

To the young—
where are you going?

Gospel news for eternal salvation

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Record of preaching in gospel hall

Zechariah 2: 1–5; Proverbs 7: 6–10, 27

The simple desire at this time is to seek help to make some impression on the young men that are here, and that would include the young women. It's not that this is a gospel exactly for young persons, but they are primarily in mind. The Preacher has something to say about that, he addresses himself, Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; that's the word at this time. It wouldn't be difficult to see how important that is. The immediate point is the value of a young man, or young woman; it is the same thing, no difference in that sense. Both are needed to build up one world or another. The rulers of this world know full well how essential the youth is. The god of this world does, he organises his whole system with a view to attracting young men and young women—the youth.

That is this Scripture in Proverbs, an inspired exposure of the arrangements of

the god of this world to allure young men and young women away from the light, away from the truth, away from blessing, away from hope, and away from life; and it's not surprising. Those of us who are older, our days are numbered. Not that we are ignoring, or overlooking, or slighting old persons. If they had the opportunity of speaking, they would be saying the same thing to you as I am. That is, they are very concerned about your youth, very concerned about it. It is irreplaceable. I can't tell you, I haven't got the capacity to impress on you sufficiently how valuable your youth is; it is irreplaceable, there is no substitute for it. When it is gone, it is gone and you can't call it back again, that's how serious it is.

So these two Scriptures are read because of the reference to a young man. This young man in the prophet Zechariah—I think it is the prophet himself—is showing interest. He lifted up his eyes and saw—that is, he is looking, he is exercised, he is under exercise to find out something about God, and about God's people, and about God's city. God has got a city, you know. It is not

like the cities of this world. The cities of this world are men's masterpiece. How long it has taken them, sometimes centuries to build up their cities in their pride, and culture, and whatnot. God has got a city, it's not like men's cities.

Men's cities are dark, and deceitful, and full of evil; full of opportunities for evil; full of opportunities for sin, to express my own will and cater to it—that is the second Scripture. It's under the figure of a woman, and she is a harlot; that is, she is an unfaithful person, she is faithless, she is untrue, she is deceitful, clamorous, it says, unmanageable, other things, you see. She has an impudent face, very bold and brash—that is this world in this character. Scripture has chosen certain figures in writing to men to portray certain elements, and one is a woman who is a harlot. She portrays this world with all its opportunity for evil, and deceit.

Perhaps you don't see the world that way, like this young man—simple one, void of understanding. Why should that be? I don't think it means he was unintelligent. I don't think it means that he couldn't pass his examinations at school. I don't think it means

that. I don't think it means he couldn't gain a useful occupation and be of some value. I don't think it means that. I think it means he didn't understand the difference between good and evil. He'd failed to take advantage of counsel in the way of understanding admonition, reproof, instruction. That's what this book of Proverbs is full of—instructions of life, admonition, counsel, discipline, so that you know how to go a way for good, not for evil. That's what this man was void of; he had not paid attention, he wasn't interested, he was interested in other things, catering to his own lust and his own ambition, his own self-will.

You say, Well, I can satisfy the teachers, I get a good report. You are just the person the world wants. We are not advertising, or advocating that you should not do your studies well, I am not thinking about that; but, you see, the world must have young men and young women, the devil must have them. The god and prince of this world builds his world up by young men and young women. God is building His world up with young men and young women; that's how valuable you are. You only have one

youth, I have tried to say that; only got one opportunity in youth, and you will go one way or the other.

What this young man did in Zechariah, he showed interest in Jerusalem, he asks a question. He says, Whither are you going? He saw a man with a measuring line, and he is interested, you see. That is the application of God's mind to any situation; and this man says, What are you going to do about it? He says, I'm going to measure Jerusalem, to see what's the breadth thereof, and what's the length thereof, and then the angel that talked with him—it says, Another angel went forth to meet him and said, Run, speak to this young man. See, heaven had heard this question. Heaven was paying attention to what this young man was saying and heard his question. If you show any interest in God's things, He will have the whole of heaven active on your behalf. That's far better than all the possibilities in this world which can only lead to destruction.

I read that final word in Proverbs—it says, Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death. It says that he didn't know that the dead were

there. He didn't know, you see, he didn't know that it was for his life, he didn't know that. The pleasure, the enticement, all the allurements, all the attractions of this world with its glitter and glamour, it's a cloak, it's a facade, it's a veneer, it's a sham. What's behind it? Awful corruption, destitution, despair, sorrow, grief, loss and death. That's all that this world can offer. It's got a cloak over it, you see, it hides it, it hides its real character.

