

Our Young People

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THE C. E. TOPIC—Sept. II.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT HEAVEN.

John 14: 1-3; Rev. 21: 1-8.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

All we know about heaven, we know from the Bible, and we know all that we need to know. We know enough to fill us with happy confidence and exultant hopes. And all we know is upon the authority of the only being who ever came out of heaven to report to our humanity its character and its glories, our Lord Jesus Christ.

For one thing, the Bible assures us that in heaven there is room for everybody. The Jewish rabbis used to declare that, no matter how many hundreds of thousands came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts, the streets of the city and the courts of the temple were never crowded. That fancy is gloriously true of the New Jerusalem.

Our entrance to this wide heaven, the Bible teaches, is by a narrow way. There is only one door. In ancient days, when the Christians were fighting the invading Turks, a mother, from the fortress, saw her son returning from a battle, defeated and in swift retreat. She shut the gates of the fortress and called to her son from the battlements, "You cannot enter except as conqueror!" At that heroic word the son returned to the fray and transformed defeat into victory. We cannot enter heaven except as conquerors, yes, and "more than conquerors," in Christ Jesus.

Probably the feature of heaven that is dearest to most hearts is its freedom from suffering and sorrow.

No more lame feet or aching backs in heaven! No more deaf ears or near-sighted eyes or throbbing heads! All faces exquisite, all bodies strong and swift, all minds clear, all spirits at peace. The wonder is that so many, believing this, yet dread the gates of death.

But to the sinner, wearied with the long struggle against temptation, saddened by remorse, even while he is grateful for the victories which Christ has won for him, there is a joy in heaven far superior to the absence of pain. Some little girls were telling their thoughts of heaven. To one it was a place of lovely meadows and trees; to another, a great, golden city; a third thought of the singing; and still others,

of the joy and safety and plenty of the celestial abodes. But last of all spoke a thoughtful lass: "Heaven; why, heaven, I think, is just a place where you're never sorry." That's it exactly.

After all descriptions of heaven, even the glowing visions of the Apocalypse, there is one thought that always means heaven to the Christian: it is where Christ is. A little boy was once asked, "Where is your home?" He didn't know what to say, for his family had moved about a great deal, but he turned at last to his mother and leaned against her. "My home's where mother is," he said. If the love of Christ has entered our hearts, then our heavenly home is where he is, in the next world and in this world alike.

Address by Rev. A. D. Paul at the Young People's League.

Mr. President and Christian Endeavorers,—

I can scarcely realize that a year has gone by since I was approached by the Executive Committee in connection with our League and asked if I would undertake the work of home missionary. I hardly thought that the time would ever come in my life's history, or in my experience as a minister of the gospel, when I would be called upon to undertake such a tremendous task and assume such tremendous responsibility. Now I have many things to say to you this evening; I would to God I could say them as strongly as I feel them deeply. Perhaps it would be well for me to give you a synopsis of the work I have been trying to do and the different places which I have visited during the past year.

Immediately at the close of Conference, which was held at Millstream, and as soon as I got affairs settled around home, I went to Dover, over in the eastern part of the province, and remained with the people of Dover for two weeks. I found things rather complicated there, and I found the spiritual life of the people somewhat in decline; and it is not, I suppose, necessary for me to say that what I found, as far as spiritual life was concerned, in Dover, I found in every place that I have been called upon to visit, and of course this was one of the chief reasons why I was directed by the Home Mission Executive to visit the different places to help and strengthen the spiritual life. I remained with the Dover church two weeks, when I came to Moncton and remained there two weeks, holding special meetings in the Free Baptist church in the city of Moncton. I came from this place and went up into Carleton county, spending some nine weeks among the different churches in Carleton county. I remained chiefly during that time with the church at Lindsay, holding special services and having a good revival in the church at Lindsay. After I got through at Lindsay I came to Millville, and of course the brethren here on the platform with me, and others of you as well, understand something of the condition of affairs at Millville. I would not undertake, of course it would not be opportune, to say anything about the condition of affairs in these different places; but at Millville the circumstances were somewhat peculiar; nevertheless, Bro. Barnes, who was pastor of the church at that time, and myself labored earnestly in that place. I think I can safely say that we did the very best we could to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to instil into the hearts of

