

The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES
AND IN DEFENCE 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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Registered Cable Address: Jarwitsem, Canada.

Vol. 17, No. 45

TORONTO, MARCH 16, 1939

Whole Number 878

A FRONT SEAT

By Rev. Henry Oakley, London

For four consecutive Sundays we sat in a front seat in the chapel where we worshipped. On the third Sunday a very kind, pleasant lady was entering the chapel with us. She gave us the kindest of welcomes and, with a coaxing voice as we reached the aisle, she said, "Come a little to the front, won't you?" The sidesman heard her and answered for us. "Yes, they will, they always do." I felt our character was established as unselfish worshippers.

A little time ago I was in Birmingham for some meetings. At a service where I was not to take part, I went up and took my place in the second seat from the front. Presently an elderly gentleman joined me. In a moment or two he turned to me and said, "We old chaps, who are hard of hearing, get up toward the front." I explained, "I am not deaf, I come to the front in kindness and from a sense of duty." "I don't quite catch it," he said. Then, in a much louder voice, I said, "I am not deaf, I am thankful to say, but I come to the front in kindness to the speakers and others, and from a sense of duty." This time my friend heard and remarked, "You are better than I thought you were."

I hold with almost ferocious firmness that it is the Christian's chance of helping the meeting or service he attends to take a front seat if a front seat is free. The advantages are many:

1. The help it is to speakers we need not dwell upon. That is clear enough.
2. It is a great help to good listening. There are much fewer distractions and there is the great gain of seeing the speaker's face—the eyes, the tremors on the lips. It's quite a good bit of the emphasis.
3. There is the perfect freedom from late comers. If you are packed in the last pew and some dear little late mother comes in and looks furtively and nervously about for some little place where she can shyly sit down; you must be a particularly hardened selfist if you can sit on and watch until the nervous little lady passes up to sit on a few inches four or five seats up. There is delightful freedom in the front seats.
4. I am sure, from a long experience, that it is easier to keep awake in the front seats. From my usual vantage position in the pulpit I can see the temptation of the back seats. I have often watched the manful fights, well fought, but ending in defeat. I have not seen this for many years among my front seat friends.

From four Sundays' experience in the pew, receive, dear reader, my affectionate behest. *Get a front seat if you can.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO "OUR OUTLOOK"

The following two excellent articles are taken from "Our Outlook," London, Rev. John Wilmot, Editor.

The Totalitarian Claim of the Bible

"Through this tribulation the Church in Germany has been enabled to make a discovery: the discovery of the glory of the foundation on which the Church stands, of the *glory of the Word of God*, as the bread on which she may feed herself, as the fountain from which she may drink, as the power that is strong when men in the Church are weak. Those questions were not the end. There came—whence came they? the great and ancient, the eternal answers: 'I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods but me.' And: 'Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.' And: 'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' There came to many, very many, a new hearing of this message, a new understanding of these words, a new joy in them, and a new trust in them. There awoke the understanding for what the National Socialist, in anger but quite correctly, called 'the totalitarian claim of the Bible', of the claim of the *Word of God which must possess us completely or not at all*. There awoke the understanding for that which the Reformers in the sixteenth century had uttered with tongues of fire: *Grace alone! Holy Writ alone! Honour to God alone in the highest!* The more the heretics and the heathen raged from without, shouting: 'Not God alone, but man too!' and finally, still more clearly: 'Man, man alone!' the more powerfully, though in all stillness, that other voice spoke in the ears of thousands: 'Glory to God alone in the highest!'"—*Professor Karl Barth ("The German Church Struggle")*.

Sin is Not the First or the Last Word

"Meditate on these things"

This connection of sin and grace forbids us ever to speak of sin as if it were the first or last word. What would we know of the darkness, the plight and depths of human life without the light of revelation which breaks through the darkness? How could man know that he had sinned against God, and that he is against God, unless he knew that *God is for him*? How could man know that he himself can make amends for absolutely nothing unless he knew that *God Himself* has made amends for the evil he does? If we know that we have sinned wantonly against God's glory and have lost our own glory, then we already know that God's glory, by proving true in the face of our rebellion, has become only so much the *greater*, and we know that He has *not* left man either to his own devices on the road which leads to the destruction of his own glory. If we *know* that we cannot save ourselves, we know already that we are *saved* by God. If we know that it is our sin and ourselves that were condemned in the criminal's death suffered by the Man Jesus Christ on Calvary, then we know already that our sin is *forgiven* us, and that we ourselves are *set free* from the sentence and judgment of God. If we are afraid of the wrath of God and of our reprobation, then we are already laying hold of the *promise* of God and of our *election* and already believe in God's compassion. If we confess and acknowledge, in the words of the calvinistic prayer, "that we have, alas, gravely sinned from our youth up and to

this present hour by evil thoughts, words and deeds", then we are already in God's arms and in His bosom. For these words can only be uttered by a man who is already there.

