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

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The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"THE SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN."

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 27th, 1932.

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"Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain."—1 Kings 18:41.

Prayer by Rev. W. Gordon Brown.

Thou Lord art our God, and Thou alone. We have seen Thee in Jesus Christ. He is the only God we know. Therefore, Thou blessed One, Thou Man of Nazareth, of Calvary, of Olivet, and of Glory, we have come to bring Thee the tribute of our hearts.

We rejoice that Thou art our Forgiveness. We thank Thee that the past may be taken away, our sin removed from us sinners; that there is forgiveness with Thee, not that we may go on in our sins, but that we may fear the Lord and do righteousness! We give thanks that there is no sin so terrible, short of the final rejection of the love of Christ, that Thou dost not forgive; that though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, by that other crimson, the cleansing flow of Thy blood, they shall be as wool.

We thank Thee that Thou art also our Comfort, for often our hearts are made sad. Thou art the Balm of Gilead, Thou art the Physician of souls. Come to the hearts that are wounded; pour in the wine that will take the poison from the wound, and the oil which will soften and heal. Stand by the broken-hearted to-night, and bind them up, and thus relieve them of their sorrows.

Thou art the fulfilment of our desires. Our hearts have gone out, our spirits have searched, sometimes we knew not for what; and all the time Thou hast been calling us, that Thou mightest restore in us the divine image, even the image of our Lord.

The Shekinah art Thou; let Thy glory shine, we pray Thee. Hasten the day when all the fond hopes, all the expectations Thou hast raised in us, shall be fulfilled; the day when Thy glory shall at last be revealed in us, and Thou shalt be admired in all them that believe, because Thy testimony was received.

Bless Thy truth as it is preached this night, and reveal it to hearts burdened with sin and sorrow and trouble. Bring to such the relief which Thou alone canst give in the forgiveness of sin, and in an entrance into heart and life of that glory which outshines any earthly sky, the glory of God as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Grant these requests we beseech Thee, for Thy great name's sake, Amen.

I always approach this massive and splendid chapter with a feeling of more than ordinary fear. The whole chapter is ablaze with the divine glory. And yet in sharp contrast therewith appear the weakness and wickedness of men. The chapter shows how the barren land may become a fruitful field, how the wilderness and the solitary place may be made glad, how the desert may rejoice and blossom as the rose.

I think I may assume that most of you are fairly familiar with the outline of the story, of how Elijah the Tishbite appeared as a man sent from God, declaring there should be neither rain nor dew for certain years but according to his word. For three and a half years a famine prevailed. No cloud appeared in the sky. The fountains failed, the rivers became dry, the granaries were emptied, and the people were reduced to utter destitution. Yet during it all the Lord miraculously preserved His servant; first by commanding the ravens to bring him food, and later by specially commissioning a widow-woman to feed him.

Then the time came when, by divine direction, he showed himself to Ahab, and the prophets of Baal were assembled on Mount Carmel. Elijah proposed that they should erect two altars, put wood and sacrifices upon the altars, but that they should put no fire under them; that the prophets of Baal should call upon their gods, and he would call upon Jehovah—and "the God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

The prophets of Baal accepted the challenge, and said it was well spoken. The altars were erected, and as Elijah was in the minority, being the only prophet of Jehovah, while the prophets of Baal were more than four hundred, he proposed that they should offer their

sacrifice first. They called upon Baal from morning even until noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us"—"But there was no voice, nor any that answered." Elijah mocked them, ridiculed them, bade them cry aloud, saying, "He is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

Then Elijah erected his altar. He put wood upon it, and the sacrifice upon the wood, and dug roundabout the altar a large trench, and directed that it should be filled with water. When this was done he called upon Jehovah to show Himself God before all the people, and to vindicate His servant's trust, to show that he had done these things according to God's word. And even as he prayed "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

Elijah gave direction that the prophets of Baal should be destroyed, and when that had been done he said to Ahab the wicked king, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain."

Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and bade his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel."

The principles of that story belong as much to the New Testament as to the Old, for our God is ever the same. Let us examine it a little this evening, for our own profit, in the hope that we too may hear "the sound of abundance of rain".

I.

First, it may be remarked that **THE PEOPLE OF GOD NOT INFREQUENTLY FALL UPON TIMES OF BARRENNESS, OF DROUGHT, AND FAMINE.** It is not always that the individual believer, or the church of Christ composed of believers collectively, is like unto Joseph, "a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall". It is true of the "blessed" man that he bringeth forth his fruit in his season, and that "his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper". It is the privilege of the believer so to abide in Christ that he may bring forth, not only fruit, but *much* fruit, that herein the Father may be glorified.

But alas! I suppose the majority of Christians have had experiences wherein they have been led to complain, "My Beloved has withdrawn Himself, and is gone." Sometimes even the believer seems to be wanting in fruitfulness. There is a way of living before God whereby we may add to our "faith, virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance pati-

ence; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

We have had, I suppose, experiences of drought, and at least of comparative barrenness. There are people called Christians who, in outward appearance, do not differ from men of the world. They are like deciduous trees in the winter-time, stripped even of their verdure, and giving no outward evidence of life.

The same is true of churches. A church ought to be like the Beloved's vineyard in a very fruitful hill. What a blessed thing it is when we can say, like the spouse in the song, "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell", when the north wind and the south wind, in turn, blow upon the Lord's garden, and the spices thereof flow out; when our Beloved comes into His garden and eats His pleasant fruit! How delightful it is when the Lord is manifestly present in the midst of His people, when fruitfulness and beauty are everywhere apparent!

But alas! there are times when the reverse of this is true, even in the history of a truly Christian church; when there is no fruit, when the leaves fall, and the song of the birds is hushed; when there is only dearth, and barrenness, and famine. How sad a thing it is when that condition prevails! How terribly true is such a description of the Christian church as a whole to-day! Where are the miracles of divine grace? Where do you hear of men being changed from demons to saints? Where do you hear of the transformation of life and character, of lame men being made to leap as an hart, of Lazaruses coming forth from the grave, of men who have been at the gate of the temple Beautiful for many years now leaping, and walking, and praising God? I say, where are these miracles to be observed to-day in any large measure? Here and there we see a little fruit. Here and there we hear of a few conversions. Here and there we hear of people joining the church—but even those who join the church, sometimes instead of increasing the church's assets, increase its liabilities. Oh for the days when the mighty power of God shall be exercised in the life of His people, in the assemblies of the saints!

How may we have such a revival as that? It must be borne in mind that whenever there is such dearth there is always a cause. We must not judge by the sight of the eye. We must bear in mind that even living and fruitful trees bring forth their fruit in their season. Even the ministry of our Lord Himself was not everywhere and always uniformly fruitful, so far as outward appearances were concerned. Of His own country it is said, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." He rebuked Chorazin and Bethsaida, saying, "If the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had

been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

The apostles did not meet in every city they visited such abounding blessing as came at Pentecost. Sometimes their word was hospitably received; men received the truth "in the love of it". Sometimes multitudes were converted: in other cases the whole city was moved in opposition; and in some few instances there were comparatively few fruits apparent from their ministry.

