

# **The Grandest Ceremony in History**

Sunday, November 26, 2006

**"Away, you sickly sentimentalists!"**

**"While you say God cannot hate, you say He cannot love – and every argument you use against Hell is an argument against Heaven." Elbert Munsey, Methodist.**

Elbert Munsey (1833-1877): "This man – tall, rapid-speaking, ungraceful, looking always as if he had just been called out of a twelve-acre field – was heralded as 'the most eloquent pulpit orator in the South' at his death." Words spoken in my ears by old Dr. Bob Jones at Bob Jones University in 1948.

Remember some months ago I preached upon the subject of the twin mountains – (Mt. Ebal to curse, and Mt. Gerizim to bless) – upon which all Israel assembled to hear the Word of God read. Munsey calls this, "the grandest ceremony in the history of the nations." A picture of these two mountains hangs in front of the church.

"And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee." Gill: Moses enlarges on the blessings and the curses which belong, the one to the doers, the other to the transgressors of the law; some of which concern individual persons, others the whole nation and body of people, and that, both under the former and present dispensations.

"And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, There shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed be the man, etc." Deut. 27 and 28. Munsey: "This was doubtless the grandest ceremony in the history of the nations."

Listen to Munsey's brilliant synopsis of this grandest of ceremonies: "In Palestine there are two mountains, rising on steep and rocky precipices about 800 feet high, on both sides of a narrow valley about 300 yards wide. They are called Ebal and Gerizim. God commanded the children of Israel by Moses when they entered the promised land, that six tribes of them should

stand upon Mt. Ebal and the other six tribes on Mt. Gerizim, and that the Levites should pronounce the curses and blessings of the law – the tribes on Mt. Ebal responding ‘Amen’ to the curses, the tribes on Mt. Gerizim responding ‘Amen’ to the blessings. This was doubtless the grandest ceremony in the history of the nations. Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim are on every page of the Bible, and on every field of divine providence, and in the valley between them will sit the throne of the Judgment – and to every blessing and every curse, all the people will say ‘Amen’, and the universe shall acknowledge that eternal punishment is right.”

## **The kind and gentle Lord Jesus was the greatest Hell-fire and damnation preacher.**

“The blessed Savior sat down on another mountain and preached his first sermon. It was a sermon of blessings. ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit – Blessed are they that mourn – Blessed are the meek – Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness – Blessed are the merciful – Blessed are the pure in heart – Blessed are the peacemakers – Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake’ – a Sermon of Blessings. Says the false prophet: ‘It would be inconsistent with Christ’s character to curse. Would not the Universalist quote these all the day? To pronounce curses would not suit that kind face and be in harmony with His mission.’”

“This was His first sermon; now hear His last – standing in the Temple in the presence of all the people and those who had been taught to regard the Pharisees and scribes as their teachers and patterns of piety. ‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites – Woe unto you, ye blind guides – ye fools and blind – Woe unto you scribes – Woe unto you, thou blind Pharisee – ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?’”

**Munsey:** Curses and blessings go together – Love incarnate can curse a sinner, Love incarnate can damn a sinner, and if Love incarnate can curse and damn a sinner it can do it for all eternity. O Eternity! Let thy ages tramp, thy cycles roll, but thou canst not crumble or scar the walls of Hell, or rust and break its locks or silver the hair of God, who has sworn by His eternal self that the sinner shall die.”

Old Dr. Bob Jones Sr. likened Elbert Munsey (the Arminian Methodist) to Jonathan Edwards (the strong Calvinist), and often said this nation needs 50 Jonathan Edwardses turned loose with Hell-fire and brimstone preaching. Jones said as a young preacher he was powerfully influenced by Elbert Munsey’s sermons. The old-time Methodists were famous for Hell-fire and damnation preaching. Their false God-loves-everybody Arminian theology laid the foundation for modern Methodists to backslide into other heresies and turn their churches – lock, stock and barrel – over to sodomites as it is this day.

**Dr. Bob Jones Sr.:** When I was a boy, I often heard of a man named Elbert Munsey. They said his educational opportunities had been rather limited. He was reared poor and had a hard time in life; but he could preach, and entire congregations sat spellbound at his never-to-be-forgotten sermons. Died at 44.

