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## Our Pulpit.

### Our Country.

SERMON PREACHED BY

REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church Fredericton, July 1st

*For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.—DEUT. XI. 10-12.*

This is Dominion Day, and it seems fitting to-night to discourse on the theme our country. We should be christians first, patriots next. We are poor christians if we are not also patriots. The Word of God teaches piety on every page, and patriotism on every other. Hence I offer no apology for what I am to say to you on this patriotic occasion. I feel it both a duty and privilege to lift up my voice when the opportunity calls for it in behalf of my country. This is my country, and I love my country, and want to see her prosper with a true prosperity.

The text I have chosen around which to cluster what I have to say, you will observe, is descriptive of another country, Palestine, and the good words said here were said of the land to which Abraham was called; still, I do not think I am misquoting and misapplying them, when with necessary modifications I refer them to our country.

A contrast is drawn here between Egypt and Palestine. 'For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs. Egypt owed her greatness to artificial irrigation. No rains of any consequence fall there, and she depends to-day, and always depended for her water supply upon her one river; the wondrous Nile. That river overflows once a year, and by means of dams and sluices and canals the country is watered and rendered wonderfully productive. But you can easily understand how much the prosperity of such a man-made country depended upon the wisdom and energy of its government and the hard work of its population. It was of course only by the immense labor of keeping the canals open, and by the infinite drudgery-work of ditch-digging, that such a country could be developed at all and kept up to anything like a prosperous state. When the government and the people, from any cause whatever, came to be supine and indifferent, too proud to dig for themselves, and too poor and weak to hire and coerce slave-labor to dig for them—and this has been the case for centuries; then, of necessity, such a country must go back, its rich wheat fields relapse into soggy swamps or dry sand-wastes. And so, Egypt, from being once the mightiest of nations, has come to be the basest of kingdoms. But there is hope for Egypt. Her river still flows through the land, and let there be a revival of the ancient energy that distinguished her, and she may be great again. And that seems to be promised here in God's word.

Palestine, on the other hand, owed whatever productiveness she had, not so much to artificial methods, as to natural causes, the regular rainfalls, the showers and the sunshine. While their neighbors the Egyptians were toiling knee-deep in mud, digging out their canals and ditches, and coaxing by artificial methods the waters of the Nile to their gardens and wheat-fields, the Israelites could afford to lie by in their tents, and see God Himself, from His cloudy reservoirs, and in His own bountiful way, watering their fields and vineyards for them. Thus in that respect Palestine was better as a country to live and labor in than Egypt.

And then it was a country God Himself had a special eye to and care over. This was necessary perhaps, for more than some other countries it depended directly upon His watchful Providence.

If for any reason He withheld the former and latter rains, a famine in the land was the inevitable result. And not a few would count it a serious drawback to a country to be so dependent upon the Divine care, to be so beholden to God for all it could be. They would

rather Egypt than Palestine in that respect; they would rather depend for success on human forethought and effort than upon the goodwill of God. But not so with true Israelites, faithful Abrahams. They were glad their country was in God's hands, and out of theirs, so much, for they were sure He would look after them better than they would or could look after themselves. And so we find Moses here, in pointing out the good features of the land of promise, and comparing it, or rather contrasting it, with Egypt the country they had left, making much of this, that it was a land God Himself looked after. 'A land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.'

Now, in speaking to you of our country, the Dominion of Canada, I would first remark, that it is a country of vast natural resources.

It is many times larger than Egypt and Palestine. Egypt was somewhere about 525 miles long and 250 broad, and Palestine Proper about 200 miles long and 50 broad, so that together in extent they bore no comparison with our huge Dominion. We have territory enough, acreage enough, so far as that goes, for ten or a dozen Egypts and Palestines.

And in natural resources they were equally insignificant compared to our great country. The prairies of our North-west are not far behind, if indeed any at all, for wheat-growing and grazing purposes, the rich Delta of Lower Egypt; and then for grand mountain scenery, rich valleys, wooded heights, and mineral wealth, British Columbia is more wonderful than even the favored land of Promise. The Lebanon ranges of mountains, and Carmel, and Tabor, and snow-capped Hermon, are trifling compared with the Rockies and Selkirks with their snow-clad peaks. The old Hebrew poets and psalmists used to sing of the oaks of Bashan and the cedars of Lebanon; but on the slopes of the Selkirks, and at the foot of the Cascade range of mountains, grow oaks and elms and tower up firs and cedars, that in no respect are unworthy to stand up alongside of the Palestinian monarchs of the forest. And for lakes, and rivers, and sea-coasts, and harbors and such like, how wanting they were compared with Canada. Indeed as far as undeveloped natural resources go, there are few, if any, countries that can surpass our own.