So have missionaries found when they have gone to the dark places of the earth. They have had to labour for many weary years before they have seen even the first fruits of their labour. Sometimes in the garden of the Lord it does appear as though the springtime were late. We must have our autumn and winter as well as our spring and summer.

But we are not to find in this principle an excuse for perpetual barrenness by any means. When it is winter nearly all the year round, when we preach and preach from year to year, and we see no fruit for our labour, there must be something radically wrong. I remember being out West—and I hope Westerners will not be offended by what I say—and I enquired of someone about their climate. This gentleman replied, "We have but two seasons out here, August and winter"! There are some churches that have but two seasons, winter and August—and August seems to be rather a short month. It seems to be winter nearly all the year. They content themselves with sending reports to their annual assemblies that faithful work has been done, that the seed has been sown, and sometime they expect to see a harvest! Farmers do not thus regard their fields. When the fall wheat does not appear at the appointed time, they plough the field over again. And I am inclined to think some churches need to be ploughed up and sown over. Perhaps we cannot complain in this place of quite such dearth as is here described. We have had some fruit, and have some now. But oh, for the days when we may see the vines of the Lord bringing forth, not a little fruit, but much fruit, that He may be honoured in the lives of His people.

II.

I say, SUCH BARRENNESS CAN USUALLY BE ACCOUNTED FOR IF WE EXAMINE INTO THE CAUSE OF IT. Generally it is popular to place the responsibility in the wrong place. On the day that Elijah showed himself to Ahab, after three and a half years of drought and famine, Ahab met him with the words, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" The man who had rebuked the king for his sin, and had rebuked the people for their idolatry, and had warned them of the folly of the course upon which they were set, was looked upon as the archenemy of the nation. He was the troubler of Israel—just as every prophet has been characterized in all the ages since that time. Whoever will be bold enough to speak for God in an age of apostasy may be sure to be called an enemy of the public peace.

Elijah said, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." In the reports appearing in the press of the annual meetings of various religious bodies regret is expressed because of the diminution of the monetary flow, the emptiness of the treasury, and for a great many other things. They say much about the depression, and propound their economic

theories, and propose I know not how many remedies for the alleviation of the church's ills. But there is no word of acknowledgement that they have forsaken the Lord, of their having turned away from the Book, from the testimony of His holy Word. There is no word of rebuke for the people for having abandoned the gospel of the grace of God, or for their failure to preach the efficacy of the precious blood. Whoever will preach these things, and insist upon them as being absolutely essential to spiritual life, is ever called an enemy of God's people. Elijah was called the troubler of Israel.

We may as well admit that when we are lacking in fruitfulness and beauty in our individual lives that *it is never anybody else's fault than our own*. At a time when men mocked at Jehovah, and when His altars were thrown down, when it appeared that the people had almost with unanimity of decision departed from the living God, when it appeared that there was but one prophet left, even Elijah, in the midst of all that blackness, he was enabled by divine grace steadfastly to maintain his faith in God, and to live in perpetual enjoyment of the divine favour, never losing sight of the Father's face, never losing the joy of knowing that God was with him. Whether he depended upon the food brought by the ravens or upon the multiplication of the widow's meal, through those three and a half years of barrenness and darkness this man could say, as Wesley later did, "Best of all, God is with us." He knew that.

I remind you dear friends who find yourselves in difficult circumstances spiritually, who complain because the ways of Zion mourn, and so few come to her solemn feasts, that the gospel is not preached from the pulpit of your church, that worldliness and unbelief are rampant everywhere,—I remind you, I say, that true faith can survive even such difficulties as yours.

Perhaps there is a son who lives in an ungodly home, and complains that he cannot live a Christian life in the midst of such circumstances. Perhaps a wife is tempted to cast away her confidence because, after years of prayer for her husband, he seems no nearer God than he was twenty years ago. It may be a father and mother whose children are nearly breaking their hearts by their worldliness. It may be they feel it is difficult, and well nigh impossible, to maintain their walk with God. I remind you of the case of Elijah. I remind you of Caleb and Joshua who through forty long years in the wilderness, when a multitude of people, the whole congregation of Israel, an entire generation died in the wilderness because of their unbelief, kept their faith alive. These two spiritual men, these two children of faith, were never partakers of the unbelief which surrounded them, but they walked with God and maintained their faith. When the period of wilderness wandering was over, you remember how Joshua so splendidly appeared as a valiant man of faith to take the place of Moses; and how dear old Caleb asked to be permitted to celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday by taking a mountain, saying, "I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain. Let me show the faith that is in me before I end my earthly pilgrimage."

I remind you of the argument of the New Testament, of how in the midst of utter blackness, and an apostasy such as the world has never seen from that day to this, prior to the deluge, God saved Noah when there was no

one to help him; and how He preserved the soul of Lot, even in the abounding wickedness of Sodom. We must not blame anybody else, we must not complain of our surroundings, of our church, our preacher. If you, as a Christian, are not a fruitful branch of the true Vine, there is only one person in the universe to blame for your barrenness—and that is yourself. You must come before God and make right what is wrong, remove whatever obstruction there is to the inflow and outflow of the revivifying power of God.

The same is true of the church. I have no doubt I speak to many people this evening who are at home because they have not much interest in their church. Thousands of them could join with us in singing,

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?"

"I have not seen it, I have not heard it, this many a day. What is the use of going to church?" The church has fallen upon evil times, and the days of conversion, of the transformation of human life by divine power, according to some, are at an end. The church must accommodate itself to changed circumstances. It must compete with the theatre; it must put on a movie exhibition; it must train its young people in amateur theatricals; it must put in a gymnasium, and I know not what else, to entertain the people. It is folly—so say the wise men of our day—to expect people to be responsive to the old evangel, or that the days of revival should ever come back to us again.

If any particular church, any individual church, has ceased to be a power in a community, if the church has ceased to be a factor in the moral and spiritual life of the people which it touches with its influence, I beg of you, cease to complain of these circumstances which attend you, cease to lay the responsibility upon the peculiarity of the age in which you live, and take the blame upon yourself. If a church is not a fruitful vine, if the church of the Lord Jesus, bought with His precious blood, is not still able to resist even the gates of hell, the fault is never outside of the church: the fault is inside; the fault is at home. Do not say to these super-attractions, to these fascinations of a seductive world, "Why dost thou trouble me?" Admit at once that the trouble is within the church—in the pew, in the pulpit, in the neglected prayer-meeting, in the neglected gospel, in the fact that the Bible is unopened and sins are unconfessed.

