

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES AND
IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

\$2.00 Per Year, Postpaid, to any address. 5c. Per Single Copy.

Editor: T. T. SHIELDS.

Associate Editors: T. I. STOCKLEY, ALEXANDER THOMSON, W. GORDON BROWN.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

Address Correspondence: THE GOSPEL WITNESS, 130 Gerrard Street East, Toronto.

Vol. 8. No. 30.

TORONTO, DECEMBER 12th, 1929.

Whole No. 395.

THE LITTLE CHURCH ON THE HILL

The primary obligation of every believer, as an individual and as a church-member, is so to bear witness to the truth of the gospel that others will "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name". It was thus Peter and those who were with him witnessed to the resurrection of Christ on the day of Pentecost. The same simple programme characterized all the apostolic activities, as recorded in the Acts and the epistles. This testimony, we are now accustomed to call "evangelism"; and the evangelist is a divinely-appointed minister of the church, for "he gave some . . . evangelists".

During the last hundred years in Europe and America God has raised up many specially gifted men to exercise an evangelistic ministry. Notable among them are such names as Charles G. Finney, D. L. Moody, C. H. Spurgeon, R. A. Torrey, with many others who perhaps were equally faithful, though less conspicuously successful. Finney, Moody, and Torrey, exercised their ministry largely from place to place, while Spurgeon's ministry was exercised largely from his own pulpit and, through his printed sermons, to the ends of the earth.

But all these men wrought amid religious conditions vastly different from our day. While in all ages there have been many who departed from the faith, in the days when these outstanding evangelists and their contemporaries ministered, the majority of the churches of all denominations were at least theoretically evangelical. In all the churches there were to be found men and women who had a real experience of divine grace; and the pulpit, for the most part, proclaimed the great doctrines of the gospel. It would have to be admitted that during the period under review, as during all other periods, there was much spiritual deadness, and much of the "form of godliness", where, if the power was not denied, it was at least ignored. But the ministry in general of those days, if it did not call down fire from heaven in all cases, did at least honour the altar of the Lord, and put the wood and the sacrifices thereon, so that when

these men of great spiritual power proclaimed, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the great evangel, and the fire fell from heaven, there was something in the churches and in the ministry upon which the fire could fall; and the wood and the sacrifices were thus consumed.

In writing thus we have designed to point out that the evangelists of the period referred to really ministered among churches that, in their doctrinal position and their Christian profession, bore at least some resemblance to the assemblies of believers described in the New Testament as "churches".

In the apostolic day it was not so; and when the apostles and others went evangelizing from place to place, they did not advise the converts to remain members of the synagogue or the temple and regularly to attend their services; but rather gathered them into assemblies which were called churches, because they were made up of people who had been "called out" of the world and separated unto the gospel of Christ. This was absolutely necessary in order to the mutual edification of the young believers, and to their mutual reinforcement in their collective testimony to the power of the gospel. Thus the whole teaching of the New Testament is to the effect that while it is of primary importance that men should be made new creatures in Christ, that they should be "born again", and become children of God, it is of only secondary importance that the new-born babes should not only desire the sincere milk of the Word, but that they should be provided with opportunity to receive it.

Thus the apostolic churches became nurseries in which the new-born babes were cared for, and instructed in the things of God. For this purpose the ascended Lord conferred His several gifts upon the churches, as it is written: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from which the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

We have now fallen upon days in which religious conditions are fundamentally different from those which obtained during the ministry of the great evangelists to whom we have referred; and are thrust back again into conditions analagous of the apostolic era; for it must be admitted that, speaking generally, the so-called churches of to-day are as unfriendly to the supernaturalism of the gospel of Christ as were the rulers of the synagogue or the officers of the temple.

Suppose a great awakening should occur somewhere, in which hundreds or thousands of persons should really be born again through faith in the expiatory sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, where could such spiritual babes find a home? Where could their faith in evangelical supernaturalism be nourished? As someone has said, a new-born babe at the breast of a dead mother would be just as likely to survive as for spiritual life to be nourished in some churches. Is it not true that in many such places the authority of the Bible is denied? the expiatory value of the blood of Christ repudiated? and even the supernaturalism of the new birth rejected? If these things be so, the whole problem of evangelism becomes, in our day, vastly different from what it was even twenty-five years ago.

We have met with some young men who professed a zeal for an evangelistic ministry. A few years ago it was our delight to spend occasional periods of a few weeks with other brethren, preaching the gospel to the unsaved. But to-day invitations to such a ministry could have no attraction for us unless it were to a church whose pastor and people stand solidly for evangelical principles. One might then hope to accomplish more ministering to a group of a dozen or so of such believers, than to preach to thousands if there were no place in which the babes could be cared for. And certainly ministers who cease to expect supernatural conversions under their own ministry would be unable to care for spiritual babes converted elsewhere.

All this leads us to say that in our day we have to face apostolic conditions. We must continue to evangelize. We must still go preaching the gospel of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And we may still expect the same results to follow such preaching—but what after that? In many instances it will be necessary to form new churches composed of these young believers, where they may come together as in apostolic days for the strengthening of each other's faith, and that they may join hands in bearing a collective witness to the Saviour Whom they have received.

Religious conditions in some respects similar to those which we now face obtained in Wesley's day. Wesley, at first, had no thought of establishing new churches. Certainly he had no intention of founding a new denomination. But he soon discovered that it was necessary to the nurturing of the new-born babes that they should be gathered into what he called "societies", in order that they might be conditioned to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

Does not the present situation strongly emphasize the divine wisdom of New Testament ecclesiology? Does it not appear absolutely indispensable to the nurture of spiritual life that there should be assemblies of believers composed exclusively of those who have been born again, and who have recognized Jesus Christ as their Lord by their obedience to His command in baptism and in the observance of the Lord's Supper? And does not the present situation make the principle of the local church's absolute autonomy appear to be necessary to its spiritual enlargement and fruitfulness? If these things be so, it follows that the task before evangelical believers to-day is not only the evangelizing of the unsaved, but the gathering together into genuine New Testament churches of all believers who can be reached, in order that they may be separated from the plague of Modernism, and that thus a testimony to Evangelical Christianity may be perpetuated in the earth.

Because of these considerations we are supremely concerned to see young men trained for the ministry who will become not evangelists only, but evangelistic pastors, who will found new churches on basic New Testament principles; and who would be content to give their lives to the upbuilding of such fortresses of evangelical testimony as the Lord would enable them thus to build.

Church Revivals a Necessity.

Dark as is the present situation, however, there is still a remnant according to the election of grace, as always. There are churches in which evangelicals are in the majority, and if they were led by godly pastors, who were willing to put Christ first and to endure the consequences of loyalty to Him and His gospel, many such churches might be revived, and become once again as a city set on an hill which cannot be hid.

It would be folly, however, to expect lasting good to come to such churches while conditions in the church, which are a grief to the Spirit of God, are permitted to remain. Only as such churches are thoroughly purged, can revival come.

And yet even among these churches there are some that periodically hold evangelistic campaigns. But if converts are given them, they are born into a situation where a progressive and fruitful Christian life is extremely difficult if not altogether impossible. Cancer cannot be removed by a hypodermic injection of morphia, plus a family party when all the members of the family are brought together for a happy evening. Religious banquets, or banquets under religious auspices; campaigns for money; appeals to denominational loyalty; and all other devices, will fail to remove the cause of spiritual barrenness when the cancer of unbelief is gnawing at the church's vitals.

Therefore the duty of evangelical believers in this dark day is surely twofold, or, let us rather say, threefold: first, to seek a personal revival in a new and deeper experience of the power of divine grace; secondly, to do everything possible to promote revival

in such churches as have in them still an evangelical remnant; and thirdly, to form new churches for the maintenance of a sound witness to the truth of the gospel.

"O Lord, revive Thy work!"

THE POPE OR THE BIBLE

The Toronto Globe, December 11, carried a despatch from Vatican City in which the Pope is reported to have remarked on the decline of Protestantism as follows:

"During the ceremony of reading approval of the beatification of 136 English martyrs Pope Pius affirmed that Protestantism was 'getting more and more exhausted,' and had reached a point where 'its own very sterility is inspiring many souls with a nostalgia for Catholicism.'

He rejoiced that 'returns to Catholicism were being multiplied ever more frequently.

'Behold Catholicism, which shines in the clear light, while Protestantism goes from denial to denial, rendering ever more intense in many souls that follow the invitation of truth, a homesickness for returning to Catholicism.

'It has sometimes seemed as though the ship of the Church were in danger, but instead it has passed triumphantly on in the real course of culture.'

This statement is not surprising, because, so far as it refers to Protestantism—or rather Protestantism so-called—it is true. For once we find ourselves in agreement with the Pope. In an address delivered in New York City, six years ago, or December, 1923, a report of which is before us, we said:

"What are the fruits of modernism in the religious realm? Is it not evident to all that Roman Catholicism is everywhere making tremendous strides? Why is it that in this day of supposed enlightenment, of popular education, and general increase of intelligence, the superstitions of Rome should be welcomed by multitudes who long seemed proof against its teaching? The reason, it appears to me, is obvious. People are turning away from the negations of religious modernism to a religion that is positive and authoritative; and there is no hope of stemming the rising tide of Roman Catholicism by the doctrine of doubtful inspiration, which leads a man, at last, to the position where he is without any religious authority at all.

Look, too, at the new cults which are everywhere springing up. Can the subtleties of Christian Science be answered by the guesses of a 'science falsely so-called'? Can the vagaries of Mrs. Eddy be dispelled by

the vagaries of a Fosdick, or a Vedder, or a Shailer Matthews? Consider, also, the rapid spread of Spiritualism. How are we to account for it? Is it to be explained merely by the fact that death has held high carnival during the recent war, and that for that reason, more people have an interest in the life beyond? I am convinced we must look deeper than this to explain the increase of Spiritualism. Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are the natural successors of the modernist apostles of doubt and unbelief. Indeed, Spiritualism is the natural child of rationalism and unbelief. It was when and because Saul had rejected the word of divine revelation, and the oracle was silent, and no voice out of the unknown answered his hungry call, that he resorted to a witch. Spiritism is the twin of modernism. If the first is Zarah, the second is Pharez—twin brothers born of an adulterous union. Modernism is the devil's broom by which he would sweep the world clear of the last trace of a supernaturally revealed religion, and make way for the ever-multiplying religious delusions of the pit."

