

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.

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

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Vol. 12, No. 27

TORONTO, NOVEMBER 16, 1933

Whole Number 600

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

ABUNDANCE OF RAIN

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

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, November 12th, 1933.

(Stenographically Reported)

Broadcast over CFRB, 690 k.c., as is every Sunday evening service of Jarvis Street Church, from 7 to 9 o'clock Eastern Standard Time.

"Then 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.

"And Elijah said unto them, 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.

"And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

"So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

"And said to 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 mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel."

—I Kings 18:38-45.

Last Sunday evening I spoke to you of the Carmel revival; of Elijah's challenge, after a long silence, to the prophets of Baal, that the "God that answereth by fire" should be God. The Lord, as I have read to you this evening, answered by fire: the sacrifice was consumed, as was the wood, the altar as well, and the water that was roundabout the altar in the trench. When the people saw it, they made confession that Jehovah was God.

That was the beginning of a revival, but it was far from being complete. The fire had come. God had demonstrated His faithfulness in that He had answered the cry of His servant. The people had been impressed by this manifestation of supernaturalism, and they confessed that Jehovah was able to speak for Himself, that He was *the* God. But the beds of the streams in Israel's land were still dry, the fields were as barren, the granaries were as empty, the resources of the nation were just as low, as they had ever been. There had been no replenishment. Nor, indeed, had the life of the nation

as a whole been greatly affected. The regular worship of Jehovah as yet had not been established. The life of the people had not been reformed. Nor had there wanted prosperity been restored to them. They had had a great religious meeting, characterized by the manifest presence of divine power, with an unusual response from the multitude there assembled—but beyond that, the revival had not gone.

I suppose we have all seen such beginnings as that. We have been present at great religious gatherings where there has been much prayer, where perhaps there has been sound preaching, where fire has really seemed to fall from Heaven, and where people have made confession of faith in God. We have said, "The revival is here." But for some reason or another it has died down. We need a revival, but it must not be confined to the walls of a church building. A revival, to be a revival indeed, must manifest itself somewhere else than in religious assemblies. It is well enough that it should be seen there. It is probable that its beginnings will be

manifested there chiefly, but if it is a real revival, it will spread beyond the narrow limits of the religious conventicle. A real fire is likely to burn its way out, so that people will see it outside of the house as well as feel it inside.

This, I venture to affirm, was a real revival—but it did not stop with the fire. The fire was but one of the distinctively supernatural elements in this story. We may as well adopt that principle. The Hebrew ritual was differentiated from all other forms of religion in that its sacrifices were consumed by a heavenly flame; not by a fire kindled upon earth, but by fire sent down from heaven. It was said, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." As they journeyed from place to place, the altar-fires were always kept burning. The incense offered by the priests was offered with that supernatural flame. Every sacrifice that was presented to the Lord was touched, and then consumed, by the fire that came down from heaven. When Manoah and his wife were anxious to know who the angel was who had visited them, he "ascended in the flame of the altar". When Elijah issued his challenge, God answered by fire. When Solomon dedicated the temple, fire came once again. And when our glorious Lord had returned to heaven, and had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He shed forth that priceless gift, and there was fulfilled, once and for all, the promise He had made to His waiting people, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

That fire is still with us, for this is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Fire is here. It may have been burning low upon the altar, it may not attract very much attention, but the divine principle and the divine presence are still with us. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

But there was something more than fire needed at this time. Please do not misunderstand, but there was a sense in which Israel needed water more than fire. What they needed above everything else was rain. Though the fire had come, the land still burned beneath a brazen sky. There was no rain. There were no clouds. There seemed to be at that moment no probability of rain. It seemed to be as far off as it had been at any time during the three and a half years.

We all have been disappointed by revivals that had in them unmistakably a divine element, but that did not continue. God came near, as He did to the disciples Whom He met on the Emmaus road, and on reaching the house, "made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." What happened on Carmel's mount that induced the God that answered by fire to abide, to carry through the revival to glorious and fruitful consummation? That is the sequel to last Sunday evening's story.

I.

What happened? THE FIRE ENABLED THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO SILENCE THE VOICE OF A FALSE RELIGION; for when the fire fell, the work was not all done.

Elijah had accurately diagnosed the case when he spoke by the Spirit of God. He recognized that the cause of all Israel's distress, the underlying, fundamental, basic, thing, out of which all other evils grew, was the alienation of the people from God—and that, through a

false religion. When the fire came, and the people acknowledged that Jehovah was the God, in effect *Elijah* said, "That shall be our religion, and we shall have no other god. Take the prophets of Baal."

If we are to have a real revival, there must be a recognition of the fact that all our troubles come from hearts that are alienated from God, and that they are the result of erroneous teaching, of a false religion.

I have little doubt there were many evils rampant in Israel's life at this particular time. Certainly in times of famine those who are foresighted and forehanded have a great advantage over their fellows, and there may have been certain economic and social inequalities in the life of Israel then. It may be that, notwithstanding the famine, some people had plenty while others were starving. It is very likely that some measure of despair had gripped the hearts of the people, so that they had come to say, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry; for to-morrow we die." They had become careless of the future, hardened because of their trouble. Trouble does not always soften people. It does not always drive us nearer to God. Sometimes it drives people farther away. There may have been difficulties that could be directly traced to the material conditions then obtaining.

