dialect of the people. Except that he knew the intense hostility of the Tibetans to every religion but their own, the Sádhu had little knowledge of place or people, but it was not long that he remained in ignorance.

He soon found they resented his teaching, and wherever he went he was met with bitter opposition and hatred, especially from the Lamas. These men were particularly venomous, and often assumed a threatening attitude on the border of the crowds that gathered to hear the Sádhu's preaching. Notwithstanding this, he reached the important town of Tashigang in safety and was astonished and pleased to receive kindly treatment at the hands of the head Lama of the place. This man was a person of importance and under him served some hundreds of inferior lamas.

The Lama not only received the Sádhu with kindness but provided him with food and shelter, and as the weather was bitterly cold this hospitality was most acceptable. Moreover the Lama called a gathering of the persons under his control to hear the Sádhu's message, and so the Gospel was preached by him with great thankfulness of heart.

Journeying on from this place he was fortunate enough to arrive at a town under the rule of another Lama who was a friend of the Lama of Tashigang, and here again he was accorded a welcome and a good hearing. From this place he visited several other towns and villages, but in these he met with even greater opposition than in his earlier work. He was constantly threatened and warned to get out of the country lest some evil befall him. But he was not to be thus terrorized, and he continued his work amidst many difficulties.

Thus has Sádhu Sundar Singh 'besieged this stronghold of bigotry and fanaticism,' and in doing so has passed through many tribulations, but to him

persecution and infamy are as nothing if he may win but one soul for his Saviour. A Ceylon friend says, 'His resolution to walk barefooted amidst the perpetual snows of Tibet is the mark of his invincible determination to bring men to Christ.'

Chapter XVIII

Sundar in Tibet—II

For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life (Phil. ii. 30).

I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die . . . for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xxi. 13).

With a deep determination to make the name of Christ known in this hostile country the Sádhu continued his work, knowing that sooner or later bitter persecution would be his lot. At a town called Rásár he was arrested and arraigned before the head Lama on the charge of entering the country and preaching the gospel of Christ. He was found guilty, and amidst a crowd of evil-disposed persons he was led away to the place of execution. The two favourite forms of capital punishment are being sewn up in a wet yak skin and put out in the sun until death ends the torment, or being cast into the depths of a dry well, the top being firmly fastened over the head of the culprit. The latter was chosen for the Sádhu.

Arrived at the place he was stripped of his clothes, and cast into the dark depths of this ghastly charnel-house with such violence that his right arm was injured. Many others had gone down this same well before him never to return, and he alighted on a mass of human bones and rotting flesh. Any death seemed preferable to this. Wherever he laid his hands they met putrid flesh, while the odour almost poisoned him. In the words of his Saviour he cried, 'Why hast Thou forsaken me?'

Day passed into night making no change in the darkness of this awful place and bringing no relief by sleep.

Without food or even water the hours grew into days, and Sundar felt he could not last much longer. On the third night, just when he had been crying to God in prayer he heard a grating sound overhead. Someone was opening the locked lid of his dismal prison. He heard the key turned and the rattle of the iron covering as it was drawn away. Then a voice reached him from the top of the well, telling him to take hold of the rope that was being let down for his rescue. As the rope reached him he grasped it with all his remaining strength, and was strongly but gently pulled up from the evil place into the fresh air above.

Arrived at the top of the well the lid was drawn over again and locked. When he looked round his deliverer was nowhere to be seen, but the pain in his arm was gone, and the clean air filled him with new life. All that the Sadhu felt able to do was to praise God for his wonderful deliverance, and when morning came he struggled back to the town, where he rested in the serai until he was able to start preaching again. Back in the city at his old work again was cause for a great commotion. The news was quickly taken to the Lama that the man they all thought dead was well and preaching again.

The Sádhu was again arrested and brought to the judgement seat of the Lama, and being questioned as to what happened he told the story of his marvellous escape. The Lama was greatly angered, declaring that someone must have secured the key and gone to his rescue, but when search was made for the key and it was found on his own girdle, he was speechless with amazement and fear. He then ordered Sundar to leave the city and get away as far as possible, lest his powerful God should bring some untold disaster upon himself and his people. And thus God delivered Sundar from a fearful death, and again Sundar praised God for interposing on his behalf.

Chapter XIX

Further Experiences in Tibet

Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure . . . in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake (2 Cor. ix. 10).

Dr. Fosdick in his *Manhood of the Master* says :

Jesus made the right attitude toward hostile men not a negative refraining from vengeance, but a positive saviourhood, that prays for them, blesses them and sacrificially seeks their good.

This is the attitude of Sádhu Sundar Singh in all his work and life of suffering amongst the peoples of Tibet and other hostile states where he goes to carry the Gospel of Christ. In the course of his addresses he sometimes gives illustrations from his own experiences. In speaking on the text 'he that loseth his life shall save it' he told this amazing story. He was one day making a journey across some mountains in Tibet on a bitterly cold day when snow was falling. Both he and a Tibetan companion who was travelling with him were almost frozen to death, and despaired of reaching their journey's end alive. They came to a deep precipice to find a man lying there apparently dead. Sundar suggested they should carry him to a place of safety, but the Tibetan declined, saying it was all they could do to get into safety themselves, and he passed on his way. With difficulty the Sádhu lifted the man on his own back, and began to struggle forward with his heavy load. Soon the exertion brought warmth to him, and communicated itself to the helpless body over his shoulders. He had not gone very far when he overtook his Tibetan companion who had fallen stone-dead across the path. Eventually Sundar arrived at the village, by which time the half-dead man had recovered consciousness, and they both thanked God for lives snatched from the jaws of death. The Sadhu said he had never known a better practical exposition of the words, 'Whosoever will save

his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.'

On another occasion the Sádhu had been climbing over rough crags when he came to a cave in which he saw a man praying. In order that he should not fall asleep the man had tied his long hair to the roof of the cave, and with closed eyes he strove hour by hour to meditate and pray. Sundar entered the cave and asked the man why he was thus suffering. Like many others this man had spent most of his life in worldly pursuits, but deep down in his mind there was a haunting fear of a dreadful and unknown future. This at length drove him to forsake the world, and he had come to this remote spot in the hope of finding satisfaction in prayerful meditation. He explained that no relief had come to his spirit. The Sádhu opened his Testament and read to him such words as, 'Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest.'

He proceeded to explain the true way through Jesus Christ. Spellbound the poor fellow listened to the wonderful words, and at last he jumped up crying out, 'Now is my soul at rest; make me His disciple, lead me to Him.' He begged hard for immediate baptism at the Sádhu's hand, but was persuaded to accompany him to the nearest mission station, where he was left in the care of the missionaries for further instruction.

The Sádhu tells of another place where his message had met with great hostility and the people were converted into friends by an accident. He was climbing a steep mountain when he slipped and fell, and in his fall a large stone was displaced and rolled over the precipitous cliff on to a place beneath. It happened that just where the stone fell a huge cobra was lying, and it was immediately killed. A boy who was herding cattle saw what had happened and ran to tell the Sádhu, explaining that this very snake had been the cause of some deaths in the village, so that nobody dared to pass along that road. Then he ran to tell the villagers, who were so impressed and so grateful that they welcomed the Sádhu, and here he had the blessed privilege of making known the love of Christ to the ignorant people.

The Feet That Bled

The rough mountain track had torn his feet, and Sundar sat down to bandage the wound. Another man traversing the same road and seeing what had happened stopped to ask the Sádhu how he felt. They entered into conversation, and the stranger learnt how that Sundar for his Master's sake day by day walked many weary miles to teach people of him whose feet had bled on Calvary. The two men held sweet converse together, for Sundar found that his companion, Tashi by name, was an earnest seeker after salvation. But in his quest for truth he was perplexed with many doubts, and these the Sádhu tried to solve. Tashi afterwards said to him, 'Looking at your bleeding feet something within me seemed to say there must be some great power behind this happy life of self-denial.' And so Tashi urged Sundar to remain with him, and he spent more than a week at his house instructing him and praying with him.

Tashi then sent him on to a Lama who was friendly with him and kindly disposed to Christianity. When the Sádhu returned he found Tashi full of hope and happiness, for he had found Christ, and now nothing but baptism would satisfy him. All doubts were gone, and so Tashi and his whole family begged that they might now receive baptism. So before leaving Sundar had the great joy of baptizing Tashi and his family—nine persons in all. Being chief secretary to the Lama of the district and a man of importance Tashi has not been called upon to suffer for his faith, but he is under strict orders not to persuade others to follow his example or in any way to propagate the new faith.