Our God is from everlasting to everlasting. He changes not. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day; and for ever." He gave us His promise, "Lo, I am with you all the days"—not some of them—"even unto the consummation of the age." To the last syllable of recorded time, until the angel shall blow his trumpet, and the dead shall arise, the Spirit of God will abide with His believing people, the same in power as He has always been. If you are not having blessing, if souls are not being saved in your church, my brother, the responsibility is not without: it is within. Let us frankly face it, and see if we can find a remedy.

III.

WHAT WAS THE REMEDY? How did it come to pass that after three and a half years, during which the brazen heavens had mocked the cries of hungry multitudes, and had given forth no rain—why was it that after three and

a half years of succeeding nights in which there had been no dew, at last—at long last—there was one man who was able to say, "There is a sound of abundance of rain"? What difference was there? What radical change had been effected to work that meteorological miracle? What did Elijah do to bring about this miracle?

He was God's man. He was chosen especially for this purpose. And *what was the principle of the test?* When he got the prophets of Baal together on Mount Carmel, a great religious convention, he did not propose a committee to revise Israel's creed, and accommodate it to the requirements of the prophets of Baal. He did not propose some new economic theory. He did not propose a re-organization of the nation. What Elijah said was, "We are all lost. We are helpless and hopeless unless God Himself intervenes. You say that Baal is God, I say that Jehovah is God. You cannot convince me by your arguments, and I have failed utterly to convince you by mine. Let our appeal be to Heaven itself. Let our appeal be to God to vindicate the faith of His people, and to prove by His own outstretched arm that He is God. We will each build an altar, and put upon it the wood and the sacrifice, but no fire. Then we will pray. You have a prayer-meeting, and I will have a prayer-meeting. We will call upon our Gods, and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

I say to my modernistic friends just what Elijah said: Gather your professors together, the men who deny the inspiration of the Book, the men who deny the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus, the men who repudiate His Deity, the men who mock at the necessity of His precious blood, the men who deny that He did literally rise again from the dead, the men who ignore the tremendous fact that no man is ever saved until the miracle of recreation is wrought in him by the power of the Holy Spirit—I say, let all the rationalists from all the universities, and from all Toronto pulpits, come together and pray from morning until night, and ask their god to answer them by fire. Show me the drunkard made new by your god, show me the debauchee reclaimed, show me one dishonest man made honest, show me the moral miracles that have been wrought by your modern use of the Bible. Let them come together, and let their god answer by fire. They will cry, not only from morn until noon, but from January to December. There will be no voice, nor any that answereth, because it is written, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." They deny the only Way by which any man can get to God. With that door closed, there can be no answer.

That is why the prayer-meetings in this city are neglected. That is why many churches have no prayer-meeting. That is why some of you who hear me to-night are not at your own church. That is why you have not prayed for your minister. That is why you have not expected that through his ministry somebody would be saved. You have lost the expectation of the presence and power of the God that answereth by fire. And there is no other God. There is nothing in these days that Canada needs, or Great Britain, or the United States, or the lands that are dark with the superstition of heathendom, more than a revisitation of the God that answers by fire.

But *how does the fire come?* I read to you of Elijah's putting his face between his knees. But *that was not where he began to pray.* Elijah's whole life for three and a half years had been a prayer. I doubt whether,

our Lord Himself excepted, there ever lived a man who was tempted as Elijah was. He is described in the New Testament as a man of like passions with us. Do you know what he prayed for? First of all that God would shut up the heavens, dry the springs, and bring the whole nation to bankruptcy.

And he had to share it. He had to share the very distress for which he had prayed, and was saved only as the Lord wrought a miracle and sustained him in the midst of it. I have no doubt that by the brook Cherith and in the house of the widow of Zarephath, Elijah must have cried, "O Lord, how long? Must I wait a year? And another year? And still another year? Shall there be no rain?" That was the time of trial. It is easy to shout, Hallelujah, when there is a sound of abundance of rain, but when the springs are dry, and the granaries empty, and God is giving the people clean teeth in all their cities, when He is laying His rod of chastisement upon them, people do not—and will not—associate that with God.

But Elijah prayed for three and a half years—not that there might be rain, but that there might be no rain, and no dew, and no fruit, and no corn. It is all very well for people who have wrought every species of evil suddenly to blossom out in a desire for revival. People may go into ecstasies as they shout, Hallelujah, but that does not bring fire from heaven. Elijah did not begin to pray by putting his face between his knees: *he first of all restored the altar that had fallen down*. He took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and restored the place of sacrifice to the central place of the worship of Israel.

I said this morning, and I repeat it now: in the midst of all these religious currents that are flowing about us, when you ask yourself, "Is this of God? Ought I to join this movement and this group?" I will tell you how you may know. Look for the altar, for the sacrifice. Look for the central truth of the Cross. I care not what the movement, by whomsoever it is espoused, if they have all the learning of the moderns—and of the ancients too—there will be no fire from heaven until the altar is rebuilt, until the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is put in the central place, until men come back to that everlasting principle that "without shedding of blood there is no remission". If you hear of any movement from which the cleansing blood of Christ is eliminated, I beg of you, have nothing to do with it. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Paul said. If there were any other way by which souls could be saved than through the death of Jesus Christ, and the outpouring of His precious blood, His death was a mistake, a colossal blunder. The cross is the central truth of the gospel. It is useless to pray for revival, for better times for the church local or at large, until you have rebuilt the altar.

It may be you ought to rebuild it in your own home. It may be you ought to rebuild it in your own heart. Perhaps it ought to be rebuilt in your own church. I appeal to you elders and deacons who hear me,—I would not put a thorn in any pastor's pillow. God knows that preachers have hard enough times,—but learn to be dissatisfied with any kind of preaching that does not magnify the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When Elijah had repaired the altar, he put wood upon it, something for the fire to burn. I remember dear old

Father Bone, the sailors' missionary on the Welland Canal. He had a little lisp which made his speech all the more winsome and attractive. A little while before he went to heaven his helper and successor was appointed. They went together one day to visit the boats as they came through the Canal. Mr. Bone was at this time far past eighty years. As he and his helper were coming home, after having spent the day talking with the men as the boats passed through the Canal, he turned to his associate and said, "I feel that we may well go home and pray. There are many people who pray, 'Lord, send the fire,' but there is no place for the fire to fall; there is no altar, no wood, no sacrifice. But we have done the best we could to-day. We have given our testimony. We have built the altar, and put the wood and sacrifice upon it; now let us ask God to send the fire."

There are some people who would like to do everything by prayer. I weary of hearing some people say, "Let us pray about it." Do not misunderstand me. Those who know this place, know that we do not make light of prayer. January will complete the twelfth year in which we have had three weekly prayer-meetings. We have never missed one, summer or winter; and never have we been without a goodly number who have come together to call upon God. I am not making light of prayer, but I do remind you that "faith without works is dead".