Here we share not only in our glory as men now restored to us, but far beyond this we share also in that new glory which is founded on the completely new order of grace as those who through God's coming in Jesus Christ, have been saved, won and purchased to be called the *children* of God. For it is only the children of God who can testify to their sin.

What is our sin? It is what we are and what to do, in spite of which God comes to us in the Man Jesus Christ. What is our debt? It is the showing of the gratitude which God has brought about and made efficacious for us all in the Man Jesus Christ. What is our punishment? It is the infinite agony which it cost God Himself to take our place in the Man Jesus Christ, in order that we would not have to suffer. Is it nothing besides? No, nothing besides. In this way alone is there real, serious and Christian knowledge of our sin, debt and punishment—it is the essence of the *regeneration* of man as elected in God's free grace, that it, since it is identical with *faith* in Jesus Christ awakened in us by the Holy Spirit, necessitates *this* knowledge of our sin, guilt and punishment, and precludes any other.—(*Professor Karl Barth.*)

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

SOUL-THRILLING NEWS FROM KAPUSKASING. The phrase is from the pen of Rev. Robert Brackstone, the faithful and energetic pastor of Kapuskasing, whither he went two years ago to a struggling missionary cause. From time to time these columns have carried news of the increase given to the seed sown, and now comes the following letter from Mr. Brackstone:

"Now for some news which will thrill your soul. To-day we purchased a large lot, centrally located, on which is a large frame house. Therefore in a few weeks the Kapuskasing Regular Baptist Church will be worshipping God in a building of its own, dedicated to the glory of God! I am convinced that the sooner we obtain a building of our own, the sooner we shall be able to reduce considerably the grant we receive from the Union Board. Yet for the present we are in great need of the grant. That is one reason why we cast about for a building. Then again, we have to pay \$40.00 monthly for rentals—for hall rent and house rent. Renting a hall for services requires much money and is unsatisfactory at the best.

"A few weeks ago an opportunity of a lifetime came our way. We were offered this large building and lot for \$2,000.00. Then we were offered it for \$1,800.00, then \$1,700.00, then \$1,650, until we could resist no longer. The people here gave sacrificially—in such a way that it humbled me—until we had enough to make the first down payment of \$240.00. In a few weeks, pledges will be redeemed amounting to approximately another \$200.00. I have appealed to other Christian friends as we are going to make another large cash payment on the 29th of April of this year. At least \$2,000.00 will be required to cover both the purchase-price of the property and the cost of renovations. Therefore our financial need has been intensified, but we feel confident that by applying our rental money, we shall have this property paid for within a short period of time, and that we shall have a good church building.

"The structure is two storeys. The upper storey can be made into a residence for the pastor, and the lower part can be easily altered into a spacious church auditorium seating about 165 to 170 people. It is the highest building on the street and only a few yards from a fairly busy intersection where hundreds of school children pass every day. Among the men of the church are those who can paint, do carpenter work and various other trades, so that labour will be given free.

(Continued on page 6)

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A KINGDOM FOR A MORSEL OF MEAT

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

Preached in Massey Hall, Toronto, Sunday Morning, March 12th, 1939

(Stenographically Reported)

"Lest there be any . . . profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

"For ye know how that afterward when he would inherit the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

—Hebrew 12:16-17.

Prayer Before the Sermon

O Lord, our God, we acknowledge that when we would offer our praises, and present our petitions before Thy throne, we have in ourselves no worthiness, and no spiritual competence to render to Thee a service acceptable in Thy sight. In ourselves we are hopelessly undone. It is by the grace of God we are what we are, and it is through Thy grace that we are permitted to come into Thy holy presence at all. We draw near this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus:

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on th' accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.

