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Box 08, Folder 16 - (Indian Twilight?) Preface (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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PREFACE

Mount St Vincent's Home for the Aged
4831 35th Ave s.w.
Seattle Washington . U.S.A
Feb 20th I 66

Preface

My dear Mr and Mrs Sarabhai and Family

It is well over forty years since I had the privilege of living with you and your family in Ahmedabad, but I am happy to say that we have maintained our contact though all these ^{the} intervening years .

For myself I can truthfully say that our long continued friendship has added an extra facet to my life .The Orient, which to so many Westerners remains a world apart & strange far off ,different ^{thanks} ~~xxxxxx~~ to our friendship has never seemd so to me .My sojourn with you , your kindness and hospitality ,the gracious way you made me feel ^{so completely} ~~quite~~ at home ~~---~~ all this has rendered meaningless to me Kipling's famous couplet --East is east and West is West
And never the twain shall meet "

The Sarabhai Family became , and has remained ever since , an indestructible part of my existence .My only regret is that I was not able to revisit The Retreat ; but happily ^{our} frequent vists to Europe, and our correspondence has kept the link between us strong and shining .And I am sure that as long as I live it will remain so .

"As long as I live !" ~~is~~ this rather ominous phrase brings me to the next point in my letter.I have already well passed the allotted "three score years and ten "(I am in my 80th year) and my health is not too good and the future uncertain . This is why I am so glad that - owing to the kindness of Bharati Bhen ^{thanks} ~~these memories of the~~ happy memories of those

Bharati. When these records of those far off happy days are going to be published. I would like to regard the book that they ^{will} ~~will~~ make as a lasting monument to our long friendship ^{ship.} ~~ship.~~ ⁵ ~~5~~ ^{I should like to have of it} ~~and~~ as something which ^{will} ~~would~~ help, in however small a way, to underline the essential human unity, ~~in spite of so many superficial differences~~ between the East and the West.

Good friends, when they part, often exchange gifts. I am not, as you know, and never have been, endowed with more than a modicum of this world's goods; and therefore feel that there is nothing material ~~and tangible~~ that I could give you which you do not already abundantly possess. But there is something-- of a more immaterial nature - which I possess in which you might be interested. When I look back on my life at the Retreat, some of the most cherished ⁸ memories, which stand out, were those long philosophical and religious discussions ^{which} we used to have -- often as we sat out ~~under the blue vault of night and the bright~~ ^{under the} ~~3000~~ 3000 volt arc-lamps that lit up the lawn where we were having dinner ^{under the deep vault of night.}

Sometimes our discussions would touch on the doctrine ^{of Karma} of Karma and Re- Incarnation; and this was of special interest to me, because at that time I was very much drawn to this view of life and the Universes. In fact one of the reasons which led to my ^{coming} ~~wanting to come~~ to India, in the first place, was so that I would be able to acquaint myself at first hand with this doctrine and its practice.

At that time I was very unsettled in many of my own religious views (^{For one thing-} ~~I was swaying between Catholicism and Protestantism~~) I was more of a "seeker" looking for the Path of Liberation. Since that time my ideas have more or less crystallised out, and I have come to a more definite ^{it} and fixed point of view (~~Weltanschauung~~ ^{our place in it}) with regard to the nature of God and the Universe. ^{etc.}

~~As~~ ^{In fact} ~~a consequence~~ in 1923 I joined

~~to~~ ^{Preface} ~~the~~ Roman Catholic Church

~~I joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1923.~~

^{now} As a consequence I am in a position to see more clearly certain contrasting views, which were only dawning on me at the time I was with you. As these views are the most precious things I possess I feel a strong desire to share them with you, or at least give you the opportunity of considering them.

It would be manifestly impossible to this in any degree of fullness -- it would require at least ~~one or two~~ books -- so I am limiting myself to one aspect of the subject. And I do this because I think this particular approach brings out a very important practical consideration. ^{So} ~~So~~ I have written ^{therefore} one last letter, which is in the form of a dissertation, ~~which I have~~ entitled CHRISTIAN HEAVEN AND BUDDHIST NIRVANA COMPARED -- ~~with a practical corollary at the end of it.~~

At the end of the ^{essay} ~~letter~~ I have added a few paragraphs which I have called "A Joyful Corollary". This deals with what is a very important aspect of the question, and one which brings ^{us} ~~it~~ down from the realm of theories to a very important and definite practical issue, one to which I cannot imagine your being indifferent. ^{Beginning from page you will see} ~~You will see what I mean.~~ ^{what I mean.}

Meanwhile I remain - as always -

yours affectionately

.....

C/O The Providence Sisters
Mount St. Vincent--Home for the Aged
4831--35th Ave. S. W.
Seattle, Washington U.S.A.

Feb. 21st, 1966

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Sarabhai and Family,

All the previous letters in this book were written from India to my friends outside it. This letter, on the contrary, is written from outside India to my friends in it. And, as explained in the Preface, was written more than forty years after the other letters.

As I explained in the Preface this letter deals with a subject which after all these years stands out in my memory as one of the most important we ever discussed. In fact, one of the reasons why I came out to India in the first place was because I was so interested in the idea of Re-incarnation and Nirvana.

Christian Heave

When I lived in India I soon discovered that almost all the people I met (except the Mohammedans) believed that after you were dead you would come back again to earth in another incarnation; and also another and then another; and so on through countless different lives.

It does not seem to occur to one person in a thousand to