A member of the Executive Board of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches showed me a letter last week that he had received from Mr. Spurgeon. It was written to this man when he was a lad, by Mr. Spurgeon's own hand, and read something like this: "Dear Arthur: I was at a meeting this afternoon of parents who had met together to pray for the conversion of their children, and I felt as though I could weep my eyes out in sympathy with them. As they prayed I thought of you"—and then the great Spurgeon poured out his soul in that private letter to the boy, as he then was, begging him to give himself to Christ. In that letter he said, "The prayers of your father and mother will not avail unless you pray for yourself." Let us build the altar, but let us see to it that we put the wood on it.

I read in *The British Weekly* this afternoon an article, I think it was by the Editor under the name of *Watchman*, in which was a story of a negro minister whom he knew. He had heard him tell his experience, that he prayed much that the Lord would help him; that was his favourite prayer: "O Lord, help me; help me." Again and again he prayed, "Lord, help me." One day, as he prayed, it seemed as though a Voice from heaven said, "Help you? How can I help you when you are doing nothing?"

Ah, yes, it is for us to build the altar, to put the wood upon it, and to put upon it the burnt-offering, which was typical of the self-surrender of the people, the yielding of themselves to God: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . . yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." We are to put ourselves on the altar. You remember how the Psalmist prayed, "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." I wondered long what that meant, but I think I see now. Some people sing,

"I surrender all."

And they think it is possible, by a single act, to make a complete surrender of themselves.

I do not think it is possible; I think that act of surrender must develop into an attitude of perpetual

submission. These natures of ours are so complicated that we do not know what is in them. Though I tell the Lord to-night that I surrender everything to Him—as I ought to do—to-morrow I may have another battle. Do not forget that after years of faithful walking with God, Abraham met the greatest trial of his life: "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there." We are to offer ourselves as a burnt offering, and then to pray that God will bind the sacrifice upon the horns of the altar. The Apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ". He did not say, "I *was*," but, "I *am*. I live a life of crucifixion. I die daily. I bring under my body. The marks of the Lord Jesus are upon me." We are to be always upon the altar, bound thereon as a whole burnt offering unto the Lord.

Elijah then commanded the trenches to be dug, and certain people carried water. There are always plenty of people to carry water; if they are good for nothing else, they can at least carry water to put out the fire. I have sometimes wondered why some people were put in a church. They certainly are not hewers of wood—but they can bring water. The wonder is that a church can live. Some Pharisaical brother or sister has said, Amen, to everything I have said thus far. But you go about with a clinical thermometer, testing the spiritual atmosphere of different places of worship. Why do you not rather bring a bundle of sticks with you to help warm the place? Some of those very proper people, who are expert at filling the trenches roundabout the altar, so that they may be perfectly sure the miracle is genuine, would be better employed in carrying wood. Notwithstanding, they prove the reality of the miracle! Let us thank God for them: I do not know what some people are for but to pour water over everything, and to make blessing impossible except God send fire from heaven.

When thus Elijah had prepared, and had ordered a situation where nobody could function but God, then *he raised a prayer of faith to Heaven*, and asked God to answer by fire—and even as he prayed the fire fell. It licked up the water, and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and the altar—everything. There was a great revival, and the people fell upon their faces, saying, "The Lord he is God."

Many people I know need to begin building altars, laying the wood thereon, and the sacrifice. If I did not know other people, I should know one. Do you not? Is it not you? And is it not I? Ask God to answer by fire in your life, in your home, in your office, in your shop, wherever you go, that there may be an unmistakable manifestation of the power of God.

Then Elijah said, "I think we will have a round table conference with the prophets of Baal, for I see no reason why we should not all get together and have a settlement of all our differences." Is that what he said? No! "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."

What is the spiritual application? The Baal element, the thing that is a substitute for God in your life, in the life of the church, in the life of a denomination, you must slay; you are to hold no conference with that. You are to give it up to the sword. I will hold no conference with the man who denies the Deity of Christ. I will hold no conference with the man who denies the blood. I will have no part in any movement of which the crucified,

risen, and coming Christ is not the Sum-total, the Centre, and Circumference. There is no other way of revival.

But, having said that, and having removed the prophets, Elijah went alone with his servant and fell upon his knees, and put his face between his knees—but not one word of the prayer he offered is recorded. He said in the beginning, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Now this mighty man alone bows before God in silent prayer. When he had told Ahab that already his spiritual ear had heard the sound of abundance of rain, he said to his servant, "Look." Six times he returned, saying there was no sign of rain, but the seventh time he said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." And Elijah said, "Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

There is no other way of revival to-day than the way it came in Elijah's time. You may sing, and pray, and shout Hallelujah, as much as you like, but until the altar is repaired, and the sacrifice put upon the altar, until the wrong is righted, and sin confessed, there will not be the sound of abundance of rain. May God help us to do as Elijah did, that we may be channels of blessing to multitudes of people.

Let us pray: O Lord, we beseech Thee to bless this evening the testimony of Thy holy Word. We thank Thee that we go not a warfare at our own charges. We thank Thee that we have not to invent a gospel, but only to proclaim it. We thank Thee that we have not to accomplish these wonders of grace ourselves, that we have only to be the instruments of Thy power. Oh that Thou wouldst send a great revival to the heart of every believer who has heard this service this evening! We beseech Thee, O Lord, to vouchsafe that this very night many a man, and many a woman, in his or her own home may resolve to let God have His own way completely with him or her.

Bless the parents who have listened, those who have wayward sons and daughters. Pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication. Make them to be Thy remembrancers, to plead unceasingly with Thee for the salvation of their children, even as Abraham pleaded for the deliverance of Lot. The Lord bless the parents who have ungodly children; wives who have prayed for their husbands, and husbands who have prayed for their wives; brothers for sisters, and sisters for brothers. Bless them, we pray Thee.

Strengthen Thy servants who preach the gospel of the precious blood by whatsoever name they may be called, the men who preach in little mission halls, faithful witnesses of the Lord Jesus, who testify on street corners—whoever they may be, whether they wear the uniform of the Salvation Army, or the surplice of the Episcopacy, may the power of Thy Spirit rest upon them. O Lord, bring back again to Thy Book, to this Bible, to this inspired and infallible Word of God, men who have wandered away, who have depended upon their own wisdom, their own efforts, instead of casting themselves upon God. Send us, we pray Thee, not an artificial religious movement, but a real Heaven-sent revival. If the magicians do so, with their enchantments, draw a line, so that even they will have to say, That is beyond us; that is the finger of God. Answer by fire, we pray Thee. For the glory of Thine own great name we ask it, Amen.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

A Lecture by Dr. T. T. Shields.

Delivered in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto,
Thursday Evening, November 24th, 1932.

*Sixth in a Series of Thursday Evening Lectures on
Biblical Theology, (the second on the Book of
Judges) which is included in the Curriculum
of Toronto Baptist Seminary.*

(Stenographically Reported)

We begin with the eleventh verse of the second chapter. Verses eleven to twenty-three seem to have been designed to form a summary of the chapter. If you read your newspaper with discernment you will very often find in a report of a meeting, or of an accident, or of any other matter of interest, a speech by the President or the Premier, that the whole article is summed up in the first paragraph. If you are busy you will learn to read the headlines and the first paragraph.