No navigator can afford to throw his compass overboard, and then shut his eye to the polestar. It is philosophically impossible to dispense with all objective standards of judgment and direction. A religion without authority is the negation of every benefit religion proposes to confer. Modernism is pure subjectivism: it makes a man a law unto himself. Luther could never have shaken Rome, and effected the Reformation, by the proclamation of his opinions. He set the authority of the Bible against the authority of the church.

What is now called Protestantism too often protests against nothing. To be true to its historical, and etymological genius, Protestantism must protest against everything that is contrary to the Word of God. Modernism has taken the protest out of Protestantism, and, in the name of tolerance, made it the breeding ground of every kind of lawlessness. Modernism is not only the ally of Roman Catholicism, it is the ally of every anti-Christian system—yes, of every anti-Christian thing on earth.

GOOD NEWS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA

The following article is reproduced from *The B.C. Baptist*, "Issued by The Convention of Regular Baptists of British Columbia", for November, 1929. We publish the article with great thankfulness. We have made many visits to Vancouver, and have always had an experience with our B.C. brethren similar to that of Dr. R. E. Neighbour. The Mount Pleasant Church seemed to us to be on the verge of a great revival. The split in that church was, in our judgment, unnecessary. When anyone moves into a new house he is likely to want to make some alterations—a room must be repapered, furniture in another room changed,

and perhaps, on the whole, many readjustments may be necessary to suit the new occupant. But no wise man would either burn the house down, or blow it up, to effect the necessary alterations.

When a pastor goes to a church, he is likely to find many things which need readjustment; but where no principle is involved, and all that is necessary is a readjustment of conditions to suit personal idiosyncrasies, a little patience and a little tact will effect the necessary changes without the slightest rupture. We rejoice, however, in what Brother Neighbour says about the fine spirit obtaining in the membership of

Mount Pleasant Church. We believe the Regular Baptists of British Columbia have an almost unequalled opportunity for establishing a true Baptist testimony, in that great province of the West, which is an empire in itself. It has been our privilege to come into personal contact with some of the pastors and laymen constituting the Convention of Regular Baptists of British Columbia, and we have always shared the high opinion which Dr. Neighbour has now formed of them. We rejoice in their fidelity to the truth, and especially congratulate them on having thus early in their career extended their missionary efforts to China.

We also know Dr. R. E. Neighbour quite intimately. He has often been a most acceptable preacher in Jarvis Street Church, and his unswerving loyalty to the gospel has been written upon every page of his ministerial history. Dr. Neighbour has a great opportunity in Mount Pleasant Church. We almost envy him; but we are delighted at Dr. Neighbour's manifest interest in the whole work of our Regular Baptist brethren in British Columbia.

From what we know of Dr. Neighbour we can well believe that he will find a fellowship after his own heart among these brethren; for Dr. Neighbour has never been a man of compromise, and would be uncomfortable among that type of Fundamentalists whose only resemblance to a dove consists in their ability to sit on a fence! Brother Neighbour will find nothing of that disposition among the Regular Baptists of British Columbia. They have been through the fires, and know what they believe, and why they believe it. Doctor Neighbour will find opportunity to exercise a great ministry not only in his own church, which, of necessity, will be his chief concern, but among all the Regular Baptist churches of that great province.

Thousands of readers of *The Gospel Witness* know Dr. R. E. Neighbour, and love him; and we commend him to them, begging them earnestly to pray that his ministry in Vancouver may be crowned with such blessing as even he has never experienced before. We ask our readers thus to pray because we are sure that in our own experience of the last few years even our continuance in health has been made possible in answer to the prayers of thousands of friends.

British Columbia is the largest of all the provinces of the Dominion. An Irishman is reported to have said that when the Lord made British Columbia it was so big that He had to crumple it up to get it on the map! As we write these words there is a great Hallelujah, in our hearts at the receipt of the good news from British Columbia which is contained in the following article:

HOW THE REGULAR BAPTIST PASTORS AND PEOPLE APPEAL TO ME.

By R. E. Neighbour, D.D.,

Pastor-Elect at Mount Pleasant Regular Baptist Church.

"Would someone the gift to give us,
To see ourselves as others see us."

Coming as I did from South Carolina with one big bound, and landing in Vancouver, B.C., on October 12th, just one month ago, I have had abundant opportunity to "size up" the situation among the Regular Baptists of British Columbia.

Nor do I think that anyone could think of me as a biased witness. To be sure I came under invitation of Mount Pleasant Regular Baptist Church for three months' supply, with the view to a call; however, I came without a knowledge of the conditions which prevailed either in Mount Pleasant Regular Baptist Church, or among the Baptists of this province.

Now as to my conclusions:

1. As to Mount Pleasant Church. I found a church greatly distressed by a division which had taken away about one-half of their membership, among whom were many staunch and spiritual people who had been active in the church in the past.

I entered in and out among the ones who were left behind, numbering perhaps 200 active members—the ones who stood by the faithful and efficient work of Pastor A. F. Baker in other years.

When I learned of the division, I naturally looked for a spirit of bitterness and criticism. That some existed I would not deny, but it was scarcely visible. The mass of the membership although disheartened, had filled in the breaches as best they could, and were standing with one heart and soul, a united, praying group, waiting for God to say, "Forward, March."

The deacons are conservative but stalwart men, 14 in all, who are willing to march when God gives command. They certainly stood with me in prayer, and showed every willingness to co-operate in the Lord's work. The Young People are a glorious band of strong, staunch and separated Christians who know how to pray and testify. The choir is one hundred per cent. for God, each one saved and separated from the world. It is blessed to hear their prayers and testimonies in which all take part, before they enter into their weekly choir meeting. The Sunday School is equipped with able workers, and is growing with leaps and bounds. The women are like those of whom Paul wrote, "Help those women who laboured with me in the gospel." Some of the women are real warriors in prayer.

The church as a whole has so deeply impressed me, not only as to its need, but also as to its great opportunity for a vital testimony both in Vancouver and in British Columbia, and unto the ends of the earth, that I, before this letter goes to press, will have accepted the call of the church which was given me a week ago, by private ballot, 151 for, and 2 against.

The Regular Baptist Pastors and Churches.

Two general meetings of the Convention pastors and churches have met within the month, in each of these I had opportunity to get behind the real spirit which dominates the Convention.

The first meeting was the Young People's Rally at Ruth Morton Church, Rev. Andrew Grieve, Pastor. I went over as a guest, and when I reached the commodious and beautiful church auditorium, I found standing room almost at a premium. Never will I forget the sight at the close of the sermon as young men and women, all under thirty years of age, pressed their way to the front and stood packing the rostrum and choir stand, dedicating their lives to God. This gave me a vision of the spiritual life and joy in Christ which possessed the young people.

The second meeting was the All Day Thanksgiving Rally of the churches of the Regular Baptist Convention. This was held in the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. The morning service opened at 9.30 and the people came from many churches—pastors and people mingling in spiritual service. Three pastors spoke at the morning services on different phases of "Prayer." In thirty-eight years of ministry, I have never seen so fruitful a service. The Sunday School room of the church was filled with earnest hearts, each intent on meeting God. I would say that half the time allotted to each speaker was given to prayer—that is one and one-half hours of preaching on prayer, and one and one-half hours of practicing prayer. It is true—

"God came down our souls to bless."

My own heart was so stirred that I could not but weep as I prayed.

The afternoon was given to missions and evangelism. The Sunday School Annex was packed during the whole three hours. What a revelation of the soul-yearning and soul-winning spirit which dominated the audience. The first address was by a most gifted young man, the son of Pastor A. F.

Baker. He is leaving soon, accompanied by his wife, for China. What joy! Four of the Convention's most gifted young people—two preachers and their devoted wives—under the appointment of the Convention to be their missionaries in China.

The night service, in spite of a heavy rain, almost filled the main auditorium. When six hundred people fall to their knees as one man in prayer, it is a scene not soon to be forgotten.

Is that all?—by no means. The spirit of liberality pervades the whole Convention. In the Thanksgiving Rally the

people laid more than five hundred dollars down for the Lord's work. The churches are giving largely to home and foreign missions, and giving freely.

In our next issue, with the permission of *The B.C. Baptist*, I will continue this strain, writing on "Why the Organization of the Regular Baptist Churches and Convention."

Just now, as an incoming pastor, I want to reach out my hand to my fellow-pastors, and say to them: Never have I seen a group of men more devoted to Christ and His service, and more willing to sacrifice in His will. I am yours, and count it a joy to labour with you in the gospel.

"We Must Keep Faith With John E. Davis"

This is what *The Canadian Baptist* says as an argument in support of its drive for \$300,000 for Foreign Missions. Reference, of course, is made to the heroic Rev. J. E. Davis, who contracted leprosy while a missionary in India, and died of leprosy, April 28th, 1916.

Is it "keeping faith" with John E. Davis to support a man who denies the infallibility and authority of Holy Scripture?

Is it "keeping faith" with John E. Davis to support an institution and a Convention which endorse and magnify a professor who implicitly mocks at the precious blood which John E. Davis went to India to preach?

Is it "keeping faith" with John E. Davis to give money to a Foreign Mission Board who will send out missionaries trained in an institution where evangelical principles are always discounted, and sometimes denied? John E. Davis was one of the greatest heroes of the Christian faith. The record of his devotion must be an inspiration to all who believe the Bible, and that men are saved through faith in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Is it "keeping faith" with John E. Davis to set a man up to preach a Foreign Mission sermon, such as was preached by Dr. Richard Roberts in Walmer Road Church, Sunday, December 1, who began his sermon by frankly saying that he did not believe the portion of Scripture from which his text was taken? and who, in the course of his address, expressed gratitude for the "life" of Confucianism and Buddhism, and the "living water" brought to the earth "by other faiths than ours"?

Splendid and heroic as John E. Davis was, noble and full of inspiration as was the example he set us, Mr. Davis himself would be the first to insist that there is a higher Example than his; and a more heroic Person with Whom we must "keep faith".

What the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec need to learn is that our first duty is to "keep faith" with Jesus Christ from Whom their commission was received.

Is it "keeping faith" with Jesus Christ to support or sponsor, directly or indirectly, that which must result in the sending of men to India who deny the Scriptures which our Lord endorsed and which He declared testified of Him?

