

# *Memorial Service Address for William Aberhart in Calgary*

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Sunday May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
( Four days after Aberhart's Funeral in Vancouver)

I feel sure many of you will remember that the hymn we have just sung, (*In A Little While, We're Going Home*, see lyrics at end – editor) full as it is of quiet confidence and joyful anticipation, was one in which our beloved Brother Aberhart found rich and abiding enjoyment. It spoke to him of that rest beyond, that home prepared, that relief from care that he so rightly possesses today. And it cheered him for the tasks and burdens of that little while between.

Much of the trouble that besets humanity today arises because of failure to catch that true vision of that which lies ahead. While he was with us, the man whose memory we honour today declared unceasingly that the little span of human life could not be properly lived unless the soul made diligent reckoning of the things of eternity. How often he quoted to us the words of the Apostle Paul, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

We must set our heart on something that lies beyond. Surely we can understand that great and majestically wonderful realms lie beyond the feeble detection of our mortal senses. How deep would be our unspeakable grief today if that were not true! *Illustration:* In the natural realm alone, science has discovered 64 octaves of vibration. Near the bottom of that long scale are the 11 octaves of sound. Immediately above them, are some 8 radio octaves.

Up in the 49<sup>th</sup> octave we find the octave of sight, the only one that we can see. We know nothing of the others, nor what marvels lie beyond them again. They are the unknown natural realms. What then lies beyond us in the unseen spiritual realms, where God is, and where our loved ones have gone?

*I. I speak thus today because I want you to think with me of the William Aberhart of today. A man who lives on!*

a ) - You have known him as the Honourable William Aberhart of yesterday, the 7<sup>th</sup> and greatest Premier of Alberta. You knew him in days gone by as a Christian gentleman. We of this Bible Institute which he founded knew him as a Spirit filled teacher, as a wise counsellor, and as a mighty champion of the faith.... That was yesterday.

b.) And today? What of the man so many of you knew and loved? No voice from earth can answer that question. We saw his quiet and silent form, and could only say, "He is not here." But in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation, and the 13<sup>th</sup> verse I read, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write." Men and women, the Spirit of the Living God has spoken from heaven itself about this matter. Out of that unknown realm, beyond mortal perception, the Voice spoke, and obediently the Apostle John took up his pen and wrote..these glorious words.."Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth."

What a marvellous thing! In the very face of death, that great malignant enemy of man, in the presence of the deepest grief mortals ever knew, the parting experienced at the edge of the grave, The Spirit Of God sent that triumphant cry from heaven. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Yes, we sorrow today. Our hearts are lonely and distressed. But not for Brother Aberhart. Today he enjoys the blessedness of that home beyond, from which the Spirit spoke these words, and enters into the joy of His Lord.

c.) I want to pay him simple tribute today in these words, "he died in the Lord." I think you all know what that means. It is not true of everyone, and the promise of blessedness is not for everyone. But of this man, let every voice confess... he died in the Lord. As Paul of old he contended for the faith once delivered unto the saints. He took what God had written in His Word and believed it with all his great heart. God give us men like him! God give us leaders and Premiers like him!

And though sometimes the ignorance of unbelief scoffed and sneered, he stood like another Stephen, like another John Huss, like another Luther, like another Moody. And before the world confessed himself a Christian in the true and full sense of that word. Yes, he confessed himself a sinner, but proclaimed unashamed to all who would listen that he was washed in the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

And so, with his eye of faith upon the Cross of Calvary, he died in the Lord. Do you remember the words he spoke to us when he stood in this pulpit for the last time? Quoting Colossians 3:4 he said, "There is glory to be after this life. I am afraid that not many of us have any idea what that glory will mean to us. We sometimes talk of getting a thrill out of certain associations in this life, but when we get to glory over there, the greatest thrill or enjoyment we have ever had on earth will pale into insignificance when compared with it."

Today, he knows in actual experience, the blessedness of which he spoke.

## ***II. The second part of this statement from heaven follows on most naturally.***

a.) "Yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours."

The labouring servant has become the resting saint. Like Paul he could say of himself, "In labours oft." How oft you and I will never know fully.

As dean of this Bible Institute, Bro. Aberhart would gather often with the young men and women of the student body, and together we sang that hymn, "I shall wear a golden crown when I get home. I shall lay my burdens down, when I get home. Clad in robes of glory, I shall tell the story, of the Lord who bought me, when I get home."

And the knowledge of that coming rest spurred him on to ever greater efforts. He practiced what you (just) sang.. "Let us do the work that our hands may find to do. In a little while we're going home. And the grace of God shall our daily strength renew, In a little while we're going home." Leaning on the grace of God he laboured for his fellowmen and his Lord. Like Elijah, Solomon, David, Moses - 4:44

b.) I need not repeat what has been said today about his work. Let me only add that thousands of men and women this day acknowledge in word and deed and thought, their tremendous debt of gratitude to the labours of this fearless man of God! And this world is a better place because he lived in it. His life counted for God!

