

Waiting in the Vestibule of Heaven

Preface

The following text is an excerpt from the book, "Through The Mist", by Robert James Lees, a British medium who lived in the early 1900s. This account is a conversation between two spirits who had recently departed the Earth for the great beyond. It sheds light on the erroneous belief among the faithful, of spirits ascending straight into heavenly glory, after death; especially those who have lived true to their faith.

Both spirits were inclined towards poetry while on earth. The female, who had been in the beyond a little longer, was explaining to the man how true interests live beyond the grave, and that talents have greater scope for growth in the beyond. She demonstrated this by sharing one of her newly written poems, since coming across.

This excerpt is a translation into modern style of the words used in the book itself. This is because the English language of the early 1900s is cumbersome and not easily understood by many modern readers. Anyone interested is encouraged to read the excerpt in its original language and style starting on page 260, paragraph 4 of the book.



"Now we can talk, and I may welcome you."

"And I may thank you for all you have done for me, by your pen," I replied.

"But those thanks are not due to me, my brother, but to God; He filled my cup so full of graces that it must overflow; Whatever song I heard in my poems came not from the cup, but from the falling favors that filled the glass."

"I know it," I said, "and my soul does magnify His name; but I cannot be unmindful of the fact that the form of the receptacle has much to do with the sweetness of the music."

"Yes, that is so," she replied, "but even then, the gratitude are twofold His, for did He not construct the cup as well?"

"Come into the garden," she said, as if she didn't want to discuss it more, "where we can talk among the flowers." Isn't it a reward for all the earth's labor to be given such a home?"

"It is indeed, but yet this is scarcely your ideal of heaven."

"No, not my old ideal; but I can understand where I, like all mankind, made a huge error.

We are not hesitant to recognize facts or accept uncertainty here for fear of exposing a flaw in our teachings, so I can face the problem that would occasionally surface like a shadow of a fear as I imagined the abrupt passage of a soul from earth into the presence of the King.

Then it was a daily struggle for faith to achieve something resembling a clear vision of paradise.

If you tried to listen to its music, there was always the fear of hearing a dissonance from an inharmonious voice that hadn't had time to learn the song. You could never look at its residents without feeling a quiver of anxiety, lest one be discovered wearing clothing with the semblance of a stain.

The deathbed, particularly in some cases, appeared to be too close to the throne to be completely safe."

"And now?" I asked.

"Now, I can best compare the earthly concept of paradise to the experience of a mountaineer who, at dawn, begins from the inn and looks longingly at the peak he wishes to reach. Faith takes one big leap and stands like a queen on the towering height, laughing at the laborers who are climbing, resting, and eventually slipping so far behind. except faith is not a tourist, and its massive leap has carried nothing except its own imagination. He who used it is still among his fellow travelers, and despite this, he will be forced to ascend the steep incline with caution, or he will never reach his destination.

However, trust is beneficial since it provides buoyancy to the step and overcomes the thousand doubts that others will experience as a result of the challenges of the journey.

"If then, it were possible for you to write again, you would sing these later experiences?"

"Possible to write!" she said, little surprised. "Why can't I write now, as others sing? Genius of all kinds can only be born in the mortal state. Growth, expansion, and fruition are left to us.

One note of melody was once breathed down by angel lips, but the earth has never heard the full extent of her song. Little fingers strum the strings, but the harp cannot be tuned amid the clash of worldly discords. So, how can flesh pass judgment on the anthem of the worlds?

Thank God, I can and still do write. I learnt the alphabet on Earth, and now I'm trying to spell the words I'll use to create my songs in paradise.

Since you've heard my first, allow me to sing you one of my current sonnets."