Many a time and oft Sádhu Sundar Singh feels the loneliness of soul that must come to all whose entire lives are given to spiritual things. Extreme exaltation of spirit accompanied with tremendous expenditure of nervous power must be followed by moments of reaction. Ordinary missionaries and ministers may find respite in change of occupation, but not so the Sádhu. His

changes are of place not of work. Day in and out his unwearied search for souls continues, and whether in the churches and conventions of Christians or amongst the non-Christian peoples the strain never relaxes. A missionary rightly said of him in Travancore, 'He must live very near to God to stand it,' and that is the true secret of his being able to continue. Never impatient, never too wearied to meet people who seek him, always gracious and ready night or day for the tasks that fall to him, he is a living copy of his Master. Sharing his Master's spirit he also shares His loneliness. Speaking of such a time as this he tells of a day when he was unusually tired, hungry and footsore. Utterly dejected he was painfully trudging along when he was joined by a man who entered into conversation with him, and so led him out of himself that he forgot his misery in the charming companionship of his new friend. They went on together until they came close to a village, when much to the Sádhu's perturbation he found himself once more alone. He cannot explain it, but his own words are, 'I now know that it was an angel of the Lord sent to strengthen and uphold me in my hour of weakness.'

Chapter XX

Martyrs of the Faith

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren (1 John iii. 16).

Sádhu Sundar Singh is in the great succession of noble men who have 'climbed the steep ascent of heaven,' and during his sojourns in Tibet he has come across well authenticated cases of the martyrdom of godly men who have preceded him in carrying the gospel message to that dark land. Strangely enough the first of these martyrs came from the State of Patiala where he himself was born. Kartar Singh was a Sikh and the son of a rich zamindar. All the hopes of the family were centred in this boy, for there were no other sons to

carry on the name. Like Sundar he was brought up in the midst of luxury, and preparations for his future were made by giving him the best education possible. Nothing was forgotten that could make his training complete for the fulfilment of his father's ambitions for the boy. But in spite of an utter neglect of religion in this education, there grew up in his mind a desire after spiritual things which his secular training could not satisfy. He heard of Christianity, and little by little got to know and understand its claims, until a deep conviction of its truth laid hold of him. The more he studied it the more he felt it supplied the craving of his own soul, until at last he saw but one path—and that the strait and narrow one before him.

Kartar now took the irrevocable step of declaring himself a Christian, a fact that filled the hearts of his people with dismay. Many attempts of various kinds were made to win him from persisting in this determination, but finding him not to be tempted by ordinary means, his father sent to him the beautiful girl who was his chosen wife. This poor girl came before him in all her tender promise of life, and with tears besought him to desist from taking a step that would mean such terrible loss to her. Looking upon her misery his heart was touched, yet even in this last temptation God gave him strength, and with much tenderness he put the sweet Hindu child from him, declaring that the one heart he had to give already belonged to Christ his Saviour. The broken-hearted girl returned to her future father-in-law's house to tell how useless had been her protests, since Kartar had said all his love had been given to Another.

Not long afterwards Kartar was driven forth homeless from his father's house. To enable him to buy food and sufficient clothes he then took up the work of a labourer, and undiscouraged by his hard lot, this tenderly reared boy bent his back to tasks such as his own father's servants would have despised. Very soon however Kartar began his mission to the people of his own country, and went preaching among the towns and villages of Patiala, where he trod the thorny and difficult

path that was to prepare him for the harder future awaiting him. After preaching in many places in the Panjab, Kartar turned his steps towards the mountains that lay between him and darkest Tibet, and after some weeks of weary journeying over rough country he found himself in the land of his choice.

The Buddhism of Tibet has no place for Christ, whose very name arouses the deepest feelings of hatred and opposition. No record remains that Kartar met with much personal kindness or that his message was accepted, but no thought of going back seems to have occurred to his mind. These people were without Christ and had need of him, and as Christ had given His life, so Kartar was prepared to sacrifice his life also, that at least his witness should be borne and his love testified to before his persecutors. Although hearts were touched by the sight of his youth and the fervour of his message, there was little courage to take his part, and it was only after his death that the fruit of his labours and testimony came to light.

Kartar saw, as our Saviour did before him, that the thorny path could only end in one way. In spite of numerous efforts to drive him out of the country, he continued his preaching in many places for some time, but eventually he was haled before the Lama of Tsingham and charged with unlawfully entering the country with intent to teach a foreign religion. The end he had looked forward to had come, and with undaunted courage he faced the inevitable, trusting to God to give him the necessary grace to witness to his faith to the end. As Sundar afterwards heard, Kartar heard his sentence without a quiver, and with firm step turned away from the judgement seat to walk to the place of execution. On the way thence he delivered his last message, urging on the crowd the necessity of seeking salvation through Jesus Christ, and one at least of all who heard his words remembered them and through them found the Saviour.

Arrived at the place of execution Kartar was stripped of all his clothes and was sewn up in a wet yak skin which was then put out in the sun. A cruel mocking

crowd stood about to witness his tortures, and as the skin shrunk and tightened round him they laughed to hear the bones cracking in the slow process of death. By his side on the ground lay the New Testament that had been his one and only comfort through the hard days that had followed his confession of his Master. Unheeded it lay until on the third day, when Kartar knew the end was drawing on, he asked that his right hand might be set free for a moment. This was done, probably more from curiosity than mercy. Collecting all his strength Kartar wrote his last message on the flyleaf of his Testament. In Persian character—

Ján Khwáham az Khudá ná yake balki sad hazár,
Tá sad hazár bár bamiram bráe yár.

Khasrawá dar ishq aukamtarzi Hindú zan mubásh,
Ki in bráe murdá sazaad zindá ján i Khwesh rá.

In Urdu character—

Ján de dí dí húi usi ki thí; haqq to yih hai, ki haqq adá na húa.

In English.

Is this a death-bed where a Christian lies?

Yes, but not his; 'tis death itself there dies.

Translation—

From God I life besought, not once but a hundred thousand times,
That to that Friend again as oft I might return it.

That love for Him, Khasrawa, shall not be less than hers—

The faithful Hindu wife,

Who on the burning pyre draws to her heart the loved one,
And lays her life beside him.

The life He gave to me was what I gave to Him;

True is it that though I did all, yet all I could not do.

No cry of anguish escaped the brave lips, but as evening came on Kartar gave thanks aloud to God for comfort in death, and quietly passed away with the words, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

Sádhu Sundar Singh found that Kartar's father was still alive, and upon his return to the plains he sought the old man out. Telling him the story of the death of his heroic son and speaking of the great love of Christ

that had borne him through, the old man listened with a softened heart, and thus Sundar had the joy of hearing him say, 'I too believe in Him.'

Amongst the crowd who watched the passing of Kartar Singh was the chief secretary of the Lama of Tsingham. He noticed the little Testament in which this hero of the cross had written his last message, and taking it up he carried it home and commenced to study it. With the memory still fresh in mind of the words and conduct of a brave man, his heart was open to receive the message the Book had for him, and in reading it there came new light and joy to him. For some time he pondered the wonderful things he now believed, but as the realization of them more and more filled his soul, he could no longer keep his secret, and he one day revealed to his master the Lama that he had given his heart to Jesus. The Lama then declared that he must also die. Pitilessly he was judged and sentenced to the same death as Kartar. Lying in the wet yak skin in the sun was not cruel enough to teach the onlookers that this sort of thing if persisted in would add to the bitter punishment, so red-hot skewers were thrust into his body to increase his torments. As if weary of waiting for the inevitable end, he was taken out of the skin, a rope was tied round his mutilated body, and he was dragged through the streets of the town, splinters of wood also being driven under the nail of his feet and hands.

His body was then thrown on to a dust heap outside the town and he was left for dead. Having satisfied their lust for revenge his persecutors departed, and for long he lay unconscious. Very gradually the poor fellow came back to life, and little by little strength returned until he was able to crawl away. When he had recovered from his many wounds, great fear came upon the people to see him, whom they had left for dead, alive and well again, and to this day no one dares to interfere with him. Superstitious dread of a supernatural power they believe him to possess prevents attempts to take his life, so that when Sádhu Sundar

Singh heard from his lips the story of Kartar, he also heard how wondrously God enables this brave man to continue preaching Christ boldly among the people of Tibet.

These and other histories like them Sádhu Sundar Singh has himself gathered during his missionary journeys through darkest Tibet and other regions where the light of the gospel has scarcely pierced. To the people of these benighted countries his gentle heart turns with infinite longing and pity, and his burning zeal for Christ, and desire to make Him known convince him that there his appointed task lies. He says, 'This is the field which God has given me to work in. I have heard His call to serve Him in these hostile provinces. I am not afraid of the risks. I have to win the crown of martyrdom by laying down my life in these parts for Him.'