Then, of course, the worship of Baal involved the repudiation of all divine standards, for the standard of the Decalogue was one thing, and that which was believed to be required of this heathen god was another thing. Indeed, the vilest immoralities were associated with the worship of Baal. Here were the prophets of Baal and of the groves. I dare say *Elijah* might, with good reason, have denounced the flagrantly wicked lives of the people of Israel, beginning with Ahab and Jezebel, and going down through every stratum of society. He might have taken the position of reformer, and said, "We must have new legislation; we must prohibit some of these irregularities; we must readjust the scales so that everybody shall have his due portion." But *Elijah* was too wise a diagnostician to concern himself with mere symptoms. These were but the symptoms of the disease itself. He said: "The trouble with Israel is heart trouble. They have given their hearts to a heathen deity, and have excluded the true God. If we are going to have healing in this nation, if we are to better conditions, we must go to the root of the trouble. Take the prophets of Baal."

I have a good deal of sympathy for people who complain of some of the difficulties from which men suffer in our day. I am not surprised that there should be people of radical opinions springing up everywhere, that these—what shall I call them?—social and political nostrums that are being offered to us with every issue of the press. Many of the evils which they denounce unquestionably obtain. I am not disposed to quarrel with them on that account: I only insist that the remedy prescribed will never effect a real healing. It is not a bit of use to try to wash away the symptoms of the disease with a lotion, when the disease itself is in the blood. We must go deeper than that.

There are inequalities in our modern life. Some people are very rich, and some people are very poor. It is easy to denounce the capitalists, but men do not do that: they denounce capitalism. I am not half so concerned for the abolition of capitalism as I am for the conversion of capitalists. It is economic nonsense to say there is any evil inherent in the thing that they call capitalism. The evil consists in those who control it. A

man may be a multi-millionaire, and yet be God's angel to a multitude of people. Nobody will object to his having control of large resources if his heart is right, and he knows how to use them.

I venture to believe that the talk of the "mechanized age", that we are living by machinery, and that people are being put out of work, is sheer nonsense. I have met some very industrious people, but few who want to work every waking moment. A normal man likes a little leisure. There is no special virtue in working like a slave. What objection can there be to a machine that will lighten a man's burdens? I never feel sorry when I see a load of produce being hauled along the street by a tractor if that is a substitution for a procession of wheelbarrows. You can have the wheelbarrows if you want them, I do not object to the truck,—but I think we ought to consider who owns it, who drives it, and to what use it is being put.

Why is it people cannot see that behind all these things there is that one thing that never changes, except by the grace of God, the natural heart of man? What have we had in our day but a religion that has revolutionized men's thinking? Modernism has done that. Religious Modernism, in the ultimate analysis, is nothing less than anarchy. It is a repudiation of all authority, except the authority that resides within the man himself. It makes the man a law unto himself, and a majority of men can make any law in defiance of the Decalogue, and call it right. It takes the fear of God from before the eyes of men. It leaves men without any authoritative norm by which conditions and character are to be appraised. That is what we have had from those who have prophesied in the name of Jehovah for now not a few years. The Bible is set aside. Jesus Christ is no longer God manifest in the flesh, but a man comparable to other religious leaders.

What must we do if we are to have a revival? Have a prayer-meeting only? Get everybody to come to Mount Carmel? Get everybody to yield an intellectual assent to the principles of the gospel—and then go home and say, "We had a lovely meeting. I think the revival is here"? Is that what we are to do? No! No! "Take the prophets of Baal." There is the trouble. There is the cancer. There is the disease that is wrecking society everywhere. Men are being told that they can build up an ideal family, or community, or state—or an ideal world—without God. It is the devil's own lie. It cannot be done. Baal is no substitute for Jehovah. A religion with the god of the evolutionist, the god of the Modernist, without an authoritative Bible, without a divine Saviour, without the principle and power of the virgin birth and the resurrection, without any promise of a supernatural power that can make men, by grace, other than they are by nature—a religion of that sort will bring chaos anywhere. That is what has brought it: our theological schools and universities, and even our newspapers, are reduced to a state of godlessness. We have only such god as each of us chooses to make or imagine for himself.

"Now", said Elijah, "we shall continue the revival: take the prophets of Baal." That is what we need today. *We must correct the evil at its source.* I speak this evening very probably to thousands of people who, in their hearts, are evangelicals. I doubt not that among the multitude who said, "Jehovah, he is the God", there were thousands of people who were glad that the time had come when it was safe thus to confess their faith,

for, though they had bowed at the altar of Baal, many of them did not believe in him; but as that was the religion of the court, and as they were in terror of the powers that then were, they accommodated themselves to circumstances. It was a great national movement, and they appeared to be Baal-worshippers.

Of the people who call themselves Modernists, I do not believe there are more than a very small percentage who are Modernists at heart. They *know* that the modern Baal is no God. They *know* that the Bible is true. They *know* who Jesus Christ is. They *know* there is power in the blood. They *know* that the Holy Ghost is come. They *know* that God has answered by fire again and again. There is no doubt about these things in their own minds, but they are afraid to say so.

These people were afraid to say so until the fire from heaven came. When the fire fell it made the people of Israel bold enough to deal with the national evil.