Here was a man whom God could take and use as His own instrument, through whose lips He could and did speak the Word of Life. Today his course is run, his work is done. God made no mistake; it was time for this servant to take his well-earned rest from all his labours.

**III. *And what then? Ah, surely the best part of the Spirit's message is yet to be read.***

a.) Listen to it. "And their works do follow them." Death has often been pictured as a great robber. Of material things the Scriptures truly declare, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

The one who lives for self, and for self-gain, who lives his own selfish life of greed, is playing the losing game. Christ told the story of a rich man whose fields brought forth abundantly, and who decided to build his greater barns, to hoard for himself, with no thought of the welfare of those about him. Of him the Lord said, "Thou fool. This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

b.) What then does this mean... Their works do follow them? Surely just this. The servant of God, through that which he does for Christ, begins a chain of influence that goes on after they themselves have been taken home to rest. Oh, let us thank God for this today! Our beloved Bro. Aberhart has gone to his rest in the blessed home above, but his works will follow him for many a day.

We sometimes think of his arrival on the other side; his joyful meeting with those he brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. But there is much more yet to come. The influence of his teaching and preaching is still drawing many after him. He has sown seed in the hearts of men that has not yet sprung up. Yet God has declared that His Word will not return unto Him

void. There are many of you here, and out in radio-land listening to this service, who will some grand day follow to that rest beyond, because you heard this man telling the glad story of the Saviour's love.

I remember that Sunday afternoon in the Grand Theatre when, as a young lad, a high-school boy, I first heard from his lips that Christ died for my sins and was ready then to redeem my soul by His own blood. I thank God for the influence of such a man in this land and in this city. I remember when he laid his hand on the shoulder of a boy in Red Deer, our Bro. Laing, now the Pastor of this Church, and asked him if he thought that God would some day make him a preacher of the Gospel.

And today scores of fine men and women, trained in this Institute, and now serving God with unflinching zeal, can join us in thanking God that they too have been drawn to follow after this man. Truly his works do follow him.

**Conclusion** - Men and women, I have tried to show you from God's Word, the Declaration's of the Holy Spirit concerning the William Aberhart of today. If he were able to stand beside me here this afternoon, I think he would want to ask you men and women the question, "What of your today? And what of your tomorrow?" If you were to be taken away tonight, would you, "die in the Lord?" Do you not remember his warnings, his exhortations, his earnest appeal to you? Have you rested your soul on the Saviour he loved?

Have you believed what God has said concerning your sin, and about the Saviour He has provided for you? Can you rest in the full and quiet assurance that the beloved disciple John had, when he declared, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth me from all sin?" May God grant that all of us may be wise enough to be found in the faith of Jesus Christ today.

And may I say this word to you Christian people. When some glad day you enter into your rest; when you go to meet and greet again our brother, what works will follow after you? Oh, may God stir us up! Into our hand God has put the burden of this generation. If we do not win men for Christ, who will? This is the challenge of the life and the home going of Brother Aberhart.

**Illustration:** Legend told of a taper, (a slender candle), lying in a drawer. The owner took it out and carried it away. "Where are you taking me?", said the taper. The owner replied, "To show big ships across the sea." But no ship," said the taper."could see by means of my tiny light." "Leave that to me," said the owner. "Then he climbed the hill, and he lighted the great lantern, and blew the taper out. Ah yes, take the light you have received, and light another with it.

**Illustration:** A man of God was once asked if he did not think the world was growing worse. He replied, "Madam, if it is, I am determined it shall be in spite of me." That was the spirit of Brother Aberhart. May God grant that it may be ours too.

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**In a Little While We're Going Home**

## Eliza E. Hewitt – Lyrics and Composition.

*In a little while, in a little while,  
We shall cross the billow's foam;  
We shall meet at last,  
When the stormy winds are past,  
In a little while we're going home.*

Let us sing a song that will cheer us by the way,  
In a little while we're going home;  
For the night will end in the everlasting day,  
In a little while we're going home.

*In a little while, in a little while,  
We shall cross the billow's foam;  
We shall meet at last,  
When the stormy winds are past,  
In a little while we're going home.*

We will do the work that our hands may find to do,  
In a little while we're going home;  
And the grace of God will our daily strength renew,  
In a little while we're going home.

*In a little while, in a little while,  
We shall cross the billow's foam;  
We shall meet at last,  
When the stormy winds are past,  
In a little while we're going home.*

We will smooth the path for some weary, way-worn feet,  
In a little while we're going home;  
And may loving hearts spread around an influence sweet!  
In a little while we're going home.

*In a little while, in a little while,  
We shall cross the billow's foam;  
We shall meet at last,  
When the stormy winds are past,  
In a little while we're going home.*

There's a rest beyond, there's relief from every care,  
In a little while we're going home;  
And no tears shall fall in that city bright and fair,  
In a little while we're going home.

*In a little while, in a little while,  
We shall cross the billow's foam;  
We shall meet at last,  
When the stormy winds are past,  
In a little while we're going home.*