That Sundar Singh may be used of God to bring gospel light to the people of these dark places is the prayer of those who know, love and revere him. But none can pray without earnestly pleading with God to spare his wonderful life, that rather by 'labours more abundant' than by this supreme sacrifice he may serve his Master and his generation.

Chapter XXI

Sundar's Mysticism

THE study of a character like that of Sádhu Sundar Singh cannot fail to be both interesting and instructive, for in a materialistic age he is a man untouched by materialism. Mr. K. J. Saunders in the *Adventures of the Christian Soul* says :

Mysticism is the passionate search of the soul in love with God, and the claim that this search has been rewarded . . . The mystic consciousness is marked by simple clear and insistent ideas . . . Possessing God the mystic desires nothing more . . . The passionate love aroused in the heart by Christ . . . explains his clear insight into spiritual things and the tenacity of his pursuit of lofty ideals.

Thus is Sundar Singh a true Christian mystic, and so closely has he studied the life of Christ as it is written in the New Testament, and so constantly has he imitated His example, that naturally he lives in an atmosphere only now and then enjoyed by the ordinary Christian.

His wandering life of poverty in a country like India brings endless opportunities of recognizing his Father's hand in all things, so that often where others would only see the common mercies of daily life the Sádhu praises God for special help in special need. He is familiar with the deepest agony of soul and with the most intense joy. Nights of prayer alternate with long days of toil for his Lord. Close and prayerful study of the New Testament is combined with equally close communion with Christ. A yearning desire to save lost souls that gives him no respite from his labours is balanced by a deep devotion and love for his Saviour that fills his heart with peace, and shines in his face. The things of the spiritual life are more real to him than those of the temporal. So near does he live to the great world of spirits that to him there is nothing strange in the ministry of angels. He looks upon it as God's provision for great need, and when in his own experience some unusual event has come to pass he simply believes that God cares enough for the individual soul to interpose on its behalf. The great mysteries of life and death and the great beyond bring no distress or doubt to his mind, and he does not puzzle the minds of his hearers with them. But deep down in his contemplative mind they hold their place and are a source of infinite satisfaction to him.

The marvellous records of some of the Sádhu's experiences have preceded him in most places he has visited. Matter-of-fact people have been prejudiced by them, and emotional ones have looked for revelations and even miracles performed by him. Yet one and all, after seeing and hearing him, have been struck by his sane teaching and well-balanced mind.

His own version of the deliverances he has had falls

so naturally from his lips that it sounds like the straightforward simple statement of a second 'Acts of the Apostles.' In relating these experiences Sádhu Sundar Singh says that God has stretched forth His hand to save when nothing else could avail. This is the simplest explanation in view of the fact that for so long and under such signal difficulties and dangers the Sádhu has worked in the closed lands of Tibet and Nepal.

Incidents such as the following show the spirit in which the Sádhu takes his deliverances. On one occasion he was preaching in a village of Nepal called Khantzi, where considerable opposition was being shown. The villagers seized him and rolling him up in a blanket hustled him out of the place, but a stranger passing by took his part and released him. The day following he was again preaching in the same place, and this so angered the villagers that they took him and bound him by his hands and feet to a tree and left him there. Slowly the day wore on and being faint for want of food he looked longingly at the fruit on the tree just out of reach. In that strained position he at last fell asleep from exhaustion. In the morning he awoke to find to his amazement that his bonds were loosed. He was lying at the foot of the tree and by his side lay some fruit. He then praised God for the suffering he had endured for Christ's sake, ate the fruit with thankfulness of heart, and went on his way filled with fresh courage to preach the word to those who know it not.

On another occasion when he was in a place called Teri some men told him that in a certain village the people were anxious to hear the gospel, and they gave him instructions as to the way he should take. Following the directions he wandered on for a long time through marshy jungly country, but without seeing any signs of a village. The undergrowth grew thicker, and presently he discovered he was lost in a jungle from which there seemed no escape. Arrived at a stream he thought that by crossing it he might find a way out, but on stepping into the water the current was so strong he saw he could not effect a passage without almost certain loss of life.

Evening was closing in, and in a dejected frame of mind he sat down by the stream to consider what next to do. Listening to the weird sounds of the jungle, and watching the increasing darkness his mind became full of apprehension, for soon the wild animals would steal from their haunts in search of food and his life would be safe no longer.

He prayed earnestly to God, and then looking across the river in the gathering gloom he caught sight of a man, and the words reached his ears, 'I am coming to your help'. Then he saw the man plunge into the stream and swim across, and taking the Sádhu on his back he swam to the other shore with him. Arrived on the bank he saw a fire at which he began to dry his wet clothes, but even as he did so the stranger disappeared, and the Sádhu was left to meditate on the wonderful ways of Providence in thus sending help to him in this unaccountable way.

Yet one more instance is worth relating. The Sádhu had been preaching at a place called Kamyán where much bitter enmity had been exhibited. The whole day had passed without his being able to get any food, so, hungry and weary, he found himself in a desert place without shelter for the fast-closing-in night. Very weak and miserable he lay down under a tree and soon fell asleep. About midnight it appeared to him that some one touched him and bade him arise and eat, and upon looking up he beheld two men with food and water standing over him. Imagining that some villagers had had pity on his condition he gratefully partook of the refreshments thus offered to him. When his hunger was satisfied he turned to converse with the men who had brought the food, but there was not a soul to be seen anywhere. How they had disappeared he could not tell, but again he blessed God for His kindly provision for him in time of need.

Doubtless such instances could be multiplied, for in a life like that of Sádhu Sundar Singh there are frequent opportunities for acknowledging the good hand of God, and without attempting an explanation the Sádhu

accepts his deliverances as coming from God with a thankful mind. He simply says, 'I know the Lord has stretched forth His own hand to save me,' and whether by human agency or otherwise, he is surely right in ascribing his many deliverances to the care of a loving heavenly Father.

Chapter XXII

The Sadhu's Love for the Cross

I am crucified with Christ: . . . and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Gal. ii. 20).

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. vi. 14).

The great theme of all Sádhu Sundar Singh's preaching is Christ. The cross of Christ is the central figure to which he draws all men, for there he himself found peace, and can speak with authority of the power of that cross to save others. The most frequent words on his lips are words taken from his own experience, 'I can say with confidence that the cross will bear those who bear the cross, until that cross shall lift them into the presence of the Saviour.'

As a Muhammadan said lately to a missionary who had been relating to him the story of the cross, 'If you present that story to India as you have to me India will accept it.' Thus has the Sádhu found the heart of India, and presents to it the one and only satisfaction for its soul hunger—Jesus and His Cross. He presents it in the New Testament way, and his life of utter self-abnegation and sacrifice enforces his teaching, while his own intense personal joy in the Saviour commends his preaching as nothing else can. The cross implies suffering, and to be like his Lord is the one desire of the Sádhu. He wrote in an autograph book :

So great the joy I have in light,
That every sorrow brings delight.

And whilst surrounded by almost adoring crowds in Trivandram, his one grief was that things were so comfortable that he was not suffering for his Master enough. Perhaps later, when he was rushed from place to place for countless meetings in the heat of our tropical summer—a heat he had not experienced before (always having from a child spent the hot season in the hills) and having to travel by boat, bullock cart or train at night, and having to start his work again upon arrival, he may have felt differently. In speaking of it to his friends he simply said, 'It is the will of God.'

When he was plunged into the misery of an eastern prison at Ilom to find himself herded with all sorts of evil characters, he wrote in the fly-leaf of his New Testament these words :

NEPAL, June 7, 1914

Christ's presence has turned my prison into a blessed heaven; what then will it do in heaven hereafter.

So like his predecessors, Paul and Silas of old, his prison was his meeting-place with Christ, and to be in hell with Christ is better to him than to be in heaven without Him.

So sure is the Sádhu of Christ's continual presence with him that he expressed no surprise when the following event took place in his life. When travelling through a wild part of Tibet and unable to enter the village because of the hostility of the people the Sádhu took refuge in a cave. He had not been there long when he saw a number of the village people approaching him with sticks and stones, and feeling that his end was near he commended his soul to God in prayer. Within a few yards of him the men suddenly stood still, and falling back some paces they began to whisper together. Then again they came forward and said to the Sádhu, 'Who is the other man with you in bright garments, and many more who surround you?' The Sádhu replied that there was no man with him, but with awe the men insisted that they saw a host of bright ones standing all round the cave. Then the men besought the Sádhu to accompany

them to their homes, and going with them he spoke of Christ so that they feared and believed his words. The Sádhu then knew that God had sent His angels to protect him in danger and to open the way for him to preach to these men.