We thank Thee that Thou hast taken upon Thyself our sin. Thou hast atoned for all our transgressions. Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood; and by Thy regenerating grace Thou hast made us new creatures, even children of God. Help us, O Lord, this morning to rejoice afresh in the realization of our position in Christ.

We all are too often cast down, and our souls disquieted within us. Often we become weary. Often when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. Yet Thou knowest our frame; Thou rememberest that we are dust. And like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Look upon us, then, in our weariness, in our weakness; undergird us by Thy Spirit. Help us that as we go forth during the week, each to the duties of the day, we may be strengthened with might by Thy Spirit in the inner man, and enabled by Thy grace to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Accept our thanks for the multitude of Thy mercies. We cannot name them before Thee, so great in number are they.

Look now upon every man and woman, every boy and girl in this congregation. May Thy Word come to us with power this morning, enabling us to see something of our responsibility to God, something of our privileges as the children of God!

Bless Thy people everywhere. Remember those who are absent from us through sickness, or through the infirmities of age. Let Thy blessing be upon those who minister to the sick, upon those who are away from home, upon those whose duties call them to serve on this Thy day. Help us all to understand that wherever the hearts of men go out toward God, there He is pleased to receive them, and bless them with Heaven's benediction.

Now teach us out of Thy Word. Make this service to be profitable to every one of us for Thy name's sake, Amen.

These verses epitomize the life's history of one of the outstanding characters of antiquity. It is marvellous to

observe what volumes God can condense into a few sentences. From the record of a life in which there was found no place for God, absolutely nothing of importance is omitted in this comprehensive summary.

It is the story of a hungry man. Esau was not hungry in any figurative or metaphorical sense: he was simply and literally hungry for his dinner. And by the gratification of his physical appetite he sacrificed forever the interests of his soul.

Esau was the first-born of Isaac's children. To him belonged the right of primogeniture; which, among the Jews, involved the right of being the priest of the household in his father's stead; all the blessings of the covenant which God had made with Abraham, and his seed after him; and the privilege of transmitting those blessings to his successors. But to the value of all these things, Esau appears to have been utterly blind. It is said of him that "for one morsel of meat he sold his birthright," with all that was involved therein.

We have here a story that is applicable to multitudes of people in our day—and very probably to not a few within these walls this morning. It is the story of a soul asleep; a soul that awakened out of his sleep; but who awakened only to discover that he had slept too long. "Afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

I.

Here then (to begin with) is THE STORY OF A SOUL ASLEEP. We all know how it is possible for one member of the body to be dormant, to be temporarily paralyzed, while the other members of the body regularly exercise their functions. It is possible for one member of the body to be unresponsive to anything from without, as, for instance, when we say the foot is asleep, while the body as a whole instantly responds to the slightest touch.

This is the story of *one element in a complex nature being fast asleep*. Here was a man who was made up of spirit, soul and body. There was a sense in which he had to live two lives, because it was necessary that he should relate himself to two worlds. And on one side of his nature you will find that Esau was wide awake, always alert, always instantly responsive to the appeals of that world to which he belonged; but on the other side of his nature he was asleep; he was dead; he made no response whatever to the appeal of the spiritual. He was awake to the advantage of the morsel of meat; but utterly unresponsive to the appeal of the birthright, with all that it involved.

And I venture to say that that is descriptive of the condition of multitudes of people still. When the Scrip-

ture says that a man is "dead in trespasses and in sins", it does not mean that he is morally just as bad as he may be: it does not mean necessarily that he is not a kind husband, nor a good father, nor outwardly, at least, a respectable citizen. But it does mean that he is without response to the higher things of life, to the voice of the Spirit of God.

Let us see what is said of this man Esau. First of all, he is described as "a profane person." That does not mean that he used profane language in the modern sense. I need scarcely, of course, remind you of that. The word for "profane" is a very interesting word: it is suggestive of our word "thoroughfare." You see it about the streets to-day—"No thoroughfare"—the path is reserved. Now if a Greek had been wanting to put a sign to the effect that there was no thoroughfare, he would have said, "Not profane," that is, reserved. It is a word that was used to describe the ground before the sacred enclosures of heathen temples, to differentiate that which was without from that which was within. It was not enclosed; it was not fenced; it was not reserved for that particular purpose—it was profane; it was open to anybody and everybody who desired to pass that way.

