

The Prophet in Life is the Subject of The Eloquent Baccalaureate Sermon Preached by Rev. Frank Baird on Sunday.

Woodstock Pastor, a Graduate of U. N. B., Addressed Students of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church—Urges Young Men and Women Going Out Into the World to Give a Large Place to the Divine, to Prayer, to Dependence, on The Things, Which Though Unseen, Are Alone Eternal.

IN ACADEMIC DRESS.

Chancellor Jones and the students—including the "co-ed"—in academic dress marched to the church and the faculty and students occupied seats in a body. Rev. Mr. Baird's complete sermon follows:

Text: II. Kings, 2: 21: "And he went forth unto the spring of the waters and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord: I have healed these waters."

SUBJECT: THE PROPHET IN LIFE.

There is presented unto us in the text a picture of a prophet of the Lord in active service. That old yet ever new problem—the city's water supply—had pushed itself to the front. The fountain that should have meant cleansing and life to the land and to the people, had become contaminated; the pall of death lay on the city, and vegetation owing to the deleterious effect of the poisoned streams of water by which the community was evidently irrigated, had failed. The land, we are informed, was barren. It is in this time of crisis and death, when the civic and scientific theories and practices of the wise city fathers had failed to bring relief, or stay the sweeping plague, that we behold appearing upon the sadly confused stage, a single prophet of the Lord named Elisha. He, out of confusion, by the power of the Divine manifested through him, brings order. He succeeds in staying the plague; in healing the city's wound, in drying the weeping eyes, in displacing death with life, in restoring the land to its wonted productivity, happiness and beauty. His coming was worth while, and we may with benefit to ourselves dwell, for a time, upon the man and the means by which the mighty and far-reaching reformation was effected.

As to Elisha, the prophet with whom we are to deal, it may be observed at the outset that he was the disciple, and later, the successor of Elijah. This latter prophet, as a consequence of a serious lapse from his usual high courage and great faith had been instructed by the Lord to anoint his successor, and the voice that had commanded one prophet to step aside had named the other who was to ascend the vacant throne. Elijah, doubtless feeling the justice of the rebuke administered to him, for his lack of faith, hastened at once to find his successor. He finds him, where many great leaders have been found, in the seclusion of the country. After the symbolic manner of the East, Elijah calls the new and hitherto unknown prophet by casting his mantle upon his shoulders. The sign is understood, and while the young farmers hesitates for a brief time, he is, with little delay, found to be a follower, and doubtless an eager disciple of the great prophet whose sun was fast hastening to its setting.

As to the time of Elisha's spiritual apprenticeship to Elijah it would seem to have extended over some six or seven years—a fairly credible college course but none too long to admit a novice into the high and solemn mysteries which pertain unto the advancement of the kingdom of God. From the note of tenderness which sounds in the conversation which takes place immediately prior to the transmission of Elijah, it is made apparent that a bond of strong filial affection bound master and servant professor and student together. And here, at the point where the passing and the coming prophet separate, we may fittingly pause a moment. Here we discover a number of the subordinate, but by no means unimportant factors in the great assumption drama; at this point, with keen interest, with true student-like alertness, anxious to put all things to the test, like the Athenians ready for some "New thing"—here we find the college men of the day, fifty in number, designated in the language of the day as "sons of the prophets." They were, however, simply students seeking to qualify for the prophetic office, Elisha being one of their number, who, by reason of his intimate relations with Elijah, his dramatic call, and probably his seniority in years and spiritual perception stood, we would imagine, about midway between the students of the day, and the great martens so soon to be taken away.

In the seventh verse of the chapter, from which the text is taken we discover the students standing afar off, but with eye and ear alike alert for whatsoever may happen. It had been rumor, and rumor had become conviction, that something unusual was to take place. They resolve that nothing shall be missed. If these theories as to Elijah's power were to be verified, or falsified, they would know it. Some of them, I fancy, were open unbelievers. There would be many doubters, some hopeful, some fully convinced. Of course they had debated these mysteries—often, mayhap hotly. The materialists, the bald rationalists, had consented, with the others, to put the matter to the test; and so, as a body, the whole college, goes out on an investigating, truth-testing tour.

They see Elijah take his mantle, wrap it together, and smite the waters of Jordan. It is a moment of keen anxiety. The students fall reverently silent. They strain their eyes to see, standing on tiptoe, as they are afar off. The theological radicals as well as the orthodox section of the group know that the crisis has come, feel that a mighty issue hangs trembling in the balance. But the suspense is not too long. It can be seen that Elijah and Elisha are moving forward. And then it comes home to even the skeptics that God has not forgotten His world nor deserted His prophet. Rationalism, materialism, natural law have all been relegated to their proper place; the divine is still a potent force among men. The waters of Jordan have divided, there is virtue in the prophet's mantle, and the prophet who had been, and the prophet who was to be, are crossing Jordan dry shod, the waters a wall on the right and on the left.