A few years ago the Sádhu wrote :

I thank God that He has chosen unworthy me in the days of my youth that I may spend the days of my strength in His service. Even before baptism my prayer to God was that He should show me His ways and so He, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life did show Himself to me, and called me to serve Him as a sádhu and to preach His holy Name. Now although I have suffered hunger, thirst, cold, heat, imprisonment, maledictions, infirmities, persecution and innumerable evils, yet I thank and bless His holy Name that through His grace my heart is ever full of joy. From my ten years' experience I can unhesitatingly say that the Cross bears those who bear the Cross.

To-day the Sádhu bears the same testimony to the writer, adding that he hopes God will spare him yet for some years, that the fulness of manhood's strength may all be given to Him in the precious work of preaching and in suffering wheresoever his Lord may send him.

Chapter XXIII

Sadhu Sundar Singh and the Sanyasi Mission

It was surely a wonderful provision of God when He called Sundar Singh to be a Christian Sádhu. Amongst Christians his saffron robe gives him a position the best possible for the acceptance of the message he brings. Granted the same man and message he would assuredly have won the heart of the Indian Christian Church, but being a true Sádhu in appearance as well as in spirit has added enormously to the influence and power of his teaching.

Perhaps nothing has proved more wonderful to Christians everywhere than the amazing humility and

sweet simplicity of his sádhu's spirit and no one is more filled with wonder than himself when crowds linger about him just to look at his face.

But the most remarkable results of his being a Sádhu are apparent in his life and work amongst non-Christians. This he looks upon as his sworn task. Naturally his sádhu's robes gain him an entrance to places and to people as nothing else could. Often in the course of his pilgrimages from place to place he comes across unusual types of Indian sádhus, and it has been his privilege to discover to the world a marvellous movement amongst the most deeply religious men of India towards Christianity.

The Rev. J. J. Johnson, of the Church Missionary Society, who died early this year, was one of the finest Sanskrit scholars in India. During the latter part of his life, he was set apart by his Society for a work he was magnificently fitted for amongst the pandits and learned classes throughout India. The story of this work is a romance waiting to be written. On his last visit to the south he told us that he believed there were great numbers of the highest castes of India waiting to become Christians, a statement made after years of intimate knowledge of and relationship with the leaders of religious thought in India.

But it was reserved for Sádhu Sundar Singh to lift the veil and prove the truth of this astonishing statement, and this is how it came about. Towards the end of 1912 the Sádhu went to Sárnáth (the scene of Buddha's first preaching) and there he met with some men dressed as sanyásis. Entering into conversation with them he found they were Christians, and belonged to a secret organization numbering some 24,000 members, who are scattered all over India. These are divided into two classes called Shishyas and Swámis, or Companions and Heralds. The Companions are ordinary members who fulfil all the usual work of life. The Heralds number about 700, are dressed like Sanyásis and are the unpaid preachers who conduct services among the Companions wherever they meet them.

They observe baptism and the Lord's Supper. Bands of these secret believers are found all over India, and in most distant and unexpected places. It was due to the kindness and care of some of these good people that Sundar was on one occasion nursed back to life after imprisonment and persecution in Nepal. The Sádhu says that these believers are wont to assemble at fixed and very early hours in 'Houses of Prayer' outwardly resembling Hindu temples, but which contain no images or pictures.

The Bible is read and expounded and Christian papers are circulated. Eastern methods are sedulously followed, such as complete prostration of the body in prayer. The belief is held by them that if men prayed in perfect faith they would have constant visions of the Master Himself.

Belonging to this secret Christian Brotherhood are various sádhus and hermits of recognized holiness, and a large number of the members are educated and wealthy men of the upper classes, who freely subscribe towards the maintenance of the organization. The Sádhu has often been present at their services, and has several times been mistaken for one of themselves. He has very earnestly begged that they would openly confess Christ, and their promise is that when the right moment comes they have every intention of doing so.

On one occasion while the Sádhu was preaching on the banks of the Ganges his audience told him that while they liked him as a sanyási they did not like his message, and they requested him to visit a great Hindu preacher who lived close by and who was attracting large crowds. For three days the Sádhu could not get near him for the crowd. One day however, he was able to meet him alone, and then the Sádhu learnt that he was a Christian. The Hindu preacher then embraced him and said, 'Brother, we are doing the same work.' Surprised at this the Sádhu said he had never heard him preaching Christ to which he replied, 'Is there any foolish farmer who will sow without preparing the ground? I first try to awaken in my hearers a sense of

values, and when a hunger and thirst for righteousness is created I place Christ before them. On the banks of this ancient river I have baptized twelve educated Hindus during the past year.' He then showed the Sádhu the Bible he always carries about with him.

In one of the holy cities of India some of these secret believers took the Sádhu to an old temple, where they showed him an ancient Sanskrit manuscript containing an account of Pandit Viswa Mitra, one of the three Wise Men who after seeing the Divine Child came back to India but returned at a later date to Palestine, when Christ had entered on His public ministry. They claim that he was the one of whom the disciples complained to the Master that they found him performing miracles and forbade him 'because he walketh not with us.' This parchment also gives in modern Sanskrit a history of the Brotherhood during later days.

The Sanyási Mission does not appear to have flourished much until the days of Carey, when some Christian Sanyási heard the Gospel from his lips and were fired with fresh enthusiasm. With quickened faith from that time the mission prosecuted its work and numbers began to increase.

In one of the large northern cities the Sádhu was introduced to a famous Hindu preacher who was considered a profound scholar in the Vedas. He heard him lecture on the Hindu Scriptures, and towards the end the lecturer said, 'The Vedas reveal to us the need of redemption from sin, but where is the redeemer? The "Prajapathi" of whom the Vedas speak is Christ who has given His life as a ransom for sinners.' When questioned afterwards by Hindus the lecturer said, 'It is I who believe in the Vedas and not you, because I believe in Him whom the Vedas reveal, that is Christ.'

In speaking of this the Sádhu declared that the great need of our age is that the Church should have a broad vision; that the Christian should transcend the limitations of sect and creed, and be prepared to recognize the Spirit of God in whatever form it may be made manifest. He added that he fully believed the Sanyási

Mission is being blessed of God, and although it has taken a form we are not accustomed to, it is given to its leaders to do great things for India.

Yishú Násri Náth ki Jai—'Victory to Jesus Lord of Nazareth'—is the password of this secret Brotherhood of Christians in India.

Chapter XXIV

Sadhu Sundar Singh and the Maharishi of Kailash

SOME time ago a North Indian newspaper published the following :

Our worldless, selfless and godly brother Sundar Singh has discovered the Christian hermit the Maharishi at Kailash, who has for years been on the snowy Himalayas praying and interceding for the world. . . You have revealed to the world the secret of one of the members of our mission the Maharishi at Kailash.

During his pilgrimage in Western Tibet the Sádhu was constantly searching for those holy men who retire to the snowy peaks and caves of these distant mountains, there to spend their last days in contemplation. Far from the dwellings of men in the silence of the eternal snows stretches the Kailash range of the Himalayas. The mighty Indus has its remote and primary source in this range, and its great tributary the Sutlej also takes its rise there. The Sutlej flows through the country of Sundar Singh's birth, and at one point where the bed of the stream is 8,494 feet above the level of the sea, the rocky gulf presents a scene of awful sublimity and is one of the natural wonders of the world.

On the summit of one of the mountains of the Kailash Range is a deserted Buddhist temple now rarely visited by man. A few miles from this temple dwells the great saint known as the Maharishi of Kailash, in a cave some 13,000 feet above sea level. All this region is the Olympus of India, the seat of Hindu holy myths, and it is associated in Hindu sacred books with the names of great and

devout souls of all times. In one cave the Sádhu found the skeleton of some nameless holy man who had died whilst meditating there.

The scenery all around is grand and impressive, and amidst the everlasting snows springs of boiling water bubble up from out the frozen ground. Some three days journey from this place is the famous Lake Mansarowar, an exquisitely beautiful and holy place. On the Lake float many fine swans, and upon the overhanging cliffs, in sweet picturesqueness are perched ancient Buddhist temples and monasteries. The Sádhu describes this as one of the loveliest places he has ever seen, but he also adds that here too are found the most cruel of nomadic tribes, who slay for the pure love of it, and thus convert it into a place of terror to the harmless pilgrims travelling through it.