The writer of the Book of Judges in these few verses in the second chapter summarizes the history covered by the book itself. In the chapters following he goes into particulars, and elaborates the principles which he lays down in the opening verses.

I.

In the eleventh verse note the phrase that "Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord". This Book is written with a view to showing us how things appear "in the sight of the Lord". We sometimes speak about the perspective of history. It is sometimes said that a man of measure can never be understood nor rightly appraised by his contemporaries. He and his deeds—his influence in general—must, in order rightly to be judged and appraised, be viewed in the perspective of history, when the things he did have had time to work out. "Wisdom is justified of her children."

We are even now too close to the Great War to judge of its influence upon the destiny of nations. Secular history is written from the point of view of man as related to man, but in the Bible you will come upon phrases akin to these: "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord"; Israel "sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord." When David was convicted of his sin, and made confession, he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." If we can get that point of view to begin with, it will help us clearly to interpret these scriptures.

Even in this life, and among men, the same thing may present an entirely different matter to the eye of the expert from that which appears to the eye of the mere layman. An artist sees something in the sunset and all things about him that the ordinary observer does not notice. There are certain things that appear in the artist's sight as they do not appear in the sight of anybody else. In the same way the physician may observe things which cause nobody else alarm, but in his sight appear very serious. On the other hand, symptoms which appear alarming to the layman may not alarm the physician.

The Bible presents things as they appear in the sight of the Lord. Some things that appear evil in His sight are regarded as being marvellously clever and profitable by men: "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." "Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." This chronicler, whoever he was, is

writing down that which was revealed to him by One Who was contemporary with all ages, Who told him to write for the profit of generations to come the contents of these chapters as things appeared "in the sight of the Lord."

It is no wonder many people do not understand the Bible. They never will until, by the grace of the Divine Spirit, they are able to share God's view of things. In the measure in which we do share His view, we shall understand His thought.

II.

"Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim." They worshipped idols. The worship of Baal and Ashtaroth is a subject you students will study in another department. It is enough for our purpose to remark that they turned from the worship of God to worship idols.

Observe the steps. "They forsook the Lord." Trouble always begins with a declension of spiritual interest and life. It is charged against Israel elsewhere, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." The negative and positive always go together. Forsaking the Lord, men always go somewhere else. Declining in their own spiritual lives, they become susceptible to the germ of the idolatry about them.

"They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt." If we could always remember that we were brought out of Egypt we should be everlastingly grateful to the Lord. The principle is in the New Testament: "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." He fails to grow; his life becomes stagnant; he is a dwarf. When that condition obtains physically, scientists tell us there is something wrong with a gland. And there is something wrong when we do not grow spiritually. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off." He loses his spiritual perspective, and fails to measure things of time by the things of eternity. He loses his power to look into the past: he has no retrospective aspect to life, and "hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."

I have read that passage again and again, and tried to be charitable toward people who are now Modernists but who once seemed to have a real spiritual experience. I say to myself, "They must have stopped growing, become dim of sight, and, failing to see the eternal city, they have forgotten about "that happy day when Jesus washed their sins away."

These people forgot the God of their fathers Who brought them out of Egypt. No man will ever properly understand his own day who is devoid of some knowledge of the days that have gone before him. A great man like Henry Ford may make a simpleton of himself by describing history as "bunk", but if you do not study history you will be "bunk"! We must have a knowledge of the things that have gone before. That is why a young man should listen to his father.

Note this principle: "And followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were roundabout them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger."

We noted in our last lesson how again and again it is said of some of the tribes of Israel, "Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean"; "Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites"; "Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho." They left a few of the Hittites, and the Canaanites, and all the rest of them, and they lived with them, with the result that they followed the gods of the people who were roundabout.

One of the students asked me in our Pastoral Theology class how far a minister adhering to the principles of Evangelical Christianity ought to allow himself to associate with other ministers who call themselves Christian but who deny these things. We must be careful of the company we keep. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." These people were corrupted by the heathen roundabout them.

I used to go to general ministerial associations. I did not want to be straightlaced and narrow, and I attended. But I found after a while that I must do one of two things: I had either to come away with a guilty conscience, for having been silent when I heard the Lord and His Word denied, or else protest. It was the same every Monday. There was some slur cast upon Evangelical Christianity. Many ministers who are called evangelicals are "hail fellow well met" with everybody. They associate with the Jebusites, and Canaanites, and all the other Ites; and keep silence when the things they profess to hold dear are mocked at. You cannot do that without impairing the strength of your own conscience. Little by little that thing will wear upon you until by and by you will get used to seeing people worship idols, and will say, "There was a time when I used to be troubled by these things, but there is nothing I can do about it."

These people gradually followed the people around them. There are fashions in religion as there are in millinery,—and cycles too. Do not throw your old hats away. If you keep them long enough they will come in style again. These people simply followed the fashions; they went with the crowd. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim . . . and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were roundabout them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger."

"The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel." That is out of date, but the Bible says, "God is angry with the wicked every day." Do you ever get angry? I expect you do. Sometimes we are inclined to call our indignation a "righteous indignation" when it is a fit of temper. I am not justifying these explosions, but I have no sympathy for the man who has no capacity for anger. There are some things in the world that ought to make us angry, furiously indignant. There is something morally wrong with any man who cannot be stirred to anger by great evil. The revelation of God is that He is angry, that His holiness flames against evil: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Let us save ourselves from this twaddle that is taught in the name of religion, that nothing matters. "The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel." It flamed against them. They stirred up a jealous God to anger because they had turned from Him to idols. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." He will not yield His place to anybody else. He is God, and beside Him there is none else. When we put anything or anybody in the place which belongs to God—which is the first place—it makes Him angry.

But He did not smite them with lightning: He "delivered them into the hands of spoilers". He does not need to send someone to smite you every day when you are slipping on ice. If He wants to teach you a lesson He needs only to tell His angels to let you alone, that is all. And down you go, and break a leg. He let His people alone, and the enemy spoiled them.

These people, instead of serving God, thought it would be more profitable to serve the gods of the heathen. Perhaps I have told you the story of a godly couple about whom I heard. Both were Christians, and members of the church. They were not rich people, but the husband had employment and they had a reasonably comfortable and happy home. But even Christian people may get grouchy, and this good man's wife was grouchy one day, and it happened that on that particular day they got a circular letter from the church, laying some need before them. The wife said, "Do you not think it costs us a great deal to be Christians? Do you not think we lose a great deal?" "Undoubtedly we lose a great deal", replied her husband, "before I was converted you used to stand at the washtub every day to earn enough money to keep bread in the mouths of the children—and you have lost that. Before I was converted, when my step was heard on the threshold, the children ran to find refuge; they were afraid of their father. They had a father that filled them with dread—and they have lost that. I am ashamed to say it, my dear, but before I was converted I used to come home drunk, and did not know my friends from my foes, and I used to strike you; you had black eyes—and you have lost them." "John", said she, "I think you had better give the biggest offering you can give."