She turned and dashed into the house as she said this, but almost immediately reappeared with a book from which she read the following, which I attach with her permission:

Waiting. Waiting now upon the threshold,
Just within the porch of life;
Safe from all the storms and tempests,
- Hushed the discord and the strife;
Stilled the heart with its wild beatings,
Calmed the hot and fevered brain
Waiting now, and resting sweetly,
'Till the Master comes again.
Waiting, where the rippling wavelets
Of life's river lave my feet;
Washing off the stains of travel,
Ere the Master I may greet;
Till the voice is full and mellow,
And I learn the sweet, new song;
Till the discord is forgotten,
That disturbed my peace so long.
Waiting, till the wedding garment,
And the bridal wreath is here;
Till our Father's feast is ready,
And the bridegroom shall appear
Till the seeds of life have blossomed,
And the harvest-home we sing.
Gathering up my life's long labours
for my bridal offering.
Oh! 'tis not as men would teach us

just one step from earth to God;
Passing through the death-vale to Him,
In the garb that earth we trod;
Called to praise Him while aweary,
Or to sing, while yet the voice
With love's farewell sob is broken,
Could we, fitly, thus rejoice?
No! we wait to learn the music,
Wait, to rest our weary feet;
Wait to learn to sweep the harp-strings
Ere the Master we shall meet;
Wait to tune our new-found voices
To the sweet seraphic song;
Wait to learn the time and measure,
But the time will not be long.
Wait to understand the glory
That will shortly be revealed
Till our eyes can bear the brightness
When the book shall be unsealed.
Oh! the vision would o'er power us,
If it suddenly were given
So, we wait in preparation,
In the vestibule of heaven.

As she read, in those eyes that looked away in patient desire along the panoramas of hope, I caught a sight of paradise itself, which absorbed me. Her recital was a calm confession of trust in God, and though the inflections of her voice sounded distant, yea, even in the near presence of her Master, she lingered over each recurring 'waiting' as if she drew the full sweetness of the assurance that 'they too serve who only stand and wait,' and was hesitant to turn away from the refreshing draught.

She had forgotten everything except her God, with whom she was once again in such wonderful connection, and the continual outpouring of her lips was like a spontaneous outpouring of overflowing melody in her soul.

I dared not speak, even when she stopped reading, but I strolled beside her, enthralled by the inspiration that surrounded her. I'll never know how long this reverie lasted, but when she finally took the deep breath that woke her up to the reality of my presence, I was startled to see how far we'd gotten. She didn't say anything, but raised her shining eyes, as if to watch her reflections fly home, and I wasn't about to shatter the precious silence on which they hovered.

"Do you not think," she was now asking, "that those are sweeter thoughts than the mistaken ideas we held on earth?"

"Yes, they are. But if you've merely reached the vestibule, what will the beauty of the inner sanctuary be?"

"I can't say, and I'm not in a position to understand if any of our pals tried to explain it. It is impossible to accurately comprehend what we have not seen, and attempting to do so merely reinforces wrong beliefs. I am unable to see therefore I am glad to wait until my eyes can handle the brilliance of the revelation; in the meantime, I have much to learn and many precious pleasures to harvest on my journey to holiness."

"Then you think there are still other preparatory stages before you reach the final home?"

"Oh, yeah! There are others; I'm not sure how many. The question that occasionally occurs to me is: Will we ever reach the end? Is there a finale? Can we reach any limit because God is infinite? Think how far we were from holiness when we began our voyage on earth, and what a little distance we have yet walked, then you will comprehend that there must yet be numerous similar steps before we can hope to stand in the undimmed glory of His presence.

With the new capacities and deeper understanding which my new existence has given me, exposing a wider sense of His purity and my own unworthiness, I sometimes fear it will be virtually necessary for the memories of our earth life to pass away before we can bear to look upon His face."

"But you do not think our identity will be lost?"

"No! We can never lose that; that would be to annihilate ourselves. But when I think of the searching power of those eyes which are too pure to behold iniquity, if the consciousness of what I have been is not lost before I am called upon to bear it, that sacred beam will call to my memory reflections of my once sinful self, sufficiently intense to stain my purity and turn that gaze away.

"What shall we do then?"

"I know not. That is one of the challenges to be overcome in the higher light. For the present we have to wait; it is enough for me to know that 'God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.'

"When you think of such a consummation, do you not wish for the intervening, stages to hasten by that you may obtain it?"