Is it "keeping faith" with Jesus Christ to send to India the product of McMaster University, an institution which is shot through with Modernism, and especially with that feature of it which constitutes the denial of the blood atonement?

To talk about "keeping faith" with John E. Davis, while the whole effort of the Convention, as such, is directed to the destruction of all that John E. Davis stood for, is nothing short of the most outrageous hypocrisy.

How can the churches keep faith with John E. Davis while supporting a Convention which has broken faith with Jesus Christ?

Furthermore, a noble son of this noble missionary, who still believes his father's gospel, has withdrawn all support from the old Convention, and stands solidly with those who are standing for the gospel his martyred father so nobly preached. Is this son not "keeping faith" with his father? It is the worst of sacrilege to use the honoured name of John E. Davis for the purpose of extracting money from the purses of uninformed people. It dangerously approximates the wicked practice of obtaining money under false pretenses. It is not, however, to be wondered at, for any movement led by Dr. John MacNeill, who has trampled under foot all the principles he professes, who has so openly and persistently betrayed the gospel by the support of men who unblushingly deny it, having thus broken faith with the great Head of the church Himself, will break faith with anybody.

SPURGEON ON INSPIRATION

(We publish below an extract from one of Mr. Spurgeon's great conference addresses, published in 1891. The title of the address is, "The Greatest Fight in the World". We wish all our ministerial readers could obtain a copy and not only read it, but study it.—Ed. G. W.)

We are resolved, then, to use more fully than ever what God has provided for us in this Book, for *we are sure of its inspiration*. Let me say that over again. **WE ARE SURE OF ITS INSPIRATION**. You will notice that attacks are frequently made as against *verbal* inspiration. The form chosen is a mere pretext. Verbal inspiration is the verbal

form of the assault, but the attack is really aimed at inspiration itself. You will not read far in the essay before you will find that the gentleman who started with contesting a theory of inspiration which none of us ever held, winds up by showing his hand, and that hand wages war with inspiration itself. There is the point: We care little for any theory of inspiration: in fact, we have none. To us the plenary verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture is fact, and not hypothesis. It is a pity to theorize upon a subject which is deeply mysterious and makes a demand upon faith rather than fancy. Believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and

believe it in the most intense sense. You will not believe in a truer and fuller inspiration than really exists. No one is likely to err in that direction, ever if error be possible. If you adopt theories which pare off a portion here, and deny authority to a passage there, you will at last have no inspiration left, worthy of the name.

If this book be not infallible, where shall we find infallibility? We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly; but we shall not set up instead of him a horde of little popelings fresh from college. Are these correctors of Scripture infallible? Is it certain that our Bibles are not right, but that the critics must be so? The old silver is to be depreciated; but the German silver, which is put in its place, is to be taken at the value of gold. Stripplings fresh from reading the last new novel correct the notions of their fathers, who were men of weight and character. Doctrines which produced the godliest generation that ever lived on the face of the earth are scouted as sheer folly. Nothing is so obnoxious to these creatures as that which has the smell of Puritanism upon it. Every little man's nose goes up celestially at the very sound of the word "Puritan"; though if the Puritans were here again, they would not dare to treat them thus cavalierly; for if Puritans did fight, they were soon known as Ironsides, and their leader could hardly be called a fool, even by those who stigmatized him as a "tyrant". Cromwell, and they that were with him, were not all weak-minded persons—surely? Strange that these are lauded to the skies by the very men who deride their true successors, believers in the same faith. But where shall infallibility be found? "The depth saith, It is not in me"; yet those who have no depth at all would have us imagine that it is in them; or else by perpetual change they hope to hit upon it. Are we to believe that infallibility is with learned men? Now, Farmer Smith, when you have read your Bible, and have enjoyed its precious promises, you will have, tomorrow morning, to go down the street to ask the scholarly man at the parsonage whether this portion of the Scripture belongs to the inspired part of the Word, or whether it is of dubious authority. It will be well for you to know whether it was written by the Isaiah, or whether it was by the second of the "two Obadiahs". All possibility of certainty is transferred from the spiritual man to a class of persons whose scholarship is pretentious, but who do not even pretend to spirituality. We shall gradually be so bedoubted and bericriticized that only a few of the most profound will know what is Bible, and what is not, and they will dictate to all the rest of us. I have no more faith in their mercy than in their accuracy: they will rob us of all that we hold most dear, and glory in the cruel deed. This same reign of terror we shall not endure, for we still believe that God revealeth himself rather to babes than to the wise and prudent, and we are fully assured that our own old English version of the Scriptures is sufficient for plain men for all purposes of life, salvation, and godliness. We do not despise learning, but we will never say of culture or criticism, "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

Do you see why men would lower the degree of inspiration in Holy Writ, and would fain reduce it to an infinitesimal quantity? It is because the truth of God is to be supplanted. If you ever go into a shop in the evening to buy certain goods which depend so much upon colour and texture as to be best judged of by daylight; if, after you have got into the shop, the tradesman proceeds to lower the gas, or to remove the lamp, and then commences to show you his goods, your suspicion is aroused, and you conclude that he will try to palm off an inferior article. I more than suspect this to be the little game of the inspiration-depreciators. Whenever a man begins to lower your view of inspiration, it is because he has a trick to play, which is not easily performed in the light. He would hold a seance of evil spirits, and therefore he cries, "Let the lights be lowered." We, brethren, are willing to ascribe to the Word of God all the inspiration that can possibly be ascribed to it; and we say boldly that if our preaching is not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in it. We are willing to be tried and tested by it in every way, and we count those to be the noblest of our hearers who search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things be so; but to those who belittle inspiration we will give place by subjection, no, not for an hour.

Do I hear someone say, "But still you must submit to the conclusions of science"? No one is more ready than we are to accept the evident facts of science. But what do you mean by science? Is the thing called "science" infallible? Is it not science "falsely so-called"? The history of that human ignorance which calls itself "philosophy" is absolutely identical with the history of fools, except where it diverges into madness. If another Erasmus were to arise and write the history of folly, he would have to give several chapters to philosophy and science, and those chapters would be more telling than any others. I should not myself dare to say that philosophers and scientists are generally fools; but I would give them liberty to speak of one another, and at the close I would say, "Gentlemen, you are less complimentary to each other than I should have been." I would let the wise of each generation speak of the generation that went before it, or nowadays each half of a generation might deal with the previous half generation; for there is little of theory in science to-day which will survive twenty years, and only a little more which will see the first day of the twentieth century. We travel now at so rapid a rate that we rush by sets of scientific hypotheses as quickly as we pass telegraph posts when riding in an express train. All that we are certain of to-day is this, that what the learned were sure of a few years ago is now thrown into the limbo of discarded errors. I believe in science, but not in what is called "science". No proven fact in nature is opposed to revelation. The pretty speculations of the pretentious we cannot reconcile with the Bible, and would not if we could. I feel like the man who said, "I can understand in some degree how these great men have found out the weight of the stars, and their distances from one another, and even how, by the spectroscope, they have discovered the materials of which they are composed; but", said he, "I cannot guess how they found out their names." Just so. The fanciful part of science, so dear to many, is what we do not accept. That is the important part of science to many—that part which is a mere guess, for which the guessers fight tooth and nail. The mythology of science is as false as the mythology of the heathen; but this is the thing which is made a god of. I say again, as far as its facts are concerned, science is never in conflict with the truths of Holy Scripture, but the hurried deductions drawn from those facts, and the inventions classed as facts, are opposed to Scripture, and necessarily so, because falsehood agrees not with truth.

Two sorts of people have wrought great mischief, and yet they are neither of them worth being considered as judges in the matter: they are both of them disqualified. It is essential that an umpire should know both sides of a question; and neither of these is thus instructed. The first is the irreligious scientist. What does he know about religion? What can he know? He is out of court when the question is—Does science agree with religion? Obviously he who would answer this query must know both of the two things in the question. The second is a better man, but capable of still more mischief. I mean the unscientific Christian, who will trouble his head about reconciling the Bible with science. He had better leave it alone, and not begin his tinkering trade. The mistake made by such men has been that in trying to solve a difficulty, they have either twisted the Bible, or contorted science. The solution has soon been seen to be erroneous, and then we hear the cry that Scripture has been defeated. Not at all; not at all. It is only a vain gloss upon it which has been removed. Here is a good brother who writes a tremendous book, to prove that the six days of creation represent six great geological periods; and he shows how the geological strata, and the organisms thereof, follow very much in the order of the Genesis story of creation. It may be so, or it may not be so; but if anybody should before long show that the strata do not lie in any such order, what would be my reply? I should say that the Bible never taught that they did. The Bible said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That leaves any length of time for your fire-ages and your ice-periods, and all that, before the establishment of the present age of man. Then we reach the six days in which the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day. There is nothing said about long ages of time, but, on the contrary, "the evening and the morning were the first day"; and "the evening and the morning were the second day"; and so on: I do not here lay down any theory, but

simply say that if our friend's great book is all fudge, the Bible is not responsible for it. It is true that his theory has an appearance of support from the parallelism which he makes out between the organic life of the ages and that of the seven days; but this may be accounted for from the fact that God usually follows a certain order whether he works in long periods or in short ones. I do not know, and I do not care, much about the question; but I want to say that, if you smash up an explanation you must not imagine that you have damaged the Scriptural truth which seemed to require the explanation: you have only burned the wooden palisades with which well-meaning men thought to protect an impreg-

nable fort which needed no such defence. For the most part, we had better leave a difficulty where it is, rather than make another difficulty by our theory. Why make a second hole in the kettle, to mend the first? Especially when the first hole is not there at all, and needs no mending. Believe everything in science which is proved: it will not come to much. You need not fear that your faith will be overburdened. And then believe everything which is clearly in the Word of God, whether it is proved by outside evidence or not. No proof is needed when God speaks. If he hath said it, this is evidence enough.

"WHAT DOT HINDER ME?"

By Dr. T. I. Stocklley, Dean of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

There is an extremely interesting story recorded in the eighth chapter of the Acts. It tells us of Philip, who was one of the seven chosen, (see Acts, chapter six) to "serve tables". Philip was conducting a great evangelistic campaign at Samaria, preaching Christ unto the people. The power of God was with the message; and, as a result, there was great joy in Samaria. In the midst of this joy there came a divine message to Philip to leave Samaria, and to go southward toward Gaza, and to take the desert route. Like a true servant of his Lord, he arose and went. From a region of great joy he was sent to the desert. It reminds us of his Lord, Who, after the opened heavens and the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove, and the Father's voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased", we read, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness": Dr. George Matheson says, "The heart that can tarry for Him in the solitudes of the wilderness is to Him the dearest heart of all."

