

## A VOICE FROM THE VALLEY

My Last Message to the Congregation  
Rev. Kenneth M. Munroe

Lying here upon my bed waiting for the end, it seemed to me that I should not miss this opportunity of saying a word to you whom for a few short months I have been so proud to call my congregation. It seemed to me that if ever I had a right to speak with anything like authority, it is out of a time like this. But what I have to say must be in the nature of a revelation of one's own faith. Indeed, what I say must be in answer to a question which you have a right to put to me. A preacher has a right to put many questions to his people, but there is one question he himself must submit to and it is this: What about your own faith? You have spoken to us of comfort in the bitterness of sorrow. Have you found it? You have preached to us of resignation in the face of disappointment. Have you said, "Thy will be done?" You have spoken to us of confidence when the structure housing the dearest things we possess comes crashing down in ruins. What about your confidence? You have told us that a Christian trusts God even though it seems as if God had turned into a cruel devil, delighting to torture and to wound. How have you weathered the storm? Well, may I say that I think I came to know something of the awful bitterness that can overwhelm the soul. I dreaded to think afterward of how my heart raged against God. "How cruel God is! He could be so gentle," cried a great European doctor looking into the unplumbed misery of human life. But what I want to say, and this may be the most effective sermon I ever preached, is that God gave me a victory so wonderful, a peace so deep and sure that I do not know what it is unless it is the peace that passeth all understanding. I want you to know that God gave me a happiness so wonderful that I found myself over and over again praising God for the strange experience which seemed such a complete frustration of all my hopes. Death lost every vestige of terror indeed; I could think of no better description of what happened than in the words of the apostle, "He hath destroyed death." I cannot tell you the effect that it had upon my soul when I realized that the gospel is true, that it works. A sense of strength and confidence and peace suffused my whole being, and now for the first time in my life my soul seems to be garrisoned with a peace which is not disturbed by a single doubt. Remember I did not come to that easily, but now that I have come into possession of it my heart is full of praise. Amid all the awesome mysteries of life Jesus Christ is the truth. In Him one more wanderer has found the secret of happiness and the soul's true home.

It would be absurd to hope that a pastorate as short as mine could leave any deep impression. Perhaps, however, it is unique in this—that in a peculiar sense I have been permitted to speak to you from the shadows. We as it were have hailed each other on a boundless sea. You graciously invited me to give you what counsel and inspiration I might. But ahead there loomed a dark cloud. It was not your course so you steered into the sunshine, but for me it was the heart of the darkness. And my message to you as I am about to enter is this—that never did I have a deeper confidence, nor a sweeter assurance of the presence of Christ. The dominant note in my

consciousness is not, "He brought me under the power of an insidious disease blasting all my hopes, but this, "He brought me to His banqueting house and His banner over me is love." "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Montreal, December 1, 1931.

Note.—Rev. Kenneth MacLeod Munro, B. A., B.D., pastor of the American Presbyterian Church of the United Church of Canada, Montreal, died at his home on Friday, December 11th. Shortly after the beginning of this year Mr. Munro settled in Montreal as successor to Rev. Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, and his active ministry was one of a few months only, since he was able to occupy his pulpit on just one Sunday after his return from summer holidays.

Mr. Munroe was well known throughout the Maritimes and had preached in Scotland with great acceptance. For some time before his death he had known that his illness was such that he could not recover. Though cut off from preaching he devoted a large part of his time to writing letters to ailing members of his congregation. These were full of comfort and relief to them. Last of all, he had a word for his whole congregation, and because it seems to have a definite message for these days we reprint it above in its entirety.

How can we best honor the memory of our leaders who pass on at times when it seems we can ill spare them? Surely it is by emulating their works through having a like faith, confirmed in our hearts by their great words, greatly spoken. It is thus that each generation inherits from its predecessor even greater possibilities.—Witness and Canadian Homestead.