These people thought it cost too much to serve the Lord, and He delivered them into the hands of the spoilers. It costs far more to fight against God than to keep step with Him. "He sold them into the hands of their enemies roundabout." In effect the Lord said, "If you will not acknowledge my right of proprietorship in you, I will sell you out." A little boy once said to his mother when he was displeased with her treatment of him, "I will go down the street and let a little dog bite me." "All right", said his mother, "I would if I were you." There are many of the Lord's children saying that. "All right", says the Lord, "let two dogs bite you." He sold them. He let them alone. He let them look after themselves.

What happened? "They could not any longer stand before their enemies." Every battle they tried to fight, they lost. They had thought they were doing all the fighting themselves. They were proud of the victories they had won. When the Lord withdrew, they were defeated every time.

That is all the Lord needs to do with us. He does not need to send an angel from heaven to judge us. He does not need to send grasshoppers or hail: He needs only to leave us to ourselves. Leave any man to himself and he will soon go to ruin. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

"Withersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed." We talk much about the promises of the Lord, about the divine faithfulness, when some blessing comes to us because the Lord is faithful; but when chastisement comes, and we are delivered into the hands of the spoilers, and defeated at every turn, and distressed beyond measure, what then? We begin to whine and to

say, "Where is the faithfulness of God?" It is just there, for God sware He would do that thing. His promises of judgment are just as sure as His promises of mercy. If He keeps His sworn testimony to bless His people if they obey His commandments, so He will keep His word if His people forsake Him. It is just as true that if you sow thorns you will reap them, as it is if you sow lilies you will reap lilies. You may have what you choose.

III.

Here is God's method in emergencies: "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them." God has always done that. No revival of history has ever begun with an institution. Never. It may spread to institutions until multitudes of individuals are revived, but God's method always is to deal with the individual. If He is going to start a revival anywhere, He will start it with some one person. He always has done so. He raises up a judge, a prophet, a king, a leader of some kind. You see the unreasonableness of complaining because "they" do not do this or that. Who knows but He will make you a judge for the hour of emergency?

"And yet they would not hearken unto their judges." They did not even listen to the men whom God specially called. They were called years apart, one after the other, Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, and so on, covering the whole period of the book. This book was called Judges because this is a history of the judges. He raised up men to judge Israel, but the people would not hearken.

You must not be surprised if the Lord chooses you to be a pastor, and makes you a blessing, if the very people you are sent to bless do not receive you kindly. You must be patient, and still keep on preaching. A minister came one day to Mr. Spurgeon to ask him a very, very serious question. He was greatly troubled, and had come a long way for the interview. He said, "I have a problem that I cannot solve." "What is it?" enquired Mr. Spurgeon. "I have a very awkward man in my church." "Well, that is not altogether unusual, but what is the matter with this man?" "He does not say much, but he always comes to church. He sits in the front seat, and the moment I begin to preach he puts his fingers in his ears. It is a most distressing situation. What would you do in such circumstances?" "I think," said the great preacher, "I should ask the Lord to send a fly to light on his nose." The man was shocked at first, that he should have come such a distance, with such a profound problem to submit, and receive such an answer. Then after a while he joined Mr. Spurgeon in laughter, saying, "It is not much, is it?"

He raised up judges, but they would not listen. If anybody puts his fingers in his ears when you are preaching, ask the Lord to send a fly to light on his nose—but if the dear brother is bald, it will make little difference where it lights! When you get in difficulties of that sort, if you are not in the apostolic succession, you are in the succession of the judges.

"They went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so." There are some diseases that develop very slowly. They used to speak of consumption as "decline"; a certain kind of consumption that afflicted its victim, and took many years to do

its deadly work. There was another kind called "galloping consumption". Men get both kinds. You will find some people who take a long time to get off colour, but some will do it quickly. They may be all right to-day, and to-morrow you will not know what is wrong. And that will be true of you too!

"The Lord was with the judge." Even though the people did not respond to the judge, the Lord was with him. As you exercise the office of the ministry, no matter what people do or say, make up your mind that you will so abide in Christ that the Lord will be with you. Determine that whether there is a perennial revival in your church or not, you will have one in your own heart; that you will be one of the prophets who always have the Lord with them. If you do that you will be able to go on even though beset with trouble.

"All the days of the judge." As long as they had a particular leader the people were obedient. Follow that principle in your study of Scripture, and mark what responsibility rests upon you as a leader. Some of you young ladies will be in India or Africa, and some at home. And you men, I do not know where the Lord will call you, but it is given to men and women so to dwell with God, and so to have His power resting upon them, that they may be God's instruments to hold a company of people during their lifetime. "All the days of the judge"; "All the days of Moses"; "All the days of Joshua"; "All the days of the elders that overlived Joshua." Now God finds someone else in the succession of judges.

"For it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them." I do not suppose they held a prayer-meeting to groan. I do not suppose they knew they were praying. I believe we are going to have a revival, and shall I tell you why? Not because on every hand prayer-meetings are packed, and churches that have not had prayer-meetings are meeting again to pray, but because nearly all religious meetings are spent in groaning. They complain of all the counter-attractions with which the church has to contend, the movie, the theatre, the motor-car. They have fallen upon evil days. The Bible is out of date. They groan and moan, admitting that human nature has come to an end of itself. How our Lord delighteth in mercy, for he hears even our groans.

"It came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." Put those two things together: "Their own doings", "their stubborn way". They groaned, but they went on in sin. "And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died."

There is a principle worthy of note. That is all the Lord said, "I will leave them alone. I will not help them any more." When you have difficulties in your own life, when the Canaanites are pressing you, and you do not know what to do, you are inclined to say, "I have had the same difficulty before, and I overcame it. What is wrong now? The things that formerly did not trouble me, now greatly distress me. What is the matter? I

expect the Lord is teaching you a lesson.' He has said, "I will not help you any more."

I remember reading an incident in the life of Mr. Spurgeon when he was but twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, and all the world was ringing with his praises. There were not facilities in those days for getting to London as there are now, and as Spurgeon went about England preaching, buildings could not be found large enough to contain the people who flocked to hear this prodigy, this marvellous youth who had taken the world by storm. The preachers were jealous of him, the religious press was jealous. While the publicans and sinners came to God, the Scribes and Pharisees mocked at the beardless youth who dared consider himself a preacher! On the occasion to which I refer he was preaching in the Midlands, and in the midst of his sermon he said something to this effect, "I cannot explain why, I am not conscious of any reason why I should be forsaken, but I know that I am preaching to-night without the Spirit of God. I ask you to pray, as I shall pray."

