

ed in this 12th ch. of Hebrews, quoted by Mr. Mackenzie, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God." The kingdom of God (His Church) actually began on the day of Pentecost, although it will not come in its glory and splendour until Christ shall have put down all rule, all authority, and power that is opposed to Him. And this kingdom now existing extends beyond the grave into the realms of paradise: for as the hymn quoted by the lecturer says:

"The saints on earth, and those above
But one communion make."

Yes, "those above:" but not necessarily in heaven: they have been "caught up into paradise," as St. Paul once was, after he had been caught up to the "third heaven."

As to Enoch, we are nowhere told that he was taken up into heaven. If I say he was translated to paradise I have as much ground (to say the least) for that statement as your lecturer had for saying he went to heaven; but I will not affirm even that. Concerning Elijah the A. V. does certainly say, "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven;" but so, also, we read of the "clouds of heaven;" "the winds of heaven;" "the fowls of heaven." The word "Hashamayim" used here does not necessarily mean more than the "first heaven" according to the Jewish reckoning, that is the clouds or the skies. That was all that Elisha witnessed, the carrying away of his beloved master into the skies. That he actually did go further than that we may well believe, but to what specific region beyond that the Scripture does not say; it may have been to paradise, but evidence concerning the present location of the souls of the righteous does not much help us either in this case or in that of Enoch. If we may indulge in a wild speculation of possibilities it may have been that each was taken to some other terrestrial sphere, to one of the visible planets, perhaps, to be the founder of a new branch of the human race, an Adam to a holy race of descendants in worlds to which Satan and his angels may have no access as they have to our sphere. (Astronomers tell us that the planet Mars and probably Venus, too, are capable of being inhabited at the present time by beings like ourselves). Holy Scripture has nothing to say against such a notion. But the point I wish to enforce is only this that Scripture does not affirm that either of them are in that Heaven where God has his throne, and is especially adored by angels and archangels: that glorious abode called in Scripture the "Heaven of Heavens;" and by Jewish and Mohammedan writers the "Seventh Heaven."

Our lecturer has given a long explanation of our Saviour's words, "No man hath ascended up to heaven," but his argument may be briefly summarized thus, "hath ascended" that is "hath descended." These latter words could easily have been used had such been the full meaning to be expressed. Whereas there seems to be a portion argument here, none have ever yet even ascended; much more then may it be affirmed that none have ever yet descended to bring back news from there, except the Son of Man himself.

Since Papias does not agree with either of us, let us pass on to the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus. "Christians dwell in corruptible bodies looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the Heavens." So I affirm, too. He does not say, however, that they are to enter it as soon as they die. Again, Polycarp says that Ignatius and others "are now in their due place in the presence of the Lord." Undoubtedly they are, and so are all righteous souls who are enjoying the bliss of paradise "forever with the Lord." The expressions quoted "in the Heavens" and "above the Stars" are probably nearly equivalent, but do not mean the same as "Heaven."

Mr. Mackenzie does not stand, by any means, alone in his belief that the souls of the righteous go at once to heaven at death. Besides all the Protestant sects, he has the two hundred millions of the Church of Rome with him, so far as this that they hold that the souls of most eminent saints do go thither at once at death, while ordinary saints have to go first to purgatory for a longer or a shorter time (independent of the time of Christ coming again to judgment). But I do not think my friend generally seeks instruction in Church doctrine in that quarter, and I should rather feel disposed to regard this as one of those many points of doctrine concerning which our article says 'The Church of Rome hath erred.' Yours truly,

ROBERT C. CASWALL.

MISSION WORK.

SIR,—I write to call attention to a failure in this work, in the Diocese of Ontario, which needs a remedy. Year after year missionary meetings are announced to be held in the various parishes and stations of our church, with a Convener and two or three others, generally clergy, appointed to address the meetings. Notices, in the nature of direct promises, are given from the various pulpits beforehand, or by posters or both, that certain persons, named as

the deputation, will deliver addresses. How have these promises been kept in the past? The answer is, very badly indeed. This year a new and approved departure was made in adding the name of a layman to some of the deputations. The result appears to be no better. My view is that the appointment and arrangement of persons to address these Missionary meetings should be made so far in advance as to give the persons selected ample time to prepare the fullest information and the best addresses they can for the objects in view. It is their solemn duty to be prepared, for unprepared addresses, like unprepared sermons, are generally of very little, if any use. Year after year the Convener has had to apologize for the absence of some of the deputation; often of all but himself. It has been so this year. How can it be expected, then, that the laity will take a proper interest in these meetings, and contribute as they should and would, when they are certain to hear the old apologies and be obliged to bear, as best they can, the old and continued disappointments? The clergy have been and are great sinners in this respect, although they should feel bound to keep these engagements, equally with their Sunday appointments; nor should any layman allow himself to be charged with neglect, who consents to act on a deputation. It is not fair nor honest treatment of the laity, and they so regard it, and if continued much longer will have a serious and injurious effect. The object and importance of this work surely demands a vast change for the better. I beg for this matter a thoughtful consideration by all those who may hereafter be engaged in this mission work on behalf of our beloved church.

Yours truly,

Pembroke, Feb. 27, '88.

H. LOUCKS.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

4TH SUNDAY IN LENT.

MAR 11TH, 1888.

The Prophetess of Israel.

Passage to be read.—Judges iv. 1-23.