At a certain point on the road a high government official under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, came near in his chariot. Philip's attention was arrested. As the chariot approaches Philip hears the Ethiopian reading aloud, and to his delight he is reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" the divine voice said. Philip eagerly obeys, and ventures to ask the bold question of the Ethiopian, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I", said this great official, "except some man should guide me?" Philip is invited into his chariot, and then with a glowing heart he began at the same scripture, Isaiah, chapter fifty-three, verses seven to nine, and preached unto him—What? The sufferings of Jeremiah? No. The suffering Israel? No. "He preached unto him *Jesus*." The great gospel message is unfolded; the Holy Spirit carries it home to the heart of the hearer, and a mighty transaction takes place. The Jesus of Isaiah fifty-three becomes the personal Redeemer and Lord of the eager Ethiopian.

Philip evidently taught him that faith should be followed with confession, and the immediate form of confession should be baptism. Driving along the road they came to "a certain water": Dr. Thompson in his "The Land and the Book", says that taking a certain road Philip and the Ethiopian would meet somewhere south-west of Latron, and further, that "there is a fine stream of water there called Murubbah, deep enough even in June to satisfy the utmost wishes of our Baptist friends". Better still, it satisfied the

unsophisticated believer who knew only the word of His redeeming Lord. Dr. Thompson says this Murubbah is merely a local name for the great Wady Sûrar given to it on account of copious fountains supplied with water during the summer." Seeing this "fine stream of water" the Ethiopian said to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" There is something intensely delightful about this question. Evangelists to-day rarely touch the subject of Christian baptism when they address enquiring souls. Most of them find great difficulty in mentioning it at all. Not so with preachers in apostolic days. "Repent, and be baptized", said Peter on the day of Pentecost. And Philip here acted upon our Lord's great commission: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them" (the disciples) "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And so having understood the message and accepted Christ as his Saviour, and heard the teaching concerning baptism, the Ethiopian said, "What doth hinder me? Is there any further requirement before I am baptized? Can I not be baptized now?" He did not adopt the religious subterfuge of many and say, "As to baptism, I cannot decide now: I must pray over it." The Ethiopian did not think he should postpone obedience, but this step of confession should be taken at the first possible opportunity. He was willing to go the whole length with Jesus. If there was any hindrance whatever he was eager to overcome it without delay. So it should ever be. Baptism is intended to mark the beginning of the Christian life; intended to proclaim to the world the ground of a soul's trust, namely, Christ Who died, and was buried, and Who rose again. It is intended to proclaim the soul's union with Christ in death and burial and resurrection. It is intended to proclaim the soul's own experience of death and burial and resurrection. And this proclamation should be made as soon as Christ has become the saving Reality of the soul.

"What doth hinder me?" How different the tone of this question from that of some who peevishly say, "Why need I be baptized? Cannot I be a Christian without being baptized?" It would be well to look at the question honestly. "What doth hinder me?" *Does want of faith hinder you?* Have you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Of course you ought not to be baptized until your answer to that question is quite clear and firm. You want a faith that receives Christ just as an imprisoned debtor re-

(Continued on page 13.)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

CAN A PERSON BE SAVED INSTANTANEOUSLY?

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields.

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, December 8th, 1929.

(Stenographically Reported)

"So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house."—John 4:53.

Prayer before the Sermon.

O Lord our God, we bow not our heads alone but our hearts, in Thy holy presence, that we may worship Thee. Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves. We come to Thee as to our Creator in Whom we live and move and have our being; to the God in Whose hand our breath is, and Whose are all our ways. We acknowledge Thee as the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variableness, neither shadow cast by turning, and from Whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast come out of the unknown, and though men have ever found it impossible to discover Thee, yet Thou hast been pleased to disclose to us Thy glory in the person of Thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We thank Thee that the cry of the human heart, when made aware of the transiency of all earthly things, and quickened with a desire toward God, Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us, has been answered by Jesus Himself saying, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. We worship Thee, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this evening, because we have seen Thee in the person of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men.

We thank Thee for the mercy-seat, and bless Thee that Thou dost sit upon the throne of grace. How terrible is Thy power! How fearful would be the contemplation of Thy matchless might, had we not heard that while power belongeth unto God, to Thee also belongeth mercy! We thank Thee that Thy great power has been mercifully directed toward us; and that all the resources of Deity have been engaged in the gracious work of redeeming men from the bondage of sin and corruption, and in delivering them into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We thank Thee that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God hath appeared to us in the face of Jesus Christ. We think of Him this evening as smiling upon the little children; as shedding tears at the grave of Lazarus; as being filled with anger—and showing His anger—at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and of the chief priests.

We thank Thee that we know what God is like because Jesus Christ has come. We rejoice to believe that it is still true of Him, that, This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. We remember that in the days of His flesh He declared that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins; and ere He departed He announced that all authority was given to Him, in heaven and on earth. Thy power is just the same, Lord Jesus, and Thou hast still authority to remit our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We need that gracious, tender, ministry; and we come to Thee as broken men and women this evening, confessing that we have all sinned and come short of Thy glory. We would not dare to come where God is did we not know that the Blood has been shed. We thank Thee—Oh, we thank Thee—Thou great Saviour, that as Aaron stood between the living and the dead until the plague was stayed, so Thou hast stood in our room and stead. Thou hast braved the storm for us,—

"Jehovah bade His sword awake,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee;
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake,
Thy heart its sheath must be.
All for my sake, my peace to make:
Now sleeps that sword for me."

We rejoice that Thou dost come to us in this age and at this hour, not in judgment as our sins so richly deserve, but

in measureless mercy, in boundless grace. Thou art ready to save us everyone. May the heart of every believer here this evening afresh be inspired to praise Thy great and holy name! May every man and woman here who has not yet tasted that the Lord is gracious, this evening taste and see that the Lord is good, that they may find that they are really blessed who put their trust in Him.

May no heart or conscience escape Thy scrutiny this evening. Discover the stranger, we pray Thee, the man who is hiding from Thee, and possibly from his fellows; the wayward son who is away from home, and who this hour is followed by his mother's prayers. Thou art a great Detective; Thou has found many in this place who had been lost for years. Thou hast saved them, and brought them not only to Thy Father, but back to their friends again. So do Thou put Thine arms of love and mercy about us all; have compassion on us in our sins, and so deal with us in this evening hour that everyone of us may be saved by Thine abounding grace. May the angels be very happy to-night because of what shall take place in Jarvis Street Church! May heaven be filled with rejoicing because many sinners shall come home! We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

It has been laid upon my heart this evening to discuss with you in simple terms the possibility of instantaneous conversion. I have selected our text from this familiar New Testament story because of the principle it contains. You will readily recall the context: the nobleman of Capernaum who heard, when Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee where He had made the water into wine, that the great Prophet was there. Driven by the urgency of his need, he besought the Lord's help, that He would come down and heal his son. The Lord responded almost forbiddingly. He said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman answered and said, "Sir, come down ere my child die." I think we may understand his speech to have meant something like this: "It is true that I came expecting to see signs and wonders, it is true that I had some pre-conceptions as to how the miracle should be wrought; but if I am all wrong, then I beg Thee to correct me. My only plea is that my son is at the point of death, and I need Thy healing, saving, touch. If my thought has been wrong, then come on Thine own terms; but come in any case and let this son of mine live."

Our Lord merely answered, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." He gave him no sign. He promised him no wonder beyond that of his son's recovery. He gave him nothing whatever upon which to rest his faith but His own simple, unsupported, word, that his prayer had been answered, and that the miracle had been wrought: "Go thy way; thy son liveth." What followed?—"The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his

way." He did not stop to argue, he asked for no confirmation: he received the promise with all his heart; he believed it; he acted upon it; and turned his face toward home.

As he was going down his servants met him—for something had happened at home during his absence. They were so full of the good news that they could not wait until his return. The servants hastened along the road that led to Cana, that they might tell their master what a change had taken place; that the fever had left his son; and that he was well on the way to complete recovery. They met their master on the road and said the very same thing that our Lord had said: "Thy son liveth." He said, "When did that happen? Tell me, when was the miracle wrought?" They answered, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." "Why?" said he, "it was at the seventh hour that I besought His grace, it was at the seventh hour I received His promise; and now I discover that at the same hour in the which Jesus said in Cana, 'Thy son liveth', my son was recovered from his illness yonder in Capernaum"—and "himself believed, and his whole house", because he saw that the word of God was instantaneously effective, and that when Jesus Christ declared a certain thing to be so, that hour the thing was done. That is faith, believing God's word to be true, and resting in the assured possession of the grace promised.

So much for the record of the miracle. I shall leave it there, to take out of it the principle, namely, that the word of the Lord instantaneously effects the purposes of grace, and that when an omnipotent Saviour says we are saved, we are saved. There is no longer room for controversy ("Hallelujah!").

I desire to ask a few questions this evening, and try to talk to you as though I were sitting by your side discussing a problem that perhaps has arisen in the minds of some who as yet are not saved. You will see that it is not remote from the text, for the text has direct application to the principles I shall discuss with you.

I.

I begin by asking the question, WHAT IS THE NATURE OF CONVERSION? I do not say, character. I use a stronger word, the strongest word I know—what is the *nature* of conversion? What is it in essence? What is it at its base? What happens when a soul is converted? What do we mean by conversion? When we find an answer to that question, we may further enquire whether there is any possibility of expecting such a miracle as conversion involves to be wrought instantaneously.

What is conversion? It may be wise to discover first, *what it is not*. I know there are many who no longer believe in the supernaturalism of the gospel, who yet talk about conversion. They think of conversion as a mere psychological revolution. A new resolution is formed which sets what human powers there are in a new direction, and leads a man to concentrate his energies upon an effort to do good, instead of permitting himself lightly to slip down the greasy way in the doing of that which is evil.