I hear some people pray after this fashion, "And, Lord, if there be anything amiss in us, please take it away." You can leave out the "if", dear brother. There is plenty amiss in all of us, so you need not pray after that fashion. And furthermore: you need not ask the Lord to take it away, for He will not do it. He never does. God's method of dealing with men is not to treat them as mere automata, mere puppets. God always enlightens the judgment, engages the affections, and brings the whole man into co-operation with Himself. The Lord does not send lightning from heaven to remove the prophets of Baal: He says, by the light of His fire, "There they are. Take them! Take them away!" The light that shines from this holy Book, the light that is kindled from the Sky, will reveal to us what is amiss if we ask for it, and will so give us grace, and so energize our wills, that we can take it away. But that is God's method always, to operate upon the wills of men, so that the will is sanctified to His service, and the man acts with a glorious liberty. Just as we sang to-night: we are bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, but we love His slavery. We do His will because we love to do His will.

Let me deal with that problem for a moment, by calling attention to religious life in general. I speak after this fashion because I have letters frequently from religious leaders, university professors, ministers, heads of educational institutions, saying, "We listen to you." There may be some such listening to me to-night. I have attended religious Conventions all over the American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf to as far north as you can go. I have found nearly everywhere that evangelical sentiment is overwhelmingly dominant, evangelical believers in most instances in the majority, only a few believing that Baal is the god, only a few. But officially, denominationally, people have been dealt with very much like the Russian Soviet. Do not misjudge Russia: that one-time empire, that vast country with one hundred and eighty to two hundred millions of souls, are not all Bolsheviks by any means. I do not suppose there are a quarter of a million real Bolsheviks in Russia, but they have put themselves in official positions and hold that vast country by the throat, having brought it into slavery.

It is because this thing that is so antagonistic to supernatural Christianity has wormed its way into official position that people are afraid to say what they believe. But I have seen them in religious conferences when the vote is about to be taken. Dr. Johnston was speaking about it in this pulpit the other night, and I attended

the Convention to which he referred where the open vote was taken. The Chairman said, "All in favour of the motion will rise." Did you ever see the keys of a piano when it was being operated by pneumatic action, how they respond to that invisible power? Well, that Convention looked like a key-board which was being manipulated by an unseen hand. Men got up to see who was voting on a certain side—and down they went again! Nor need one go to the United States to see that: I have seen it in Canada.

Are you going to argue with people like that? You cannot argue with professing Christians who have lost a sense of the Divine Presence, and a sense of their own responsibility to God. What we need is a restoration to the hearts of the professing people of God of a wholesome fear of God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." When the fire comes, when God the Holy Ghost revives the hearts of His people so as to liberate their tongues, enfranchise their wills, and make them strong to do what they ought to do, then they will take the prophets of Baal and make short work of them. They will clean out their universities, and will restore the Bible, as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, to its proper place.

But nobody but God can do that. Nothing but the power of the Holy Ghost can give people courage so that they will remove evil far from them. We need to pray for just such a revival as that, a revival that will remove the prophets of Baal.

II.

Then observe that WHEN THE VOICE OF A FALSE RELIGION WAS SILENCED, THE SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN WAS HEARD. When the prophets of Baal were removed, Elijah said: "I hear it! I hear it! It is coming. There is a sound of abundance of rain."

It was not heard generally. It never is. Sometimes my radio friends write to me and say, "Why do you move away from the microphone, so that I cannot hear what you say?" Then someone else writes me from New Brunswick saying, "The writer was mighty glad to hear you *roar out* that positively great sermon last night"! What is the difference? I do not move away from the microphone—and even if I did, it would be so modulated that my voice would carry.

My great predecessor, Dr. Thomas, told me one day some years ago that he had a member of this church who attended a Bible class Sunday afternoons in what was the west part of the city at that time. The Bible class teacher one afternoon said, "I wonder if any of you could offer a suggestion that would make this Bible lesson more interesting?" This man, who was growing old, and who sat with his hand to his ear, shouted out, "You might speak a little louder. My own Pastor does not speak as distinctly as he used to speak." My friend, the late Dr. A. C. Dixon, was visiting me on one occasion, and he said, "There is something wrong with my ears, and I wish you would take me to the best aurist there is in Toronto." I took him to a specialist, and presently he came out smiling. "What did he say? Is it anything serious?" "No! it is just *Anno Domini*." That is the trouble with your radio. *Anno Domini*. It is too old. It is not as responsive as it ought to be. It is characteristic of old men that they lose something of the acuteness of their hearing.

When the "old man" is in the ascendancy, we cannot

hear spiritual things very clearly. But Elijah was so attuned to heaven's wave lengths, if I may so say, that he caught the faintest whisper. Long before there was any appearance of rain, he knew it was coming. He knew he had been directed of the Lord, that he had fulfilled the conditions as God had given them to him, and he said, "There is a sound of abundance of rain."

When I came back from England a few weeks ago, I sat at the table with one of the officers. I said, "What about the weather?" "Oh", said he, "there is a little roll to-day, but there is fairer weather ahead; we shall soon run out of this, and into smoother waters. How did he know? There was an instrument on the top deck that told him. He was in communication with ships everywhere, and knew what the weather conditions were from shore to shore."

This captain of the hosts of the Lord knew that it was going to rain. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." Blessed is the man who, by the goings of God on his own spirit, is able to say, "There is a sound of abundance of rain."