Again and again, after Joshua was dead, Israel forsook God,—again and again were they punished for it,—again and again did God deliver them when they cried to Him for mercy. In Judges iii. we read how Othniel delivered them from the king of Mesopotamia, Ehud from Moab, and Shamgar from the Philistines. But now, after enjoying peace and felicity for eighty years (ch. iii. 30), Israel once more does evil: and so again God gives them over to be punished at the hand of their enemies, the oppressor this time being Jabin, King of Canaan.

I. *Israel's Misery.*—For twenty years this man "mightily oppressed the children of Israel." What a sad thing to see any one in trouble. But think of a whole nation in trouble; fields and villages overrun by an enemy; no man, perhaps, feeling his life safe. Such was the state of Israel now. "The highways were unoccupied, and travellers walked through by-ways" (ch. v. 6). The people were afraid to go upon the common and most frequented roads. "The inhabitants of the villages ceased" (v. 7), the people withdrawing to the larger towns for protection. "War was in the gates" (v. 8), so that not even in the towns and cities did the people feel themselves safe. And so completely were they disarmed that we read (v. 8), "Was there a shield or a spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?" Meanwhile their enemies are stronger than ever; and Hazor, which had once been destroyed by Joshua (Josh. xi. 10-12), is again the powerful city from which all their trouble comes. Well might they cry unto the Lord for deliverance from all this evil.

II. *The "Mother in Israel."*—God hears their cry, and once more comes to the rescue. A woman named Deborah is now judge in Israel. She had her house (or her judgment seat), under a palm tree in Mount Ephraim. This woman cannot herself fight; but she receives a message from Barak (a general living in Kadesh-naphtali, almost in sight of Hazor, Jabin's city), bidding him collect ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun to make war against Jabin's army, and promising him victory. When Barak refuses to go unless she will go with him, she promises to accompany him, at the same time telling him that not he, but a woman, should have the honour.

III. *The Triumph.*—So Deborah and Barak and the ten thousand of Naphtali and Zebulun assemble on Mount Tabor; while Sisera, Jabin's great general, to whom news of the rising is brought,

gathers together all his troops, with his 900 chariots of iron, by the brook Kishon, which flows through the plain of Esdraelon at the foot of Tabor. And now, at Deborah's command, Barak arises, and he and his ten thousand rush down the mountain-side upon the hosts of Sisera. A storm of rain and hail driving in the face of the Canaanites seems to have helped Barak. The whole army of Sisera is utterly destroyed, the Kishon, swollen into a roaring torrent by the storm, preventing their escape. But as for Sisera himself, when he saw that the battle went against him, he alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. Making his way northward toward Hazor, he came to the tent of Heber, the Kenite, and as there was peace between Jabin and Heber, he accepted the invitation of Jael, Heber's wife, to come in and rest in her tent. But she, while Sisera lay asleep, slew him. Thus was Israel delivered from the Canaanites; while the honour of the triumph was, as Deborah had foretold, with a woman; and Deborah herself, the prophetess, sang a song of praise, ascribing the victory to God.

WESTERN ASSURANCE COMPANY.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The shareholders of this company held their thirty-seventh annual meeting at the head office in this city at noon, Thursday. The chair was occupied by A. M. Smith, Esq., the president of the company, and the managing director, who was appointed to act as secretary, read the following:—

DIRECTORS' REPORT.

In submitting the annual statement of the accounts of the company for the year ending 31st December last, the directors are pleased to be able to congratulate the shareholders upon the prosperous condition of its affairs which these indicate, as well as the evidence they bear of its continued growth in public favour and confidence.

The net income from premiums, as shown by the revenue account, amounted to \$1,680,096 96, while the interest receipts were \$40,185 26, and after payment of losses and expenses, as well as making provision for all unadjusted and unsettled claims, there remains a profit balance of \$99,080 98. This result is the more gratifying from the fact that recently published statistics show that the past year has not been generally a profitable one in either Fire or Marine Insurance business, owing to the losses, both in Canada and the United States, having considerably exceeded the average of previous years.

The assets of the company being taken at their market value on 31st December, it has been necessary to write off some \$14,000 for depreciation in these, to meet the shrinkage in values which has been common to most securities during the year. After providing for this and the payment of two half-yearly dividends at the rate of ten per cent. per annum, the sum of \$40,000 has been added to the Reserve Fund, the total surplus funds now amounting to \$775,317 81. The amount necessary to reinsure or run off the current risks of the company is estimated at \$584,080, which deducted from the surplus as above, shows a net surplus over and above capital and all liabilities of \$241,287 81.

Your directors take this opportunity of acknowledging the efficiency of the officers and staff of the company, as well as their appreciation of the services of its agents throughout its extensive field of operations, to whose energy and zeal is attributable, in a great measure, the favourable showing which is presented by the accompanying accounts.

REVENUE ACCOUNT.

| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Fire Premiums..... | \$1,291,649 89 |
| Marine Premiums..... | 574,365 61 |
| | \$1,866,015 50 |
| Less Re-Assurance..... | 235,918 54 |
| | \$1,680,096 96 |
| Interest Account..... | 40,185 26 |
| | \$1,670,232 22 |

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Fire Losses, including an appropriation for all losses reported to 31st Dec. 1887 | 329,464 47 |
| General Expenses, Agents' Commission and all other charges..... | 497,336 44 |
| Balance to Profit and Loss..... | 99,080 98 |
| | \$1,670,232 22 |

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Dividend paid, July, 1887..... | \$25,000 00 |
| Dividend payable Jan. 9, 1888 | 25,000 00 |
| | \$50,000 00 |
| Depreciation in Investments..... | 14,104 87 |
| Carried to Reserve Fund..... | 40,000 00 |
| Balance..... | 817 81 |
| | \$ 104,422 48 |