The story hurries on. Elijah is taken up, having granted the request of Elisha for a double portion of the departing master's spirit. Elisha picks up the fallen mantle, and though saddened at his loss, returning, he smites the river as he had seen his master do so recently. And at this point we may imagine a possible revival of interest, indeed if not an incipient revival of heresy, among the gazing awe-struck company of students. Can any but Ulysses bend Ulysses' bow? Has not the divine departed from the world with the older prophet, who had been whirled heavenward in a chariot of flame? Will not the victory yet fall to the rationalist; will not the so-called divine fall, or will not the honors be, at most, evenly divided? Will not the boastful theological radicals have as much support as the trustful faithful spiritualists of the expectant group? Interest is as keen as ever, and distrust is again bravely raising its head. The master did it. Can the pupil do it?

With the same faith, and the same God, he can. We read verse 14: "And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters and said: Where is the Lord, God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters they parted hither and thither and Elisha went over."

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, the spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him."

From this it is but a step to the appearance of Elisha in the text. Once convinced of the might of Elisha, the news flies that the new prophet had wrought a mighty miracle; and if the radicals among the students did not spread the news, he assured the conservatives, the adherents of the old faith, would. And the tidings reach the ears of the sadly perplexed men of the city. Perhaps, indeed, some of the students had died. Perhaps they had in their scientific studies touched the impure water question, and who knows but some of them, in vacation time, had been in the employ of the city. Perhaps in the water department.

At any rate, it seems to have been but a brief time until we find a delegation from the city waiting upon the new man of God. I fancy there was strong opposition when the proposal was first made in the city council of the distant day and city, to lay the

water question before a mere clergyman. But in great crises men sometimes fling away pride, humble themselves, and when the arm of flesh, and the devices of man fall, they turn to the representative of religion, they seek God, give a place to the divine. Small merit attaches to their visits on such occasions; and since they come driven of stern necessity, their actions lack both moral and religious quality. It is not faith so much as a conspiracy of circumstances, and the failure, of the human, that throw the unbelieving back upon the eternal. Happily, however, driven or drawn, the wise men, and truly learned men, the man who take the farther and deeper look, who apprehend life in its broader and fuller significance, turn like the distressed men of smitten Jericho, to the Lord of heaven and earth for relief. The spirit of both the people and of the prophet appear in the words preceding the text.

"And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee the situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth, but the water is naught, and the ground barren."

And he said bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake."

And here behold the man of God in action, the servant of the most high beneficent servant of humanity; here mark the prophet in life. At this point also we may with profit to ourselves pause a moment to consider first the

SOURCE OF THE PROPHET'S POWER.

As to his physical and spiritual antecedents Elisha was evidently well equipped. He was found at an honorable occupation; his request to bid good-by to those of his domestic circle prior to his departure from home shows a trait worthy of emulation. His prompt sacrifice of the means of his physical livelihood, namely his team of oxen, is a highly symbolic and significant action. He was to go no more back. Convinced of his divine call he sacrifices the means by which he had formerly lived and boldly, and in faith, flings himself on the Eternal for sustenance and support. Nor does he shrink at the task of serving as a menial, Elijah for many years. He was also a patient and courageous learner. In humility and with the reticence and reverence of the true scholar we can fancy him spelling out slowly some of the mysterious books of the chapter of life. Best of all when we see him first in the open, first as leader, first among men in active service, he here, in the performance of his first miracle, in the purifying of the corrupted and vitiated waters, does in the name of the Lord. Herein lay the chief source of his power.

As to the view that the casting of the salt into the poisoned spring was the action of the wise man of science remained in the laboratory rather than in the closet; as to the contention that we have here a case of more worldly wisdom, an illustration of the superiority of Elisha's scientific knowledge to that of the men of the city, as to the suggestion that there is none of the divine here, I remark that even though we might eliminate the divine from this incident—which I do not for a moment believe we are warranted in doing—we still have the divine dominating the life of Elisha, and what is more, the life of the world, and of men today. Devise and explain and philosophize as we will we must visit God, accept the supernatural, recognize the divine. The secret of the power of the prophet of the text lies in the place he as student gives to the divine.

For us of today there is in this a message and an appeal, and one reason why I turn your attention to a part of the Scripture and to the life of a man, where everything turns to the relationship of the attitude of man to the supernatural, is because of the fact that it not infrequently happens that,

with education, with much culture, there comes a corresponding departure from dependence upon the things which though unseen are eternal. It is by no means universally true but it emerges often enough to warrant the sound of an occasional note of warning. Let therefore be said again and again, that we cannot eliminate the divine. Indeed learning itself will not suffer the de-thronement of G.d. The pendulum swings back. Prof. Shafer, now Sir Edward Shafer, in 1912 as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, boldly declares in a notable address in that year that the secret of the creation of life was almost within the grasp of the man of science.

It was but a step to the goal; by the mingling of elements in the crucible of the chemist the riddle of the creation and the propagation to be solved and that right speedily. But Prof. Shafer is succeeded as president of the august, by a greater than he—by Sir Oliver Lodge, who in an address to the same distinguished society a year later, in 1913, restores the balance by boldly asserting that materialism is hopelessly doomed as a world satisfying theory, and by showing that there are things far beyond either the range or the sphere of the test tube of the crucible and the laboratory. You cannot eliminate the divine.