Conversion is vastly more than forming a new resolution. It is more than signing a pledge. In the old days temperance workers used to try to get men who were addicted to drink, to sign a solemn pledge

that from that forward they would not use intoxicating liquors. A few men of strong will kept their promise, and others did not. It is a good thing to sign a pledge, to turn over a new leaf. If a man has been indolent, it is a good thing for him to resolve to go to work. If he has neglected his duty, it is a good thing for him to make up his mind that he will attend to business. If a man has been careless in attending to the needs of his family, if he has been a selfish father or husband, and yet has it in his power to provide for their requirements, he is to be commended if he turns over a new leaf and makes up his mind to bring his money home to his wife. That is what every wise man does, for usually a woman is a better manager than a man. Such reforms are all very good as far as they go, but singly or collectively, they do not convert: conversion of the soul is a far bigger thing than that. It is a deeper work than that. The fact is, it is not the result of human effort at all; it is not within the power of any preacher, by the exercise of mere personal influence to persuade a man into a new course of life, and effect his conversion by human agencies, by human power. I fear, however, there are many conversions of that sort.

I heard a story,—I do not know whether it is apocryphal or not. I have heard it attributed to Moody and Spurgeon and Wesley, and I do not know whether or not it is authentic. For illustration's sake, let us say it belongs to Wesley. A drunken man, staggering along the street, is said to have met the preacher and said, "How do you do, Mr. Wesley." To which he responded with some reserve. "Do you not know me?" the drunkard enquired. "I fear I do not", was the reply. "Why", said the man, "you converted me the other day." It is said John Wesley replied, "It looks like my work. If God had done it, He would have made a better job of it."

Conversion is not effected by human persuasion. It is not the result of strong reasoning. There are people who imagine that salvation lies at the end of a syllogism, that one can reason a man into a state of grace; that he can shut a man up to certain propositions, secure his consent to them; and send him away converted!

I believe certain types of modern evangelism has done infinite harm at this point. I remember in my first pastorate I went to help a Methodist preacher in some special services. That is not so very, very, long ago; but it is long enough ago to belong to the time when Methodists believed in conversion. It was in a little town, and on this particular evening there were two officers of this little Methodist church who brought a man into the meeting. I can see them now,—they looked for all the world like two policemen, and that man looked as if he were under arrest. They walked one on either side of him, each holding one of his arms; one went into the pew, then they put the victim in next, and the other followed. When the sermon was preached the Methodist minister took charge of the service. He asked everybody who wanted to be a Christian to rise. There were a few people who rose. He then asked all the Christians to rise, and the greater part of the congregation rose to their feet. These two men got up—and this man was between them. Poor fellow! he had no chance at all, so after a while he had to get up. They brought

him out to the front, one leading and the other pushing. It was almost like two engines on a train. They brought him up to the front, and got him to kneel at what they called the altar. Nobody brought him to the Word of God, nobody opened the Bible to show him the promises of God. The minister said, "Let us pray him into the kingdom"—and they prayed. After a while he said, "Let us sing him into the kingdom"! And what with singing and praying they thought they got him into the kingdom—but he was out the next morning. It was the substitution of human effort for the work of the Spirit of God.

I remember the last evangelistic meeting with which I had anything to do in Massey Hall, when we had a great choir, all the Salvation Army bands in the city, and a very famous man as leader of song, and another famous man as the preacher. The song leader led that audience into a perfect frenzy. Toronto sang against Hamilton, and Hamilton against Toronto; and what with the excitement produced by the bands and the choir, I declare I scarcely knew whether I was in heaven or on earth myself. When the congregation had been brought to that pitch the preacher preached; struck while the iron was hot! I was Pastor of this church at the time, and I must acknowledge that that campaign demoralized our work for the winter: and if there was one real convert I did not meet him.

It is quite possible, by means of music and human persuasion, by human effort of one sort or another, to lead a man to take a position so that he will say, "I have been converted." He may not be converted at all. It may not be the work of the Spirit of God.

Conversion is not the result of mere human effort. *It is a supernatural work wrought in the soul of a man.* It is something—I will not say what it is for the moment—but it is something which no human power can accomplish. It is something which nobody but God can do. It is not an outward work—though there must be an outward expression of it ultimately—but it is an inward work, it is a work wrought in the soul of man whereby he is entirely changed, and it can be wrought only by the mighty power of God.

I do not know the nature of the malady from which the nobleman's son was suffering. It may have been consumption, I do not know. It was some kind of fever. But there is a man in the sanatorium with one lung collapsed, and the other one decaying away. He has only part of a lung left, and the whole frame is consumed with fever. If that man is to live physically, what does he need? If he is to live and have a new and exuberant life, what must be done for him? You say readily, "He must have a pair of new lungs." Yes, that is what he needs, new lungs. But you say, "That is beyond human power to effect." Certainly it is! And such a case cannot be physically healed and made whole without those decayed and decaying organs being made new and vigorous. It is something like that in the moral and spiritual nature. A man's moral fibre is gone; his spiritual nature is collapsed; he is dead in trespasses and sins. All the priests and preachers and churches, all the scholars, all the men of science, cannot do inside that man what must be done if he is ever to stand before God in the likeness of Jesus Christ. A miracle must be wrought, a work must be done which only the creative power

of God Himself can accomplish. When you conceive of conversion as involving a miracle like that, you will believe that only God can do it.

What is it? I ask the question, What is the nature of conversion? *It is a life*—and there I use a term which absolutely defies definition. Nobody can tell me what life is. Nobody knows what life is. No surgeon ever discovered it by the use of his lancet. No scientist in his laboratory, by the use of the most powerful microscope, did ever look upon life, the vital principle. He has seen the effects of it, he has seen manifestations of it; but that intangible, invisible, undefinable, indescribable, something that comes from God, and that differentiates the material in which it operates from the non-living, nobody can define. But that there is such a principle, everybody knows. The smallest child knows it. But between life and death there is a great gulf fixed, and no human power has ever bridged that gulf, and no human power ever can bridge it. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "I give unto them eternal life." He gives it, but He has no agents. He has no distributing centres. He delegates to no human individual or organization the power to give life. That is always, everywhere, a divine prerogative, the act of God Himself.

That is what conversion is. It is a new life, whatever that may mean. It is something that comes from God. "You hath he quickened—or made alive—who were dead in trespasses and sins." "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Many years ago Drummond in his book entitled, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World", laboured to define life; and with some physiological support for his reasoning, he called it "correspondence with environment". For example, here is a man who is alive physically; he corresponds with his environment. He sees, he hears, he smells, he tastes, he touches,—all his senses are alert. He inhales and exhales. He lives in correspondence with the vitalizing air about him. But he loses his sight, and one avenue of communication is cut off. He loses his hearing, and another avenue is cut off. He loses his sense of smell, and the flowers no longer mean anything to him. His palate is affected, his taste is destroyed; by and by paralysis grips him, and he does not respond to the sense of touch. Yet within, there are still powers which correspond: the breast still heaves, and he is in communication with the outside world. But by and by the heart stops, blood circulation is discontinued, the lungs no longer exercise their reciprocal ministry, the vitalizing oxygen is no longer taken into the system. The last communication with the body's environment is broken, the doctor puts his hand upon the breast and says, "He is gone! He is dead!" There is no longer any response at all.

What is spiritual death? It is the severance of correspondence with God, the discontinuance of all communication with the spiritual world. There is no reciprocation at all between the soul and God; there is entire separation. Sin is between.

What is conversion? It is a quickening of the soul. It is the impartation of a new life-principle that gives a man a spiritual capacity, and leads him again to correspond with God, to answer the divine communication. That is a poor definition, I know, because I

cannot really define it. I told you it defies definition. It is merely a suggestive word, as I say, but conversion consists of the implantation in the human breast of a new life—and that life comes from God.

Figures could be multiplied. Conversion is a new birth. "Ye must be born again." Something that was not here before is communicated to me by the Spirit; a life that I had not before I now possess; a capacity to which I was a stranger is now my possession; something is done for me which the Bible says is a new birth. "Will you explain it to me please?" someone asks. No; I will not; for the good and sufficient reason that I cannot. "How can these things be?" said Nicodemus; and Jesus in effect answered, "Nicodemus, I will not explain the how, but I insist on the 'must be'. Ye must be born again whether you understand it or not." You are not a Christian until you are born again, until God has done something for you which nobody else can do. "Ye must be born again." Thus conversion is altogether a supernatural work.

There is another statement of Scripture which I must not pass: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature"—or, there is a new creation. The work of creation is a divine act. We are manufacturers. That is the best man can do. All that man can do is to take the material provided, and make something of it. But God spake the worlds from naught. He is the Creator, and can and does create that which He planned to bring into existence out of nothing. And if any man be in Christ there is a new creation.

Again, I will not attempt to explain it, but simply say that the soul that is really saved has been the subject of divine power, and something has been wrought within that was not there by nature. He is made by grace something that he was not by nature. And that work is of God.

I wonder does that offer any encouragement to a tried and defeated man here this evening? To go back to my figure, I come to some consumptive patient and see him or her in weakness—in an agony of weakness, for sometimes it means that, and I say, "I hope you will recover. I hope you will be better in the morning." The patient, if he be one who knows his own case, says, "That is a vain hope, sir, for that which is indispensable to continued life within is gone, and the little that remains is fast decaying. Unless you can tell me of some way by which there may be effected an inward and inner renewal of my physical powers there is no use to say, 'I hope you will be better.' My doctor says he has done all he can do, and I am going down to the grave."

If I were to speak to some man this evening about a larger and richer life and say, "I hope you will be better in the morning", he would say, "Alas! I have discovered that I have no capacity for goodness, I have no capacity for heaven, I have no will to go to heaven; for every tendency of my depraved nature is leading me down to hell, and unless you can promise that something can be done within me that is not there now, you cannot preach any gospel to me. I know that I am just as much morally and spiritually stricken with consumption as the man you have described, and unless you can promise me the reinvigorating of my will and the renewal of all my powers by an energy that is not my own, you have no gospel for me."

Will you forgive me if I say that I become sometimes indignant—yes, indignant—with some who profess to preach the gospel, who are yet leading men down to death? Supposing I were to get permission to go out to Weston, and perhaps to Gravenhurst and Hamilton and elsewhere, and ask the doctors to direct me to the worst cases. Here are several cases which are hopeless; there is no chance of recovery at all; yet I go around from bed to bed saying, "Do not believe what the doctor says. You will be all right in a week or so." What if I were thus to go to men and women, marked for death, in all the institutions of this country, preaching a lie—do you not think I should be arrested and put in jail for endeavouring to inspire in the human breast a vain hope? I say, for a preacher to tell bankrupt men, utterly ruined men, that they can save themselves, is not only an error: it is a crime; it is a positive crime for which God must bring them to account. It is sheer impertinence for me to offer any better condition of life to anybody here unless I can tell him of Someone who can do for him what no human power can effect. But that is just what conversion does.

