

## Our Firm Foundation

leaders, but it is hard to compare them. When we think of Elijah we picture a dynamic, forthright reformer who could split the skies with his prayers. But Elisha was different. He was quieter, yet he so inspired his workers and his church members that even the least likely of them began to witness for the truth.

That captive maid away up there in the home of Naaman, one of the enemies of God's people, began to tell about the great God of Israel. Although a little slave, separated doubtless from her loved ones, she nevertheless loved her master and her mistress, and she wanted them to understand something of the love of her God. Naaman stood high in rank. He was next to the king. But there was in his heart an awakening desire to know something about the true God. His leprosy became the occasion of his visit to Israel. But in it all was something bigger than leprosy. He needed to know about God, and it was the testimony of that girl that brought the saving message to his home. Thus the Gentile world began to be reached.

### A Praying Church

Now let us make the parallel. The true symbol of this message and this organization is Elijah. In fact, this is the Elijah message. How splendidly our pioneers laid the foundations of this movement! But they have all now gone to their rest. Those of us who are left are like Elisha, whose reaching out into the great Gentile world could be a type of the advance of this worldwide message. And like Elisha it is for us to inspire our young men and maidens, who though they be separated from home and dear ones, yet like that little maid, they too carry the news of God's love to all those with whom they associate.

A few years ago up in the Northwest one of our pastors was leading out in a prayer week in his own church. It was not the regular time of the Week of Prayer. There were no readings that had come from the General Conference, but this pastor was burdened for his people. He wanted them to catch a new vision of evangelism, and so he organized this special week of consecration. He told his members that if they could not go out and preach, or visit their neighbors, they could at least pray for the unsaved in their own homes. He laid the burden of prayer upon them all.

One of his members, a young woman, was housemaid in a home of wealth. She could not go out and give Bible studies, but she could pray. And she did. The one for whom she felt the burden of prayer was the mistress in the home where she worked, a lovely woman, but a woman of the world. One night this wealthy woman awakened with a strange feeling of fear. It was already after midnight, but she felt afraid. She could not sleep. She awakened her husband, crying, "Oh, I must have help! I feel terrible!" "What is the matter?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know, but I must have help. Maybe I need a doctor. No, what I need is a minister. Get a minister for me." The husband tried to calm her, saying, "Well, honey, we don't know any ministers. This is pretty late at night. Why not try to get some sleep, and I will find a minister for you in the morning?" He tried to console her, and she said she would try to go to sleep.

He dozed off, but in less than an hour she awakened him again. "I can't sleep; I must have help," she said. "Do get a minister for me." Again he reminded her that they were not religious people. "I don't know where to find a minister," he said. "I don't know any ministers." Then a thought occurred to him. "What about our maid? She is a Christian girl, you know. She belongs to those Adventists. Maybe she would know how to get a minister. Perhaps her own minister will come. Let us go down and talk with her."

So they went down to her room. Of course the maid had retired long before. This was two o'clock in the morning, but they threw their robes around them and walked down to the maid's room. The door was ajar. They heard someone talking. It was the maid; she was praying. They heard words like these: "O God, my mistress is such a good woman. She is so kind. I want to see her in the kingdom. O God, save my mistress!"

As they stood there in the dark, the husband whispered to his wife, "Honey, that's why you can't sleep. This girl is praying for you. You'd better go in there." The wife slipped in and knelt down beside this praying girl, and in a moment their arms were locked around each other, and they wept together. That woman of wealth found the Lord Jesus Christ that night and later found the beauty of His truth.

If every one of our church members would take that burden upon his heart, would pray for his loved ones and his neighbors, pray for his friends and even his enemies, we would soon see such a revival in the church as has never been witnessed since apostolic times. We know the Lord is coming soon, but we need a revival of true godliness to enable us to evangelize the world. We have no time to lose. The forces of the enemy are arrayed against the church. Evil is pressing closer and closer. Every soldier in the army of

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the Lord must sense his individual obligation to God.

### “Hold the Fort”

In 1864 near Altoona Pass, in the days of the American Civil War, something happened that became the inspiration for one of the best-loved gospel songs. An important post was being attacked. A million and a half rations were stored there. A garrison of fifteen hundred men was trying to defend this post against six thousand trained troops. One by one the outer breastworks were captured, and the defenders were gradually being driven back. Surrender seemed imminent when all at once one of the officers, anxiously looking for help from somewhere, noticed that on a nearby hill a flag was moving. A signaler was spelling out a message. It read, “Hold the fort, I am coming. W. T. Sherman.” That message so thrilled those tired soldiers that every man redoubled his efforts. Three hours later the general arrived, and they were saved.

In the valley of time the church is waging a terrific warfare, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Could we only lift our eyes to the eternal hills, we would read the words of our triumphant Lord: “Behold, I come quickly!” “Hold the fort, for I am coming.” That is the call to the church of God. And not only must we hold, but we must march on to victory. In this great hour every evangelist, every administrator, every institutional worker, every church member, every boy and girl is to take his place in the greatest evangelism program of all time. God is counting on us to redouble our efforts. The enemy knows that his time is short, and he is building barriers against the progress of the truth of God. We have been called by the Lord to match the powers of evil. In this very time the greatest battle of all the ages is reaching its climax. Wars are won by men, munitions, and maps.

Take a look at this map of the world. Here are four hundred million Indian people. For centuries India’s people have been shut away by the barriers of the caste system and pagan philosophy. Down in South America is the great barrier of Roman Catholicism. Over in Europe are the barriers of intellectualism, militarism, and nationalism. Down in the great continent of Africa we find the barriers of paganism in all its stark and brutal reality. Over in the great country of China a new barrier has arisen to impede our progress giving way before a new internationalism. Other peoples of the world are also being swept into this new concept. But God is able to break through any barrier. In North America we encounter the barrier of commercialism and intellectualism. Other great barriers have been erected in the islands of the sea. But by the miracle-working power of God those obstacles are being swept away, for, God says, “who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.” Isaiah 27:4. Divine power will break and burn these barriers. O for the burning flame of the Spirit of God!

When Ezekiel preached the second time his soul cried out for the empowering Spirit, the life-giving breath, and the Spirit came like the wind. A rising wind begins slowly. Just a little breeze first—a little eddy here and a whirl of dust in the distance. But soon the nearer trees begin to bend in the rising current. Then comes the great gust, and soon the roar of the hurricane is excluding every other noise as it breaks and smashes its way through. Come, O Wind! And come not from just one quarter. But come from the earth’s far ends. The church of the living God awaits Thy life-giving breath! Come quickly! O Spirit of God, and move the wheels that a new power may possess our evangelism.

The first wheel that was ever made was doubtless crude, perhaps a piece of round log. But at once it was a revolution in progress, as it was placed under a rude cart. Since then the wheel has gone through many cycles: the wheelbarrow, the rickshaw, the horse and buggy, the railroad train, the automobile, the airplane. But despite those many transformations, the wheel itself remains. It is basic.

Just so evangelism has gone through many cycles. Methods have changed with the changing times, but like the wheels evangelism still is basic. And on the wheels of evangelism God is going to finish His work and take His people through to the kingdom. What we need is what Ezekiel saw – “the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.” “Take fire from between the wheels,” was the command of God. It is the fire between the wheels that caught the prophet’s eye. When the wheels of organization are ablaze with the Spirit of God, when the tongues of fire leap again upon the preachers of His Word, then the world will know that this is God’s last message. And those who have hesitated to heed the call will then press in. This will be the climax of evangelism.