the people the truths of God's Word, and we had good success. Now I realize that times which we deem to be successes, in the sight of God, are not so, and it is very true, too, on the other hand, that many of the things we deem failures, in the sight of God, are glorious successes. I believe that. After laboring some five or six weeks I came from Millville to Fredericton Junction, where I had the privilege of engaging in special work with the pastor of the church, and with the president of the society, and with the corresponding secretary of the Home Mission Board. We had a good time; the Lord came to us with blessing and with power, and we had a glorious revival of God's grace in the salvation of souls. It was without doubt the best revival that it was my privilege to labor in connection with during this year. After getting through with Fredericton Junction, I then proceeded up river to Southampton, where I spent some three weeks in special labor with Bro. J. J. Barnes, whose name is upon the programme, and who was to have been here this evening, but for some reason failed to show up. After leaving Southampton, where we again had a revival, and where the churches were greatly helped and blessed, I came down to Kings Co. again and spent some time there, visiting the Fifth and Sixth District Meetings. I have omitted one month of the year that I spent at Prince William, Queensbury and Bear Island, when the snow was mountains high, and it was almost impossible to get a horse out on the road. Then I came to Gagetown, after leaving Penobscus, where I have been laboring during the past few weeks before coming here to League.

Now there is just this one thought I want to impress upon you before I proceed any further, and that is, I have endeavored to direct my effort along the line of strengthening of spiritual life, and of instilling, or endeavoring to instil, into the hearts of the people the idea of consecration.

Now, what about success? Bro. Daggett has pressed me very often for statistics, and I know I was rather a hard person to get statistics from; but I have been thinking over the matter, and following my diary I have come to this conclusion, that including those who were away from God and those that had never been converted, I believe in the meetings that I have had the privilege of holding there have been somewhere in the vicinity of 150 or 175 brought back again and converted to Jesus Christ. I am perfectly sure of the fact that I am speaking within bounds when I say that; and then I want to tell you that I have preached during the past ten months about 325 sermons, besides prayer-meetings that I have held during the day and evening; and I have made somewhere in the vicinity of about 400 calls, and that means a lot of work. If you don't think so, you undertake to do it. When I started out I thought I was going to cover a much larger denominational field than it was my privilege. I have just visited a few of the churches, and many of them who have been asking for aid from the home missionary have not been able to obtain it simply through lack of time.

Now I want to say something to-night about the financial aspect. You know it was intimated by the treasurer that the finances were somewhat disappointing, and that the collections were not as large as they expected they would be. I can very easily account for it when I look over the places that I have

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visited; but when I see the low state of the churches and the comparatively short time that I had to work up the thing, I am certainly astonished that it has been as much as it has. I think, taking all things into consideration, that the churches did very well; there was some of them that did remarkably well. I know this, and I do not think I am egotistical when I say that I believe my labors among them, under the blessing of God, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit, have been the means of strengthening and helping them in the divine life. I believe that. Well now, as far as I myself am concerned, I am a stronger denominational man than I ever was. When I say that, I mean just what I say. I believe that there are two things that a home missionary—to do good work—must keep in mind: First, I would put consecration, sacrifice toward God and Christ; and second, I would say there must be loyalty among the people to the denomination with which they are affiliated. I know that in these days now when the spirit of union is in the air, and nobody can deny that the spirit of union is in the air, I know that a man is sometimes pointed out as being narrow minded, and some would almost go so far as to say that he is a little bit un-Christian-like, because he is too loyal. I do not believe in sectarianism, as we use the word; I do not believe in bigotry; but I do believe in loyalty. I think I can point out one of the reasons why the cause of God is languishing; it might almost be considered heresy, and my reason might not be accepted by a great many people, but I have been trying to look back over the past, and it is very true that the condition of our churches, as far as spiritual life is concerned, is not as strong to-day as it was ten, twenty, thirty years ago. Now it would be hard to find a more loyal class of men, and it would be hard to find men more strongly attached to their denomination than our forefathers; but who will say that they were not Christian people? Who will say that they did not possess the spirit and the mind of Christ? Who will say that they were not perhaps—yes, I will go so far as to say it—more consecrated than we ministers of the gospel to-day? I believe that along this line—and I am