## AN ENGINEER WHO PRAYED

It was a night when the long heavily loaded B. & O. train pulled out of the station at St. Louis, bound for Cincinnati and the East. There had been a great gathering in the city of St. Louis and thousands of people were leaving for their eastern homes. Charles Waters was the engineer that night, and he was a Christian man.

As the great engine leaped forward into the darkness, a burden seemed to weigh upon him. He began to pray. On and on the long train sped across the State of Illinois, and again and again, as he drove the engine through the dark, the engineer prayed. He prayed for himself, he prayed for his train and the hundreds of people aboard, committing them all into the hands of Him who sees in the darkness as well as in the light. The whole State of Illinois was crossed and part of Indiana, and still he prayed. Seymour, Indiana, was reached in safety, and as he pulled the throttle and started out of his station the burden lifted from his spirit and he felt that some how all was well. It was almost morning now, and in an hour or two it would be light.

A little distance east of Seymour, Indiana, there lived a farmer who had risen early that morning. He had a load of hogs to take to market, and he wanted to get an early start. He lighted his lantern and went out and fed his horses and came into the house for breakfast. As he sat at the table something seemed to say, "Go to the railroad! Go to the railroad! Go to the railroad!" and yet again the insistent call, "Go to the railroad!" The farmer jumped up from the table and started out. His wife said, "Where are you going?"

"I am going to the railroad," he answered. "What for?" she asked.

"I don't know," he flung back, as he grabbed his lantern.

Down across the field he went, and over the rail fence, and stepped up on the railroad. He swung his lantern over the track, and behold, there was a broken rail—not only broken, but a great piece of it thrown entirely out of its place. He had little time to think, for just that moment he heard the distant rumble of the night express coming out of Seymour. He ran down the track and waved his lantern frantically. The engineer saw it and stopped the train and climbed down from his engine, and met the farmer.

Then he understood the reason for that long night of prayer, and the farmer now understood the strange call that had broken in on him at breakfast and bade him "Go to the railroad." A horrible wreck had been averted and hundreds of lives had been saved.

A few days ago I was coming East on this same line of the B. and O. railroad. I had been in Washington, Ind., attending a Christian Endeavor convention, and by me sat a student pastor from Indiana Central University, who had been at the convention. His name was Reed. He had decided that God was calling him to the African mission field, and wanted to talk over the matter as we journeyed.

Just before our train reached Seymour, Ind., I remembered the story of Charles Waters and his remarkable deliverance through prayer, and related it here. As I finished the story, a man sitting directly ahead of us turned around and said, "Excuse me, but I think that same engineer is running our train today."

Things were growing interesting for us now. Could it be that Charles Waters was the very man up there in the engine of our own train? Was that the reason our B. & O. train was running with unusual smoothness today? There was no jerking and jolting. She seemed to glide to a stop and start again so gently that it was scarcely perceptible.

Mr. Reed left the train at Seymour, while I was to go on to North Vernon, a station or two farther, and change for another train that would take me to Cincinnati. As soon as he was off the car he hurried down to the engine. I was making observations from the car window, and when I saw a big man climb down from the engine and grasp his hand I knew from that, and the earnest conversation which seemed to be going on between them, that he had found the man. When the train started Mr. Reed ran along the cars and called up to me, "It is he!"

When I left the train at North Vernon I set my suit case down and went forward to the engine. The engineer was down in a moment, for Mr. Reed had told him of me. He wiped his hand on his blue jeans and then seized mine. I was face to face with Charles Waters, bless him! We had a few moments of delightful conversation. He asked me where I had heard the story of his night of prayer, and I told him. He told me his work was railroading and talking salvation; that it was a strange combination, but he liked it. He made some remarks about how it pays to serve the Lord, and then he asked me about my work and my church, and then it was time for his train to start. Again his big hand grasped mine, and he said, "You shall be remembered in my prayers," and climbed aboard his engine and was gone.—Mrs. J. H. Smith.—Holiness Herald and the Vanguard.