And Esau was a profane person in the sense that within there was no sacred enclosure; there was no sanctuary, no holy of holies; no place reserved for God alone. His whole nature was an open plain, a marsh, a common, across which any and every vagrant spirit might pass at will: and there was no part of his nature that was fenced off, separated, and held sacred as a habitation for God.

And is not that true of many still—that their hearts are places of public assembly? There is no lock upon the door; there is no wall round about; but it is wide open to all the materialistic, deadening influences that play upon a human soul. There is no guest-chamber within such as the Shunammite had for the man of God when he passed that way. There is no lodging-place for any spiritual impulse, for any holy thought—for the Son of God Himself. But the man's life is like the inn at Bethlehem, every room occupied, every floor trampled by common feet, and no place in which the Son of God may be born—no place for God to come in—simply "profane." Oh, what a picture of multitudes of people living to-day! What a picture of many here—simply godless and materialistic, living for the things which are seen and temporal, with no thought of God at all!

Now it is not charged against Esau, that he abused the powers of that side of his nature which was awake. He was not a glutton; he was not a drunkard; he was not a man who was inordinately given to appetite: he was simply a common, healthy man who enjoyed his dinner, as any healthy man ought to do. I say it is not charged against him that he abused the powers of that side of his nature which was awake.

On the contrary, there were many things about Esau which were most admirable. He was a good son; he was considerate of the requirements of his aged father. We read that "Isaac loved Esau, and did eat of his venison." And have you not seen it in a family? If anybody wants anything, they know which member of the family is at their service to supply it; if father or mother finds himself or herself in a difficult situation, they know which son of the family will come to their help. And Isaac knew; he had learned to lean upon Esau; and Esau had always been kind and considerate. And when the old

man was out of sorts, and needed something to cheer him up; and something, perhaps, to tempt his failing appetite, it was this generous son of his who came in from the hunting and prepared him "savory meat, such as he loved."

Esau was terribly betrayed by his brother, abominably treated; and in a moment of anger he vowed he would kill him. But he made no effort whatever to fulfil his threat; and when, years afterwards, Jacob returned full of fear lest Esau should have nourished the old grudge, as soon as Esau saw him he ran towards him, and threw his arms about his neck and kissed him, and wept. And when Esau saw the presents which Jacob had sent, he said, "What are these?" And Jacob very humbly said, "These are to find grace in the sight of my lord." But Esau, with his characteristic generosity, said, "I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself." He had forgotten all about the past; he nourished no enmity against his brother.

It is one of the most terrible tragedies of history: to read of a man having so many admirable qualities, so amiable, so lovable in a thousand respects, and yet destitute of any interest in God! Ah, are there not men like that? You say, "Well, sir, what more do you want? You ask his wife, she will tell you the sort of man he is; ask his mother; ask those who deal with him in business; ask his neighbours; ask anybody, and they will tell you that his hand is always open to the needy, and that he is always responsive to the cry of his fellows. And as long as a man does that, what more is required?"

Is the entire obligation of the law summed up in a man's duty to his neighbour? I know that Esau ought to have been all that he was—but he ought to have been something more. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But "the first and the great commandment"—and as I have so often reminded you, the first and the great commandment is always "first", not in order merely, but in importance—the first and the great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"; and that, Esau completely ignored. Esau built no altar; he never bowed his knee to God; he was a "profane" person. The only charge registered against Esau is that for one morsel of meat he despised and sold his birthright. That is the only complaint which the Book makes against him. Not that he was a thief, a blasphemer, or in any sense a bad man, as men estimate character; but he was a man who weighed things in the balances, and his eyes were open chiefly to the realm of that which is seen and temporal. Esau had a great appreciation of the realm of the material, for the "morsel of meat" stands not merely for the indulgence of the physical—the "morsel of meat" stands for the material, for the temporal, for the things which are seen. And the "birthright" stands for the spiritual, for that which belongs to the world of the unseen, for that which is abiding. Esau weighed these two, the one against the other; and on the principle that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," he said, "What profit shall this birthright—this thing of the future, this thing of the realm beyond—what profit shall this birthright bring to me?" And so for one morsel of meat, for a dish of lentiles, for the gratification of an hour, he sacrificed his soul's interest.