It is not the place here to dwell upon the natural resources of the Dominion at any length, but this I would say, in a general way, that as a country we have an immense acreage of the finest wheat-growing lands in the world, and they are all ready for the plough; and we have room, both east and west, for the industrious millions of over-populated Europe. We have vast forests of the choicest lumber. Our seas, and lakes, and rivers, and bays, swarm with all kinds of fish. Our mountains are store-houses of mineral wealth. God has been lavish to our country of all that is necessary to a country's prosperity, and He intends and wants us to be a great country, and with His blessing we are yet to be a great country.

Again, I remark, we have a country great in opportunities for the man, or the people, who knows how to take advantage of them. Here there is room, almost too much room—room to grow, room to work. There need be no crowding in our country, no jostling of interests, no interference with individual rights, no giving men to feel that they are in the way and not wanted. Here the poor man and his children have as much of a chance as the rich man. He may have to work hard, and scrape and save. He may have more or less of a struggle to make a beginning, but if he will struggle on, and take advantage of the opportunities that come in his way to get on, there is no reason why he may not succeed in the best sense. The highest round of the ladder of success is within his reach, if he has it in him to attain to it.

From the Atlantic to the Pacific we have free schools, and they are the glory of our young country. And then we have everywhere in all the great centers of population, academies, and colleges, and universities, where a liberal education, fitting our young men and women for the learned professions, can be had, and with less difficulty than in older countries. And it is no lean education that is acquired in these educational institutions. Our young men go to the universities of Europe sometimes to take special courses, and they are able to hold their ground there with the least.

And then as to church privileges and religious opportunities and advantages, we are indeed blessed. Go almost anywhere throughout our great country—to the backwoods settlements, to the lumber-camps of New Brunswick and the head waters of the Ottawa, to the Indian tepees out on the prairies of the North-West and the camp-fires of the miners in the mountains of British Columbia, and a pure gospel is faithfully preached. All the evangelical churches are doing a good work, and without state-endowment they are filling the land with the truth as it is in Jesus, and much good is being done. And our own church is one of the foremost in this good work, as I tried to make clear to you a week ago.

Then we have other institutions— asylums, hospitals, reformatories, penitentiaries, and so on—institutions which, in their own way, are contributing no little to our advantage as a nation. We are in advance of many older countries in the way of railroad and steamship inter-communication. We have the telegraph and telephone. Our cities and towns are now lighted by means of electricity. We have all that the modern press can do for us, and indeed its power for good or evil is immense. Our people from the Atlantic to the Pacific read the world's news in their morning paper. We have one of the best systems of government in the world, and if it is not better we have ourselves to blame for it, for the ballot-box is in our hands, the hands of the people. And this we have not, and never can have, on this continent, the old world tyranny that rides rough-shod over the necks of the people.

Thus, in the shape of opportunities and advantages we have about all that we can ask to make us a great nation, a mighty people. We are well circumstanced for growth. With two oceans, we may say three, having our shores with their waters; with a river and lake system of navigation reaching to the very heart of the country, with a railroad stretching from ocean to ocean, linking east and west together with an iron chain; and then with the great American republic alongside of us to stimulate us, showing us in what it is what we can be, we ought to make progress, and can hardly but make progress.

Again, I remark, we have a country where wholesome hard work is necessary to success, and that, I regard, a good feature of any country. We like ease and indulgence. We would like to live in a country, where, without our ploughing and sowing, the necessities and luxuries grew on every tree. And there are countries where the toil for bread is reduced to a minimum, but they are peopled with savages, and likely to be so to the end.

It was hard work that made ancient Egypt what she was; that dug her canals watered her wheat fields, and built her pyramids. And if ever she is to be made again, it will be hard work that will do it. When her people will rise from their wretched ease and indulgence throw away their swords and opium-pipes, and with one accord take to their spades and ploughs, then will the kingdom of the mighty Pharaohs be great again as of yore, and men will go down to Egypt, not as now to meditate among her tombs and on her departed greatness but to see her glory and power.