As men and women go forth as exponents and members of the aristocracy of learning—the truest, and in a sense, the only aristocracy of the world—you will meet, you will doubtless on occasions be disposed to give assent to the rationalism and materialism of the intellectual liberals, the religious iconoclasts, the spiritual atheists. You will discover speciously arranged pleas to show that in the region of Scripture the prophets decided the Law; that the Tabernacle, attributed to Moses, was the creation of the exilic priesthood eight centuries after Moses' death; that the ten Commandments, placed early in time were really late in production; that the Book of the Law found in the time of Josiah was in no sense a work of antiquity, but was in reality a pious fraud being written and placed by the priests of the Exile among the debris of the Temple and its teaching projected backward through eight or nine centuries all with a view to magnifying their office; you will find that the great and true prophets who denounced dishonesty and sham and deceit are thus made a party to the greatest of all literary frauds; you will find, as the logical and the legitimate consequence of this same vicious evolutionary theory as applied to religion, that our Lord was in error in His views of the Old Testament, and knew not of what He spoke; you will find, in a word, that attempts are made on every hand to eliminate the supernatural, to dethrone God, to crowd out the divine. You will discover noisy, illiberal dogmatists; impatient and really unlearned men, who make up in insolence what they lack in knowledge, assailing and assaulting, the things from the beginning most surely believed in the church of Christ, things which rest on a basis which cannot be shaken, which are more impregnable and secure today than ever. In meeting these I trust you will not be unnecessarily disturbed.

Welcome light from whatever corner it streams; but be sure that it is light not darkness. Let knowledge grow more, let it be felt that the last of life is that for which the first was made; let it be believed, and firmly believed, that the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns, but if you hope to be men and women of power and of service—factors in the moral, the social, the political and the civic uplift of the world; if you hope to be world heroes and heroines, if you expect to throw the saving and sanctifying salt of heaven and of the things that are pure and lovely and honest and worthy into the contaminated and corrupted streams of the life of the world, as did Elisha at the source of the poisoned waters of Jericho—if, I say, you would do this—and what man or woman of culture and learning does not expect to do this?—then go in the strength of the Lord God; do not attempt to eliminate the divine.

Though learned walk softly. In the presence of the world's need, put off your shoes from off your feet feeling that the ground is holy; recognize that reverence and knowledge advance paripassu, and, looking with the eye of the keen student and at the same time taking the attitude of the person of faith you will see every common bush aflame with God; you will be prophets and prophetesses of power in the life of the world wherever it may be your lot to live and labor.

The source of your power is the Eternal God. If you would imitate Elisha in usefulness, in service, in humanitarian and kindly deeds, if you would lay hold on his power, you must put on his garment of humility, of faith and reverence;



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DECLINE SUBSTITUTES you must cast your contribution of service into the stream of the world's life with a "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters." Then, and only then, can we hope for no more death and no more barren land. Having thus dwelt on the source of the prophet's power, I proceed in the second place, to remark on concluded on page 5.

Gun Running By Ulster Unionists

Be'fast, May 12.—Gun-running operations of Ulster Unionists have been renewed on a big scale, and 20 machine guns have been landed on the coast of County Down during the past two nights.

The garrison at Holyrood Barracks is under orders to be ready for any emergency. This indicates general confiscation of arms if a Ulster Volunteers keep up their filibustering.

Water Falling Off In Smaller Streams

Fredericton, May 12.—With the water falling off rapidly the past few days in the smaller streams, considerable difficulty is being experienced in getting out some of the drives in this section. On the Keswick stream, Messrs. Randolph & Baker are having some trouble in making the anticipated progress with their drive owing to the rapidly falling water. Mr. Elwood Burt, who is in the city today, said his drive was at the mouth of their stream, and ready to go into the main stream as soon as the other passes there. There is about 4,000,000 feet in the Burt drive and about 3,000,000 in Messrs. Randolph & Baker's drive. In the event of the Randolph & Baker drive being held up, Mr. Burt will at once have his drive brought in to his mill.

From the upper St. John River word comes that logs are running out the sorting gaps at Van Buren rapidly to-day.

The water came up seven inches at Van Buren last night, but is at a standstill here to-day.

Mi-o-na An Excellent Stomach Remedy

Mrs. J. R. Whyte, Killarney, Manitoba, who says, "I have found great comfort and relief from Mi-o-na. I had been greatly troubled for months with heartburn and a heavy burning feeling in my stomach. A fair meal would disturb me so much that I would have to sit up at night—the food would sour my stomach and form a gas which would cause belching and dizzy spells. These distressing troubles disappeared after using Mi-o-na and I shall always speak highly of this excellent stomach remedy."

Mi-o-na is the best prescription for stomach trouble ever written. It gives quick relief and cures permanently. Mi-o-na is put up in tablet form and is small and easy to swallow. Sold by leading druggists everywhere. 50 cents, with a guarantee to cure or refund your money. Or postpaid from The R. T. Booth Co., Ltd., Fort Erie, Ont. You will search the world over and not find a stomach remedy half so good as Mi-o-na. Sold and guaranteed by E. W. Mair.