What did Elijah do? He said to his servant, if I may translate it into modern language, "Go to the post office and see if that letter from heaven has come yet. Go and look toward the sea. It is coming! It is coming! It is on the way. Go and see if you can see it yet." It is a continuation of the principle I expounded to you this morning, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Elijah had committed his way to the Lord, and now he was trusting.

The servant came back and said, "There is nothing." Poor man! There are many people like that. "Let us pray. Let us take time to pray for a few days." There are certain people who are wonderfully enthusiastic, ready for the fire. The fire comes, and what then? "Go up now, look toward the sea; see if there is any sign of rain." "No! No! There is nothing. There is nothing at all—not a cloud in the sky." "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."

How did it come? What did Elijah do before he sent his servant to look at the sky? No prayer is recorded. "He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." If he prayed, his prayer was inarticulate. Mr. Brown read to you this evening that Elijah prayed. How did he pray? When he fell on his knees, and put his face between his knees, what did he say? Why did he say nothing? *There was nothing more to say.* Elijah had been "saying" for three and a half years.

Do you believe in long prayers? The longest prayer on record is that of Elijah. It lasted three and a half years. His falling on the earth with his face between his knees was the culmination, the climax, of his faith. He knew the rain was coming. I am sure during those three and a half years Elijah's patience must have been terribly tried. I can imagine his saying, after a month or two, "Lord, may I not go and see Ahab's face, and challenge him?" "Not yet, Elijah; not yet." When the Brook Cherith dried up, I can imagine his becoming impatient

and saying, "Whereunto will this lead? May I not go now?" "Not yet. Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." There he continues in the house of the widow, and through all the months what was he doing? He had, from the beginning, committed his way unto the Lord, and he was now trusting also in Him. That was all. So when at last the prophets of Baal had been slain, and the evil had been removed, there was nothing for him to do but fall upon his knees before God in faith and wait for the rain to come.

Have you ever prayed until you had not another word to say? Have you noticed the prayer of our great Intercessor? Not wanting surely was He in versatility. Surely He could have found much to say. But He did not. In the hour of His suffering, it is written of Him, "He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." I have no doubt Elijah had said "the same words" many times, because he had nothing else to say. Here he was waiting before God. What a picture of the proper attitude of a devoted soul! "Having done all, to stand", and wait for the blessing of the Lord.

When the servant reported the cloud "like a man's hand", 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 mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." Will you mark this? *Elijah did not fall upon his knees until the prophets of Baal were out of the way.* Elijah did not send his servant to look for the cloud until the prophets of Baal had been removed. Elijah did not say that even his keen spiritual ear had detected "a sound of abundance of rain" until the voice of this false religion in Israel had been silenced. Then he could hear it.

My brethren who hear me to-night, if you would have revival in your own heart, and in your own church, in your denomination, if we here in this place would have an overflowing revival, and honour God so that it will spread outside this little communion—if we would do that, then we must take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and must put false principles and false practices, and everything that is alien to the Spirit of God and His revealed Word, to the sword, without pity, without mercy. There is no forgiveness without repentance. It is folly to think that by holding conferences, and having prayer meetings, we can promote a revival, while we leave the prophets of Baal untouched. I repeat, there is the cancer, there is the cause of all our trouble. The people have forsaken God. May the Lord help us wholeheartedly, as His believing people, to seek His face and favour, and to resolve that not one of these false prophets, false conceptions, false doctrines, these—what shall I call them?—I use a scriptural phrase and say, "these damnable heresies" which deny the virgin birth, the death of Christ, and the efficacy of the blood—let us resolve that not one of them shall be left. Then may we hope the fire will be followed by the rain.

Do not spoil the story. Was it a spiritual revival? Yes; but it was more than that. Presently the rivers were overflowing. Presently the seed that was in the ground began to spring up. Presently the fields were covered over with corn. Prosperity returned. Every-

thing in nature smiled, and sang praises to God on high. God proved Himself to be the Lord that could answer by fire, and in that little cloud the size of a man's hand *He proved Himself to be the God of nature Who could answer His children's cry.* He is that. He can send rain. He can send prosperity. I shall not belittle the attempts of men to bring back material prosperity. If it were possible, by human effort, then might we all rejoice in it. But I will venture the roll of a prophet and say that when prosperity returns, and in the measure in which it does return, it will be by the inexorable operation of natural economic laws which proceed from God, and which are grounded in the nature of things.

But this is the great lesson that Elijah demonstrated, that Jehovah is not an absentee God, but One Who can hear the cry of His child; and, hearing in heaven His dwelling place, He answered him. And He will answer us.

Have you sought cleansing in His precious blood? Have you prayed for the quickening of the Holy Ghost, that you may be made a new creature in Christ? If not, before we sing our closing hymn, here in this building, and in the larger company who share our service by radio, let the cry go up once more from penitent hearts, "God, be merciful to me a sinner", that we may all go down to our houses justified.

Let us pray:

We praise Thee, O Lord, that when we call upon Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, Thou dost never send us empty away. We have no merit of our own, we plead alone the merit of the precious blood; and in the name of our great Intercessor we would this evening pray the prayer He taught us: God, be merciful to me a sinner. We have all sinned and come short of Thy glory. We know it. We mourn it. We confess it. We ask Thee to forgive it. God, be merciful to every one of us, sinners. Send us away from this place, and send those who have heard elsewhere, perhaps in their own homes, to their couches to-night with a sweet sense of their justification before God—justified freely by His grace, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Amen.