In the summer of 1912 the Sádhu travelled through these regions alone and on foot, often refreshed by the beautiful scenes through which he passed, but more often fatigued to the last degree in his difficult and fruitless search for the holy men he hoped to meet there. He will never forget the day when, struck with snow-blindness and almost wearied to death, he staggered drearily on over snowy and stony crags not knowing whither he went. Suddenly he lost his balance and fell. Recovering from the fall he awoke to one of the greatest experiences of his life, for he opened his eyes to find himself lying outside a huge cave, in the shelter of which sat the Maharishi of Kailash in deep meditation.

The sight that met his eyes was so appalling that Sundar closed them and almost fainted. Little by little he ventured to make an inspection of the object before him, and then discovered that he was looking at a living human being, but so old and clothed with long hair as to appear at first glance like an animal. Sundar realized that thus unexpectedly he had succeeded in his search after a holy man, and as soon as he could command his voice he spoke to the aged saint. Recalled from his meditation the saint opened his eyes and cast a piercing glance upon the Sádhu, and amazed him by saying, 'Let us kneel and pray.' Then followed a most earnest Chris-

tian prayer ending in the name of Jesus. This over the Maharishi unrolled a ponderous copy of the Gospels in Greek and read some verses from the fifth chapter of Matthew.

The Sádhu heard from his own lips the account of his wonderful life. He claimed to be of very great age, as indeed he looked to be. The roll from which he had read he explained had come down to him from Francis Xavier and the Sádhu noticed that it was all written in Greek Uncials, and may therefore prove to be of value to scholars should it come into their possession. The Saint said he was born in Alexandria of a Muhammadan family, and was brought up to be a zealous follower of the prophet. At the age of thirty he renounced the world and entered a monastery in order to give himself up entirely to religion. But the more he read the Qur'an and prayed, the more unhappy he became. During these days of spiritual distress he heard of a Christian saint who had gone over from India to preach in Alexandria and from him he heard words of life that filled his hopeless soul with joy. He now left the monastery to accompany his teacher in his missionary journeys. After some time spent thus, permission was given him to go on his own account to preach the gospel wherever God sent him. The Saint then started out on an evangelistic campaign that lasted a very long time.

At last wearied with his strenuous labours the Saint resolved to spend the remainder of his days in the secluded spot where Sundar had found him. During the years lived in this place the Saint learnt much about the products of the mountains and jungles around him, by means of which he has been able to subsist to this day. When the Sádhu first met him he was chilled to the bone by the bitter cold. The Saint gave him the leaves of a certain plant to eat, which having eaten he immediately felt a comfortable glow steal over his body.

The Sádhu had long conversations with the Saint about holy things, and heard many strange things from his lips. Some of the excellent illustrations the Sádhu uses in his sermons were given him by this aged Saint. The Maharishi belongs to the Sanyási mission. His

astonishing visions as related to the Sádhu would, if written down, read like another Book of Revelation, so strange and incomprehensible are they, and the Sádhu himself warns readers and hearers of these visions that common interpretations can never disclose the meaning, since the saint has to clothe his ideas in language that cannot be taken literally.

Sádhu Sundar Singh has visited the saint on three occasions, and is willing that anyone desirous of seeing him shall accompany him when he goes—as he hopes to do—this year to Kailash and Tibet.

Chapter XXV

Sadhu Sundar Singh in South India

ALTHOUGH the chief part of his life has been given to non-Christians Sádhu Sundar Singh has not neglected Christians, and at the present time he is doing a unique work amongst those of India's peoples who are nominally Christians. The large Christian community of South India has provided an immense sphere for his operations, and regardless of distinction of sect or creed, thousands have flocked to his public meetings everywhere. The Sádhu's work has been varied and strenuous. Often during these past months his day's work has begun so early and continued so late that he has had scarcely time for meals, and no leisure for even the study of his Testament. In places where he has spent many days the people have rested after his departure as a man does after a good meal; but in no place apparently have people thought that the Sádhu needed rest.

Long days full of engagements have been succeeded by a wearisome night journey by boat, bullock cart or train. The new day's work has begun upon arrival and continued until departure. Public meetings are usually held morning and evening, but in no sense represent the work the Sádhu does. He sits for hours daily receiving visitors and holding interviews with any and all who come to him. These interviews are given for advice, the solution of religious problems, and in the case of

Hindus for discussions and enquiries ; and the number present varies from a single individual to as many as would make up a respectable missionary meeting. The value of these private gatherings is testified to as much by the numbers attending them, numbers which increase the longer the Sádhu stays in a place, as by the witness of those who attend them.

In one place where great numbers sought the Sádhu for spiritual help, a student in the hostel where he stayed made it his happy duty to watch over him, by himself admitting the visitors. This young man kept the key of the Sádhu's door, and as the time for devotions or meals came round the Sádhu was assured of some privacy and a small measure of rest. He looks back upon those few days as the easiest he had had for some time.

In large centres where there are colleges and high schools these have been visited between morning and evening meetings, and addresses given to the students. The acceptance of invitations to meals in private houses to meet numbers of Christians has again involved extra work at the end of arduous days. The barrier of language has brought difficulty to the work in the south. Wherever English is sufficiently known the Sádhu conducts his interviews in it, but often he has been obliged to speak through interpretation, and that not always of the best. To one of so ardent a nature, so full of his message, so anxious for the souls of men, this language difficulty must have been very trying, but to see him at these times none would know his feelings.

The Sádhu seeks for no disciples to follow his example. He rightly holds that a man must have a distinct call of God to embark on the life of a sádhu. His advice to all is sane, wise, suited to the people to whom it is given. His devout mother's example in bringing him up to love and revere religion is a constant parable of life in his talks to women. He often says, 'If a non-Christian mother can do so much for her son, how much more can you Christian mothers do for your sons?' Deeply loving the New Testament himself he speaks of Christians loving it more than he, since they have never torn and burnt it as he once did, but have been trained to honour

and love it. How conscience-stricken many of his hearers are when they hear him say this he does not know!

It has been no uncommon thing during the Sádhu's stay in South India for Hindus to seek him in the silent hours of the night, when he will 'spend and be spent' in their service whilst others sleep. He also receives many letters from Christians in the places he visits, which make demands on his time and strength, and the numbers of requests for prayer he gets are legion.

Christians by thousands, who have seen Sádhu Sundar Singh, behold in him what it is possible for God to make of a man who submits himself soul and body to his Saviour, and so long as the Sádhu is visible they never grow weary of looking at him. They have received him and his message with great joy wherever he has been, the only regret being that he could not stay longer to consolidate his work. How deep and far-reaching that work is only God can know, but that the coming of Sádhu Sundar Singh amongst the Christians of South India is timely, and that God Himself sent him none can doubt. He places before men the true ideal of a godly life of complete self-surrender to Christ and of self-abnegation in His service.

Chapter XXVI

Sadhu Sundar Singh at a great Christian Convention

WHERE Christians are numerous in South India and Ceylon annual conventions for the deepening of spiritual life have of late years become very popular. Like the Keswick Convention, meetings are held for a week with settled programmes and preachers, and are attended by increasing numbers as time goes on. Several of the conventions have been blessed by the presence of the Sádhu, the largest in point of numbers being in Travancore.

The historic Syrian Church of Malabar proudly dates back to the days when it is believed that St. Thomas landed on these shores and laid the foundations of Christianity in India. This ancient Church is divided

into three sections, the Roman, the Jacobite and the Mar Thoma Syrian.

About the middle of February (1918) the Sádhu attended the Jacobite Syrian Convention in North Travancore, when some 20,000 people came together, and he spent a happy and useful time amongst them. From there at the end of the month he went on to the Mar Thoma Syrian Convention, also in North Travancore. This latter was a romantic and remarkable experience not soon to be forgotten. A hundred miles north of Trivandram is the most beautiful and widest river of Travancore. In the dry season the river flows only in the deepest parts of its bed. A big bend in the river leaves a very large sandy island upon which each year an immense booth is erected to accommodate 25,000 people.

For a week meetings are carried on during the greater part of each day. Every day, long before dawn, a man with a stentorian voice passes round the encampment crying, 'Praise be to God! Praise to the Son of God!' Very soon after he has passed the sound of prayer chanted to old Syrian tunes rises all around, and this lasts till dawn. These prayers are chanted, the weird sound rising in gradual crescendo; thus is the blessing of God invoked before the meetings begin each day. The Sádhu drew greater crowds than usual, so that before the end of the week the booth had to be enlarged, and at the final meeting no fewer than 32,000 people gathered to hear his last message.