II.

UPON WHAT CONDITION? Are there any conditions? Yes, there are. There is a man in the hospital. He is a very sick man; the doctors say he is likely to die. There is a man sitting near his bed—who is he, a doctor? No! A nurse? No! Who is he? He is a policeman. The man is ill, but he is a criminal, and is under arrest. His wife and children may come to his bedside, but they have no permission to take him home. He is detained. Before he can be removed the demands of the law must be satisfied. I said a moment ago that it is a crime against humanity to endeavour to inspire men with a false hope; but much modern preaching is a crime against God. It impugns the moral government of the universe. The kind of preaching that makes light of sin and says that it does not matter, that it may be forgiven without the payment of a penalty, that preaching—mark what I say—I do not care who the preacher is, that preaching is downright, unadulterated, unmitigated, anarchy always.

If I were to announce that next Sunday evening I would deliver an address demonstrating the uselessness of all legislators, and all magistrates, and all policemen, and advocating the abolition of the whole system of law under which we live, I think on my arrival Sunday night I should probably find some policemen at the door. If not, they ought to be here. The man who would thus preach red revolution, trampling all law under foot, and promising any man who does it absolute immunity, would be an anarchist.

Yet your pulpits to-day are engaged in telling men and women that they can play lightly with sin, trample all God's laws under foot, and die in their sin, and yet "live happy ever after". That doctrine is an insult to the Majesty of heaven; that is an attack on the moral character of God. I do not care who the man is, he is an enemy alike of man and of God who teaches that damnable heresy. There cannot be salvation without dealing with the fact of sin—and God does deal with it, nor does He give life until these moral obstacles have been removed. Then we are

"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness"—Why?—"that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

There is a moral condition which must be met. It was met at the place called Calvary; the debt has been paid, the blood has been shed; and through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ everything that would prevent the inflow of divine power has been removed. If I may dare to say so, the resources of Deity are now released for our salvation instead of for our condemnation, because the demands of His law have been met in Christ Jesus. If every transgression has received a just recompense of reward, the way is now clear for God to work. God has dealt with the tremendous fact of sin, He has put it on Christ, put it behind His back; and is now come to us in saving instead of destroying power. Blessed be God for the place called Calvary, and for the flowing of the precious blood. The condition is that the atoning work of Christ be accepted, and that we acknowledge that our incapacity, our incompetence, our impotence, are all the result of our sin. Now they are all laid upon Christ, and God is free to work on my behalf. And I say, "Come, Jesus Christ; God be merciful to me a sinner. Remove the stain of sin, and make me a new creation in Christ Jesus, for Thy name's sake."

III.

How Is It Done? We are begotten by the word of truth. I cannot tell you how it is effected. I can only tell you that the Bible, the Word of God, the gospel, is the means that God employs. Jesus said, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The nobleman might have said, "I could have said that myself." And the answer would be, "Yes, but if you said it, nothing would happen." But when Jesus said, "Thy son liveth"; the fever left him. Sun and stars, angels and archangels, all the powers of all worlds, are subject to His almighty power; and when He says to death, "Be gone", he spreads his black wings and flies away. When He says to leprosy, "Depart", the flesh comes again like the flesh of a little child. When He says to the dead, "Come forth", even the dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that were dead come forth. The word of God, when it is believed, results in this matchless miracle.

One of the brethren who was baptized this morning, as we talked during the week, told me that he was converted over in this side section of the church. He said, "I cannot explain it, but such a change has come over me, such a miracle as I never would have believed possible has taken place. I should not have believed that it was possible for a man to be made a new creature like I am." The wonder of it, the marvel of it, to him was beyond expression. Something had happened which he could not explain, but he knew he was entirely changed.

What did it? The word of God. I cannot tell you how believing on the word of God does the thing. I heard a Christian worker say that he was in Chicago where Dr. Torrie was preaching. Among those who

came forward one night seeking salvation was a rather imposing looking man. His coat was buttoned up, but as he undid his coat it was noticed that he was in evening dress, with diamonds flashing from his shirt-front. This worker said, "I wondered what a man like that was doing in church, for people do not usually come to church dressed after that fashion. Dr. Torrie tried to lead him to Christ. He quoted passage after passage from the Word, but this man could not find salvation. It transpired later that he had been on his way to a fashionable gambling resort in Chicago, and as he was going along the street he heard some street preacher quote a text of Scripture, and it went like an arrow to the heart of the King's enemy. He said, 'I cannot go to that place to-night. I wonder if there is a church to which I may go?' He turned into the first church he passed, and it was where Dr. Torrie was preaching.

"But nobody could help him. At last—I think the Spirit of God taught me—I made up my mind that the only way that that man could be saved was by the word of God. So I leaned over and quoted in his ear, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' He paid no attention, but I repeated the verse again and again. Then the Spirit of the Lord seemed to say, 'Keep on giving him that promise.' Scores, perhaps hundreds of times, I whispered in his ear, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' He seemed to be so dead and unresponsive that no human word could get in at all, and I felt if anything could be done for him, it would be done by the naked Word of God. I kept repeating over and over and over again, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' At last, suddenly, almost as if something had struck him, he said, 'Did Jesus say that?' Yes, Jesus says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' 'O Lord', he said, 'I come I come now. All the clouds are dispelled. Is it not wonderful I am saved. He did not cast me out.'"

It is the Word of God that does the work, my friend. I would not mock you by offering you anything less than that. The Word of God, by the power of the Spirit of God, quickens dead souls.

And the Word of God for it, you can be saved in a moment. You say, Conversion does not mean a perfect life. No, but it means the beginning of a life that will result in ultimate perfection. But you may have that new life instantaneously just as surely as that young man, the nobleman's son, received healing, when the Lord Jesus said, "Thy son liveth", and he was delivered of the fever. When Jesus said that, the fever left him, the disease was gone; he was made whole. When the Lord Jesus says to you, "I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck you out of my hand", that moment you are a saved man, that moment the miracle is wrought. I cannot explain it. I will not try; nor is it necessary. You ate your dinner to-night, or whatever you call your evening meal, and you felt better; but you did not know why. You do not know how, by natural processes, the tissue is built up and the life is sustained. We live in the midst of mystery all the time. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell when it cometh, and whither it

goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The man who came in here to-night defeated, broken, ruined, hopeless, in the depths of despair, may go out a child of the King and an heir of glory, saved with an everlasting salvation.

I wonder did you ever hear the story of the great Napoleon reviewing his troops on one occasion? He was standing with his horse beside him, and the horse bolted, galloping down the lines. A private soldier stepped out of the ranks, caught the horse by the bridle, and brought him back to the emperor's side. "Thank you, captain", said Napoleon. The private saluted, "Of what regiment, your majesty?" Pleased that he had been taken at his word the emperor said, "Of my Guards." "Shall a Napoleon, who at last licked the dust, have power to promote a man? Shall his word be taken at its face value? And shall not the word of Him Who said, "Let there be light", and there was light, Who spake the worlds from naught—shall not His word be believed without question? Will you ask that a little professor whose breath is in his nostrils buttress up the Word of God? Have done with that! If God says, "You are forgiven", say, "Hallelujah. I am saved for ever. A child of God? I do not know all that is involved, but I will rest upon the Word of God and rejoice in my new relationship. An heir of glory? I will begin to get ready to live like a prince by and by."

May God help everyone of us to receive His word, and to go from this place rejoicing in His salvation, for His name's sake.

Let us pray: O Lord, we bless Thee for the simplicity of the way of life. Our minds are so clouded; we know so little; we are so limited in our understanding. We could not understand the speech of angels, but Thou hast condescended to come to us as a man, speaking to us with the voice of a man, uttering gracious words, words of forgiveness, words of life. We pray that many may enter in this evening. Give grace, that principalities and powers may be overcome by the might of Thy Spirit. May the slain of the Lord be many, for Thy name's sake, Amen.

"WHAT DOTH HINDER ME?"

(Continued from page 7.)

ceives the ransom who comes to set him free; a faith that applies the blood of God's appointed Lamb; a faith that hides in Christ, the Rock of Ages, the only refuge of the soul. Do you trust in the Lord Jesus thus? Have you committed the whole matter of your soul's salvation to the Almighty Saviour? If so, then what doth hinder you from being baptized? *Does want of vision of the truth of baptism hinder?* Some have been so brought up that they do not see the truth. The late Rev. James Smith of Cheltenham, England, once said that he was brought up in the Church of England, and when he was converted he never remembered having heard a sermon on baptism, or witnessed the administration of the ordinance, but he began to read his New Testament, and there he soon found the teaching of Christian baptism very plainly and simply set forth. Anyone who does not see the truth should read the New Testament afresh. And if he does so, and he is sincerely desirous of knowing the truth, it will be almost impossible to escape seeing it.

Some people say they do not see the need of it. They can get to heaven without it. The thief on the cross was not baptized, and why should they trouble about it. Others do not see the meaning of the ordinance. Then let them read very carefully Romans, chapter six, and see if they do not soon discover a meaning rich and profound. Others do not see the importance of it. This is a loss indeed for the great fundamental facts of the gospel lie beneath this ordinance. The symbol is of great importance as we have already seen. Others do not see that this command faced right at the beginning of the Christian life is a test of obedience, and should be responded to promptly. There is no reason why want of vision should hinder any, for there is ample light on the subject in the New Testament for those who are willing to walk in the light.

Does want of utter abandonment to Christ hinder you? Often there is faith, and there is vision, and yet there is some hindrance. What can it be? Alas, too often it is the want of entire surrender to Christ and to His will. Some people have a curious way of saying, "Baptism does not appeal to me", as if that closed the question so far as they were concerned. During the Great War many young men could have said, "War does not appeal to me", and they could have said that with truth, for many of them hated the thought of war. But the call of King and country had to be obeyed. Our Divine King bids all His followers take this step of Christian baptism, and He looks for whole-hearted obedience. He must be given the first place. And when He is given that place in the heart, it is not very difficult to obey His voice. When He says, "Be immersed in My name", it will be difficult to find any hindrance. You will answer the question, "What doth hinder me?" by saying, "Nothing shall be allowed to hinder. I will break through my early training, my religious associations, my personal prejudice, my lack of love, and all my poor excuses, every hindrance shall be swept away, and I will rise gladly to do my Master's will."