And that is characteristic, I venture to say, of many whom we regard as among the best of people—the people whom we meet and respect and love; the people who in many respects are altogether worthy; but who yet

have no place for God in their lives. We speak to them of the blessings of the covenant, of salvation by grace, of the "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation"; but they have no ears to hear, nor eyes to see. O that I could get the ear of some such this morning! It will pay you, my brother, to go without your dinner; to make less profit in your business; to sacrifice the pleasures of the hour; to shut your eyes to this present interesting and alluring world, and look for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." But Esau smiles, and says, "I really do not know what you are talking about; I do not see such a city; I have no consciousness of what you call the spiritual world; I have no interest in what you call the covenant; I feel no need of it whatever. Why should I? The blood of Jesus Christ? I know nothing about it. All that I care for is the present, call it a 'morsel of meat' or what you will."

II.

Let us consider now, THE STORY OF A SOUL AWAKENED. "Afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." What volumes are condensed into that one word—"afterward!" Can you schoolboys parse it? Tell me what part of speech it is. "Afterward!" Some lad will say, "It is an adverb, is it not, sir?" Yes. And what is an adverb? An adverb is a word that modifies words expressive of action or quality. And here is a word that modifies the words relating to Esau's action, which relates his later wisdom to his early folly. "Afterward!" "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel!" O the difference! "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." O the pain of it! "Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

"Afterward!" It is a word that is suggestive of proportion and perspective; of the distant view; of the ability to see things relatively; to get a larger view of things, and to determine thereby the true values of life. "Afterward!" If we could only anticipate the "afterward"! If a man when he drops the spark from his tongue that is "set on fire of hell" could only see the conflagration he is going to kindle; if he could see the ruin which will be wrought in the lurid glare of that fire kindled by an evil tongue, would he drop the spark? "What will ye give me?" said Judas. "And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." And you can see the miser rubbing his hands. "I have got it; I have got it; I will sell Him for thirty pieces of silver." But oh, "afterward," when he had got the money, it was to him like the very coals of hell, and throwing the silver ringing down upon the temple floor, he said, "Take it! Take it! I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood!" If he could have seen things as they appeared "afterward", the wealth of the world would not have tempted him to sell his Lord.

Well, Esau was asleep. Mark a soul's awakening! Esau has lived in a beautiful out-of-doors; Esau has trained himself to believe that there is no better light than sunshine—that there is nothing sweeter to the taste than that which an arrow from his quiver can bring to his board. He has trained himself to believe that there is no music so entrancing as the song of birds, and the ripple of the brooks, and all the murmur-

ing music of the world of nature. He is a child of the field; and every sense is awake and alert to all the glories, to all the fascination, of God's beautiful world. And he says, "If I have that, I have everything." But there comes a time when he discovers that behind the door of the promise within the compass of the covenant, behind the veil of sense, there is another world; and that it is a still more beautiful world than the world in which he has been living; that it is fuller of treasure and of joy. And something within Esau awakes, and he comes knocking at the door, saying, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept."

And that awakening comes in the providence of God to many. I think perhaps to all—a sense of the Unseen, and of the reality of the future. Here, for instance, is a business man immersed in business. He calls himself a "hard-headed business man," whatever that is. But he lives in facts and figures; he is proud of his ability to get on—and he is getting on. His home is a place in which he passes the night, and where he comes at meal time. But he says a man cannot live on sentiment. (I remember going, by request of somebody in this city, to see just such a business man, in old London. I would as soon have a marble image to live with—hard, cold, unsympathetic, just a machine for grinding out business, and making money.) He goes from his house in haste in the morning; and some time during the day his telephone rings. He takes the receiver down and listens, and at once his face takes on an ashen hue. He drops business, rushes out, jumps into his car, and in a moment or two rushes up the front steps of his house, and is met by one who raises a warning hand. "How is he, Doctor?" "Absolute quiet, please!" "But, Doctor, I want to know how he is. I was so busy at noon I did not even say 'good-bye' to the little fellow; did not have time to call him to my knee; and now I want to see him." "But," says the Doctor, "you are a strong man, aren't you? You can bear bad news? Well, your boy will never speak to you again." "He must, Doctor! he must! I did not even say 'good-bye' to him." "Well, I have to tell you the truth; he will not speak to you again." And in a little while the crepe is on the door.