The wonder of that daily scene is almost beyond description. A rough platform about eighteen inches high had been placed about a third of the way from the back of the booth, and on one end stood two chairs occupied by the two Bishops of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, who appeared daily in resplendent robes of red or purple satin with gold belts and quaint head-dresses. On the platform below sitting tailor fashion were the clergy of the Church, and in front of them in the same lowly style sat the Sádhu.

The vast crowds were seated on the sand, the women all in white on the left, and the men in front and at the

right. Away over the sea of heads one caught glimpses of the shining river, with its strange craft plying up and down. A more devout crowd it is not possible to imagine. Every day the early part of the meetings was given to prayer. Subjects were given for silent prayer from time to time by the presiding Bishop, when every head was bowed and the almost inaudible murmur of prayer gradually increased until a sound like the surging sea rolling in full tide rose all around—a most impressive experience!

The fearful heat was only equalled by the intense silence that prevailed as the Sádhu rose to speak. Often in his northern country he had heard of the great numbers of Christians in Travancore, and thousands had gathered in our own mission to hear him. But here for the first time he realized, as he looked at this mighty crowd how great the number was; and his heart was filled with wonder as to why the Gospel had been so long in reaching the millions of greater India.

In brave stern words he reminded this multitude that through the ages God had made the Syrian Church the repository of His truth, but that failure on their part to hand on the Gospel to their own countrymen had forced God to call men from America and England to do the work they had left undone. Then alluding to the great reform movement in this ancient Church, he earnestly and tenderly besought them to rise to the call—unheard for so long—and send the light to the millions who are still dying in darkness.

(The Syrian Church in Travancore has been alive to this great need for some years, and is continually increasing the number of missionaries it has begun to send to different parts of India.)

This same appeal has been made in other places since then, and the hearts of people have been stirred to this great issue as never before. The Sádhu clearly sees the duty and privilege God is offering to the Indian Church to enter into His purposes, and claim for Him the myriads of this ancient land. In his own person as well as by his words Sádhu Sundar Singh commends as well as urges India's sons to take up their cross and follow Christ to final victory at all costs.

Chapter XXVII

Christ sent me to preach the Gospel

Christ sent me to preach the gospel (1 Cor. i. 17)

I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel where Christ was not named . . . as it is written to whom He was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand (Rom. xv. 20, 21).

It is an acknowledged fact that some sermons are more powerful in print than when delivered. The reverse however, is even more true, for many really great sermons with far-reaching results would make but a poor show on paper. The desire has been expressed in several quarters for the sermons of Sádhu Sundar Singh to appear in book form, and a Tamil edition of such a book has been published. But those who know the Sádhu best and the true value of his work feel doubtful as to whether such a book can possibly do him justice.

Sádhu Sundar Singh is a good preacher; he loses no time in figures of speech, wastes no words on fine phrases. He is direct, clear, concise. Needless to say, he is dead in earnest, and leaves no single hearer in doubt as to the object he has in view. No hesitation in delivery or haziness of expression mars the effect of what he has to say. He never appears without a message straight from God, and his clear voice carries that message to the remotest limits of his audience, however large that audience may be. A tense silence and strained attention witness to the power with which he speaks. His calm and yet humble dignity of manner, as he stands with his small Urdu Testament in his clasped hands is strangely at variance with his impassioned language and vigour of delivery. Not for one moment does any dulness creep in to give opportunity to heedless hearers to stare about.

Constantly in parable or from actual personal experience Sádhu Sundar Singh illustrates what he has to say and always aptly and strikingly. In lecturing to non-Christians he contends that religion is not a matter of argument but of experience, and proves very conclusively before he has done that this is so. However mixed

his audience may be none can go away without the deep impression of having heard the truth. Lovers of Jesus Christ are fortified in their faith, the careless are brought suddenly to a standstill and made to reconsider their position. Thoughtful non-Christians are brought face to face with the question as to how far Christ has any claim on them, and as a result many have been brought to the feet of the Saviour.

The real significance of the preaching of the Sádhu lies in the triumphant reaffirmation of the eternal things of spiritual life. The charm of the message has brought new life to many Christians, who before his coming had scarcely felt the vital power of Christ in their own lives, and to whom religion was more or less a lifeless thing. For many Christians the first flush of zeal and devotion for Christ had passed away and the pressure of the world had blurred the heavenly vision.

But Sádhu Sundar Singh, coming fresh from the continual communion he holds with his Lord, stands amongst men in his Sádhu's robes, filled with a message so persuasive, so insistent, so attractive that once again is felt the power and the sweetness of a Saviour well-nigh forgotten. He draws his life from God's unfailing springs of joy, and communicates something of that joy to those who see and hear him, until they too are fired with desire to drink at the same fountain and share the same bliss.

His message to Christians is strong and impressive. It is urgent and compelling, pointing to higher and nobler ideals of living, which his hearers must heed or be left worse off than before he came.

'In preaching to non-Christians he never attacks their religion or uses unbrotherly terms of reproach. But he fearlessly testifies to his own failure after long and painful search to find peace, joy, satisfaction apart from God's great revelation in Jesus Christ. Neither argument nor philosophy, but the inspiration which comes from the simple yet powerful testimony to the power of God to redeem from sin is his method of drawing non-Christians to the feet of Christ.'

The Sádhu goes back to foundation things: God's

love; Christ's witness in life and death to that love; the unflinching power of that love to save all who accept it; and supremely Christ and His cross are his theme. He speaks of One he intimately knows; One whose power he has never ceased to experience from the hour when that One appeared to him as a boy; One who is his companion day and night, and for whom he has given up everything that life can offer. His hearers are conscious that before them stands a man who is LIVING Christ as well as preaching Him.

Sádhu Sundar Singh's own personality carries weight with his message. At one of his early meetings in the South, when his address was over he sat down before the translation was completed, when it was most difficult for the good translator to keep the attention of the audience to an end. At later meetings the Sádhu remained standing until the translation was finished, when not an eye was turned away for a moment. It is himself and his message combined that is powerful to influence those who receive that message from his lips.

The writer of *Ecce Homo* says :

The first step towards a good disposition is for a man to form a strong personal attachment. Let the object of that attachment be a person of striking and conspicuous goodness. He will ever have before his eyes an ideal of what he himself may become. Example is a personal influence.

The Sádhu wherever he goes is able to awaken this feeling of strong personal attachment, and this power he uses entirely to draw men to Christ. The crowds that constantly linger round that they may catch sight of him, and the honourable titles often accorded him voluntarily in places where he goes (such as Mahatma and Swami, indicating a partaker of the Divine nature) witness to this spirit of personal devotion. Devout Christians realize that if the Sádhu can awaken such feelings, how much greater loyalty and devotion may spring from the appeal of Jesus Christ Himself. And thus by his personality the Sádhu leads men upwards to the one source of spiritual life.

Many young men in the South have desired to become his disciples, but the advice of the Sádhu to all

such is that they should serve God where they are and amongst those around them.

His chief work, the work the Sádhu recognizes as that specially given him by God, lies beyond the limit of ordinary churches, amongst those inaccessible to their influence and suasion. 'To the churches he comes to impart a deeper glow and sterner purpose, but he passes on his way without tabulating results, only leaving behind a burning message and an inspiring memory. His simplicity is a rebuke to all selfish love of the world, and his presentation of Christianity is calculated to correct the erroneous idea that it is only a religion suited to westerners in which India can have no share.'

Chapter XXVIII

His witness to all men

Thou shalt be His witness to all men of what thou has seen and heard (Acts xx. 15).

Ye shall be witnesses to ME . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts. i. 8).

In May 1918 the Sádhu had almost completed a long and arduous tour through the South. Before passing west and north again he left the great continent of his birth, and crossing to Colombo spent six weeks in Ceylon. The story of those crowded weeks would fill many pages. Suffice it to say that the enthusiasm of the South was here repeated in every place, and increasingly as the days passed.

K. R. Wilson, Esq. of Colombo was instrumental in forming a committee of missionaries, ministers and laymen of all denominations, and their harmonious working together contributed largely to the success of the Sádhu's work in Ceylon. Mr. Wilson in a private letter to the writer says:

His (the Sádhu's) meetings were always attended by enormous crowds. People began to come in from 3 o'clock when the meetings were announced to begin at 6 p.m. Catholics and Hindus came in great numbers. People came in from forty miles to hear him, and he has left a very deep impression in Ceylon.