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Shall have my soul, my life, my all."

JARVIS STREET NEWS.

Sunday was a fairly good day. The weather Saturday night was most unfriendly. Long ago we learned that most people make up their mind Saturday night either to go to church or stay at home. The Wise Man long ago said something about a falling tree. Let's see—what was it? Ah, here it is; and it applies splendidly to our case: "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

Like the falling tree, if people fall into bed Saturday night, thinking the weather will be too rough to go to church Sunday morning, when Sunday morning comes—well, "there it shall be"—still in bed instead of up in time to go to church. And if he that observes the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap, so people who are influenced by the weather, if it is bad on Saturday night, are likely to be missing Sunday morning. Jarvis Street people did not stay away from church on Sunday, but some of them apparently got up too late to get to Sunday School.

Notwithstanding, however, the sleet and the snow and the

ice, the attendance at the School was 1,267. Three were baptized at the morning service, and five at the service in the evening. The sermon appearing in this *Witness* was preached in the evening; and though there were fewer visible results than usual, we believe it was, as the farmers would say, "good growing weather".

This week Jarvis Street is greatly enjoying the ministry of one of her favourites, Dr. W. L. Pettingill, of Philadelphia. By the way, he told us a good story. Everybody who knows Dr. Pettingill, knows what a radiant, glowing, person he is. He was recently introduced to a congregation by one who had heard him introduced by the Editor of this paper. We had forgotten using the metaphor, but we are inclined to think it was rather a good one. We told the people on that occasion, a year or so ago, that while, in this country, we are accustomed to furnaces, in England in many places they still have only fire-grates; and what we are content to call simply "heating", they call in England, "central heating"; by which they mean a furnace that is big enough to heat the whole house. Having made this explanation, we introduced Dr. Pettingill a year or so ago to a certain congregation as the "central heating plant". Someone who was present, a fellow-countryman of this Editor, thought the introduction was rather a good one, so quite recently, when it

fell to his lot to introduce Dr. Pettingill, he referred to our introduction of him, and then himself introduced the speaker as the "central heating plant"!

That is Dr. Pettingill's own story. It is rather a good one, so we pass it on to his friends and ours. There is no patent on the introduction, but if anyone is disposed to copy it, please be careful of your "H's" next time!

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

Send "The Gospel Witness" to Your Friends for a Year, for \$2.00.

Send in your subscription at once, and we will send the first number in a sealed envelope by first-class mail, enclosing a Christmas card with your name and compliments, or anonymously as you desire. As a special inducement, we will send also as a premium either of the following books by Dr. Shields:

"The Most Famous Trial of History," "Christ in the Old Testament." If both books are desired, add 50c.

The Union Baptist Witness

These two pages (14 and 15) are the Official organ of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches in Ontario and Quebec.

337 Jarvis St., Toronto, Canada.

W. GORDON BROWN, Editor.

Communications for this department should be addressed direct to W. Gordon Brown, Box 502, Orangeville, Ont.

TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY.

Churches wishing the services of the TORONTO BAPTIST SEMINARY QUARTETTE should communicate with Mr. B. Jackson, 563 Sherbourne Street, Toronto.

PLANS AND PLEAS.

Seeing what the Lord had done, it was a moment of convinced enthusiasm at our recent Convention when our missionary report was adopted; and greater things, so the delegates instructed the Executive, were to be attempted this year than last. Of course, these are what the Executive wish to reach out after; but,—and here is the test,—they must be supplied with the munitions of war in cold dollars and cents, or rather in money backed by fervent and prevailing prayer. Indeed, our present programme, not to mention an enlarged one, demands greater "supplies" in the immediate future than have been forthcoming since our Convention year closed.

We have three suggestions to make.

First, let all treasurers forward mission funds, as far as possible undesignated, at the end of every month. This plan seems to work admirably in the work of our Women's Board; why not in our general work?

Secondly, let pastors present from the pulpit and in the prayer meeting the news and needs of our glorious ministry together. Such action will keep our people informed, will encourage their prayers, and will stimulate their contributions.

Thirdly, when we are giving to our friends this Christmas time, let us not forget the Great Friend. One thing the Wise Men brought was gold for the one born King. Could we not bring some gold also to extend His reign in the hearts of men and to hasten the coming of His Kingdom?

EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS IN BAYVIEW.

Ten days of special meetings were recently held in the Bayview Baptist Church, Rev. Edward Hancox, Pastor. For the first three nights Rev. J. M. Fleming, of Lindsay, was the preacher. His heart-searching messages were used of God to the salvation of a young lady who is teaching school in the district. Rev. Fred Kendal continued the meetings, and the blessing of the Lord was manifest in the salvation of souls.

It rained continually for four days during the last week, making the roads exceedingly bad for cars, and reducing the attendance. Despite this fact much blessing has come to the church as the outcome of the special effort.—E. H.

OTTAWA.

Rev. James Hall is carrying on a faithful and fruitful ministry in Ottawa. On a recent Sunday, two men were baptized, and one woman was received on experience. On the first Sunday of this month the Sunday School took a special offering for the building fund of St. Paul's Church, Montreal,—a needy and worthy object,—and the amount totalled well over \$100.

On November 22nd the church had the Latin American Missionary and Evangelist, Rev. Harry Stoachan, as a spe-

cial speaker, and he gave a strong message on his unique work in the "Neglected Continent".

BARRIE.

The Male Quartette of our Toronto Baptist Seminary, together with their instructor, visited Collier Street, Barrie, the Sunday evening of December 1st. The crowd to hear them was good considering the weather, and their singing was enjoyed.

SERMON AND SONG.

A middle-aged father and a son of sixteen years together responded to the Gospel invitation at Annette Street, Toronto, last Sunday evening. A full house listened to an excellent programme of sacred music by the Gospel Quintette (Coloured) on Monday night, as also to a heart-warming message on "The Bigness of Christ" by Pastor Frank Holliday, of Fairbank. Although this preacher spoke for only fifteen minutes, he gripped his hearers in a remarkable way, and lifted them to the very heights.

Many are writing to Pastor W. J. H. Brown to tell of their interest in, and inspiration from, his radio ministry over CFRB (312 meters; 960 kilocycles). Following are some extracts from the letters:

Muskoka: "To us, who are snow-and-ice-bound on the shores of Lake Rosseau, four miles away from the nearest church, very rarely getting to church during the winter months,—you can form some idea what a great blessing and help your services are."

Toronto: "Several of my unsaved friends have been listening-in, and they say it is so different from what they

hear at other times. . . . If some of the (false) cults think it worth while to broadcast, I think the Church of Christ ought to rise to her privilege in giving the Gospel over the air to unsaved people."

Peterborough: "It is the best radio message of the whole day."

Allandale: "We enjoy your sermon, the best we get, and only wish there were more faithful men in the ministry."

"THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL".

The subject of Pastor Leander Roblin, at the Fundamental Baptist Tabernacle, Fort William, on Sunday, December 1st, was, "The Truth About Hell". "Judgment preached in love brings results," for a young man professed conversion through the message.

A WEEK OF PREACHING.

The Second Markham Baptist Church, where W. S. Whitcombe is pastor, has enjoyed a week of Bible exposition. A week ago Sunday, the beloved Dean of our Seminary, Dr. T. I. Stockley, was the preacher. His visit was followed by Revs. H. Peer (Willowdale), W. Fleischer (Stouffville), P. B. Loney (Runnymede, Toronto), W. J. H. Brown (Annette, Toronto), and F. Holliday (Fairbank, Toronto), respectively. Attendance was good, in spite of some bad weather. So was the preaching, and so were the meetings all round. Such a scriptural testimony is bound to bear fruit in future days.

121 ADDITIONS.

Pastor James McGinlay continues to exhibit the fervour of a Wesley in his preaching in London. Last Sunday night five from the congregation of eight hundred in the Capitol Theatre, responded to the Gospel invitation; another five had come the Sunday before. One hundred and twenty-one have been added to the membership of Central Church since Easter. The work of preparing a permanent building and home for this growing flock is going forward. This undertaking is a tremendous one for a small church, but, in the old proverb, "It must be done,—therefore it can be done."

IN ALTON.

We hear indirectly that four made profession of faith in Christ after a sermon by Pastor W. H. Turner, in the Alton Baptist Church, a week ago last Sunday.

THE SEMINARY QUARTETTE.

Our Toronto Baptist Seminary has an excellent Male Quartette, who have already visited a number of churches to the delight of their hearers. They are open for further engagements. Any pastor desiring their help should write to the Dean.

"A LITTLE BEHIND HAND."

A humorist has remarked that most church members have three hands,—a right hand and a left hand and a little behind hand! We agree!

How often the beauty of a hymn is marred, or the sense of a Scripture lost,

when someone, "a little behind hand", saunters down the aisle!

"Better late than never"? Oh, yes, but "better never late".

Suppose a group of us were to have an audience with our Sovereign, King George V. Would any of us think of arriving late? No, we should be so eager to see the King that we should never forgive ourselves for allowing so unpardonable a breach of etiquette as reaching his presence late. And have we more esteem for the King of England and our Empire than we have reverence for the Sovereign of all the earth and Heaven too? "Evil's wrought for want of thought more than want of heart". Now think it over.

Delegates from twelve churches gathered at South End Regular Baptist Church, Owen Sound, November 5th, for the purpose of examining for ordination Mr. E. Hancox, their energetic pastor. Churches represented on the council were: Bayview; Flamboro Centre; Grace; Hespeler; Hughson and Immanuel of Hamilton; Mt. Pleasant; Willowdale; Wingham; Owen Sound, and Wortley Road, London. Moderator was Rev. Gorder, and clerk, Rev. A. J. Milligan.

Bro. Hancox's threefold statement of conversion, call to the ministry and views of Christian doctrine were presented in a most lucid manner and they served to strengthen the convictions of all who heard him that here indeed was a God-called man. All questions put to him were answered readily and with absolute satisfaction to the council, and it was unanimously voted to accept the candidate and proceed to ordination.