And it is hard work that makes any nation. The nation that works the hardest is the mightiest today. Great Britain is full of hard work. Germany is full of hard work. The Great United States is full of hard work. And it this Canada of ours is ever to be anything else than a vast undeveloped wilderness, a nation of great possibilities indeed but never of actualities, then it will be hard work that will do it for her. Let us be thankful if we have to work hard. Next to the gospel, hard work is our hope and deliverance as a nation. Hard work keeps us out of the mischief we would otherwise be led into. I am afraid indeed that we do not work hard enough, and so we are lagging behind in the race of the nations. We smoke our pipes, and we drink from the cup of indulgence, and the spade and the plough rust in the field, and we are not developing as fast as we might. Our ambitious sons grow dissatisfied with our want of push and pluck, and our easy-going and self-indulgent way of getting along, and they go off where they have to work twice as hard, but they like it all the better, for hard work means success.

And then again, I remark, that Canada is a country that like Canaan God cares for with a special care. He cared for Egypt in the long ago, and He cared

for Canaan. We should not be too fast in saying that He cares for our country more than He does for others, for it may not be so, and we may presume upon His care and favor beyond what we have any right, any scriptural warrant. And yet the text teaches that He does care for some countries as He does not for others. He cared for Canaan as He did not for Egypt. Moses, in describing the land of promise to the people of Israel, speaks of it as 'a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.'

And there are countries that more than others, so to speak, need His special care. We know how that is. We have children in our homes that need more tender nursing and watchful care on our part than others of our children, and because they need it, they get it. And so among God's children, the nations. He lets Egypt water her own gardens, but Canaan's hills and valleys He waters with His own hands.

Now, Canada, like Canaan, needs God's care, and she enjoys His care. He waters her fields with the rains of heaven in the summer season, and wraps her up in a snowy blanket in the winter. He knows how much we need fuel, and in our forests and coal-mines we have an inexhaustible supply. He gives us the finest wheat for bread, and abundance of fish to eat. Want is unknown in the land. If we have not much, we have at least enough—enough for need but not for luxury.

And then we are not shaken to pieces with earthquakes, nor blown to atoms with cyclones, nor wasted with plagues. As a country we are happily free from many catastrophes such as we hear of visiting other nations. If we have a somewhat stern climate, we have a salubrious one, and we ought to be a hardy vigorous nation.

Thus, I think, God cares for us. But there is such a thing as presuming too much on His special care and favor. Israel did that in Canaan, and now there is no country more God forsaken than Canaan. God helps those countries the most that do most for themselves. The rains fall, and the sun shines, and the gentle breezes blow, for those who are on the alert to avail themselves of them. So many are ever behind in getting the full benefit of the good that is going. Theirs is always a stern chase, and a stern chase is always a hard one. They never manage to get their crops in in time in the spring, and then when the autumn comes it is the same again, and their fields do not yield half a crop. Thus they have it hard, and they bewail their bad luck; but in most cases it is their want of forethought, and wicked laziness that stand in the way of their success. Let us understand that we have a country that God's eye is open upon, and His care cares for; and if, as a nation, we will do the best we can, we will succeed, for He will bless us.

I come now to speak of the claims our Country has upon us. And we ought to love our Country. Your mother may not be as beautiful as some other mothers, nor attired as richly, and your father may not be as great and gifted as some others, but they are your parents, and as such it is yours to love and honor them. And Canada may have its drawbacks, its stern climate, its severe winters, its slow poking ways, and so much else that you cannot like; still, she is your Country, and she has claims upon your love as no country under the sun can have.

You go away perhaps, as too many of her sons and daughters do, and you succeed as you could not, or think you could not, at home, and so you speak unkind words about her; but you know not how much of your success was after all hers. Certainly it is no man's loss nor disadvantage in any respect that he was born and brought up in Canada. That more than you know may be an element in your success. I say, then, love your country. Never despise the home of your childhood. It is an evil bird that fouls its own nest.

Again, believe in your Country. Have faith in her future. She has in her the elements of greatness. She has size, vastness, and that is something. There are countries that can never be great, for they have not room to grow. They are too small to be great. But the Creator evidently intends the Dominion to be great some day, for He has made her great in length and breadth. And then He has filled her, made her extraordinarily rich, with undeveloped resources. What seas and lakes and rivers! What mountains and plains! What wheat fields and pasture-lands! What vast mineral wealth—coal, iron,

Concluded on fourth page.