THE EDITOR IN FORT WORTH

Dr. Shields left yesterday (Tuesday) morning for Fort Worth, Texas, where he will deliver a series of addresses at the Bible Conference that is being held in the First Baptist Church. He will be absent three weeks, returning by way of Paducah, Ky., where he has a speaking engagement.

RADIO NEWS

Last week we published the letters that had reached us from Monday to Wednesday respecting the reception of the Sunday evening service. This week we are unable to do so, but list below the places from which news has come: Southbury, Norwich, East Killingly, Torrington, East Haven, New Haven, Hartford, Clintonville, Middletown, and Cheshire, Connecticut; Washington, District of Columbia; St. Augustine, Florida; Spencer and Woden, Iowa; Milltown, Maine; Arlington Heights, Springfield, Milford, and Boston, Massachusetts; South Haven, Hillsdale, and Clarksville, Michigan; Maynard, Minnesota; Salisbury, North Carolina; Bartlett and Manchester, New Hampshire; Ocean Grove, Hanover, Gladstone, Metuchen, New Jersey; Brooklyn, Buffalo, Hall, Johnson City, Schenectady, Brockport, Binghamton, and Utica, New York; Beach City and Proctorville, Ohio; Philadelphia, Milford Square, Towanda, Sunbury, Beaver, Lewistown, DuBois, Hamburg, Quarryville, and Williamsport, Pennsylvania; Eden Park and Westerly, Rhode Island; Richmond, Cape Charles, and Proffit, Virginia; Bridgewater, Vermont; and many places in the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario.

SEMINARY "GOSSIP"

There is a sense in which even vice may be sanctified, for we are to "covet earnestly the best gifts". These paragraphs are sanctified gossip, chit-chat about the work of the Lord that is being carried on by Toronto Baptist Seminary.

At the opening of this school year we "imported" a student from France who acts as *professeur de Français*, and right interesting times do his classes have. Last Sunday night he and a fellow-student were returning from a mission in the city, and were attempting to converse in French. Some man on the street-car overheard them, and was so interested that he went past his own stop, got off at theirs, and walked down the street behind them. He engaged the young men in conversation, and they spoke to him about things spiritual. He promised to come to church—so that French is useful, apparently, for advertising purposes!

Most of our students regularly do Sunday School work. Twenty-six of them teach classes in the great Bible School here in Jarvis Street. This work includes much visitation, as well as teaching. Others teach in other places. One of our new students, on a recent Sunday morning, supplied the place of the teacher of a large young men's class, with thirty-nine in attendance.

For supply preaching our men are particularly useful. In the illness of the pastor, Rev. A. Penman, of Long Branch Baptist Church, due to a serious accident, students have been supplying his place, and if the people have enjoyed their messages as they have enjoyed giving them, the blessing has been mutual.

A week ago last Friday evening a group of lady-students and the brother of one of them visited the Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton. One of them spoke on French work in Quebec, another gave a Bible exposition, others sang, and Dr. Olive L. Clark gave an address. The gathering of perhaps seventy-five seemed greatly to enjoy this fellowship in the Lord's work.

Two mixed quartettes sing, preach, distribute tracts, and visit, in two of the wards of Toronto General Hospital each Sunday morning. Such work has been highly commended at that institution as a practical expression of Christianity. It is a fine time to give the gospel to a man when he is forced to lie on his back and at least look upward! A group of students brighten the lives of children in the Home for Incurables each Friday evening, with songs and stories and gospel.

Several of our students have been holding open-air services Saturday nights, and through this work two men have professed conversion. Each Wednesday afternoon an evangelistic service is held in the Don jail. The men are not forced to attend, but most of them elect to do so. The Seminary Four sing, and others speak. The good seed is sown on stony ground in the case of many, but doubtless on fruitful soil with some. A group of Seminary students regularly take services at the Yonge Street Mission. Five play instruments, and others speak. On a recent evening one man professed faith in Christ.

The Seminary Four visited the Hillsburg Baptist Church for their anniversary services on Sunday, October 29th. The church was filled in the morning, and people were turned away at the evening service. The folks were much delighted with the service in song, as the students assisted Rev. R. LeDrew in his able preaching of the gospel.

The following Sunday the Four visited the Medina Indian Church, along with Rev. W. E. Atkinson, Secretary of our Union. The boys sang in English, the Indians sang in their own tongue, and together they praised the Lord. That evening the Four fulfilled a long-standing promise to sing again at Stanley Avenue Baptist Church, Hamilton.

Last Sunday three of the Quartette were present for the opening of the new church building erected at Guelph, known as the York Road Baptist Church, by the heroic labours of the pastor, Mr. H. H. Chipchase. The building is both pretty and commodious. The inside is not yet completely finished. The seating capacity is two hundred at present, but were there more seats, perhaps two hundred and seventy-five could be packed in. Last Sunday evening two hundred and five

were present by actual count. The preacher of this great day also was Rev. W. E. Atkinson.