One of the managers later comes up from the place of business to see his chief about a very important matter. He makes his way into his presence, and spreads the matter of business before him. But he says, "Do not talk to me about business; I do not care anything about business." "But, sir," says his manager, "it is absolutely necessary that you give it attention." "Nothing is necessary," he says. "I thought as you do twenty-four hours ago. I prided myself on my stoicism. I said a man could not live on sentiment, and I did not know that my father-heart was sleeping; I did not know that there was another world from which my folly was excluding me. But now I am awake, and I care nothing for business." And when other years have passed, the man stands in the cemetery where he has laid the beautiful mother of his darling boy, and where he has buried his all. He has amassed great wealth; he is a man of great fortune and influence. "But," he cries, "the emptiness of it all! Now I can see that it was all for them, and now that they are gone, there is nothing left." And in his impoverishment he lifts his eyes heavenward to cry, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

My brother, it cannot be done! The hunger of the soul cannot be satisfied with business, nor with wealth, nor with pleasure, nor with fame, nor even with wife and family. They are all mortal and must leave you. And when the soul awakes it will be to the realization that you are poor indeed, unless you have that one all-comprehensive blessing of the Father, even "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

III.

The sad part of my story is that ESAU AWAKENED WHEN IT WAS TOO LATE. "Afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." There is a sense in which Esau did repent. He repented of his early choice; but he found then it was impossible to satisfy himself with that which had abundantly satisfied him before. And now "when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected"; and he finds no place in which he may again change his mind back to his former state, though he seeks it carefully with tears.

I have never been particularly concerned as to whether the scriptures descriptive of the future state of the impenitent are to be interpreted literally or figuratively; whether hell is a place and condition in which there is literal fire, or whether it be but a figure. All I have to say is this: That the scriptural descriptions of the final state of the lost in their least awful aspect are so terrible that they are hell enough; and as to whether the literal or figurative interpretation be the worst, I am not prepared to say. But this is certain: that for a soul to awake sufficiently to get a glimpse of glory and miss it; for a soul thus to get a view of the loveliness of Jesus, and to lose Him; for the soul to understand the possibility of salvation through the blood, and never to receive it; for a soul to get a glimpse of the happy reunions of the future, and to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the hosts of the redeemed, in the kingdom of God, and himself cast out, that is hell: and it is hell enough! To see what he might have been, and to know that by his own folly he has thrown his soul away—to know that, is to taste the most terrible remorse of which any creature is capable—to feel that would be to taste "the second death."

Do you not see it? "When he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." And the Scripture abounds with teaching on this matter. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart you from me, all ye workers of iniquity." "You had no place in your heart for Me. There was no guest-chamber for the Son of God. There never was a recognition of the cross. There never was a spirit humbled before the Sovereign of the universe. You had no place for Me. Depart, I never knew you." The Scripture, I say, is full of that terrible truth.

"There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

"To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth:
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health.
"How long may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin
The confines of despair?
"An answer from the skies is sent,
'Ye that from God depart:
While it is called to-day, repent,
And harden not your heart.'"

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Remember the "afterward!" May the Spirit of God make us wise now!—now!—now! It may be now or never! There was a moment, mark you, a fateful moment of decision in Esau's life. He had been gradually coming up to the crisis of his life, and there came one last moment, a point of time as the twinkling of an eye, when "for a morsel of meat he sold his birth-right." At last, he simply crossed that line, and it was done forever! And there comes that moment to everyone. It may strike for you this morning, this hour—hush!—While angels bend on hovering wing about you, and God the Holy Spirit calls to you to choose between the carnal and the spiritual, between the temporal and the eternal, between darkness and light, between hell and heaven, between Barabbas and Christ—at this instant, you may stand at "the great divide"—this tick of the clock may settle your eternal destiny! What is your answer?

NEWS OF UNION CHURCHES

(Continued from page 2)

"The consensus of opinion is that it is a good building, in a good location, and that we were very, very fortunate to obtain it for \$1,650.00 instead of \$2,000.00. In talking with Rev. H. C. Slade of Timmins over long distance telephone, he remarked that to him it seemed a good proposition and assured me that our Board would rejoice in this blessing that has come to us. Yet we do not lose sight of our added financial need and responsibility.

"We acted quickly, yet carefully, and in harmony in this transaction. We acted quickly because lots of central location are scarce or impossible to obtain. We acted quickly because the Roman Catholics buy up all such property to gain further central here in the town—as in all the North. As the obtaining of this building means the acceleration of our work, and brings nearer the day when we can afford a reduction in our grant; as spending money for an edifice of our own is more profitable than pouring it into rentals, and as our people here pledged the money and labour, we believe we have been guided by God. The offerings have shown increases during the last few months. Strangers have been attending the services. The people seem to have a "mind to work".