The Rev. G. G. Brown, M.A., of Jaffna, Ceylon, in speaking of the Sádhu says :

He never gives the impression that his should be the normal experience of others, or that others should follow his manner of living. He represents a purely Indian type of life and thought. In him we have an expression of Christian thought and ideals in a purely Indian setting. He exalts the life and character of his Master and has a straight message for those of other faiths.

Mr. Amarasakera of Kandy also adds :

The Sádhu's mission drew immense crowds of Muhammadans, Hindus, Buddhists, Roman Catholics and Protestants of all denominations. The impression made on the minds of those who saw and heard him, by his personality and his soul-stirring message is very great.

A Hindu gentleman in Ceylon hearing the Sádhu speak on prayer remarked, 'He is really a spiritual guru (teacher) and I hope to get light from him.' The Sádhu often addressed as many as three meetings a day in Ceylon as well as conducting interviews, and he suffered so much from the moist heat that in writing to a friend in the north he likened himself to a lump of salt in solution, adding he was 'willing to melt like salt if only the South might be salted.'

The Sádhu's tour through South India and Ceylon was an astonishing experience. In Colombo every day hundreds could not get near the doors of his meetings, and from dawn to late at night great numbers sought him out for spiritual guidance, so that his life was lived amongst crowds. Newspapers teemed with accounts of him and his name became a household word in thousands of Christian homes. But multitude and popularity count for nothing to the Sádhu beyond the fact that they provide for him unique opportunities to preach Christ and reach the souls of men. At what cost this great work has been done only the Sádhu himself knows. His calm dignity amidst the enormous crowds that surround him and invade his privacy at all hours gives no hint of his innermost shrinkings from such great publicity.

Returning in July to India the Sádhu completed his work in the South, turning west to Bombay for a Conference and then north to Calcutta, where he fell ill of influenza, which was raging there at that time. In

writing afterwards of this he said : ' In sickness God has given me the rest and time for prayer I could not get in the South.' Upon his recovery he went to spend a few days with the great Eastern Mystic Sir Rabindranath Tagore at Bolpur, returning to Calcutta to obey a call to visit Burma and the Straits Settlements.

In the cosmopolitan cities of Rangoon, Penang and Singapore the huge audiences were perhaps as mixed in race, status and language as is possible anywhere in the world. Here the Sádhu came in contact with Chinese, Europeans and various Indian races, and his addresses were usually translated by two interpreters. Urdu, Burmese, Tamil, Telugu, Chinese and English were the medium of his messages in these places, whilst business men of different races, army men and leading officials took the chair or shared the same platform with him. In Maymyo the Sádhu met a group of Panjabis who insisted on his taking a meal with them, and much to his joy he was invited to eat from the same dish with them. In Penang the Sádhu held a special meeting for Sikhs. The building was crowded, and at the close of his address a Sikh gentleman got up and publicly invited the Sádhu to speak in the Sikh temple there.

A gentleman writing of his work says, ' In every city he visited the Sádhu had a royal welcome, and he has left a trail of light behind him.'

The beginning of this year (1919) marks a great event in the Sádhu's career, for not only has he made his great journey eastwards to China and Japan where he now is, but on January 2 he found himself in Singapore amidst a people whose common language was English, and none could translate from Hindustani for him. Immediately he resolved to use English, and from that day forwards his work has been done almost entirely in English.

In writing of this the Sádhu explains that he will have no further need of an interpreter, but that at first especially he felt when he was speaking in English as if an internal earthquake were taking place, 'The thoughts in my heart have no means of escape and my heart quakes.'

But the great venture has been made, and how immensely this helps in bearing his witness to 'the uttermost parts of the earth' the Sádhu is best capable of judging. One great mark of his work since he left the shores of India is the unanimity of feeling of all classes and races in regard to him. People of high rank, Europeans, Indians, Chinese, have attended his meetings, entertained him, provided free passports by rail and steamer for him, and all bear the same great testimony that 'he is truly a man of God and has a message for all peoples.'

Chapter XXIX

I live by faith

I live by the faith of the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20).

No one can study the life of Sádhu Sundar Singh without feeling that he has entirely cast himself upon God, and that God has amply rewarded his faith. Christ's words, 'Take no thought for your life . . . what ye shall eat . . . drink . . . put on,' have been taken quite literally by the Sádhu, and he implicitly believes that his 'heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of all these things' and will supply them.

To pass alone from the continent of India through Burma, Perak, Penang, Singapore, and away even to China and Japan with their varying climates and languages, without money and with only a foreign language as his medium of communication with strange races is a fresh proof of his faith in God. But the same strong simple faith that in earlier years made him turn his back upon his home and took him while yet a boy to the wilds of inhospitable Tibet has enabled him to go at God's call to those distant places and peoples without a moment's hesitation or doubt. And when he returns that same faith will take him back to the frozen highlands of his chosen field of labour, where amongst the great solitudes of the snowclad Himalayas he will again hold high converse with his God.

Even those windswept plateaux of Tibet, whose scanty populations refuse his message and drive him forth hungering into the wilderness, provide for him those great experience about which he is so reticent, but which prove him to be specially called of God and cared for by Him when human sources of help fail. For months together the Sádhu has wandered alone in regions seldom trodden by the foot of man, and has learnt to love the mountain peaks where he beholds God's mighty works and often hears His 'still small voice.' Amidst such scenes Sádhu Sundar Singh has not only seen visions but has gathered power for his great ministry amongst the multitudes of the plains. And while his sensitive soul turns with longing to the wider spaces where he can be alone with God, he has walked through countless temptations amongst crowds of men, and retains through it all the unspoilt sweetness and simplicity his lonely life of hardship for Christ has given him.

In his own inimitable way Sádhu Sundar Singh used a striking simile when he compared India to a giant, the snowy Himalayas being the head and South India the feet. Putting his finger on the weak spot in the armour of Southern Christianity he said, 'It is with the feet of South Indian Christians that Christianity can walk in India. But alas! although the feet are there, apparently strong and well-shaped they cannot walk. What is wrong? As in the case of a man I saw in Cochin, there is elephantiasis in the feet, and this elephantiasis is the spirit of caste.'

Who can speak with greater authority on this subject than Sádhu Sundar Singh himself? Like Paul who declared himself 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews' so may the Sádhu claim to be 'a Sikh of the Sikhs'—one of the proudest names in India; but instead his life testifies to the words, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.'

In passing through Ceylon and India the Sádhu has made his appeal. Well might he say, 'Be ye followers of me' in this great matter. When will the great Chris-

tian Church accept and abide by his teaching and example, and casting off the chains of centuries enter into that 'fulness of life' of which the Sádhu so constantly spoke, and which he himself enjoys? Thus and thus only shall she enter into that abundant and glorious service that shall claim India for her Lord.

The visit of Sádhu Sundar Singh to the Churches of South India and Ceylon is over. His work is done, and he has passed to other lands and other communities. The hearts of thousands have been touched by his message and his personality, and though eminently practical he has stirred deep emotions in every place he has been to. Probably no single man has attracted so much attention and devotion in all the history of the Christian Church in India.

During his visit people constantly besought him to pray for them; to visit and pray with sick friends and to bless little children; and even to touch his robe brought comfort to many. As the Sádhu continued his journey through the South these requests and this treatment became so general, and reports of his having healed the sick by his touch or through prayer so persistent that he was obliged to decline requests to visit the homes of people, lest superstitious beliefs should cause them to look upon him only as a worker of miracles. When asked to bless people his reply invariably was, 'How can these hands bless anyone—these hands that tore up God's Word and burnt it in the fire?'

Not by such means did Sundar Singh strive to bring men to the feet of his Master! But by forceful message and by a living example he showed men how to tread the same path, and with persuasive tenderness he sought to lead them to the Saviour. Is Sundar Singh to pass leaving only a burning message and precious message?

Greater than the blessing of his hands, greater than his *personality* is the deep desire of his heart that the Christians of India and Ceylon may accept his ministry put it into practice, live by it, and with him become true and devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Let us arise, and 'His grace abiding' follow Sádhu Sundar Singh even as he follows Christ?

The Message of this Book

THIS little book lays no claim to being a life of Sádhu Sundar Singh, or even a record of his labours. It attempts to lay bare the secret of the singularly beautiful character of a deeply religious soul, and seeks to extend as well as to keep in mind the magnetic influence of a wholly consecrated life.

If in any measure it shows how one good man in preaching and living Christ so presents Him to the world as to 'draw all men unto Him,' and if other hearts are stirred to a deeper devotion to Christ and so catch something of the Sádhu's spirit, its purpose will be served.