What a confession for a young man to make before an audience numbered thousands! He felt that the Lord was not driving out the Canaanites as He used to do. His enemies picked it up, and said, "We have believed that for a long time." They mocked at him, and poured contempt upon him. But he was a true man, and when he felt the Spirit of the Lord was not with him, he confessed it. It was apparently a providential ordering of the Lord to teach him that without God he could do nothing.

When that time comes in your ministry, and you have one dreadful, desolate, day, and at night you vow you will never preach again, go before God. Remember what I am saying to you. "Aha, I know why the Lord left the people, and I expect He left me for the same reason. I will try to live more closely to Him."

"That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein." I have sometimes wondered why some people go to church. I have sometimes wondered why some people join the church. We are delighting in happy and blissful unity of the spirit and of faith in this church. May the Lord persevere it for many years—and He will if we walk carefully before Him. But sometimes these various "ites" get into a church, and they do trouble one, they really do.

Then it says here that through all their history the Lord left certain nations, to "prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Therefore the Lord left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua." I have had that experience. I have actually asked the Lord to keep some people away from church—and to bring other people. I have asked the Lord many times to deliver me. Paul prayed to be delivered from "unreasonable and wicked men". The unreasonable men are almost harder to deal with than wicked men—nor do I think unreasonable women are any better! We may well pray to be delivered from unreasonable people of any sex.

But sometimes the Lord does not answer our prayer. He leaves these things to worry us. He does not drive them out "hastily". Someone asked me to-day, "Why does the Lord permit certain things?" Why do you permit a weed to grow in your garden? I expect the

seed was sown there, and it is natural for it to grow. These things were part of the "all things" that work together for good. In these circumstances that crib, cabin, and confine, in the awkward people we have to meet—and the awkward people which other folks have to meet when they meet us;—it is half a dozen of one and six of the other. It is the old problem of the two men who could not see straight, and so ran into each other. One said, "Why do you not look where you are going?" To which the other replied, "Why do you not go where you are looking?"

That is one of the problems of life: we are bumping into each other all the time. That is why you have little money. The Lord leaves these troubles to prove us, to see what is in us, to make something of us.

I had hoped to get further than that, but we will let those introductory verses to the book serve for to-night. You will find the Book of Judges, if you remember that it is written to represent things as they appear in the sight of the Lord, full of instruction for us in our day. It throws a flood of light on the irritations we meet all the time, and will show us how to be delivered therefrom. Most of us need that, for it is easier to meet the big things of life than the little things.

REV. JAMES MCGINLAY.

In response to many enquiries we are glad to be able to report that at this writing Mr. McGinlay is improving. November 21st he seemed to be so much improved that further stay in the hospital was considered unnecessary, and he left the hospital on that date. It later developed, however, that a further operation was necessary, and he returned to the hospital on the 28th. A second operation was performed yesterday, the 29th. It was a very serious one, but is said to have been completely successful, and at this writing (1.30 a.m. Thursday) his condition is reported, both by the surgeon and the nurse, to be thoroughly satisfactory. His brave and cheerful spirit, and a clean and rugged constitution, are enabling him to put up a splendid fight. We invite our readers to join in earnest daily prayer for his speedy and complete recovery.

SHENSTONE MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANTFORD.

We are glad to report, especially for our Ontario and Quebec readers, that Shenstone Memorial Church, Brantford, is once more out of the woods. This church, when Rev. F. A. McNulty began his pastorate, was such a church as any pastor in the world might have counted it a privilege to serve. It had taken, while still without a pastor, a firm stand for the faith, and had attracted to itself evangelical Baptists from other churches. The building was crowded, and the people were eager to get on with the Lord's work.

By the worst pastoral leadership we have ever known, that splendid church was reduced almost to chaos. About seven months ago the people were refused permission to express themselves, and the Pastor and a little group led the church on from bad to worse. We need not relate the details: it is sufficient to say that the financial management of the church was so bad that a large group of members, constituting the great majority of the church, were forced to apply to the court for an injunction to restrain the Pastor and the officials still with him from further action until the church was permitted to express itself. This injunction was granted. An appeal was taken to the high court, but the injunction was continued. In the meantime, in desperation, the Pastor, who had so loudly proclaimed his Fundamentalism, sought to lead the church back into affiliation with the old Convention.

The business meeting which the courts insisted should be held, was held November 23rd. As a preliminary arrangement, it had been agreed that Mr. McNulty's pastorate should cease as of November 1st, and that certain resolutions respecting the withdrawal from the Union and the application

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THE OPEN FORUM MEETINGS.

Several weeks ago, the announcement of the Open Forum meetings at the Mount Pleasant Road Church was made. The meetings are held on Friday evenings, and Rev. Alex. Thomson is receiving questions regarding Bible difficulties and answering them. At such a meeting those who have been misled or have met with problems which appear to be unanswerable are invited to present their difficulties, and in the atmosphere of a Christian church and by a Pastor sympathetic and well versed, serious thought is given. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Such an opportunity as is given at the Mount Pleasant Road Church is revealing many things. It is showing how great the need is. It is a means of fortifying the young people against the atheistic teaching which they are meeting on every hand, and it affords an opportunity of teaching and studying the Word of God. Those who need help along this line would do well to attend the Friday evening meetings at Mount Pleasant Road Church if living in the northern district of the city of Toronto.

This week we announce that Rev. P. B. Loney is giving opportunity for the presentation of questions at the church's mid-week service, and that there will be Open Forum held for one half-hour each Wednesday evening at the Runnymede Road Baptist Church, Toronto.

Pray for these meetings. Only the great need for them can be realized when some loved child, or some precious soul, is contaminated by the false teaching, and many parents are blown about with every wind of doctrine, not willing for His sake and for their children's sake to be separated unto the Lord.

AN ARMISTICE DAY CONFERENCE.

The semi-annual conference of the Sunderland District of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec was held at Cannington, Armistice Day, November 11th, with fourteen churches represented. Owing to the illness of the Moderator, Mr. James H. Ratcliff, of Stouffville, the Vice-Moderator, Rev. John Byers, of Orillia, took charge of the meeting, which opened with a real old-fashioned song service led by Rev. M. B. Gillion, of Bobcaygeon.

Rev. W. W. Fleischer, of Stouffville, brought a message on "The Growing Need of Revival", and instead of pointing to world conditions, or the worldly condition of the church, he applied the message personally, and each one was directed to look within—"Man looketh on the outward appearance, BUT GOD looketh on the heart".

The message was followed by a half-hour of praise, prayer and testimony, led by Rev. Oscar Boomer, of Miner's Bay.

The second message of the afternoon was delivered by Rev. Alex. Thomson, of the Mount Pleasant Road Baptist Church, Toronto, and dealt with "The God-given Way to Revival". Mr. Thomson pointed out that there must be the acknowledg-

ment of every known sin, and complete surrender of the cleansed temple to the Holy Spirit of God.