"So, Brother Whitcombe, will you please do what you like with this letter, and its contents, and kindly make a strong, pointed plea in THE GOSPEL WITNESS for us for funds. We are conscious of the great burden upon us, but feel happy and confident that God's people here in Kapuskasing and elsewhere will share this great financial load with us. We have always appreciated the Board's sympathetic interest and feel assured of the continued prayers by the men of the Board on our behalf.

"I suppose it would be wise when appealing in THE GOSPEL WITNESS for the Kapuskasing building fund, to advise those who would like to give to send their gifts to your office. At the same time, we should like to know the donor so that we can send a word of thanks."

In the absence of the Secretary, the following night-letter was sent by the President of the Union, Dr. T. T. Shields, to Rev. Robert Brackstone:

"Greatly rejoice news contained your letter to Whitcombe. Please convey your people my warmest congratulations on what I regard as an exceedingly wise

and enterprising action. I am positive the Board will enthusiastically approve your course and continue support until you get established. Will do our best to cooperate through THE WITNESS." T. T. SHIELDS.

Now all that remains is to make the strong, pointed plea Mr. Brackstone requests. But for those who have read thus far, Mr. Brackstone's story is the strongest most pointed plea possible. The work in Kapuskasing was made possible in the first place by two private gifts of \$50.00 each. What a large return these two brethren have had on their investment! We believe that the present need is just as great as it was at the commencement of the work, and certainly there is a much greater prospect of successful work now than when we first entered the town. We earnestly and urgently appeal to the churches of the Union to come to the aid of Mr. Brackstone. We hope that we may also have personal gifts from the Lord's stewards to further this splendid work. Send your gifts to the Union office, and we shall forward them at once to Mr. Brackstone. W.S.W.

The Kind of Letter We Like to Receive

We all receive letters that, after we have opened them, we straightway wish the postman had lost. But then, as if to balance such letters, we occasionally at least have the joy of reading a very different sort of letter, the kind that brings a thrill of pleasure and makes the daily load a little lighter. The following paragraph is from such a letter that just came in from a pastor who has been receiving a bundle of WITNESSES each week for distribution in his church: "Just a word concerning THE WITNESS itself. I do not believe there is any other religious periodical from which I receive more profit or pleasure. Dr. Shields' editorials and sermons are indeed a source of inspiration and provide most instructive and informative material. May God bless the Editor and the staff, and may they realize something of the good that is being accomplished in making possible THE GOSPEL WITNESS. I shall forward Money Order covering amount mentioned within a few days."

Since last Convention a number of our Union churches have made arrangements to have THE GOSPEL WITNESS sent for distribution among the members so that they may keep in touch with the work of the Union at home and abroad. We hear that the plan is successfully arousing a deeper interest in our missionary work, and we venture to hope that those who receive THE GOSPEL WITNESS in this way will not fail to note carefully the last sentence in the letter quoted above, for our postman never loses the bills the printer sends us.

Bible School Lesson Outline

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

Vol. 3 First Quarter Lesson 13 March 26th, 1939

ISRAEL A PRINCE WITH GOD

Lesson Text: Genesis 32.

Golden Text: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."—Gen. 32:28.

For Reading: Genesis 33, 35, 36.

I. Prayer: The Two Hosts—verses 1-12.

The angels of God met Jacob on his way when he was walking in the path of obedience. At the command of God (Gen. 31:11-13), Jacob was making his way back home after spending twenty-one years in Haran (Gen. 29:20, 27, 30). He had been harassed with troubled memories of the past, and with anxious forebodings as to the future, but he was comforted by the assurance of the support of the heavenly hosts, and of the Lord of hosts (Joshua 5:14; Psa. 46:11; Rom. 8:31; 1 John 4:4).

Jacob sent messengers to the land of Edom where Esau dwelt (Gen. 36:8, 9), to pave the way for meeting him personally. His message sounds very like the diplomatic notes of modern states. He would curry favour with his brother, calling him "my lord Esau", and speaking of himself as "thy servant Jacob". He apologized for his absence from the land, and tactfully reminded Esau of his own wealth and strength.