"Yes; and yet, no!" she said slowly. "That is the absolute ideal of every true soul, which, in common with them, I am anxious to reach. But at present I have not the capacity to appreciate and enjoy it, therefore the gift would be too overpowering, and would only crush, instead of uplift me. You must remember that one who has been successfully operated on for blindness can only be initiated into the light by degrees. We have all been blind, and God's light will only come as we are able to endure it. He is too clever to allow any danger of calamity. So, the climax of expectation can only be accomplished when the soul has, by process of natural growth, reached its full stature, and that is surely not yet.

As for waiting - well, I am rather like a youngster who realizes his inferiority to a man, but the realization thereof by no means decreases his present joy. The desire for fall fruit never dims the brightness or degrades the fragrance of summer rains. Neither does my strong longing to meet my Father decrease my enjoyment here. "On the other hand, every step I take towards Him sends another messenger to me, bringing a new insight of His love. Every halting-place becomes another unfoldment, and every message quietly builds my soul into a closer resemblance of Himself.

I'm always joyful, and my cup is overflowing. It is constantly expanding so that it holds, and I understand more.

I am even now in heaven, as far as I can tell, for if greater pleasure existed, I would be unable to perceive it.

Yes, there is more now than I can comprehend; my cup is overflowing, but I am unsure how much.

As a result, I feel satisfied because all of my powers and capacities have been fulfilled. However, there are other powers and possibilities that I will develop in the future, and they will be equally well cared for.

With this knowledge I look forward, like the youngster, to that which is before, and like him, perhaps I create my castles in the air of what I shall then do. But, in the meantime, I praise the Father for His amazing love in the past and present, and am content to wait His future revelation."

"In what light do you look upon your earth life, with your present knowledge?"

"If I had to write my own epitaph from my current point of view, I fear I would be forced to write 'of the soil, earthy; very earthy.' I thought I sung about spiritual liberty.

But now I realize I was nothing more than a slave, having never dreamed of liberty until I inhaled it on these beautiful hills."

"Of course, you know it is still possible to reach the earth, and correct our false ideas of the past."

"Yes, with the wonderful assistance of several of our friends, I have already shattered the solitude of my sleep and brought to earth some such ideas as the ones I have read to you. But we have numerous obstacles to overcome before we can make significant headway in that direction."

"I would like to know what is the first obstacle as you see it."

"Your familiarity with my writings," she responded, "will surprise you when I describe one of the first obstacles I encountered. But it will demonstrate how dramatically different things appear from this perspective.

One of the first lessons we must teach upon our return is that God's word cannot be printed. God is, and His message is, like Himself, an ever-present, living, moving force. What is written can never be more than a historical record of God's words to Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and Paul.

Seasons, flowers, harvests, and sunshine were not given to us all at once. God renews each at its own assigned period, and the same is true for His word.

It is like a well of water that is constantly bubbling up, rather than a stagnant pool that has remained at the same level for two thousand years.

Men must realize that He speaks today, if they will only listen, as much as He ever has.

A printed book merely records the course of the stream in the past; it cannot portray the expanding revelation of the present, and it only weakly suggests the notion of future infinite love.

Our earthly brethren have yet to discover this, and with it, they will recognise that the ordination of angelic ministry is the everlasting channel through which God's word must flow.

"This is Christ's gospel, the gospel of redeeming love."

"Still love!" I shouted; "how naturally everything here appears to resolve itself into that one word."

"It is the whisper of every tree in heaven," she replied, "the breath of every flower; yon rippling waters sing it to the banks which drink their kisses, the dew bears it to every blade of grass, the zephyrs chant it as they pass; yon craggy peaks declare it all the day, and in the vaulted dome

above its echoes find eternal habitation; it is the architect of every home, the motive power of every act, the subject of every prayer.

Love, unaided, designed the fields of heaven, fitted every bower, and spread each couch for the pilgrim soul to rest.

Flower, tree, and shrub, hill, dale, and stream, and everything that makes up this happy state in which we live, is an evolution from herself.

She is our mother, our father's bride; what else can we do except glorify her name?"

"Love, then, will be your theme in future ministry to earth?"

"Yes! That was Christ's one gospel, and it remains the only theme that may fall from heaven. When the combat was over, I would sing of love while waiting to crown the victor.