## **Gehenna – the final Hell of punishment.**

**“And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast (both soul and body) into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” Lk. 12:4-5.**

We are indebted to Dr. William Elbert Munsey for giving good king Josiah credit for making Hell out of the Valley of Hinnom; to wit: “Josiah, who abolished the worship of Moloch, to render this valley odious turned all the filth of Jerusalem into it. The dead bodies of animals and of malefactors were thrown into it. The sewers of Jerusalem emptied their filthy contents into it. To continue this filth a fire was kept there perpetually burning. The valley, by a natural law of all ideas, became the symbol of cruelty, misery, pollution, and of perpetual burning. Thus, by a law of language, its name was transferred to the place of punishment for the wicked, and is so used in the above text and eleven other places in the New Testament.”

“This valley was southeast of Jerusalem, near the city. Here was an image of Moloch, Baal, or the Sun, and here the idolatrous Jews, in the worship of this god, burned their children alive. It is also called Tophet – from *toph* – meaning a drum, because the cries of the burning children were drowned by the beating of drums.” This is the same as the word Topeka – from the French name given this evil place by early French settlers on their maps – meaning, “a noisy den.”

Thus, the old Methodist preacher Munsey contributed to our understanding of what we somehow knew already – that for 50 years God has commissioned us to live among and preach to the inhabitants of Hell – even as Noah, preached to antedeluvian spirits in prison. 1 Pet. 3:19: “By which also he (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison (in and through Noah); Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.”

As a young preacher, I memorized big chunks of Munsey’s sermons – for example:

## **“The last day will come.”**

Munsey: “Though your bones may lie bleaching in the bottom of the sea, or fossilized be deeply imbedded in rock; though your dust may be scattered over continents, transmuted into animals or plants, diffused in the air, diffused in the water, or mingled with clay, God’s power is able to raise you from the dead, and is pledged to do it.

That power sooner or later will be exercised. **THE LAST DAY WILL COME.** The sun unwheeled will drag along the jarring heavens and refuse

to shine. The stars will hide their faces, and the moon will roll up in the heavens red as blood, and hang her crimson livery upon the wing of the night. Earth will tremble upon her axis, and huge mountains of woe will drift and lodge upon her heart.

A mighty angel with a face like the sun, clothed with clouds, and crowned with a rainbow, and shod with wings of fire, will cleave the heavens in his lightning track, and descending with his right foot upon the troubled sea, and his left foot upon the quaking earth, lift his hand to Heaven, and swear by the judge of the quick and the dead that time shall be no longer. Old time, the father of centuries and the tomb builder of generations, will drop his broken scythe and break his glass, careen and fall – a giant in ruins.

## **"O Grave, where is thy victory?"**

The trump of God will then sound. Its resonant thunders will roll through all the lengths and breadths of death's vast empire, and its old walls and arches crammed with buried millions will fall in crashing ruins. The dinky king will drop his sceptre ringing in fragments upon the damp pavements of the grave, and fly howling from his tottering throne down, down to Erebus. The antiquated dead will start into life from their ashy urns and funeral pyres. Pyramids of granite and crypts of marble will be rent in twain to let the rising bodies come. Mummies will fling off the trappings of centuries, and pour from their vaulted chambers.

Inquisitions will rock upon their foundations and revived dead will stream from their dungeons. Abbeys, cathedrals, grottoes, and caverns will be vocal with life. Wanderers will shake off their winding sheets of sand, and rise from the face of the desert. Human bones will break away from their coral fastenings; mermaids draped in dripping weeds will mourn the evacuation of all their caves; old ocean will heave and swell with teeming millions.

The battlefields of the world: Troy and Thermopylae, Talavera and Marengo, Austerlitz and Waterloo, Marathon and Missolonghi; the battlefields of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, will reproduce their armies, and crowd the world with revived legions. Indian maidens will leap from the dust of our streets, and our houses overturning will let their chiefs to judgment. Abraham will shake off the dust of Machpelah, and arise with Sarah by his side. David will come with harp in hand. The reformer of Geneva and the apostle of Methodism will come side by side.

Our village church yards and family burial grounds will be deserted. All will come: patriarchs, prophets, Jews and Gentiles, Christians and heathens, bond and free, rich and poor – fathers, mothers, children, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives – all from Adam down will come forth.

And all the saved all around the world all together will hail this redemption's grand consummation, with one proud anthem, whose choral thunders, rolling along all the paths of space, will shake the universe with its bursting chorus: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"