The Essex Baptist Church last Friday evening closed a series of evangelistic meetings initiated by the pastor, Rev. J. Fullard, with Rev. W. J. Hay Brown as evangelist. The first meeting was poorly attended, but the attendance increased until on the following Sunday evening the building was taxed to capacity. After the regular service that evening, a mass meeting was held in the town hall, and about two hundred and fifty attended; and "listened with rapt attention to the stirring and forceful message". Twelve publicly professed their faith in Christ during the mission. At the end of the first week of the campaign the pastor baptized two, and the following Sunday, five; others are waiting to be interviewed concerning baptism. The people are very happy, and are praising the Lord for this manifestation of His power.

A few weeks ago a short series of meetings was held by our missionary-pastor, Rev. J. W. Knight, at Tweedside and Clarksonville in his parish at Jamaica. "Both series were owned of the Lord to the conversion of some, and to the recalling of a few backsliders."

Last Sunday Pastor Chas. McGrath began his pastorate at Stouffville and Second Markham (Ninth Line) Baptist Churches. Mr. McGrath comes to this field to succeed Rev. W. W. Fleischer, now of Shenstone Memorial Baptist Church, Brantford, in answer to a unanimous call from both churches. For the last two years Mr. McGrath has been at Crossfield, Alta., where, in that short time, a group of Christian workers was led to erect a church building, and open it free of debt. We predict a fruitful ministry for this useful servant of the Lord.

It is a well-known fact that THE GOSPEL WITNESS is a missionary and evangelistic paper. One of our students, upon returning from his summer's work, told us that he found THE WITNESS his best tract. Visiting mines, he would give a WITNESS to a man whom he thought might read it, and in a number of cases would return some days later to find the man busily engaged in reading its expositions of the Word of God.

We publish herewith Director W. D. Clark's statistical report of the practical work, covering the period from October, 1932, to October, 1933. The figures are given separately for men-students and lady-students.

	Men	Women	Total
Sermons preached	361	361
Meetings addressed	931	79	1,010
Lessons taught	448	429	877
Musical services	2,063	212	2,275
Visits made	14,168	1,747	15,915
Religious interviews	608	127	735
Bibles distributed	107	49	156
Gospels distributed	2,499	205	2,704
French Tracts distributed	7,000	7,000
English Tracts distributed	10,052	3,901	13,953
Professions of Faith	89	40	129
Baptisms through Students' influence.....	32	8	40

Statistics need always to be well lubricated with plenty of imagination. It will not be hard for our readers to make these figures live in their minds.

Perhaps few of us realize the sacrifices our men and women are making in order to their course of training for full-time Christian work at home or abroad. A theological class to which we once belonged had as its yell:

"Faith, hope and charity,
Long coats and poverty, Amen."

All our men and women could join heartily in the loud Amen. The work, however, is done in faith, hope and charity; and, as will be seen from the above sketches, it is owned of the Lord in His Kingdom. Pray for us, work with us, give to us, that together we may arise and build, as did Nehemiah, the walls that have been destroyed by the enemies of the Lord.

Whole Bible Course Lesson Leaf

Vol. 8

No. 4

REV. ALEX. THOMSON, EDITOR

Lesson 48

November 26th, 1933

FOURTH QUARTER**ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN**

Lesson Text: II Kings, chapters 1 and 2.

Golden Text: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."—II Kings 2:11.

Bible School Reading: II Kings 2:1-18.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Monday—II Kings 6:8-17.

Tuesday—Job 14:1-12.

Wednesday—Prov. 27:1-10.

Thursday—I Cor. 15:35-49.

Friday—I Peter 2:19-25.

Saturday—Matt. 17:1-8.

I. ELIJAH AND AHAZIAH (1:1-18).

The children of evil parents enter upon the duties of life handicapped by their associations, and wrong training, which influences them in many cases to follow the footsteps of those who were the means of bringing them into being. There is a bias in the wrong direction, which the old nature takes advantage of, but which does not rob them of personal accountability. It emphasizes the grave responsibility resting upon parenthood, while it gives due recognition to the possibility of choice on the part of the offspring. In the case of Ahaziah we have an evil son, following an evil father, (I Kings 22: 51, 52). We could hardly expect anything good to come from such a family. Both parents were wicked, both were idolaters, and it is not surprising that the son likewise should follow other gods. Note the possibility of conversion in such cases. There are none too hard for God.

Ahaziah did not reign long in Samaria, (I Kings 22:50), and but few details are given concerning him. First, we learn that the Moabites rebelled during his reign, (v. 1), probably taking advantage of the death of Ahab to do this; a custom not uncommon among subject peoples in that day. In the second place a series of incidents are related respecting an accident, which resulted in the death of the king. The nature of the accident is stated, (v. 2), the lattice probably referring to an opening in the roof of the palace like a skylight, covered over with lattice work. The accident was of such a severe nature that evidently from the first there was no doubt as to the issue, leading the king to make enquiry concerning the same. Note

the idolatrous condition of ruler and people; the meaning of the god's title: "the master of flies", these little pestiferous insects being plentiful at Ekron; and the pitiful state of persons whose supreme source of information and help is a heathen god. The blessedness of knowledge of the true God may be set as counter to this.