At the evening service the church was crowded to the doors and gracious blessing entered into the hearts of all as the ordination service was proceeded with. Rev. Gorder offered the ordination prayer; Rev. H. W. Bower gave the charge to the church. In charging the candidate, Rev. I. H. Peer said: "Be small, be watchful, be firm, and above all, have spiritual perception." Rev. Edgar Ferns gave the right hand of fellowship, while Rev. T. J. Mitchell delivered a magnificent ordination sermon, based on Romans 8:37-39.

The happy time of fellowship was brought to a close by the pronouncement of the benediction by Rev. E. Hancox.

LARGE CONGREGATIONS.

Indirectly we hear that Rev. John Knight, who, with his bride, lately went to Jamaica, preaches to audiences that number as high as five hundred. What a splendid opportunity!

MICHIGAN NOTES.

By C. R. Peterson.

OKLAHOMA.

Brother W. O. Leach, Pastor of our church at Seminole, Oklahoma, was elected President of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, by an overwhelming majority. Brother Leach is a Baptist fundamentalist, tried and true, and holds the confidence of all our people. —*The Southern Baptist Trumpet*, November, 1929.

OHIO CONVENTION.

This paper stands for the fellowship of love and the unity of the Spirit, among those of "like precious faith". We are sure, therefore, that our readers will be glad to hear that the Second Annual Convention of the Ohio Union was a time of spiritual power. The Association met with the Emmanuel Baptist Church of Toledo, October 22nd to 24th. From the report in the official organ, now called *The Ohio Independent Baptist*, we find that the sessions were feasts of good things. The speakers rang the changes on the exaltation of Christ, the exposition of faith, the propagation of missions, and, for these great needs, the consecration of believers. The Association is made up of fifteen churches, and is open to Fundamental Baptist Churches bordering on the Ohio River. With a membership of 2,545 at the beginning of the year, there were 228 baptisms, or a little better than one for each eleven members. The present membership is 2,702. The grand total contributed by churches for all objects was \$73,084.54. Of this, \$13,356.81 was for missions, but only a small amount passed through the treasury of the Union. The name of the Union, for various reasons, was changed to "The Ohio Association of Independent Baptist Churches". Rev. R. T. Ketcham, of Elyria, was re-elected President of the body. A Women's Missionary organization was begun. We believe this Association will grow in membership and spiritual power.

ST. LOUIS.

Owing to a number of disturbing circumstances, this church has been without a pastor for a number of months, and the outlook was most discouraging. Their numbers were reduced by the inroads of several persistent and pernicious sects (or insects?) who infest many districts of Michigan. The church had heard of the great work the Lord had wrought at the Strickland Church, 17 miles away, and finally decided to ask the writer to come to St. Louis for a series of meetings. These services began Nov. 10th, and closed Wednesday evening, Nov. 27th. The church was greatly revived, and plans are under way to carry on the work there. We did not reach the unsaved to any appreciable degree, though there were several wonderful conversions. On the last Sunday evening, four adults were buried with Christ in baptism. Bible teaching figured largely in the services, and with the aid of three large charts, many professed to understand the Bible better than ever before. Especially needed was the instruction given with the chart illustrating the message on "Which Church of To-day is the New Testament Church?" There will probably be others ready for baptism here in the near future.

NORTH CHESTER.

Evangelistic meetings, conducted by the State Missionary, began at the North Chester Baptist Church, Sunday, Dec. 1st. Bro. L. D. Gross is pastor of this church.

Baptist Bible Union Lesson Leaf

Vol. IV.

No. 4.

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR.

Lesson 52. December 29th, 1929.
Fourth Quarter.**ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.**

Lesson Text: 1 John, chapter 5.

Golden Text: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."—1 John 5:13.

I. OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, (vs. 1-3).

1. The practical nature of John's teaching is again evidenced in the subject matter of this chapter. He is the apostle of love, and would have all men exhibit this spirit, but he warns us against a mere sentimental manifestation of it. It is easy to say we love, but what fruit does our love bear? Does it lead us to obey God? If such be the case then it is real, but if not then it is mere profession. 2. In the verses of this section the practical aspect of love is emphasized. Preceding this there is a statement concerning the identity of those who are born of God. Such are they who believe that Jesus is the Christ, (v. 1). This implies real faith in Him, and not simply intellectual assent to the fact of His claim. The nature and significance of the new birth might here be explained, (John 1:11-13; 3:3-8). The statement is then made concerning love that those who love God, love those also who are begotten of Him, thus giving evidence that they are partakers of His nature, (3:14). A further sign of the reality of that love is the keeping of God's commandments, and such commandments are not grievous to real love, (vs. 2, 3). Obedience is the real test of love. In earthly relationships love delights to serve, and even to sacrifice itself for the one loved, and this spirit in an even higher degree is shown in the service of our Lord. The reality of our love may be judged by our willingness to sacrifice for our God and Saviour. Explanation may be made of the nature of love, and of the way in which we may be possessed by it.

II. OVERCOMING THE WORLD, (vs. 4-5).

In Scripture the world is looked upon as being antagonistic to God, (2:15-17; Rom. 8:6-8) and the Lord's people are urged to keep separate from it, (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1); the term world implying, the unregenerate society of mankind, dominated by the spirit of the Wicked One, (Eph. 2:2). Not that we can altogether separate ourselves from sinners for then we would have to go out of the world, (1 Cor. 5:9-13) but that we should not fellowship any wrong spirit. We are meant to overcome the world, and not be overcome by it. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith", (v. 4). We are saved through faith; we are kept by faith, and live in the same manner, and great are the possibilities of such a relationship with

God, (Mark 9:23). There is personal victory for the believer, and this is an ever-present necessity; and there is victory for the church in its conflict with opposing forces of evil. It is a distinct message of encouragement to know that no matter how severe the conflict may be victory is certain for the Lord's people, (v. 5). Explain the nature of the victorious life, and service, personal and collective, and the necessity for the same.

III. DIVINE WITNESS-BEARING, (vs. 6-13).

1. After stating the source of the believer's victory over the world, John informs us of the witness borne to Jesus Christ: "This is He that came by water and blood", etc., (v. 6). He entered upon His mission at His baptism, (Matt. 3:13-17); His great work of reconciliation was wrought through His shed blood, (1 Peter 1:18-21), and on the cross when His body was pierced by the spear there came forth blood and water, (John 19:34). "And it is the spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth". He bore witness at the baptism, (Luke 3:22), and on Pentecost, (Acts 2:) and in the heart of each believer He also bears witness, (John 15:26). There is therefore a threefold witness on earth, reminding us of the Trinity in heaven, (vs. 7, 8). Emphasis here may be placed particularly upon the blood of Christ in view of the attitude of many these days in opposition thereto. 2. The witness which God has given ought to be accepted. We refuse not to accept man's witness when given in a proper manner, and "the witness of God is greater", (v. 9). Each believer has "the witness in himself", (v. 10). The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, (Rom. 8:16). "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar". Unbelief is a sin abhorrent in God's sight. It is evident in the sin of our first parents, (Gen. 3:1-7), it kept the Israelites out of the promised land, (Numbers 14:11; Heb. 3:19), it hindered our Lord in His work in Nazareth, (Matt. 13:58), and because of it sinners are condemned, (John 3:18). The unbeliever makes God a liar in not believing the record which He has given of His Son. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son", (v. 11). The implication is therefore that all who have not received the Lord Jesus as a personal Saviour are committing the sin of unbelief and making God a liar, for which serious sin they will have to give an account and suffer the consequences unless they repent. 3. Eternal life is not to be received apart from Christ for this life is in Him, therefore "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life", (v. 12). This is stating the matter in a very plain and simple manner easy to be understood by all, and in accordance with it we are enabled to judge of our standing in God's sight. The following verse informs us of the purpose of the apostle in writing the epistle, "that ye may know that ye have eternal life", (v. 13). It is of interest to note how often the word "know" occurs in this letter. It is the blessed privilege of the child of God to have the assurance of salvation and to

"know" that he has eternal life. To this end he has the testimony of God's word, (John 5:24), the witness of the Spirit, (Rom. 8:16), and the testimony of the life itself, (vs. 1, 2; 3:14). But in order to retain the joyful consciousness of it he must not harbour sin in the life, and he must truly separate himself unto God and live devotedly unto Him, (Heb. 12:1-3). Note the nature of salvation, the blessedness of assurance, and the nature and consequences of unbelief.

IV. CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER, (vs. 14-17).

1. Having informed us of the condition of the believer, the apostle states in the following verses certain blessings arising therefrom. Union with Christ gives confidence in prayer so that "if we ask anything according to his will" we know that "He heareth us", (v. 14). The blessing is the privilege of being heard, the condition is asking according to the will of God. And as a result of this "we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him", (v. 15). In this we are enlightened concerning the limitations and the possibilities of prayer. God has not promised to answer the selfish prayer, but the answer is certain when the above condition is fulfilled. We are exhorted to approach God's throne confidently (Heb. 4:16), to be importunate in our supplication, (Luke 18:1-8), to pray in the Spirit, (Eph. 6:18), and to expect the answer, (John 14:13). Note the scriptural examples in this respect, such as Abraham, Elijah, Nehemiah, etc. 2. Such teaching is followed by the naming of a special matter for prayer, respecting the one who commits a sin not unto death. We may pray for such an one and have prayer answered. And there should be more prayer on behalf of those who are seen committing sin. There is a sin unto death, however, for which we are not enjoined to pray, (v. 16). This probably is the deliberate sin of the apostate, (Matt. 12:22-32) "All unrighteousness is sin", (v. 17), in saint as well as sinner, and it behooves us to be very careful in all our words and actions that we do not depart from the standard of righteousness. Note the power of prayer and God's attitude toward sin.

V. THE SAFETY OF THE SAINT, (vs. 18-21).

1. In this section there are three distinct statements of truth, and a request; each statement beginning with the words "we know". The first is that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not, (v. 18). The child of God has been liberated from the power of the Devil, and with the help of God is enabled to overcome his temptations, and the new life which has been implanted within him seeks the things of God; thus he is enabled to live the victorious life. 2. The second truth stated is, that "we know that we are, of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One", (v. 19:R.V.). The unsaved are under the power of Satan, they walk according to his spirit, (Eph. 2:2), they are blinded by him, (2 Cor. 4:3, 4), they serve him, (John 8:44), and dying thus they go to be with him, (Matt. 25:41).