The writer acknowledges help obtained from Mr. Zahir's book *A Lover of the Cross* and to various newspapers that have from time to time printed accounts of the Sádhu's life and work.

It is a great joy to render this small tribute to the amazing power of Sádhu Sundar Singh to turn men to Christ, and it is offered to the reader by one who has experienced that power, in the hope and with the prayer that its message may be blessed of God to all who will receive it.

R. J. P.

Jesus said

I, if I be lifted up, . . . will draw all men unto myself.

O God O kinsman loved, but not enough!
O Man, with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drawn human breath!

Come, lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
Die, ere the guest adored she entertain—
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly day
Should miss Thy heavenly reign.



SADHU SUNDAR SINGH

APPENDICES

Sikhs

THE Sikh States lie in the Panjab, roughly speaking between the rivers Ganges and Indus, and are bounded on the north by the mountainous region that separates them from Tibet and the Chinese Empire. The two capitals are Amritsar and Lahore.

Nanuk was the first of the Gurus or Teachers of the Sikhs. He was born at Rayapur in 1469. From childhood he was inclined to devotion and indifferent to worldly concerns. His father sought to divert his mind from religious things, and on one occasion sent him to transact some business for him, which was to result in financial profit. On the way Nanuk met some hungry fakirs, and divided his father's money between them observing, 'The gain of this world is transient. I wish to relieve these poor men and thus obtain that gain which is eternal.' After partaking of food the fakirs entered into a long discourse upon the unity of God, with which Nanuk was greatly delighted. Returning to his home, his father asked what profit he had brought, and receiving the reply that he had fed the poor, his father abused and even struck him. Rai Bolar, the ruler of the district hearing of this, interdicted Nanuk's father from ever again treating him in this way, and he himself humbly bowed in veneration before Nanuk.

Nanuk then, adopting the saffron robe began to practise the austerities of a holy man, and soon became celebrated for the goodness of his life and character. He travelled to many Hindu holy places, and even to Mecca itself in order to purify the worship of both Hindus and Muhammadans. Wherever he journeyed, he preached the doctrine of the unity and omnipresence of God. Born in a province where these two races were utterly opposed to each other, he yet strove to blend them in one harmonious peace, and to bring them back to a simple and pure religion.

Nanuk taught that devotion was due to one God, and idol worship must be banished, his object being to

reform, not to destroy existing religions. Before his death his followers had become a distinct sect, and were known as 'Sikhs,' and Sikh means Disciple. In all his writing Nanuk borrowed indiscriminately from the Shástras and Qur'án. Many of the chapters of the Adi Granth were written by Nanuk and were in verse. Nanuk desired to abolish all caste distinctions, and place all men on an equality. He also declared that the most acceptable offering to God are morning praise and the presentation of the body to him.

After the death of Nanuk other leaders followed to the number of ten, the two most famous of these being Arjun and Govind Singh. A bitter persecution of the new sect by Muhammadans converted a harmless religious people into a great military commonwealth, determined to avenge the sufferings they had endured. The martyrdom of their pontiff Arjun turned a hitherto inoffensive sect into a band of fanatical warriors. Har Govind one of their leaders at the time gave to all his followers the honourable name of 'Singh' (Lion), and the order that no Singh should allow his hair to be cut was issued at the same time.

Govind Singh the tenth and last of the great Sikh leaders or pontiffs wrote a large part of the tenth book of the Granth, and held a place in the esteem of his followers as at least equal to Nanuk himself. Under Govind Singh the Sikhs assumed the character and rank of a military nation. Before his death he made the promise that whenever five Sikhs should meet together he would be present amongst them.

The temples of the Sikhs are generally plain buildings with a flat roof and sufficiently large to hold a number of worshippers, who stand during service. The forms of prayer and praise are simple. Portions of the Granth are read or sung, and the priest exhorts the people to 'meditate on the Book.' Daily worship is performed by pious Sikhs and portions of their scriptures are read. Sikhs believe that they were placed by their last and most revered pontiff Govind under the peculiar care of God.

Tibet and the War

An English paper has recently published the following :

Tibet the most solitary of the hermit nations, has come forward with an offer of a hundred thousand men to help fight the battles of democracy on the European front. Our awed imaginations have lingered over the impassable terrors of the road to Lhasa, forbidden on pain of death to outsiders. The barred doors swing wide on rusty hinges, and the Grand Lama, most secluded of the world's monarch steps into the fast-running currents of twentieth century history as the friend and defender of democracy.

The natural prayer of the Christian is that this great closed land may now open its doors to the Gospel, and that Sadhu Sundar Singh may 'see of the travail of his soul' in bringing Tibet to the feet of Christ.

Who rules India? What power is it which sways the destinies of India at the present moment? It is not politics, it is not diplomacy that has laid a firm hold of the Indian mind. It is not the glittering bayonet nor the fiery canon of the British army that can make our people loyal. Armies never conquered the heart of a nation. That power is CHRIST. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved this bright this precious diadem, India; and Jesus shall have it.

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN

Appreciations

SÁDHU Sundar Singh arrived in Ceylon on May 29, 1918, and returned to India on July 11, after nearly six weeks ministry in the Island. He first visited Jaffna where he remained for just over a fortnight, then Colombo, then Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Galle, Chilaw, Matara, Badulla, and Batticaloa, and finally passed through Colombo on his way to Madura to complete his South Indian itinerary. Probably no Christian evangelical effort in recent times so greatly stirred the people as this mission of an Indian convert garbed in the manner of a Hindu sanyási and preaching the simple message of the Risen Christ. Christian and non-Christian alike flocked to his meetings, and at no place could a hall be got large enough to hold the crowds that thronged to listen to him day after day. The preaching was throughout in Urdu and was translated into English and Tamil. There was no way of interpreting his addresses into Sinhalese, and after an unsatisfactory attempt to render the Urdu into English and the English into Sinhalese, the idea of holding meetings for the benefit of the Sinhalese speaking people had to be abandoned. In addition to the public meetings, a number of drawing room meetings were held in each town the Sádhu visited, and many who would otherwise have been prevented from hearing him were thus provided with the opportunity which they much appreciated of listening to the Sádhu and coming in contact with him.

The Sádhu's striking personality everywhere attracted attention and imparted force to his utterances. There was a radiation of spiritual energy from him which clearly marked him out as a gospeller of Christ to whom some special message was committed to be delivered to the people to save them from the wrath to come, and it is impossible to estimate the extent of the revival which has been wrought among Christians no less than

the awakening among others who were previously unmoved by the presentation of the truths of our religion. There is no doubt that the profound impression which has been created by the Sádhu's ministry will bear abundant fruit and that it is, indeed, already yielding tokens of a deeper realization of the meaning and purpose of the religious life.

K. R. WILSON

The Rev. G. G. Brown, M. A. of the American Mission, Jaffna sent the following for publication sometime back to K. R. Wilson Esq.

FOR several months the people of Jaffna, and especially the Christian community, have been looking forward to the visit of Sádhu Sundar Singh. He is now here and is attracting large crowds. He has been here long enough for us to form some estimate of the man and his message. The following are a few of the points which have attracted me :

1. He has the appearance of a fine manly man, of more than ordinary stature and would attract notice anywhere. Apart from his yellow robe he has no outward marks of an ascetic.

2. He lives simply but makes no show of his simplicity nor does he appear to consider his manner of life any particular virtue.

3. He has nothing of cheap sensationalism either in himself or in his message. In a half hour interview with him over in India I was at once struck by this characteristic. Nor does there appear to be any trace of cant in him.

4. He has apparently had a deep and somewhat unique religious experience, yet it is with great hesitancy that he talks about it and he never gives the impression that his should be the normal experience of others, or that others should follow his manner of living.

5. His message is a straightforward appeal to men to turn to righteousness and godly living, and to find in Jesus the example which they should follow and the power to cleanse. He is clear and positive in exalting the life and character of the Master. He does not preach Sundar Singh. He preaches Christ. The lessons for life which he draws are true.

6. His hold upon the people is very real. I have noticed many persons who have attended his meetings over and over again, sometimes travelling long distances. I have never seen any large meetings in Jaffna at which the order and quiet attention were so marked.

7. Part of his power and charm lies in the fact that he represents a purely Indian type of life and thought. He is absolutely un-Europeanised. He is Indian through and through. We have been longing for an expression of Christian thought and ideals in a purely Indian setting. Here we have it.

8. He does not attack other religions but he has a clear straight message for those of other faiths. Sundar Singh is a man of real power and he is doing a great work.

(Signed) G. G. BROWN

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