We again have the interposition of God in the affairs of men, in the instruction given Elijah concerning Ahaziah's enquiry. Note the probable identity of the angel of the Lord, in the second person of the Trinity, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Elijah is bidden to go and meet the messengers of the king, and give them the information that their master would surely die, (vs. 3, 4). Observe the divine complaint respecting the wrongly directed enquiry. There are many in these days who enquire at other sources than the divine, and thereby offend the living God, Who would have us in His Son approach His throne boldly, (Heb. 4:15, 16). The men evidently knew not Elijah, but by their description of him the king realized his identity, (vs. 5-8), and being displeased with his message sent a company of men to apprehend him, (v. 9). Fire from heaven destroyed these men, (v. 10), and also those composing a second company, (vs. 11, 12), and a third company was saved only by the entreaty of its captain, (vs. 13, 14). With this man the prophet went unto the king, and delivered his message in person, (vs. 15-18). Note the power of God manifested in the coming of the fire, and the vindication of God's message, and messenger contained thereon; also the wickedness of the king in seeking the apprehension of the servant of God, and the boldness, and faithfulness of the prophet. The prophet's task is very often an unthankful, unpopular, and dangerous one, now, as then, but he has the consciousness, when faithful, of the divine approval, and the responsibility for consequences is not his, but the Lord's.

II. THE ASCENSION OF ELIJAH, (2:1-25).

Several remarkable incidents are recorded in this chapter. The first relates to the ascension of Elijah. This, with its subsequent events, is interesting from both the historical and spiritual aspects. Elijah may be accepted as a type of our Lord, and Elisha of the Church, His successor. There is first, the testing of Elisha, produced by the repeated request of Elijah to tarry, (vs. 2, 4, 6), and finally by the declaration of the latter concerning the condition on which blessing would be received, (vs. 9, 10). This condition implied concentration respecting the one who was about to depart, resulting in the heavenly gaze. Note the necessity for heavenly-mindedness in the present time, (Col. 3:1, 2). Our spiritual gaze should be on the Lord, and to Him we should cling.

The journey of Elijah is worthy of attention, with the visits made to the theological colleges of Bethel, (v. 3), and Jericho, (v. 5), the crossing of Jordan, (v. 8), and the ascension to the glory, (v. 11). Typically, there is presented to us a picture of our Lord's death, (in the Jordan), and His resurrection, and His ascension. He died for our sins, (I Cor. 15:3), rose again from the tomb, (I Cor. 15:4), and ascended unto His Father's right hand, (Acts 1:9), after which He bestowed upon His church at Pentecost the "double portion" of His Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). This body now carries on the work which He began, and does so in the power of the Spirit which He has given, (I Cor. 12). Elisha took up the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, and with it wrought a miracle, (v. 14). The fiery prophet had gone, but the power remained. Our Lord is no longer visible, but His power is still manifest in accordance with His promise, (Acts 1:8). There is a sense also in which the ascension of Elijah may be taken as a type of the church in rapture, when at the coming of the Lord, its members will be taken from this scene into the glory, (I Thess. 4:13-18). This is the blessed hope of the church, (Titus 2:13), and the grand consummation of salvation.

In the attitude of the Jericho sons of the prophets we have an interesting typical sidelight on the modernistic theologians of the present day. Elijah had ascended bodily into the glory, but they would not believe it. They imagined that the Spirit of the Lord might have cast him upon some mountain, (v. 16), so they persuaded Elisha to permit them to send out a search party, (v. 17), which being done proved fruitless, (vs. 17, 18). These men were theologians who believed in the continuity of the spirit of Elijah, (v. 15), but were unbelievers respecting his bodily ascension. They were Jericho theologians, and their successors are still with us; men who profess to believe in the continuity of the Spirit of Christ in the world, while denying His bodily resurrection and ascension. They endeavour always to explain the miraculous from the natural standpoint; they are wise beyond their knowledge, and seek the superiority of the same to rule the supernatural out of religion. Their efforts are just as fruitless from the standpoint of results as those of the men of Jericho, though more harmful in their influence on others.

Two further incidents are recorded, the first relating to the healing of the waters, (vs. 19-22), another example of the manifestation of miraculous power, and the second recording the punishment of the scoffers, (vs. 23-25). These were young men who disbelieved the report concerning his master, and mockingly urged him to follow him, using the epithet "baldhead" to show their contempt of him.

The Union Baptist Witness

Is the Official Publication of the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Send all communications to the Office Secretary, 337 Jarvis Street, Toronto 2, Canada.

GUELPH

The York Road Regular Baptist Church is to be heartily congratulated upon the splendid building which has been erected during these hard times. Sunday, November the 12th, was in many respects the beginning of new things for these people.

For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the story of this church, we give a brief résumé of the work. Some four years ago a Sunday School was started in the east end of Guelph, which has been carried on ever since. This has gradually grown into a thriving Baptist work, through the untiring efforts of the self-sacrificing pastor, Mr. Howard Chipchase. Many have heard the gospel and have been saved and united with the church. The building in which they were meeting was entirely inadequate and in a dilapidated condition, and it became apparent that something must be done to house this growing congregation. Two of the ladies of the church contributed towards the securing of two lots, and a building was started. Progress was made, but owing to the lack of funds the building operations had to be suspended. The old building became untenable, and the people were anxious that something be done. Eventually, the whole matter was placed in the pastor's hands, and he has gone forward with the work until the edifice, which would cost more than six thousand dollars to complete, has been erected at a much smaller figure.