That's why Satan is a deceiver, the god of this world is a deceiver. He is a master at it, he is a master. He has studied men for six thousand years, and he knows the very thing that will be the most deceitful in your case, it might be different in my case. He has studied you all your lifetime to ascertain what it is you are attracted by, away from God, away from Jesus, away from God's people, away from good, away from blessing, away from life. He doesn't make it obvious to you what's going to happen, but this Scripture exposes it to us. It says, an arrow goes through his liver, right through the very seat of his being; an arrow strikes through his liver: as a bird

hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for its life.

So I am seeking just to present the glad tidings in all its simplicity to you; it's a way of good, a way of blessing, a way of salvation, a way of holiness apart from this world. You put your foot in it and go one foot after another, one step after another, and what you will find is salvation, and blessing. Eternity of bliss, an eternity of blessing, and a lifetime of happiness here in confidence in Jesus. Think of Jesus as the Saviour, think of how well He knew men. I don't like to say things that are out of place, but He understands men better than Satan does. Satan understands you better than you do, but he doesn't understand you like Jesus does.

Jesus died for you. He gave His life for you. He gave everything for you. God has done it; spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Think of the very best and greatest, and most glorious of heaven given for your salvation—that's Jesus, and now He lives there for you. He ever liveth to make intercession for you; to appear in heaven in the presence of God for you. Think of a Person up there, the

greatest Person, the greatest Man in the universe, He's up there in heaven in your favour. See, it makes you independent of the allurements of this world, the attractions of this world, the way Satan can dress it up to advantage for the present, but there is no future to it. You read this chapter privately and see what the sequel was, what the result was to this young man void of understanding.

In the other case, it is beautiful, the prophecy of Zechariah, this man comes in. I didn't read it all for want of time, but how delightful it is to God. You see these wonderful words, Ho, ho! Ho, escape. It's God calling out from the heavens, He knows everything, He knows everything about you, He knows the end from the beginning, He knows what's the very best for you, and He will do only the very best for you. Give up trying to do the best for yourself, it'll turn out to be the worst; do the best that God wants you to do, and it will be for your eternal blessing, and your salvation now.

I am not so much concerned about heaven in the future, we know that will be all right, we've got no doubts about that.

I can't tell you too much about it, but we know that Jesus fills heaven, but He can bring heaven right down into your heart now, and set you as free of this world as heaven is. He can make your heart like a home of heaven—for who? For Christ, that's how valuable you are. Ever thought you could be that great to Christ that He would make His home in your heart? That's what it says, Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. What does it mean? He likes it there. He loves to be in your heart, and find a home there, and He can give you the peace of heaven, right now.

It doesn't matter what troubles, it doesn't matter what sorrows, it doesn't matter what tribulations will overtake you, Christ is there as the Prince of peace, in your heart. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. Think of it, Satan can't bring a thing against you, not a thing. He can look back in all those dark areas of your life, and my life, and can bring up nothing against you. Why? Because of the blood of Jesus, a perfect, sufficient, eternal answer to every accusation of the foe, and you go forward in confidence. Confidence in Jesus, confidence in the

blessed Spirit. He will put the Holy Spirit in your heart, the love of God, it says, shed abroad in our hearts. You feel afraid, you're worried, you're disturbed, you're distressed, wake up in the middle of the night anxious, just turn to Christ, turn to the blessed Spirit, He's right there in your heart and He will fill it with God's love. If you think of the greatest thing in the universe, if you can speak that way, it's God's love, and He will fill your heart with it, keep you free from trouble.

It doesn't mean you won't have sorrow, it doesn't mean you won't have adversity, it doesn't mean you won't have disappointments, but they'll all be in the realm of nature and this world; you will get no disappointments in heaven, I promise you that. Once you step in there, you'll be a little surprised; you haven't been there before, we haven't been to heaven yet, not in the full sense. Only one Man in heaven yet, all these other beloved saints of God that have died in Jesus, where are they? They are with Christ, they're not exactly in heaven, there is only one Man in heaven yet and that is Jesus. When you get in there you'll be a little surprised, but you'll know

Jesus and He will show you round and you'll feel at home at once. Why shouldn't you live your life with the home of heaven in your heart as Christ is King? For His name's sake.

J.S. Hales

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