The evening session opened with a devotional period, led by Pastor R. Brackstone, of Cannington, and following, Rev. J. M. Fleming, of Lindsay, brought the first message of the evening, a message on "The Glorious Power of Revival". The Personality, the Place and the Power of God, the Holy Spirit, were emphasized.

Rev. W. W. Fleischer brought the closing message on the "Gracious Results of Revival", directing all to read the last book of the Old Testament, the Book of Malachi, and in reading compare the condition of Israel with the spiritual condition to-day, keeping in mind that the dark days preceded the time when the Lord Jesus Christ came to be crucified, and that in the midst of evil times, the blessing of Pentecost was experienced.

The meeting was closed with prayer, and the benediction was pronounced by Rev. W. E. Smalley, of Markham.

TRINITY REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH,

Niagara Falls, Ont.

On Monday evening, November 7th, in the auditorium of the I.O.O.F. Hall, Main St., Niagara Falls, the members of the Trinity Regular Baptist Mission met and formally organized themselves into a church. Rev. Clifford J. Loney, of Hamilton, was chairman, and Rev. H. S. Bennett, Vice-President of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, brought a message on "The New Testament Church". The office of Pastor and deacons was studied, after which the church proceeded to organize; officers were elected.

It was stated that during the six months' ministry of Pastor James Fraser, the membership of the Mission had increased 80 per cent. With the organization of the Church, an unanimous call was extended to Mr. Fraser, and the work goes on under his pastorate with the expectation of seeing much blessing.

SOUTH LONDON REGULAR BAPTISTS.

The progress being made by the South London Church and the promise of their new church building's completion before Christmas is very gratifying. Rev. R. D. Guthrie has been leading the Thursday evening meetings of the Central Regular Baptist Church, London, while his brother-in-Christ, Rev. James McGinlay, has been so critically ill in a Toronto Hospital. Pray for both the London churches.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TIMMINS.

The Timmins Church has recently enjoyed a visit from Rev. James Hall, of Ottawa, in celebrating its anniversary with a week of services. The attendance at all services was very good, but the Sunday services, both morning and evening, were especially times of blessing.

The Bible School also joined in the anniversary spirit and recorded the largest attendance in the church's history at its Sunday afternoon session. Ten professed acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

CHATHAM REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH.

From Rev. E. C. Wood we hear that the work at Chatham has had the joy of seeing one accept Christ in their services recently. The Pastor writes that he has nothing startling to report, but that the services are well attended and that the Sunday School has twice in the past month gone over the hundred mark; that the Junior meetings average an attendance of about one hundred and twenty-five. The singing of the Salem Choir over the air is much appreciated, and the hearts of Pastor and people long to see an outpouring of revival blessing. They ask the prayers of the Union fellowship.

WESTERN ONTARIO.

The Pastor's and People's Conference of the Western Ontario district was held in the Calvary Baptist Church, Windsor, on November 24th. Pastor F. S. Kendall and his faithful workers greeted the visitors most cordially and extended the warmest hospitality. Owing to the icy condition of the roads many were hindered from attending, but despite this a goodly number assembled for the Conference.

The reports from the different churches were received with much interest. There was broadcast a confidence, accompanied by heartfelt desire for the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord Jesus would send revival blessing upon the work.

After the business session, Pastor Walter Lempriere of Wheatley, spoke from I Corinthians 3:16, and pondering on the Word of the Lord those gathered marvelled anew at the condescension of the Godhead and the responsibility of guarding and keeping the temple of the living God pure. It was realized that God desires to dwell with us, that we may enjoy more fully all the treasures of wisdom, knowledge and love which are hid in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Rev. J. Fullard of Essex, President of the Conference, presided at the evening session and Rev. W. N. Charlton of Hespeler was the speaker. Mr. Charlton gave an evangelistic message from Proverbs 27:1 and the Lord used it to bring a boy and girl to a profession of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Many hearts were stirred and the message may yet be used of the Lord in the salvation of others. The music during the evening was rendered by the Calvary Church choir and special messages in song were brought by Mrs. MacAllister, a member of Calvary Church.

"The day was spent in the courts of the Lord and will, we trust, bear fruit in the lives of all in the days which lie ahead," writes the clerk.

**SHENSTONE MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH,
BRANTFORD.**

(Continued from page 10)

to seek affiliation with the old Convention should be rescinded. At the meeting on the 23rd all other offices, with the exception of that of Trustees, were declared vacant. An Executive Committee of seven men was appointed to carry on the business of the church for three months.

Twenty-seven of the Pastor's supporters were present, as against sixty-three in opposition. Most of the twenty-seven withdrew from the meeting, and the motions passed were adopted therefore by unanimous vote, with the exception of one, against which one contrary vote was recorded. The resolution printed below was passed, and by motion was ordered to be published. We regret the necessity of giving publicity to this matter, but we feel that loyalty to truth and righteousness compels it. Following is the resolution:

"This Shenstone Memorial Regular Baptist Church at the first business meeting of the church at which all members legally entitled to vote have had opportunity to express themselves for a period of over seven months, hereby records its view of the matters which have troubled the membership of the church during that time; and registers its solemn resolution in respect to the course which the church shall, by the blessing of God, pursue in the future:

"1. We profoundly regret and in deep humiliation acknowledge that this church which so emphatically declared its uncompromising loyalty to the Word of God, and to the principles of the Gospel, has, during the period under review, so sadly failed in its official life to practice the principles it professed, as to bring public reproach upon the cause of Christ in general, and the name of Regular Baptists in particular; and we hereby solemnly resolve that in future we will, with divine help, so order the collective life of this church as to deserve a good

report of them that are without; and that we will endeavour so to order our lives as individuals as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

"2. Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church expresses regret that a group of members under the leadership of the Pastor and certain officials of this church, (which church, for its declared loyalty to the Word of God and the doctrines thereof, was on October 18th, 1928, by resolution of The Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, publicly excluded from the said Convention) without the authority of this church, and, therefore, unlawfully, at a meeting held in a private house, but in the name of Shenstone Memorial Church, did resolve to apply for readmission to the said Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and that at a time when the said Convention is in its official life more openly committed to the doctrines of Modernism than it was at the time when this church was excluded for its protest against Modernism. This church therefore deplores and repudiates the said action of the said group of members, and declares that it is as strongly opposed to the Modernism of the said Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec to-day as it has ever been.

"3. Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church also expresses its deep regret that a group of members under the leadership of the Rev. F. A. McNulty and certain officials, at an unlawful meeting held in a private house, did, in the name of this church, pass a resolution withdrawing from the fellowship of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec.

"This church, in a legally constituted meeting, deplores and repudiates the said action of the said group, and reaffirms the loyalty of Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church to the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec, and declares its determination to continue in affiliation therewith, and to support the testimony and missionary endeavours of the said Union to the utmost of its ability."

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