Special services marked the opening of the building. In the morning the church was well filled. In the afternoon more than one hundred and fifty gathered at the Bible School session. In the evening the church was taxed to its utmost capacity, there being more than two hundred people present. The special speaker for the day was Rev. W. E. Atkinson, and a real spirit of consecration prevailed throughout all these services. What a joy has come to the lives of many people in the east end of Guelph, as a result of this work! Many have responded to the claims of Jesus Christ through the faithful preaching of His Word.

Meetings are being held practically every day this week in honour of this occasion. The Pastors' and People's Conference of that district was held on Monday, November the 13th. The speaker of the afternoon was Rev. A. C. Whitcombe of Orangeville, and in the evening Rev. Jas. McGinlay, President of the Convention, addressed the gathering.

We are sure that the readers of the *Union Baptist Witness* pages will continue to pray for this people, that the blessing of the Lord may continue upon their ministry, and that many souls may be won to His cause.

SUNDERLAND ASSOCIATION

On November the 8th, the Sunderland Association of Regular Baptist Churches

of Ontario and Quebec met in the auditorium of the Mount Albert Baptist Church. The sessions were of a most interesting character, and much blessing was experienced as the various pastors related the blessings which had fallen upon their ministry.

The afternoon session was given over to a time of prayer and testimony, and the fellowship which existed was nothing short of that of apostolic times. The ladies of the nearby churches served supper in the Masonic Hall, and a happy time of fellowship was spent about the tables.

In the evening, after the devotional exercises conducted by Mr. Fawcett of Cannington, the Rev. John Byers, the Moderator of the Conference, took charge of the service, and several musical numbers were contributed by the visiting quartette from Toronto, and also by Mrs. Russell and Miss Brown. The speaker of the evening was Rev. W. E. Atkinson, who gave an address on "And ye would not come unto me that ye might have life". Following this the Moderator extended an invitation for any who would follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and after a most heart-searching time the front of the building was filled with those who were seeking salvation and reconsecration of themselves to the work of the Lord. Seldom has our eye seen anything like it, and the meeting lasted until well on to the midnight hour. The joy of His presence, and the manifest blessing of God were in the midst of His people. May He give us in these days many more such Conferences and times of refreshing.

ORILLIA

Much has been said about the splendid progress which this church has made under the leadership of the Rev. John Byers, but on Sunday, November 12th, a climax in its history was reached, when it opened its beautiful stone edifice. It was erected and opened for the glory of God, and the special speaker was Rev. C. J. Loney, of Hamilton.

After the usual formalities connected with such a service, the house of the Lord was dedicated to His service, and a great time of fellowship was enjoyed. In the evening when Mr. Loney gave the invitation fourteen responded for salvation, and a number for consecration.

For many months now the blessing of God has rested upon the efforts of the Bethel Baptist Church in Orillia. Prayer meetings have been held, and the people of God worshipping there have been greatly exercised over the condition of lost souls in their town. This has resulted in a great campaign of personal work among the unsaved.

The building, after all, is secondary if the presence of the Lord is in the midst of His people. This church, however, is one of the finest in its appointments of any Baptist Church it has ever been the writer's privilege to visit. The audi-

torium seats three hundred people comfortably. The interior decorations are exquisite. We praise God from Whom all blessings flow.

Special services are being held each night for two weeks, and the special speaker is Rev. C. J. Loney, of Hamilton.

NEWS FROM LIBERIA

In a letter dated September 28th, Mrs. Hancox writes: "I will try to get a few lines off to you before the children come back from prayer, to say Good-night. It is Bible Class to-night, and before the yard boys went home they told me to be sure to ring the bell loudly, so they would know when we were ready for them to come. We have really bright meetings; the little tots sometimes have a hard job keeping their peepers open, while others are kept very much awake by the nips of mosquitoes Four new folk attended class to-night. It is a lovely moonlight night, and quite balmy. The rains are nearly finished, and the sun is getting very warm again.

We are all busy teaching school again. Mr. Hancox has started a grammar class, Friday mornings, and he has a class for the Christian boys on Friday afternoon. The Lord continues to bless; the work goes on quietly, nothing startling, but the way is being paved, and there will be blessed fruit, and a time of reaping one of these days.

This line will find you all busy at your Fall work again, the Convention near at hand. We will remember you all in prayer. May the Lord lead you in your decisions. Kindly give our love to the friends, and Pastors. This line leaves us all feeling real well at New Cess, and happy in the love of Jesus."

Miss Lane Rejoices

In a letter dated September the 28th, Miss Lane tells of her great happiness in her work. She tells how another Gri-gri bush girl has surrendered to Christ at the Friday Bible class. Let us pray that many more may surrender to Him!

God's Word Revered

Mrs. Mellish relates the following incident in a letter dated September the 17th. "Last night Gadua's mother-in-law had a rather serious accident. Her farmhouse burned down and part of their rice. Clothes and all possessions went up in flames. This is the second farmhouse this year that has suffered the same fate. Poor Ge came out this morning badly frightened. It seems that he had loaned his brother Gimbo his Testament, and it had been burned with the rest of the things. He was frightened that the wrath of God would come down upon his head. It was not mere joking either, for when we all assured him that God would not harm him, he just breathed a sigh of relief."

We have interesting news from Mr. Mellish about the language and the native Christians, which we hope to share with you next week.