Jacob's attempt to get the better of his brother by diplomacy failed, so far as his peace of mind was concerned. His fears were increased, not released. So it is when we look only at our outward circumstances.

The ground of Jacob's prayer should be noticed. He appealed to God's faithfulness to Abraham and Isaac (Psa. 105:5, 6), to God's command to him (Gen. 31:3, 13), and to God's promise (verses 9, 12; Geneses 28:13-15).

Jacob showed an appropriate attitude in prayer. He exhibited humility (Gen. 18:27), and thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6) in view of God's mercy and faithfulness. He realized his unworthiness (Luke 7:6, 7).

His petition was brief, pointed and definite, "Deliver me from the hand of Esau" (Compare Neh. 1:11; Matt. 8:25; 14:30; 15:25). God answered the prayer of His servant (Gen. 33:4).

II. Preparations: The Two Bands—verses 13-23.

Jacob's heart was not yet disciplined so that he would rely wholly upon God. It was second nature to him to scheme and plan in his own interests. His servants were given detailed instructions as to the number of animals to be sent as a present to Esau, their order and arrangement, and also the mode of procedure to be followed. Under the guise of a big display Jacob attempted to hide his fear. His evil conscience, smiting him for the way in which he had treated his brother (Gen. 27:36), made a coward of him.

Time proved that Jacob's preparations to appease his brother before seeing him were entirely unnecessary; he need not have doubted Esau's acceptance of him. There are many who misjudge our God, thinking they must bring Him an offering of good works (Titus 3:5). He will accept only those who come on the basis of the work of Christ (Eph. 1:6).

Jacob had made preparations not merely to appease his brother, but also to meet him in the safest way possible. He had organized his company into two bands for protection (verses 7, 10). During the night he caused all to pass over the brook Jabbok (Deut. 2:37). When he actually met Esau, Jacob took his proper position at the head of his people (Gen. 33:3).

III. Peniel: The Two Wrestlers—verses 24-32.

God had dealings with Jacob when he was alone, separated from the crowd. It is at such times, when other voices are silent; that God can speak to us (Exod. 3:1; 1 Kings 19:9; Gal. 1:16, 17).

The one who wrestled with Jacob was God manifest in human form (verses 28, 30). At Bethel he had a vision of God, at Peniel a manifestation of God. The heavenly visitor began the contest, not Jacob (Gen. 22:1).

The Lord let Jacob struggle till he was at the end of his strength, then with the touch of His finger subdued him, that he might realize his own utter helplessness and also the mighty power of God (Exod. 8:19; Luke 11:20). When Jacob seemed to be weak he was in reality strong, for he had come to realize that his sufficiency was entirely of God (Isa. 40:29; 2 Cor. 3:5; 12:9).

The touch of God will mean the conquest of the flesh. The sentence of death must be passed upon the flesh with its deeds (Gal. 2:20; 5:24; Col. 3:5).

Jacob's holy importunity was commendable (Luke 18:1). He was no longer fighting, but clinging to God with tears and supplications (Hosea 12:3, 4). The same One Who had conquered him, must now raise him (Dan. 10:16-18).

When Jacob was ready to acknowledge that he deserved the name Jacob ("Supplanter") he was given his new name Israel ("Prince with God" or "Prince of God"). To all human appearances, it looked as though he had been defeated in the contest, but in the eyes of the Lord he had come through to victory.

"Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free:
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be."

The heavenly One had revealed His identity (verse 28), but He blessed Jacob when asked His name. The one who desires to know more about God will not be disappointed (2 Pet. 3:18).

Peniel means "Face of God". Jacob had seen God in the person of the Divine man who had wrestled with him, although he had not seen Him in His essential image (Exod. 33:20; Deut. 34:10; Judges 13:22, 23; Isa. 6:5; John 1:18).

TWO WEEKS TO THE YEAR'S END

This has been the most difficult year of Jarvis Street's history financially. On March 4th last our holy and beautiful house was destroyed by fire. Since then we have had to hold Sunday Services in Massey Hall, and week evening services in Cooke's Presbyterian Church. Notwithstanding the generous hospitality of our friends of Cooke's Church, the charge upon our General Fund has enormously increased. In addition to this, our people have strained every nerve to support the Building Fund. Altogether it has been a year of tremendously heavy burdens.

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